TRANSNATIONAL PRACTITIONERS GUIDE

DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION OF CARE MANAGEMENT AND DELIVERY

Experiences of the DigiCare4CE project

Coordinator: Geriatric Health Care Centers of the City of Graz & Initiative Healthacross; Health Agency of Lower Austria

Interreg CENTRAL EUROPE

Co-funded by the European Union

DigiCare4CE

TRANSNATIONAL
PRACTITIONERS GUIDE
DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION OF CARE MANAGEMENT AND DELIVERY

About the DigiCare4CE Project

DigiCare4CE is a transnational project funded by Interreg Central Europe, that supports the digital transformation in long-term care facilities for elderly people. It brings together ten partners from seven countries to test and implement innovative digital solutions in real-life care settings.
This guide is reflecting the thematic field of pilot action 1, in which three partners tested digital management and information systems in long-term-care facilities.

Embedded in a Transnational Transformation Strategy

The following recommendations can be applied in different care settings and are not tied to specific technologies. This Transnational Practitioners Guide is part of the DigiCare4CE project strategy and builds on several key results developed to support digital transformation in long-term care:

- **Transnational DigiCare4CE Model**: A framework that provides overall guidance for digital transformation in care facilities.
- **Implementation Plan:** A practical roadmap that translates this framework into concrete steps.
- **Pilot Actions:** Real-life trials where the implementation plan was used to introduce and test new technologies in care settings.
- **Monitoring & Evaluation Plan:** Key lessons and outcomes from the pilot actions, collected in one place.

This guide brings together the most important insights from this process and highlights recommendations that can be applied widely in everyday practice. The detailed project documents and hands-on resources can be found on the DigiCare4CE website – and you'll find direct links on the last page of this guide.

TRANSNATIONAL
PRACTITIONERS GUIDE
DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION OF CARE MANAGEMENT AND DELIVERY

Purpose and Structure of the Practitioners Guide

This Transnational Practitioners Guide aims to support care facilities in systematically collecting and analyzing tips and tricks for implementing digital innovations. The guide is built on practical experiences from three countries and care settings, making its recommendations broadly applicable.

Structured around the three key phases of implementing a digital technology (*pre-implementation, implementation, and post-implementation*), the guide offers practical tips drawn from real-world challenges and lessons learned.

Ready to dive deeper?

Let's explore the first phase - before any technology hits the ground - the pre-implementation phase.
Here's where we uncover common pitfalls, share hands-on tips, and set you up for a smoother digital transformation journey in care delivery.

PRE-IMPLEMENTATION PHASE

- Communicate Pilot Scope Clearly
- Properly Assess Digital Competencies
- Keep Testing Group Small in Preparatory Phase
- Critically Assess Vendor and Solution Maturity
- Clearly Specify Needs Analysis on Facility Workflow
- Predict Future Development of Technology
- Properly Analyse the Technical Solution
- Consider Alternative Scenarios

PRE-IMPLEMENTATION PHASE

Communicate Pilot Scope Clearly

Staff might expect a fully operational product, causing frustration during technical issues.
→ Clearly and repeatedly communicate the pilot status using written and verbal channels to manage expectations effectively.

Properly Assess Digital Competencies

Varying digital skill levels among staff might lead to delays and difficulties.
→ Assess digital skills before rollout and provide basic digital training as needed to ensure all users are well-prepared for the use of digital systems.

Keep Testing Group Small in Preparatory Phase

A too broad testing group might lead to fragmented feedback and strain support resources.
→ Start with a small group of highly motivated and digitally open staff, so-called "early adopters".

Critically Assess Vendor and Solution Maturity

Promising vendor presentations might not reflect real performance, leading to technical issues and unmet expectations.
→ Conduct hands-on pre-tests under real conditions and ensure clear service and support agreements before selecting a vendor.

