



Key ways
technology can
take your service
from a Good to
Outstanding rating.

By Karen Ritson



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SUMMARY

Karen Ritson

Bio

Karen Ritson spent 15 years as a CQC Inspector before launching her own independent care consultancy; Outstanding Care Consultancy Ltd. in 2018.

With CQC, Karen was a regular member of the panels that award Outstanding ratings for services. She also played a key role in developing the Key Lines of Enquiry which are used as a guide for inspections and to decide on a rating. Karen now works independently to support registered care services. A number of these have improved their CQC rating to Outstanding.



Introduction

Care regulators acknowledge the significance of innovative technologies in care provision and the potential for these to support improvements in providing effective, safe, good quality care.

"Technology in health and care services is growing in importance. Digitally-enabled care can offer significant benefits to people who use services and those who run and deliver them."

Care Quality Commission

In recent comments the government also voiced its own support for increased innovation in the care industry.

With this in mind, Arquella commissioned experienced former CQC Inspector Karen Ritson to write a report highlighting the key ways care homes can leverage technology to improve their services and take their rating from Good to Outstanding.

Examples of technology may be: Digital care and clinical monitoring records, automated triage technology, electronic medicine records, telecare, nurse call systems, movement trackers and sleep sensors, staff tracking technology and predictive analytics.

CQC has identified that the innovative use of technology can support Outstanding rated care through:

- **Giving people more control over their health and wellbeing, supporting independence and communication.**
- **Sharing information linking with services, timely, real time.**
- **Enhancing the quality of care and treatment leading to improved outcomes. Helping focus attention where needed.**
- **Capturing, comparing and analysing data effectively to improve the service.**

When looking at the ways in which the innovative use of technology can support services to move from good to outstanding, it's helpful to look at the subject in relation to Care Quality Commission's Key Lines Of Enquiry.

Safe

Giving people more control over their health and wellbeing, supporting independence and communication.

Outstanding rated services promote people's involvement in decisions about risk in innovative ways. They promote positive risk taking and ensure that risks are managed in the least restrictive way. People's autonomy and independence in relation to their safety is a high priority.

Technology can support services to demonstrate Outstanding practice in this area when people are empowered to raise concerns they may have about their care through individual access to digital care records, where they may read and contribute directly to that record.

Services can demonstrate people's involvement in decisions about medication or involvement in how their risks in relation to the home environment or equipment are positively managed through the digital platform. Effective use of digital technology can provide evidence that the service is being proactive in consulting people. This supports least restrictive risk management plans, which respect people's right to freedom and autonomy.

Electronic movement tracing and sensors reduce unnecessary restrictions and support people to take positive risks. For example, a risk plan may promote the removal of bed rails if there is movement tracking technology in place.

Sharing information and linking with services in real time.

Outstanding rated services have strong links with safeguarding professionals. They share information with appropriate professionals quickly and efficiently to protect people. They have safe medicines management processes and work closely with other agencies to promote people's independence with medicine management.

Technology can support services to share information digitally in real time, with professionals involved in people's safe care and treatment. Such technology presents care data in an easy-to-understand format and simplifies record sharing with safeguarding professionals. This leads to a streamlined and swifter communication process. Examples of such professionals are safeguarding teams, infection control professionals, pharmacies, dispensing chemists and community mental health teams.

Sharing information on digital platforms means that people benefit from advice and support from these professionals without undue delay, meaning risks can be exceptionally well managed.

Enhancing the quality of care and treatment leading to improved outcomes and helping focus attention where needed.

Outstanding rated services provide care which balances safety against positive risk and supporting each person to live as full and interesting life as possible.

Digital platforms can support the provision of Outstanding safe quality of care and treatment by making communication and information sharing easier. This means that everyone involved in a person's care can have up to date, real time information which can be used to make decisions about safe care and treatment; for example, in relation to moving and handling or safely accessing the community.

Nurse call systems enable care to be provided without delay and at the time it is requested. This supports safe care and excellent risk management. Some advanced nurse call solutions can provide in-depth data in real time, that can be used to support near miss and safeguarding analysis. This leads to excellent evidence of well managed outcomes for people in care settings which consider the balance between positive risk and safety.

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Effective

Giving people more control over their health and wellbeing, supporting independence and communication.

Outstanding rated services promote people's control over their care and treatment. They work in partnership with people to make sure care preferences are well represented in records.

Technology can support services to demonstrate Outstanding practice in this area.

Service user access to digital health care records and the expertise of specialist health care professionals supports them to understand their health conditions. This assists them to make informed decisions about their care and treatment as valued partners in their care. Automated triage systems allow staff to share up to date health care information with service users to further support them with choices about their health care.

Sharing information and linking with services in real time.

