HOW TO PREPARE YOUR CARE HOME FOR THE RISING POPULATION OVER 85

THE ULTIMATE GUIDE TO USING TECHNOLOGY AROUND THE CARE HOME WHEN THE NUMBER OF RESIDENTS IS ON THE RISE.

According to the Office for National Statistics (ONS), there will be almost 20 million people in the country aged 65 years and over by 2028, representing an 80% increase from today's 11 million. And by 2036, the size of the UK population aged 85 years and over is projected to increase from 1.6 million (2.5% of the total population) to 2.6 million (3.5%).

Further research has also highlighted that many from this generation are unprepared for the care they will need in the future.

Of course, a home will always be limited by the physical space it has but there are many other ways in which care homes can prepare to care for larger numbers of residents, mostly by using the right technology to work smarter.

"THE NEW STATISTICS REPRESENT A VERITABLE TSUNAMI IN TERMS OF THE NUMBER OF PEOPLE THAT WILL BE OPTING FOR A RETIREMENT SETTING OR CARE HOME IN JUST A FEW YEARS TIME. IN THIS REPORT, WE HIGHLIGHT SOME KEY AREAS IN WHICH CARE HOMES AND RETIREMENT COMMUNITIES CAN START PLANNING FOR OUR AGEING POPULATION."
NEIL MCMANUS, MANAGING DIRECTOR OF GHM CARE

1. Technology to improve Staff Efficiency

The sector faces several longstanding workforce challenges, which, it is suggested, can impact on the availability and quality of care. These include: high vacancy rates (Skills for Care, the workforce development and planning body for adult social care in England, estimates an average of 9.9% of roles in adult social care were vacant in 2022/23), and high turnover (Skills for Care estimates the turnover rate of directly employed staff working in adult social care was 28.3% in 2022/23).

Add to that an increasing rise in demand due to the rising population aged over 65 - the need for care staff to work smarter has never been greater.

How we can help your care staff

Enabling care staff and nurses to move around a home or community more efficiently means they can meet the needs of more residents in a shorter space of time. Here are a few examples of how tech can make care staff more efficient:

- **Delivering nursecall alerts directly to mobile devices,** Carers don't have to check a central console – improving staff mobility, speeding up response times and reducing waste. It means less time up and down the corridors and more time with residents.

- **Integrating the technologies used by carers.** Consolidating the number of devices a carer has to carry makes huge savings and enables staff to get to the information they need much faster. We integrate virtually all third party technologies and apps onto our mobile devices so everything a carer needs is easily accessible.

Around **1.52 million people worked in the adult social care sector in England in 2022/23. This is more than in the NHS. The workforce was more diverse than the population as a whole and the majority of workers were women. Around a quarter of the workforce were on zero-hours contracts, including 54% of home care workers.**

- **Automating paper-based processes.** Using technology to remove manual tasks can save hours of resources and improve accuracy. For example, digital care monitoring and reporting greatly improves the delivery of care. The Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) set a target of having 80% of the sector using digital records by March 2024 and made additional funds available to care homes for the adoption of digital care records.

2. Technology to improve Operational Efficiency

Choosing the right technology for your care home can transform the way you operate. Whatever your digital transformation goals, there are some great technologies designed specifically for care homes that really focus on operational efficiency.

Access to nursecall data

NexusCare, from GHM Care, records all nursecall data and presents it all in an easy-to-use dashboard. The reports can be broken down by number of calls, peak times, zones and types of call so management can make informed decisions on staffing levels, rotations and other key resources. Improving the volume of data available for decision making is key.

Automaticaly record nursecall activity on digital care records

NexusCare also integrates with leading digital care records so nursecall data can be recorded automatically onto a patients timeline. This not only saves having to record the interaction manually but also improves the visibility but finally bridges the gap between personal care records and nursecall systems.

Integration

By integrating apps and solutions onto a single mobile device means less devices streamlines costs, suppliers and maintenance. It also consolidates and brings together reporting data for multiple solutions into a single location.

Better Data

Not only does the right technology result in some really significant savings and efficiencies, the amount and quality of data available improves. This information offers contextual oversight, empowering homes to make informed decisions and drive improvements, improve staff productivity, reduce response times and enhance resident care.