PRE-IMPLEMENTATION PHASE

Clearly Specify Needs Analysis on Facility Workflow

Lack of detailed understanding of staff workflows and challenges might lead to mismatched solution features.
→ Conduct a needs analysis of daily workflows and documentation practices to ensure alignmemnt with user-needs.

Predict Future Development of Technology

Uncertainty about future feature needs can make it difficult to guide the system`s development effectively.
→ Precisely analyse potential future developments of the new solution.

Properly Analyse the Technical Solution

A chosen system might fail to meet requirements, leading to a switch mid-implementation.
→ Perform an in-depth analysis of the current state and available options.

Consider Alternative Scenarios

Unexpected findings during implementation might require a shift in the chosen solution, causing delays.
→ Prepare for change by identifying alternative scenarios and react agilely.

TRANSNATIONAL
PRACTITIONERS GUIDE
DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION OF CARE MANAGEMENT AND DELIVERY

Transition from Pre-Implementation to Implementation

Before starting digital implementation, it is essential to establish a strong foundation. In the pre-Implementation phase, we found that clear communication about the pilot's scope, proper assessment of staff's digital skills, and focusing on a small testing group early on can build trust and strengthen commitment. Critically evaluating the vendor and the maturity of the solution, conducting a thorough needs analysis, anticipating future technological developments, carefully analyzing the technical setup, and considering alternative scenarios further reinforce the groundwork.

And don't forget: not everyone is tech-savvy - so patience and support are key!

Now that the groundwork is laid, it's time to bring your plans to life!

Let's move into the implementation phase and see what happens when digital solutions meet everyday care routines. Ready? Let's go!

IMPLEMENTATION PHASE

- Ensure Technical Stability of the Solution
- Establish a Structured Feedback Process
- Ensure Integration to Avoid Double Documentation
- Provide Continuous On-Site Support
- Assess Integration Potential Early
- Prepare a Good Rollout Plan
- Phase Digitalization to Prevent Overload
- Align Pilot Timing With Institutional Priorities

IMPLEMENTATION PHASE

Ensure Technical Stability of the Solution

Frequent technical issues with core functions might disrupt operations and affect user satisfaction negatively.
→ Conduct pre-testing under real-world conditions and maintain close vendor communication to resolve issues early during pilots.

Establish a Structured Feedback Process

Uncoordinated feedback across multiple parties (project manager, IT staff, ...) might hinder issue tracking and resolution.
→ Establish a structured feedback process from the beginning on and enforce cooperation and exchange with stakeholders and project partners.

Ensure Integration to Avoid Double Documentation

Lack of system integration might lead to duplicated documentation, increasing workload and reducing staff acceptance.
→ Ensure at least partial integration of pilot systems. If unavoidable, limit the test phase and communicate pilot scope clearly.

Provide Continuous On-Site Support

Frontline users with unresolved issues might be overlooked, reducing engagement.
→ Schedule regular, structured and informal on-site trainings and consider job shadowing.

IMPLEMENTATION PHASE

Assess Integration Potential Early

Limited integration with the facility's system could increase administrative workload and might disrupt workflows.
→ Assess integration potential thoroughly before and during implementation for a smooth rollout of new technologies.

Prepare a Good Rollout Plan

Last minute changes to the solution during implementation might limit time for thorough testing and user preparation.
→ Develop a realistic rollout plan early and adhere to it closely to ensure adequate testing, training, and stakeholder communication.

Phase Digitalization to Prevent Overload

Attempting to address all identified digitalization needs at once will overwhelm staff and strain implementation capacity.
→ Priortize and break the transformation into manageable phases. Prevent overload and support sustainable organizational change.

Align Pilot Timing With Institutional Priorities

Routine institutional demands and staff shortages could reduce focus on the new technology and strain resources.
→ Align pilot scheduling with internal priorities, avoid peak workload periods and keep testing phases short.

