

Recipient of the  
Workforce Development  
Innovation Fund 2015/16



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## Shropshire Partners in Care/Care Workforce Development Partnership

# IT in Adult Social Care across Shropshire and Telford and Wrekin

This care workforce partnership worked with small-to-medium adult social care providers to pilot use of the NHS's secure mail service to communicate with hospitals and Skype video consultation with GPs. They developed guidance on using IT to develop care business and supported 93 staff through an e-Learning course on IT skills.

Shropshire Partners in Care (SPIC) employs 16 staff and is a not for profit organisation representing over 200 independent nursing, residential and domiciliary care companies in Shropshire and Telford & Wrekin.

The Care Workforce Development Partnership (CWDP) is the strategic workforce development department of Shropshire Partners in Care. The CWDP aim is to facilitate a co-ordinated approach to workforce development whilst at the same time maximising the opportunity to pool resources, knowledge and skills.

The partnership members are: Shropshire Council, Telford & Wrekin Council, Shropshire Community Health Trust, Telford Community Health Trust, NHS Telford & Wrekin, Shropshire Clinical Commissioning Group, Telford Clinical Commissioning Group, Healthwatch Shropshire, Skills for Care and Shropshire Partners in Care.

Through the CWDP annual training needs survey and a video-consultation survey, we identified that many small to medium care providers were interested in IT training for staff, support to develop their IT infrastructure, and support to make better use of existing technologies for example video-consultation, and the secure email service NHSmail\*.

\*To be eligible for an NHSmail account care homes must confirm that they exchange sensitive information with health and social care staff on a regular basis and they must complete NHS Digital's Information Governance Toolkit (IGT) for the Voluntary Sector Organisation requirements.

Video consultation can enable care home staff to access prompt, comprehensive clinical advice and service user assessment and reduce the requirement for avoidable GP visits out of hours.

## What we wanted to achieve

The overall aims for the project were to:

- Increase the knowledge and understanding of IT in the independent sector by highlighting to social care providers that using different methods of IT can support their business to grow, improve the quality of care that is delivered to the people who need care and support, and give their workforce the skills to use a computer effectively and efficiently.
- Reduce unnecessary admissions into hospital by providing an alternative way (video-consultation) for social care providers to communicate with out of hour GP services.
- Decrease the time in which a person who uses the service waits to be discharged back into a residential/ nursing home, or their own home, by establishing a secure email service (NHSmal) between independent social care providers and the local hospitals.

In order to achieve the aims we established an IT network steering group of adult social care businesses, health representatives, and IT specialists to analyse local information about IT in the care sector, share good practice, develop local initiatives and support social care providers in implementing a robust IT infrastructure.

We identified the following targets and success factors:

- Publication of a guidance booklet for adult social care businesses on implementing a robust IT infrastructure.
- Two events for owners and managers of adult social care providers to inform and raise the awareness of Information Technology infrastructure, and to develop their knowledge on how to adapt their business to meet the needs of the present and future market. The events would support the development and expansion of a joint health and social care tele-health remote video-consultation service and the use of a secure encrypted email system in residential and nursing homes.
- Training sessions delivered for social care staff, utilising the e-learning for health IT skills pathway.
- Digital champions trained to encourage and facilitate more staff to undertake the IT skills pathway.
- Providers to have trialled the Skype tele-

consultation service.

- Providers to have implemented NHSmal encryption service.

## What we did

We established the group with members from domiciliary, supported living, residential, nursing, health and IT specialists and agreed the terms of reference.

The group developed the IT guidance booklet specifically for adult social care businesses with ten or fewer computers. 400 booklets were printed and distributed – and included a link to the website [www.spic.co.uk](http://www.spic.co.uk) (to view the resources select IT from the menu).

Two events were planned in the local area and the programme included:

- The IT Booklet
- Best practice – IT infrastructure and workforce development
- Implementing NHSmal
- Skype tele-consultation with ShropDoc (out of hours GP service)
- Accessing the NHS Digital IT Skills Pathway E-Learning modules

We promoted the events via email, website and newsletter. Despite initial interest, there was very low take up and the steering group took the decision to cancel the events and re-think how to engage social care businesses.

The IT event programme was then incorporated into the agendas for two independent social care provider forums and successfully delivered. Many providers who attended then enrolled their staff onto the IT Skills Pathway.

The Skype tele-consultations project group developed template documents to meet the information governance and clinical governance requirements, including a privacy impact assessment, standard operating procedure and consent process.

We held a one-month trial of the Skype tele-consultation with the local out of hours GP service Shropdoc, and four nursing home providers. The review showed that no Skype tele-consultations for nursing home residents were undertaken during the period although

three of the four providers did telephone the usual out of hours triage and advice service on 15 occasions and six GP visits were made.

We assessed the feedback to understand the barriers, and looked to expand the tele-consultation pilot to include residential care homes, speech and language therapists, dieticians, physiotherapists and tissue viability nursing teams. We engaged with seven residential care homes who were continuing to implement Skype consultations beyond the scope of the project.

