

# TRANSNATIONAL PRACTITIONERS GUIDE

## DATAFICATION OF OLDER CARE DELIVERY

Experiences of the DigiCare4CE project

**Coordinator:** Initiative Healthacross; Health Agency of Lower Austria



**Interreg**  
CENTRAL EUROPE



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DigiCare4CE



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### About the DigiCare4CE Project

DigiCare4CE is a transnational project funded by Interreg Central Europe, that supports the digital transformation in longterm-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 2, in which we tested various smart devices such as sensors, mobile applications, VR-glasses and activity tools in the context of care operations.

### Embedded in a transnational transformation strategy

The following recommendations are kept general, so they 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 smart 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 processes 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.



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### 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 new innovations. The guide is built on different Pilot Actions carried out in five European countries, each starting from its own situation in long-term care. This diversity makes the 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 is even implemented - the pre-implementation phase.

Here's where we uncover common pitfalls, share practical tips and set the stage for a smoother digital journey in care delivery.





# PRE-IMPLEMENTATION PHASE



- **Ensure early communication**



- **Assess infrastructure readiness early**



- **Clarify roles and responsibilities early**



- **Involve all professional groups**



- **Explain data protection in an understandable way**



- **Counter scepticism through participation**



- **Create realistic expectations**



- **Do not assume technical understanding**



- **Grant time for training and testing**



- **Obtain feedback from similar institutions**



# PRE-IMPLEMENTATION PHASE



## ● **Ensure early communication**

Staff often receive news of new technology too late, leading to confusion, insecurity or resistance.

→ Communicate clearly and early about an upcoming system and expected changes. Allow time to raise and resolve concerns.



## ● **Assess infrastructure readiness early**

Even well-designed systems can fail if the technical environment is unprepared.

→ Check whether the infrastructure and integration with existing systems are sufficient.



## ● **Clarify roles and responsibilities early**

Unclear responsibilities during implementation planning can lead to confusion, duplication of efforts, or missed steps.

→ Define who is responsible for which aspects of the rollout and its subsequent use. Assign clear roles and communicate them to everyone.



## ● **Involve all professional groups**

Certain groups may not be considered for training because they do not directly use the technology but still have some contact with it.

→ To reduce misinformation and promote understanding, involve every professional group that may be directly or indirectly affected.



## ● **Explain data protection in an understandable way**

Unclear communication can create mistrust and fear of surveillance.

→ Provide concise and easy-to-understand training on data protection and data processing. Address the topic regularly when questions arise.



# PRE-IMPLEMENTATION PHASE



## ● Counter scepticism through participation

Lack of involvement breeds resistance and reduces identification with the system.

→ Invite staff to participate in design and decision-making processes wherever possible, to foster ownership and engagement.



## ● Create realistic expectations

Overly optimistic messaging can create disappointment if problems occur during early use.

→ Clearly communicate both the potential and the limitations of the system. Prepare staff for technical hiccups and learning curves.



## ● Do not assume technical understanding

Assuming a baseline of tech literacy can leave some staff behind.

→ Provide explanations and materials at multiple levels of complexity. Use analogies, hands-on sessions and low-barrier formats.



## ● Grant time for training and testing

Time constraints often prevent staff from fully engaging with new systems.

→ Schedule protected time for training, simulation, exploration and support the teams during this period with extra staff if needed.



## ● Obtain feedback from similar institutions

Each facility must adapt the system to their context, but learning from others can prevent major missteps.

→ Facilitate the exchange of knowledge with other care homes that use similar systems. Document successes and challenges alike.







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### Transition from Pre-Implementation to Implementation Phase

Before diving into digital implementation, it's essential to build a strong foundation. In the Pre-Implementation Phase, we explored how early communication, inclusive planning and realistic expectations can make all the difference. Involving all professional groups, explaining data protection in simple terms and countering scepticism through participation help create trust and clarity. Assessing infrastructure readiness, allowing time for training and testing and obtaining feedback from similar institutions further strengthen the groundwork.

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



### Now that the groundwork is laid, fasten your seatbelt!

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





# IMPLEMENTATION PHASE



- Gradual introduction instead of complete rollout



- Make the support structure visible



- Provide low-threshold training materials



- Take feedback seriously and integrate it



- Reduce fears of technology through demos



- Appoint digital multipliers



- Train solutions for malfunctions



- Adapt technology to real care needs



- Clearly communicate goals and benefits



- Involve and encourage residents



# IMPLEMENTATION PHASE



## ● **Gradual introduction instead of complete rollout**

Implementing a complete system all at once can overwhelm employees and increase resistance.

→ Start with a limited number of modules or rooms and expand gradually based on feedback and readiness.