TRANSNATIONAL
PRACTITIONERS GUIDE
DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION OF CARE MANAGEMENT AND DELIVERY

Transition from Implementation to Post-Implementation Phase

During the implementation phase, digital solutions are gradually introduced into everyday care routines through a realistic rollout plan with manageable stages. Technically stable solutions are essential, and at least partial integration into facility workflows help prevent disengagement caused by duplicate work. A clearly structured feedback process enables staff to address obstacles effectively with feedback taken seriously and incorporated into ongoing improvements. Frontline staff also receives continuous on-site support to resolve issues as they arose. The project remains focused by aligning the pilot schedule with institutional priorities, thereby avoiding overload and neglect.

Digital tools are now part of everyday care - what matters next is how they're maintained, improved, and truly embedded.

Now that the systems are in place and running—what's next?

Let's move into the post-Implementation phase, where we reflect, refine, and ensure long-term impact. Time to look at what happens after the rollout!

POST-IMPLEMENTATION PHASE

- Close Pilot Phases Clearly to Sustain Engagement
- Communicate Project Success and Next Steps Transparently
- Foster Peer-to-Peer Learning Post Training
- Ensure Sufficient Devices During Pilots
- Specifically Support Staff Resistant to Digital Change
- Ensure Ongoing Support to Sustain Progress

POST-IMPLEMENTATION PHASE

Close Pilot Phases Clearly to Sustain Engagement

At the end of the pilot, staff engagement might decline due to unclear outcomes, missing follow-up, and lack of closure.
→ Develop a transition plan to close the pilot phase and clearly communicate next steps. Include debriefings, acknowledge staff contributions and explain how pilot outcomes shape long-term decisions.

Communicate Project Success and Next Steps Transparently

Lack of clear communication about pilot success might lead to uncertainty among staff and missed opportunities for learning.
→ Communicate project outcomes transparently to all staff levels. Consider hosting a wrap-up event and share follow-up plans.

Foster Peer-to-Peer Learning Post Training

The absence of peer-to-peer learning after initial training could leave individual knowledge gaps unaddressed.
→ Incorporate peer-to-peer learning, where staff support and teach each other on the technology even after the pilot phase.

POST-IMPLEMENTATION PHASE

Ensure Sufficient Devices During Pilots

A limited number of devices during the pilot could reduce user comfort and hinder active participation, especially if demand exceeds availability.
→ Ensure a balanced ratio between available devices and users.

Specifically Support Staff Resistant to Digital Change

Low digital literacy and resistance to digital change among staff could hinder the long-term adoption of new technologies, as outdated methods might continue to be used.
→ After the pilot, make sure all users can operate the tool independently, avoid running parallel processes, and ensure consistent use of data.

Ensure Ongoing Support to Sustain Progress

Delayed follow-up steps could leave key requirements unmet and might weaken long-term impact.
→ Ensure structured follow-up and continued support after the pilot to complete all phases and adapt the solution to evolving needs.

TRANSNATIONAL
PRACTITIONERS GUIDE
DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION OF CARE MANAGEMENT AND DELIVERY

Wrapping Up: From Insights to Action

Digital transformation in elderly care is not a one-time event - it's a continuous journey. This guide brings together lessons learned from different European countries, offering practical tips, real-world experiences and thoughtful strategies to support care facilities in navigating change.
Whether you're just starting out or already implementing a digital tool, this guide will help you to reflect, adapt and move forward with confidence.

Let's shape the future of care - step by step, together.

Want to go further?

This guide is just one piece of the DigiCare4CE toolbox. If you want to dive deeper into your digital transformation journey, here's where to find key project results. Scan the QR codes below to explore all resources and keep improving care, together.

DigiCare4CE Online Check

Explore this framework, that helps facilities see where they stand compared with peers across Central Europe.

Project Website

On the DigiCare4CE project homepage you will find access to all detailed reports, plans and outputs

DigiCare4CE Pilot Videos

Discover short videos on all pilot actions of the project here for even more practical insights.

Interreg CENTRAL EUROPE
Co-funded by the European Union
DigiCare4CE