Automation

Technology such as Digital Care Records make paper trails obsolete and can save hours of manual activity. In addition, nursecall activity can be automatically recorded in real time, eliminating the need to write it up at the end of a shift. Better still, these two technologies can be integrated so nursecall data is automatically imported onto the resident timeline. Simple tasks such as signing onto shifts can also be automated via simple apps. Not only does this save time at the start of the shift but it removes the need to write up manual sign in sheets and increases accuracy.

3. Technology to improve the Resident Experience

As we mentioned earlier, technology in the care home sector is all about enhancing the resident experience and level of care. The segment of our population that will be over 65 in 2028 are much more tech savvy that their predecessors. Many will also be opting for a new style of living in care homes and retirement villages that provide a home-from-home level of comfort and amenities.

Connectivity is Key

Care homes will have to provide business-grade connectivity and internet access for residents to access all of their favourite entertainment, apps and technologies.

Outside and In

Outdoor access will also be more important (and can improve the use of space) so make sure any routers and access points cover these spaces too.

Keep talking

Isolation is a key issue for any care home resident. Interactions with family and friends is hugely important for improving mental health and by ensuring residents can call, video calling and message loved ones at any time is vital.

Get Interactive

Using technology to improve interaction between residents will also be key. Whether it's used to deliver activities, encourage conversations or simply to make communicating easier, having the right foundations such as a strong network, WiFi and accessible handsets and devices will empower your residents and improve their interactions.

Independence

Staying independent for longer is vital for many residents and technology can really empower that independence. For example, porting home/personal telephone numbers when they move into a care setting can make their transition less disruptive and give more control over their communications. By ensuring residents have the best connectivity also enables them to retain control, and manage elements, of their own healthcare and decisions online.

4. How AI might help care homes in the future

Technology advances quickly, and AI will play a vital role in care homes of the future. While it can't replace human care providers, used ethically, it can assist with growing demand and more efficiencies in many ways. These could include:

- Technology providers using AI to improve their solutions – using their data for more effective modelling.

- Automated reporting, compliance and administrative tasks – this could be through the use of ChatGPT or Microsoft Copilot. However, whilst AI is great for reducing these manual burdens on care teams, care needs to be taken not to spill over into the delivery of care, treatment or response.

- Predictive care – using AI to create automated workflows, patterns or predictions can guide care homes on the next best action or likely events on which to base care planning and resources.
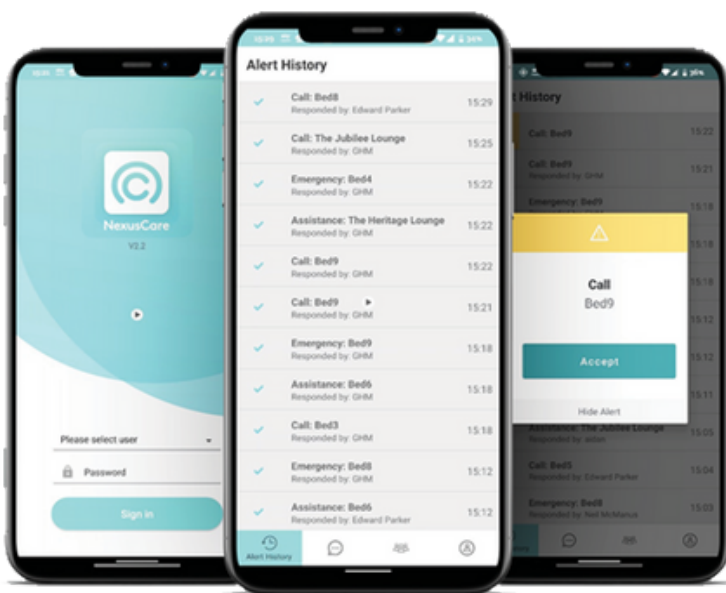
"Our job at GHM Care is not to make staff tech experts, or to replace any human interaction with technology, but to enable staff to spend more time with residents, and enhance the level of care, by providing technology that's really effective easy to adopt and use."

Summary

Our approach to care home technology is simple: we are committed to improving the level of care for residents and the day-to-day working lives of staff. We truly understand the challenges that care homes are already facing, even before the rising numbers associated with an ageing population.

So, when adoption technology ask yourself what efficiencies they will create, how easy are they for care staff to use and how can they integrate with other technologies (existing or new). But most of all, ask how they will improve the level of care and experience of the resident.

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