Outstanding rated services have strong links with health and social care professionals. They share information with relevant people efficiently and quickly to promote health and wellbeing. The service user, staff and family where appropriate are also kept informed and are consulted about care and treatment plans.

Technology can support services to demonstrate Outstanding evidence in this area by allowing for increased ease and speed of information sharing, promoting consultation with all those people who may contribute to a person-centred approach to clinical health and wellbeing.

Professionals may also contribute directly into care records. Telemedicine supports timely medical intervention, which can promote health improvement through treatment plans and prescribed medicines.

Services can also use technology to demonstrate exceptional practice in relation to mental capacity, consent and Best Interest decisions. If service users, professionals and others can gain access to care planning records this helps inform their contribution to the Best Interest process to ensure that decisions are based on strong up to date information.

Enhancing the quality of care and treatment leading to improved outcomes and helping focus attention where needed.

Outstanding rated services address people's clinical care needs in a holistic, person-centred way, This means that health care interventions happen swiftly when needed so that people's clinical health and wellbeing improves.

Technology can support the provision of Outstanding quality clinical care and treatment. For example, digital care record sharing with accurate up to date information supports the delivery of exceptional person-centred care. As do technology platforms that deliver proactive prompts of scheduled and required care, informed by care plans, that can be quickly updated with people's changing needs.

Data from nurse call systems and other technology can be analysed and cross referenced to monitoring records, for care interventions such as repositioning or support with nutrition and fluid intake.

This leads to excellent evidence of well managed clinical outcomes for people in care settings.

Technology platforms that deliver proactive prompts of scheduled and required care, informed by care plans, that can be quickly updated with people's changing needs can support the provision of Outstanding quality clinical care and treatment.

Caring

Giving people more control over their health and wellbeing, supporting independence and communication.

Outstanding rated services demonstrate a strong person centred culture, focused on kindness, respect and dignity.

Technology when used correctly can support services to demonstrate evidence of Outstanding practice in this area.

People's access to and contribution to their digital care records support them to feel listened to and ensures their care is exceptionally focused around their preferences and needs.

Sharing information and linking with services in real time.

Outstanding rated services offer care that is exceptionally compassionate and kind. They anticipate people's needs and recognise distress or discomfort at an early state.

Sharing information in real time through the innovative use of technology, supports a service to demonstrate how they respond to people in a kind and compassionate way. The ability to easily record this support at the point of care delivery and its outcome on the residents' quality of life helps to build evidence of Outstanding care.

When people need the support of health professionals, advocates or others, digital care records can be easily accessed by all those involved in the person's care. Records of comfort offered and reassurance given can support professionals to build a profile of a person's mental wellbeing, which can inform the guidance they offer. Daily notes and reviews records can be shared with professionals to demonstrate that people are treated with respect and without discrimination.

Responsive

Giving people more control over their health and wellbeing, supporting independence and communication.

Outstanding rated services demonstrate that people contribute to reviews of care and their views are acted upon so that care is delivered in the way people prefer. For example, a person may express a preference for certain meals, night time routine, activities or outings. Outstanding rated services also quickly respond to people's changing needs; they embrace innovation to help make this happen.

When people have access to their digital records this informs them about current care planning. This means they are better prepared to share their views at review. When review records directly reflect people's preferences their care can be exceptionally responsive to their choices. This helps people to feel listened to and valued.

The use of modern, call-to-mobile nurse call systems ensure that when a resident calls for support, staff are quickly made aware on hand held devices and can respond swiftly. Advanced systems that integrate nurse call functionality with care management software enable carers to directly record people's changing preferences into their care plans at the time these arise. This supports people to feel cared for and that their changing needs are responded to in a timely way.

Sharing information and linking with services in real time.

Outstanding rated services use innovative ways to involve individuals, family, friends and others in their care plans. Services respond quickly to people's changing needs. They take a key role in the community and are active in building further links. The service uses innovative ways of dealing with complaints.

Technology can be used to demonstrate Outstanding practice in this area. Digital platforms can facilitate access to a range of professionals and others involved in a person's care in real time. This means that changes in care needs can be addressed promptly, leading to improved quality of life.

Digital platforms that allow family members and social care professionals access to detailed resident reports via the web are beginning to emerge, giving a new level of real-time transparency and improving confidence in the service.

People have access to information about the progress of complaints through accessible digital care platforms. The person's contribution can also be captured and shared to improve the service. This promotes transparency and can be used to demonstrate consultation with people during the complaint investigation process.

Enhancing the quality of care and treatment leading to improved outcomes and helping focus attention where needed.

Outstanding rated services make innovative arrangements for social activities and to meet individual needs. The service also takes steps to meet people's information and communication needs beyond the requirements of the Accessible Information Standard. People are exceptionally well supported when they reach the end of their lives.

