



**Module name:** Introduction to Health and Social Care

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**Student name:** Lesiliza Pinto Da Graca

**Student ID:** 2512899

**Lecturer's name:** Umma Suleiman

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# 1. Introduction

Mrs Thompson is an 84-year-old woman who has recently been discharged from hospital following treatment for pneumonia. She lives alone in sheltered accommodation and receives domiciliary care twice a day. Mrs Thompson has mild dementia, which affects her memory and has resulted in missed medication increased confusion and concerns about her safety. Following these incidents, a medication review has been requested, and her case is currently being reviewed by the local council (NICE, 2018).

This report examines the importance of effective communication in supporting Mrs Thompson's care, with reference to the Equality Act 2010 and the Shannon and Weaver Communication Model. It will also discuss the importance of effective administrative practice, including accurate record keeping and compliance with the Data Protection Act 2018.

The report also explores the significance of collaborative working between healthcare professionals and explains how partnership working contributes to the delivery of safe, person-centred care.

## 2. Importance of Effective Communication

Effective communication is one of the most important aspects of health and social care, as it allows professionals to understand the needs of service users and provide safe, high-quality care (NHS England, 2023). Mrs Thompson's mild dementia can affect her memory, understanding and ability to make informed decisions, making communication especially important in her care.

When talking to Mrs Thompson, health and social care professionals should speak slowly, maintain eye contact and use clear, simple language. Information should be given in small sections, allowing her enough time to process what has been said. Mrs Thompson should also be encouraged to ask questions and repeat important information in her own words to confirm her understanding. According to NICE (2018), active listening, empathy and patience are essential when supporting older adults living with dementia.

Communication should also involve Mrs Thompson's family or close relatives where appropriate. Family members can provide valuable information about her daily routines, medication, behaviour and personal preferences. Their involvement helps healthcare professionals develop a more personalised care plan and supports continuity of care. However, Mrs Thompson's consent should always be obtained before sharing confidential information, unless there are safeguarding concerns that require confidential to be shared.

The Equality Act 2010 protects people from discrimination based on protected characteristics, including age and disability. As dementia may be recognised as a disability under the Act, healthcare professionals have a legal duty to make reasonable adjustments to meet Mrs Thompson's individual needs. These adjustments may include written reminders, medication charts, large-print information and the involvement of an advocate where appropriate. Treating Mrs Thompson with dignity, respect and equality promotes independence and supports person-centred care (Equality Act, 2010).

One communication model that can be applied in this case is the Shannon and Weaver Communication Model. This model includes a sender, a message, a channel, a receiver and feedback, while recognising that "noise" can interfere with effective communication. In Mrs Thompson's case, the healthcare professional is the sender, the care instructions are the message, spoken communication is the channel, and Mrs Thompson is the receiver. Her dementia, possible hearing difficulties or emotional distress may act as forms of noise that reduce her understanding. Feedback is demonstrated when Mrs Thompson repeats the instructions or shows that she understands her medication routine.

Healthcare professionals can use this model to identify barriers to communication and reduce the risk of misunderstanding and medication errors. In addition, effective communication helps to build trust between Mrs Thompson and the healthcare team, encouraging her to express her concerns and participate in decisions about her care. This person-centred approach can improve her confidence, support her independence and reduce the risk of avoidable hospital readmissions.

### 3. Importance of Good Administrative Skills

Good administrative practice is essential in health and social care because accurate record keeping supports continuity of care, patient safety and legal accountability (Skills for Care, 2023). In Mrs Thompson's case, all professionals involved in her care must maintain accurate records of every aspect of her care, including medication administration, incidents, changes in her health condition and communication with other healthcare professionals.

Accurate record keeping ensures that every member of the multidisciplinary team has access to consistent and up-to-date information. When Mrs Thompson missed two days of medication, this should have been recorded immediately in her care records. The information should then be shared with her GP, community nurse and domiciliary care team so that appropriate action can be taken. Accurate documentation supports professional accountability and assists healthcare professional in making informed clinical decisions.