NHSmail is accredited to 'Government Official Sensitive' status and allows care homes to securely share, via email service, user personally identifiable information. To be eligible for an NHSmail account each care provider must complete the relevant NHS Digital Information Governance (IG) Toolkit requirements. To support social care providers to complete the IG toolkit we delivered a workshop and webinar with NHS Digital. The first workshop showed us that the IG Toolkit was too onerous for care providers to complete and needed to be simplified. It became a significant barrier which meant we were unable to deliver the aim of the project within the timescale. However, NHS Digital began working to develop a specific online toolkit for care homes which in December 2016 was still in development.

The latest update is available here: <http://support.nhs.net/joiningnhsmail>. SPIC/CWDP is set up as the local organisation administrator for care home NHSmail accounts, once the process for progressing these is confirmed.

## What we achieved

We established an effective IT network group and captured local intelligence about existing IT infrastructures and IT business requirements for small to medium adult social care providers in Shropshire. Through consultation with this group we created the content for the IT booklet focussing on the needs of adult social care businesses with fewer than ten computers, and signposting to information which was already available. We created new webpages on the SPIC website to deliver and keep up to date more in-depth information.

We established Shropshire Partners in Care as a local training centre for e-Learning for Health's IT Skills Pathway and supported more than 90 learners to undertake the course.

In Shropshire and Telford & Wrekin, the IT Skills Pathway has proven to be a great success and I would urge any independent social care business to find their local centre and enrol their workforce onto the courses

David Coull, Chair of  
Shropshire Partners in Care

We created Skype tele-consultation infrastructure template documents in partnership with our NHS Commissioners and out of hours GP provider to meet the information governance and clinical governance requirements, including a privacy impact assessment, standard operating procedure and consent process. Piloting the Skype tele-consultation with social care providers gave us important insight into the barriers and showed that the software can be easily implemented in other nursing and residential homes. By the end of the project seven care providers were implementing Skype consultation.

We also achieved agreement that Shropshire Partners in Care will be the local organisation administrator for all independent social Care providers NHSmail accounts across Shropshire and Telford & Wrekin. We were also instrumental in NHS Digital's review of their existing Information Governance processes for social care providers.

## What we learnt

We found that the main barriers to implementing the new technology were in effecting culture change within the organisations to embrace the new ways of working.

There was resistance from adult social care providers to devote their time and people to learning about the benefits of IT skills for care staff and managers, and to implementing the new technologies.

Developing digital champions was more difficult than expected. Local businesses who embraced IT had their own digital champions already, and those who were commencing the initial phase of their IT journey had staff who began undertaking the IT course and were not ready to act as digital champions.

We learned that offering specific IT events was not a successful strategy, however when the information was incorporated into a wider forum the uptake increased. In turn attendance at the events increased the uptake of the IT skills pathway.

The Skype tele-consultation in nursing homes was not successful because the qualified nurses were usually able to make their own clinical assessment and resolve any issues directly with the nurse triage. They continued using the telephone as they did not see any benefit in offering Skype consultations to people. As a result of this learning we widened the pilot to residential care homes.

We would advise other organisations who are undertaking similar projects to:

- Incorporate any IT speakers, information sessions and key information in existing social care seminars and forums.
- Provide staff who are able to offer care providers one to one support (face to face and over the telephone) when completing the Information Governance Toolkit.
- Provide staff who are able to offer care providers one to one support (face to face and over the telephone) when delivering IT Skills Pathway e-Learning courses.
- Communicate directly to both managers and staff about the reasons why you are implementing Skype tele-consultation, NHSmail and IT training and the benefits to the business and to their professional development.
- Celebrate the achievements of individuals who have passed IT training courses or care providers who have undertaken their Information Governance Toolkit through case studies and news articles.

**This project addressed the 2015/16 priority on:**

**1. Projects that test approaches to skills development which support prevention and early intervention with a focus on the integration of services (health, housing, social care and other). Projects should make use of and build upon the 'Principles of Workforce Integration'.**

**5. Projects which enable care workers and people with care and support needs to use technology together, and which identify the workforce developments necessary to bring about, and embed these changes.**

**For more information please visit:**

[www.spic.co.uk](http://www.spic.co.uk)

**Project lead:** Debbie Price, Shropshire Partners in Care, Chief Officer of Shropshire Partners in Care and Chair of the Care Workforce Development Partnership  
[dprice@spic.co.uk](mailto:dprice@spic.co.uk)

## Skills for Care recommends

Skills for Care provide a number of resources that can help providers understand the benefits of digital working and assistive living technologies, both of which are important for integration and form an important focus of CQC regulation.

### Digital working, learning and information sharing

Our work includes creating a strategy to support the adult social care sector, films showcasing practical working, the opportunities presented by digital champions in the workforce and the core skills needed.

[www.skillsforcare.org.uk/digital](http://www.skillsforcare.org.uk/digital)

### Assistive living technologies

Our resources include a practical framework and a number of practical examples from across the sector that is helping services provide better care.

[www.skillsforcare.org.uk/alt](http://www.skillsforcare.org.uk/alt)

### CQC regulations

This section of our website helps you to understand and meet the regulations and standards for care.

[www.skillsforcare.org.uk/cqc](http://www.skillsforcare.org.uk/cqc)

Skills for Care  
West Gate  
6 Grace Street  
Leeds  
LS1 2RP  
telephone 0113 245 1716  
email [info@skillsforcare.org.uk](mailto:info@skillsforcare.org.uk)  
web [www.skillsforcare.org.uk](http://www.skillsforcare.org.uk)

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