



Case study

CarePulse

1. Project

CarePulse – Capacity Management System (CMS)

2. Organisation

London Purchased Healthcare Team

Enhanced Health in Care Homes (Healthy London Partnership)

3. Description: understanding the problem

Choosing an appropriate care home is an important decision for patients, families and healthcare professionals. Service details, quality assurance and bed availability information all inform this decision. However, the information is not always readily available. For discharge teams, establishing care home capacity is time-consuming and frustrating. For care homes, responding to individual capacity requests from different organisations removes staff from care delivery.

4. Solution: aims and objectives

The project aims were to enable healthcare professionals to access care home capacity quickly and efficiently, and to enable care homes to share capacity information across the system.

The objectives of the project were to:

- Reduce delays in transfer of care from acute settings caused by the time taken to find available care home beds.
- Enable healthcare professionals to focus on their core roles by reducing time spent on bureaucratic tasks, e.g. calling care homes to ask about bed availability.
- Enhance patient choice in discharge destination by creating a database of all London care homes.

5. Method and approach

The Enhanced Health in Care Homes programme asked London Purchased Healthcare Team (LPH) to work with them to create an online Capacity Management System (CMS) that would improve patient flow from acute settings to care homes and reduce DTaC. The system would be open to all London care homes and all commissioning groups, i.e. CCGs, local authorities (LAs) and hospitals.

The CMS was built into the existing LPH CarePulse system, which already had strong engagement from healthcare professionals and care homes. CarePulse delivers efficiencies for healthcare professionals and care homes, and supports them to work collaboratively. The principle of CarePulse is to collect information once but share it widely. This includes service details, quality assurance and market management information. CarePulse was the ideal system to incorporate care home capacity information.

CarePulse is developed iteratively with user feedback. The CMS was first launched with a pilot group of nursing homes in January 2018. Over the following two months the system was expanded to all London care homes, LAs and hospital discharge teams.

Additional functionality was added to maximise care home and commissioner engagement, including message alerts to allow commissioners to quickly share important notices with all care homes.

6. Impact

CarePulse now supports CCGs, LAs and hospital discharge teams to find available care home beds. Currently there are over 400 CarePulse users, which includes users from all 32 London CCGs as well as LAs and hospital discharge teams.

All London nursing and residential care homes are searchable on the system and every care home in England is eligible to register. The database includes over 1,500 care homes, made up of every care home in London and a number of care homes in surrounding areas. Almost 390 care homes have activated their profile and receive a daily capacity update request, representing over 70% of nursing beds in London.

CarePulse key features include:

- **A database of over 1,500 care homes:** Users can search the database by name, service type, borough or postcode.
- **On demand bed availability:** Care homes are prompted to update their bed availability each day and timestamps from the update are visible to users. Care homes can update their bed availability as frequently as they wish, and the information is instantly available to users. Users can also directly request an update from a specific care home with just two clicks.

- **Care home registration prompts:** Users can invite a care home to activate their profile directly through the system by entering an email address for the care home.
- **Notification system:** CarePulse includes a message board and resource centre to issue alerts to care homes about initiatives and resources that support care homes keep people well in their care, for instance reminders about flu vaccinations and 111*6 service.

In achieving the objectives identified above, CarePulse has realised the following benefits:

- **Supports greater partnership working between care homes and commissioners:** CarePulse is developed iteratively based on user feedback and enables care homes and commissioners to share information with each other. This improves partnership working and gives all users a sense of ownership of the system.
- **Increases transparency on capacity across the London market:** Having an overview of capacity across the care home market in London provides valuable market intelligence, which allows for more effective market management and understanding of barriers to effective patient flow.
- **Efficiency for care homes and commissioners:** CarePulse provides users with a single place for care home contact information, service details, capacity and CQC ratings. CarePulse allows care homes to update their information and validates information against the CQC database. User feedback repeatedly tells us that CarePulse makes placement processes quicker, easier and supports patient choice.

7. Key learning points

For CarePulse to be effective and sustainable it needs to be used across the whole system, this means that CCGs, LAs and hospital teams must all be engaged.

The system needs to have benefits for care homes and commissioning groups in order to achieve long-term engagement. The two-way information flows in CarePulse and ability for users to prompt care homes encourages sustained engagement.

The successful engagement of care homes can be, in part, be attributed to the simple design which allows care homes to update their capacity quickly and with minimal effort.

Collecting feedback is essential to ensure that CarePulse responds to its users' needs. A key component of CarePulse is the iterative development, which ensures

that users shape developments and the system works effectively before new developments are added.

8. Plans for spread

As part of the implementation plans, our team will continue with comms and engagement campaigns to increase the number of active users. The portal will be visible at DToC roadshows, A&E delivery boards and other engagement events.

Future system developments could include capacity for specific service levels and expansion to home care services.

9. Contacts

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