The Data Protection Act 2018 and the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR) require organisations to protect personal information and ensure that confidential data is processed lawfully, fairly and securely (Department of Health and Social Care, 2018). Professionals should only share it with authorised professionals directly involved in providing her care.

Confidential records should be stored securely, whether in electronic or paper format. Staff should use secure passwords, follow organisational policies and avoid discussing confidential information in public places. Mrs Thompson also has the right to know how her personal information is being used and, where appropriate, to request access to her health records.

Healthcare organisations also follow confidentiality policies, such as the NHS Code of Confidentiality, to ensure that patient's privacy is respected while allowing appropriate information to be shared when necessary to provide safe and effective care. However, if there is a risk of significant harm, professionals may share relevant information without consent where safeguarding legislation permits this.

Good administrative practice also includes completing incident reports, updating risk assessments and documenting medication reviews. Because Mrs Thompson was found outside during cold weather without appropriate clothing, this safeguarding concern should be fully documented. Professionals should also review whether additional support, supervision or changes to her care are required to reduce future risks. Furthermore, accurate documentation supports effective communication between different professionals and services, helping to ensure that Mrs Thompson receives coordinated and person-centred care.

Good administrative practice not only protects the service user but also helps professionals demonstrate accountability and maintain high standards of practice.

Overall, accurate record keeping benefits both patients and professionals. It improves communication between agencies, reduces the risk of errors and demonstrates compliance with legal and professional standards (HCPC, 2024).

## 4. Importance of Working Collaboratively

Collaborative working is essential in health and social care because many services users have complex needs that cannot be met by one professional alone (Care Act, 2014). Mrs Thompson requires the support of several healthcare professionals working together to ensure that she receives safe, effective and person-centred care.

The multidisciplinary team may include her GP, community nurse, domiciliary care workers, pharmacist, social worker and family members. Each professional brings different knowledge, skills and experience to support Mrs Thompson's wellbeing. For example, the GP reviews her medical treatment, the pharmacist checks her medication, the community nurse monitors her health condition, and domiciliary care workers provide daily personal care and medication support.

Effective partnership working depends on open communication, mutual respect and shared goals. Regular multidisciplinary meetings, accurate record keeping and shared electronic care record enable professionals to exchange information efficiently. This ensures that everyone involved understands Mrs Thompson's current needs and is aware of any changes in her condition.

However, collaborative working can present challenges. Professionals may experience poor communication, different ways of working, limited time or delays in sharing information between organisations. These difficulties may increase the risk of medication errors, duplication of work or delays in providing appropriate care.

Several strategies can improve partnership working. These include regular multidisciplinary team meetings, clear communication protocols, shared electronic records, ongoing staff training and person-centred care planning. Working collaboratively also allows professionals to identify potential risks earlier and respond more effectively to changes in Mrs Thompson's condition. Involving Mrs Thompson and her family in decision making helps ensure that her wishes and preferences are respected while promoting independence and improving the quality of care (NICE, 2018).

Overall, collaborative working enables healthcare professionals to provide coordinated care, improve patient safety and enhance Mrs Thompson's quality of life.

## 5. Conclusion

In summary, high-quality health and social care is based on effective communication, accurate administration and collaborative working.

Mrs Thompson's case illustrates how effective communication strategies, relevant legislation and partnership working contribute to delivering safe, person-centred care for older adults living with dementia.

Applying the principles of the Equality Act 2010, maintaining accurate records in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018, and promoting effective multidisciplinary team working all contribute to reducing risks, improving continuity of care and protecting the wellbeing of vulnerable individuals. By following professional standards and relevant legislation (HCPC, 2024), health and social care professionals can provide compassionate, safe and effective care that enables Mrs Thompson to maintain her independence while receiving the support she needs.

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