

# Improving elderly care through electronic medical records

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Donisthorpe Hall Care Home

*Donisthorpe Hall Care Home in Leeds, West Yorkshire are utilising innovative technology to improve health for the vulnerable elderly.*

*The care home, one of the largest in Yorkshire, have started to use SystemOne Care Homes to view the electronic medical records of their 183 residents, connecting the home to the wider health economy.*

Incorporating residential, nursing and dementia care all under one roof, Donisthorpe Hall is unique. Staff at the home are keen to adopt new ways of working to improve the experience for residents and their families whilst maintaining their ethos of 'being at home'. Everyone at the care home has been instrumental in adopting the new functionality and are fully recognising the benefits it can bring. Maria Holdsworth, Registered Manager, Donisthorpe Hall, emphasises **"There is no negative that I can see from using SystemOne. All staff are more informed which can only lead to better continuity of care for our residents"**.

Working with close support from local GP practices and the Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG), Donisthorpe hope the use of technology will help them address the national issues surrounding elderly care. Looking after some of the most vulnerable residents with the most complex needs the care home are forward thinking and innovative in their approach to resident care.

## THE VISION FOR CARE

There is a growing need to address the needs of the elderly, especially as the population continues to grow and live longer. Donisthorpe Hall want to bring this issue to light through the use of technology. Maria says **“For over 6 years I have been waiting for something like this. We need to bring the issue of elderly care out into the open, there are a lot of homes providing good quality care, and continuously improving standards. Through the use of a shared electronic medical record with the local health providers we will be able to plan the residents care more effectively.”**

This vision is shared with local GP practices and the CCG. John Snowden, Deputy Practice Manager at Street Lane Practice, Leeds says **“We want care homes to be incorporated within healthcare. This can be achieved through the sharing of information with local services to ensure continuity of care and achieve better outcomes for the vulnerable elderly.”**



## CONNECTION WITH THE WIDER HEALTH ECONOMY

*The use of SystmOne is enabling the care home to connect with the wider health economy, achieving their vision for care.*

John reiterates **“There seems to be no link between the NHS and care homes, the use of SystmOne is enabling us to change all that. The care provided in care homes should be linked with the NHS and cannot be isolated from primary care, hospitals, palliative care organisations and hospices.”**

Maria adds **“Elderly care is always the last to be included, however we all know that the population is growing and residents have more complex needs than 10–15 years ago. With information all collated into one unified resident record, we can implement interventions in collaboration with other providers to address these needs and improve continuity of care.”**

SystmOne Care Homes also links with local hospices who use the system. Maria says this will make a big difference, **“The automatic link with local hospices is invaluable as we often have residents who we refer to hospices or residents who are referred back to us. It is the staff in care homes looking after the resident day to day who understand the needs of that resident best. Improved information flows will ensure that we can easily pass on this expertise, especially when referring a resident for onward care.”**

## FACING THE DEMENTIA CHALLENGE

*Access to a shareable, real time electronic patient record is particularly important within the field of dementia.*

Patients with dementia often struggle to communicate or remember vital clinical information and establishing a history of care can often take months. Maria says “With access to the electronic medical record we are able to quickly identify the support needs that the resident will require. Dementia is a very individual illness and a growing problem within the UK. Access to data will provide us with trigger points to also identify early onset. The electronic record will allow us to personalise care and tailor it to the specific needs of the resident and therefore improve quality of life.”

The SystemOne electronic record contains data from other healthcare settings, including vital information related to dementia that the care home would not otherwise be made aware of. John explains “Within SystemOne at our GP practice we capture data such as dementia screening tests which is typically not shared with the care home. As soon as the resident is admitted to the home, staff can now view this vital data and plan interventions. This has a knock on effect for the entire health and social care system as the patient starts to receive the right care in the right place at the right time.”

## GREATER CONNECTION WITH HOSPITALS

*Staff at Donisthorpe Hall and in the wider health economy will also begin to establish closer links with hospitals.*

Maria says “Now we will be able to tell where a new resident is at a high risk of hospital admissions as we will have a full record of medical history and can identify incidents before they happen. This will dramatically improve clinical safety, in some cases the resident and family are unable to provide the correct information about the residents past medical history.”

Similarly where a patient is discharged from hospital to a care home, data about the patient’s admission

is delayed, often by weeks. Street Lane Surgery established a new way of working with Donisthorpe Hall where the practice was contacted if the patient was registered there. Now the process can become much quicker. “With instant access to the medical record the care home will be able to view vital information about a discharge. This is especially important when the life expectancy for discharge to a care home could just be weeks—the information is vital for improving the delivery of end of life care” says John.

## THE IMPACT ON RESIDENTS AND THEIR FAMILIES

*Staff having access to the most up to date medical record has had a remarkable impact on residents and their families.*

Maria recalls a recent instance where a resident was admitted with complex needs over a weekend, a time when GP practices and other services who may be caring for the resident are closed. In addition, family members were unable to inform staff of the medication the resident was taking. "A family member had packed all the medication that they could find in the residents home. Staff were able to access the system and viewed the current information, including the full medical history. This meant they were able to identify the correct and current medication and also implement further resources in order to meet the resident's care needs. The family were very relieved and impressed that we were able to obtain the information speedily and stated that it was one less thing they had to worry about at such an emotional time."

At Donisthorpe Hall it is important that residents are able to maintain their independence for as long as possible. Maria describes how residents are becoming more empowered. "A resident requested a four-wheeled walker to allow her to walk in our gardens independently. The resident wanted reassurance that the GP had sent the referral letter to the local health clinic which provides mobility aids. As we were able to access the electronic medical record we could confirm that the referral letter had been sent by the GP and inform the resident. The resident was then able to contact the health clinic and obtain an expected delivery date for the walker. The outcome was that the resident was able to maintain her own independence and is now happy in the knowledge that, should the need arise, information can be accessed easily."



## THE FUTURE

*Donisthorpe Hall and the local health economy now want to move forward with the use of SystmOne to achieve significant goals over the next year.*

John says “We want to move quickly with the use of the system so that we can create a complete circle of care, sooner rather than later. Our goal is for care homes to have interconnectivity with every health service to promote a safer way of working and provide the much needed continuity of care for patients.

“As people who use SystmOne extensively, we want to help Donisthorpe Hall extend the use of the system to gain further benefits.”

Maria adds “We are all excited as to where the use of the system will take us in the future. We know that the use of technology will help us innovate the way we work as a health community to improve the quality of life for the elderly.”

For more information about Donisthorpe Hall Care Home, please visit:  
[www.donisthorpehall.org](http://www.donisthorpehall.org)



### WHAT IS SYSTMONE CARE HOMES?

SystmOne Care Homes is a new software solution which is being offered to all care homes in the country free of charge. SystmOne Care Homes provides read-write access to a shared electronic patient record. TPP have customised the solution so that it can be easily deployed with minimum training required.

For more information about SystmOne Care Homes, please visit:  
[www.tpp-uk.com/systmone-care-homes](http://www.tpp-uk.com/systmone-care-homes)