## ● **Make the support structure visible**

If staff don't know who to ask for help, small problems can become major stressors.

→ Provide visible, easy-to-access support – such as help desks, hotline numbers, or designated contact persons.



## ● **Provide low-threshold training materials**

Digital-only training often gets lost or forgotten in daily care routines.

→ Distribute printed quick guides or cheat sheets staff can use during their shift. Update them as the system evolves.



## ● **Take feedback seriously and integrate it**

Ignoring feedback leads to disengagement and passive resistance.

→ Set up regular check-ins with frontline staff to capture experiences, frustrations and ideas – and act on what you hear.



## ● **Reduce fears of technology through demos**

Fear of making mistakes or breaking the system often holds people back from using it actively.

→ Use simulations or live demos to show what happens when things go wrong – and how to respond safely.



# IMPLEMENTATION PHASE



## ● Appoint digital multipliers

Without peer support, some staff fall behind.

→ Identify and empower staff members who are confident with the system to serve as go-to persons for their colleagues.



## ● Train solutions for malfunctions

When something breaks, staff must know how to respond quickly and confidently.

→ Include technical failures in your training and provide clear procedures for what to do when things go wrong.



## ● Adapt technology to real care needs

If the system doesn't reflect the actual workflow, it will be ignored.

→ Tailor settings and notifications to the routines and needs of residents and staff. Collect user feedback continuously.



## ● Clearly communicate goals and benefits

Unclear purpose reduces motivation and leads to disengagement.

→ Link the system to real improvements in care quality, safety and staff workload. Use examples and stories.



## ● Involve and encourage residents

Residents may struggle with unfamiliar or complex technologies.

→ Provide training and orientation for residents when relevant and ensure their experience and comfort are considered.





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### Transition from Implementation to Post-Implementation Phase

During the Implementation Phase, a digital solution was gradually introduced into everyday care routines. Instead of a full rollout, a step-by-step approach helped reduce resistance and allowed for adaptation to real care needs. Support structures were made visible, low-threshold training materials were provided and fears were addressed through demos and hands-on experience. Feedback was taken seriously and integrated into the process, while digital multipliers supported their teams and helped troubleshoot issues. Residents were actively involved and goals and benefits were clearly communicated to all stakeholders.

**A digital tool is now part of everyday care - what counts next is maintaining, improving and fully embedding it.**



### Now that the system is 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



- **Schedule regular evaluations**



- **Address remaining usage barriers**



- **Keep evolving the system**



- **Maintain visibility and relevance within the team**



- **Ensure sustainability in maintenance and financing**



- **Ensure integration into daily workflows**



- **Long-term strategy instead of pilot thinking**



- **Make use of the technology visible to external**



- **Reinforce technology in team culture**



- **Document technology impacts and decisions**



# POST-IMPLEMENTATION PHASE



## ● **Schedule regular evaluations**

Without follow-up, problems remain unnoticed and the system loses relevance.

→ Build in regular feedback loops with staff and residents. Use simple tools like short surveys or team discussions.



## ● **Address remaining usage barriers**

Even after implementation, technical or cultural barriers may remain.

→ Follow up on user experience, offer refresher trainings and adapt support as needed.



## ● **Keep evolving the system**

Once in place, systems often stagnate and miss new opportunities.

→ Adjust and improve the system based on real-world feedback. Use data to identify weak spots or underused features.



## ● **Maintain visibility and relevance within the team**

Technologies can fade into the background and be forgotten.

→ Include the system regularly in team meetings, training updates and care planning sessions to keep it alive.



## ● **Ensure sustainability in maintenance and financing**

Systems may need maintenance, updates, or support beyond the pilot funding.

→ Partner with vendors and budget realistically for long-term operation, including staff time and infrastructure needs.



# POST-IMPLEMENTATION PHASE



## • **Ensure integration into daily workflows**

If the system remains an add-on, it will be bypassed.

→ Map system functions directly to care routines and document how they support existing tasks rather than competing with them.



## • **Long-term strategy instead of pilot thinking**

Without a long-term plan, even successful pilots can disappear.

→ Clarify from the beginning how the system will be maintained and scaled beyond the initial testing period.



## • **Make use of the technology visible to external**

If the technology's impact remains hidden, its value may be questioned by staff, residents, or external stakeholders.

→ Actively showcase the system and its benefits. Use dashboards, reports or real-life examples to make its contribution visible.



## • **Reinforce technology in team culture**

Initial enthusiasm fades without structured reinforcement.

→ Revisit use regularly, celebrate successful cases and normalize the system as part of team routines.



## • **Document technology impacts and decisions**

Without structured documentation, learnings get lost over time.

→ Record what worked, what didn't and what adaptations were made. Use this for future scaling or knowledge transfer.



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### 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.*



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