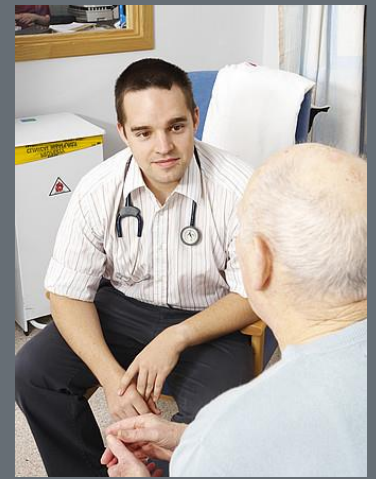


# Building bridges, breaking barriers



## Integrated care for older people: what our report means for people who use services, and their families and carers

In ***Building bridges, breaking barriers*** we looked at how health and social care services work together to meet the needs of older people, and how the current system affects people's experiences of care.

### What is integrated care and why is it important?

Integrated care is a way of coordinating health and social care services to make sure they are based closely around people's needs. It is aimed particularly at those with complex and long-term health conditions.

People deserve consistently good care regardless of where they are treated and how complex their needs are. Many older people live with multiple long-term health conditions and need to access care from a range of providers (for example, hospitals, GPs and care homes).

When health and social care professionals talk to each other and share information effectively, people experience better, safer care. When they don't, it is ultimately the person receiving the care who suffers.

When important information about people isn't shared across different services (for example, hospitals, GPs or care homes) older people or their carers often have to take responsibility for passing this on and coordinating the care themselves.

People and their carers told us that they were frequently asked the same questions by different health professionals, which left them feeling frustrated and concerned.

When information about people isn't shared it can lead to tests being duplicated and wasted resources. Most importantly, it can lead to misunderstandings about changes to a person's medication or care needs.

We found that older people are often not involved in making decisions about their care and don't have the opportunity to express their wishes.

## What older people and their carers told us

“Professionals should sit around a table to discuss a person’s care plan and have a key document that is available to everyone. This is about health talking to social care but also health talking to health.”

“My care plan does make a big difference, without it I would not be getting the help and support I need. My care plan helps me to stay at home. To me the care plan makes all the difference in the world.”

“I have a lot of health problems and everything has been explained to me, but how do I know that the health professionals communicate with each other about my health problems?”

“Telling the same story again and again becomes draining and you end up just wanting to get out ASAP. How can a professional come to an appointment without some information?”

## Our recommendations for services



Older people should have meaningful opportunities to be involved in decisions about their care. As older people’s care becomes more complex because of multiple long-term health conditions and using different services, it is essential that care is coordinated and structured to meet people’s needs. Older people who need care should have personalised care plans, and be involved in the development of them as much as they wish.

We believe that health and care services are most likely to be successful in coordinating care if they follow the recommendations set out in our report. To read these and more please visit: [www.cqc.org.uk/buildingbridges](http://www.cqc.org.uk/buildingbridges).