Case Study – SystmOne Prison

In 2004, TPP began work with Dorset PCT to create a SystmOne module specifically for use in prisons. Within 12 months, the new module was live in HMP Wear, HMP The Verne in Dorset and HMP Hindley in Wigan. Over the next few years the use of SystmOne across the offender health sphere grew drastically. In 2009, SystmOne was being used in over 60 prisons and TPP were awarded the National Prison Contract. By 2012 SystmOne was being used in every prison in England and Wales and is now live in 145 offender health settings. This includes young offender institutes, custody suites, immigration removal centres and secure children’s homes.

Debbie Dickerson, Primary Care Manager at HMP Liverpool said the following about the SystmOne prison module: “Accessibility to information is probably the biggest help. Any one of us can access and check records from any terminal. We can communicate information to other agencies when the prisoner has been released. The audit is more accurate in terms of time and date of entries. Parts of records cannot be removed or lost. Continuity of care is more effective and summary of care can be handed over to anyone very easily.”

Introducing a paperless model

The use of SystmOne allows prisons to adopt a completely paperless model. This brings a number of benefits in managing patient care across the prison. There is less chance of information being lost and an electronic system ensures information is recorded in a legible, standardised way, saving administrative time.

SystmOne allows staff to instantly see a patient’s comprehensive medical history. Debbie from HMP Liverpool commented on how the electronic record improved efficiency for them, “When everything is inputted correctly, the benefits are enormous. Prior to using SystmOne, prisoners were forever arriving without records, stating histories that we could not confirm and we were spending a lot of time ringing other prisons to get information.

With SystmOne you can instantly retrieve a previous record and this has numerous benefits. For example, in regard to new prisoners, we used to find people had been in our care before but we wouldn’t know until the old record appeared which could be some days later. Now we have this information straight away.”

Improving efficiency

SystmOne encompasses both administrative and clinical workflows, allowing the smooth flow of information between staff in a range of job roles. It saves time, improves communication and through functionality such as templates, allows the prison to standardise processes and monitor the delivery of care.

Not only does SystmOne improve the transfer of information between staff but it is customisable, and can be tailored to a staff member’s specific needs. Rhys O’Callaghan, Compliance Officer at HMP Leicester commented, “I personally find the system extremely easy to use. There are often several ways to do something so you can choose the way that suits you best. Many of the agency staff who come here to work for the first time managed to pick up the system on a basic level within a few hours.”

SystmOne displays all data held in the prison record for each patient. Healthcare professionals have access to a detailed patient history in order to make the most appropriate choices for each individual. Rhys goes on to say, “Nurses at HMP Leicester find it very useful to immediately view the whole of the prisoner’s medical record since incarceration. Healthcare professionals can also work more efficiently, as they can now search through the record for specific information. Doing so has shortened the time taken for clinicians to view patients’ notes when making diagnoses.”
Individual care

Using SystmOne has also helped to improve the care of specific patient groups. At HMP Bristol, each patient has an individualised care plan, specifically tailored to their needs, which is viewable by all services in the prison. HMP Bristol provides a wide variety of patient services within the prison including Primary Care, Substance Misuse and Mental Health. The ability to share patient data between these healthcare professionals enables the prison to standardise their delivery of care and ensure consistency of treatment.

Patient identifier

NHS England has set the target for 95% of all clinical correspondence to include an NHS number. Prisons and other offender health settings are utilising the SystmOne option to add a patient’s NHS number in the record in order to meet this goal. Using the NHS number as the primary identifier is particularly important in offender health where patients are often moved around. Whilst other patient identifiers can sometimes lead to errors or duplications, the unique NHS number ensures all the patient information is in one record. If sharing models were to change, this single record could then support continued care for the patient when they move back into community care settings.

Using the NHS number also allows staff to access additional functionality and services, for example, SPINE.

Information at the point of care

One of the biggest advantages of a shared, electronic patient record is the ability for clinicians to access the most up to date information at the point of care. Tanya Hannant, Clinical Nurse Manager at Bristol Community Health said, “We have seen huge benefits from having access to patient records on their arrival at the prison. It helps to ensure continuity of medication and allows us to immediately identify any care concerns.”

A patient’s record can be transferred instantly to another prison via the secure notification system. This gives the receiving prison immediate access to a patient’s record, including vital information such as their medication history, allergies, and sensitivities, prior to their arrival. The receiving prison can see if an immunisations and vaccination programme has been undertaken, or if further action is required. It will also show if a patient has a history of violence of substance misuse. Having this information allows first screenings to take place safely and efficiently. With access to the patient’s medical history, clinicians can make informed decisions about how to deliver the most appropriate and effective patient care.
An integration with NOMIS means prison staff can download real-time updates of patient locations. For example, they can see if a patient has gone to court but will be returning to the prison. NOMIS updates SystmOne, identifying any new patients who may be coming to the prison who need to be registered, and those who are leaving ready to be deducted or transferred. This makes it easy to manage all patients and ensure the correct people are registered to a prison.

If you are registering a patient, SystmOne will also identify possible matches, which helps to prevent duplications. If two records exist for the same patient, such as if one has a spelling error in the name, then these can be merged to ensure the correct record is used going forward.

Richard Comerford, Director of the Offender Care Service for Central and North West London NHS Foundation Trust commented: “Prison prescribing functionality will not only reduce paper medication charts but it will significantly improve patient safety, reduce medication errors and allow for greater efficiency of staff time. The opportunities for audit of prescribing and administration across prison sites are endless and will serve to enhance the knowledge-base and skills of clinical teams.”

Prescribing within the offender health system offers unique challenges, such as prescribing whilst recognising a patient’s possession status. SystmOne’s prison prescribing functionality addresses the specific needs of prescribing in offender health. A prison can make customised scripts to create their own forms. Administrative and prescribing types can be used to identify how medication should be administered, for example, orally or intravenously. Staff can also use regimes to easily manage a programme of treatment for a patient, such as an Alcohol Detox Programme.

To deliver safe and effective care, clinicians need a full view of a patient’s past medication. SystmOne provides a quick-view medication chart, giving a visual overview of a patient’s medication administration history. A comprehensive medication history, pharmacist queries sent directly to prescribers, and auditing options all improve patient safety and facilitate the delivery of appropriate care.

TPP has developed enhanced prescribing functionality, which is live at HMP Pentonville. This will then be rolled out nationally. Kate Davies OBE, Head of Public Health, Armed Forces Health and Offender Health, NHS England said, "This is great news and a real milestone.”

Prisons are able to use SystmOne for auditing, reporting and planning next steps. SystmOne is a good source of information on a prison’s delivery of care as it provides real-time data captured at the point of care. Reports can be used to measure whether the prison is meeting set targets, such as vaccinations, and detailed audits are useful in any investigations. Rhys O’Callaghan from HMP Leicester commented, “We have found the reporting functionality extremely useful. It allows you to very quickly pull information out of the system, which we share within the whole of our organisation. Data from SystmOne is then used in the efficiency rating for the rest of the prison.”

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