Digital care records can capture a wide range of social activities and interactions across each day which can be analysed to build care plans that continually respond to people's individual preferences and interests. Detailed records indicate which social activities and pastimes people enjoy. This supports the whole staff group to understand people's preferences and to provide more of what helps people achieve a sense of wellbeing.

People's communication preferences and needs can be updated in real time and accessible information needs and preferences can be uploaded so that staff have access to this on hand-held devices, ensuring these are addressed at the point of care.

Digital care planning can be updated responsively in real time as care needs change on a frequent basis for a person reaching the end of their life. This means that required changes in managing pain, the environment, visiting arrangements and ensuring advanced decisions are adhered to, are all easily available to staff providing this level of care.

Well led

Giving people more control over their health and wellbeing, supporting independence and communication.

Outstanding rated services demonstrate that people are at the heart of the service and that their contribution shapes what the service offers. When people have access to digital records and are consulted appropriately about these, they are empowered to have control over the way their care is delivered. Empowerment and control are key aspects of an Outstanding rated service.

Sharing information and linking with services in real time.

Outstanding rated services demonstrate clear vision and values, and deliver high quality care which promotes exceptional outcomes for people.

Sharing information in real time using digital technology supports staff to understand the core values, vision and ethos of the service. Quality assurance data can be shared with staff to promote ownership of the journey towards improved outcomes. The regulator and external professionals can be granted selective access to records. This improves transparency and promotes a collaborative approach to Outstanding care..

Care management technologies that give a full picture of carer activity allow managers to recognise and reward team members who are making the biggest difference, improving team moral and reducing staff turnover. Equally the same data can be used to quickly recognise those carers whose effort needs to increase or who may need further training.

This data can also be used to monitor night staff activity remotely, quickly addressing any issues that may arise.

A number of solutions exist that track carer movements throughout their shifts, however, despite their benefits to safeguarding, they often lead to staff feeling untrusted and can have the opposite effect on moral and turnover of care staff.

Solutions that automate the recording of call and care data only when care interactions are actually taking place provide the same level of safeguarding as full-time monitoring solutions, with the added benefit of maintaining carers' feeling of being trusted and protected.

Enhancing the quality of care and treatment leading to improved outcomes and helping focus attention where needed.

Governance is well embedded in Outstanding rated services. Each Outstanding rated service is an important part of its community with well-developed community links and an excellent record for working in partnership with others.

Digital care platforms provide exceptional scope for examining clinical and other care data in various ways to create robust quality analysis. This analysis can be used to demonstrate awareness of strengths and areas for development which can be used to enhance the quality of people's care and treatment. Digitalised quality analysis tools then support services to focus attention exactly where it is needed to improve care outcomes for people.

Digital systems with a community access and contribution function can improve community links and improve people's quality of life as a result. Examples are information sharing about community events, in house events, awareness raising and promoting people's involvement in community initiatives. This may be involvement with projects where people receive support and/or contribute their own skills and experience.

Information sharing through digital care platforms supports managers to analyse the effectiveness of partnership working. For example, the positive impact on people's due to health care professionals having direct access and ability to contribute to care records can be analysed and quantified using digital analysis tools. This can help managers to gather exceptional examples and statistical data to evidence exactly how partnership working has improved people's quality of life.

Capturing, comparing and analysing data effectively to improve the service.

Outstanding services have well embedded governance systems which help them to provide Outstanding outcomes. Performance management processes are effective and support staff to deliver exceptional care. The service focuses on continuous improvement and continually meets and exceeds set goals.

Innovative technology includes Digital care and clinical monitoring records, automated triage technology, electronic medicine records, telecare, nurse call systems, movement trackers and sleep sensors, staff tracking technology and predictive analytics.

Together these technologies can support a service to gather and analyse information in different ways and on a range of areas. Services can use this to provide evidence both of where improvements need to be made and to demonstrate where practice is Outstanding. This could be in relation to resident involvement, care records, clinical monitoring, embracing positive risk, individual staff performance, person-centred social activities and support with interests and learning.

Summary

It's clear that use of technology can help services to provide better evidence in each and every KLOE area which CQC consider before awarding an Outstanding rating.

However, not all care technology is created equal and there are some key considerations to factor into any investment in innovation:

1. **Future proofing** – ensure that any technology you install has the ability to evolve with the changing needs of your care environment and the changing requirements of care regulators. Technology that has no scope for evolving will become obsolete more quickly
2. **Integrate where possible** – the more technology providers you have, the more potential there is for human error or data being lost. Where possible, choose technology that integrates essential functions. That way you'll have one or fewer providers for your care home technology and there's a far better chance of maintaining data integrity
3. **You can never have too much data** – data is your friend so get comfortable with the idea of using it. The more data about your service you have at your disposal, the greater opportunity you have for making improvements

