

# Early Stages of Implementing the Universal Care Plan: Teamwork in Action

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Over the past two months, we have been implementing the Universal Care Plan (UCP) into the daily operations at our 41-bedded nursing home, with the help of the Merton Care Home Team. Their **guidance has been invaluable in helping us include the UCP into our processes**, especially as staffing constraints mean we don't always have the capacity to take on additional responsibilities.

We first learned about the UCP through the Enhanced Health in Care Homes steering group, and then the Merton Care Home Team reached out to us directly. Their proactive approach, which has **included an advanced practitioner visiting the home**, and assisting us with **the creation and editing of UCPs**, has been instrumental in making the adoption of the UCP more manageable.

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Having a shared plan like the UCP means everyone is aligned from the outset.

Because UCPs are in place for our residents, other healthcare professionals, including ambulance services, now have access to essential information. This has **reduced unnecessary hospital admissions** and **avoided distressing situations** for residents and families.

Having a shared plan means everyone—our team, external professionals, and family members—is aligned from the outset. For instance, when less experienced staff are caring for residents, they can quickly access UCPs to find comprehensive details on resident preferences.

**This has empowered our team and strengthened collaboration with external health services.**

It's been **surprising how much benefit** we have seen in just a couple of months and shows the importance of joined up thinking, with **health and social care teams working together**. As we continue this journey, it's clear that **the UCP works best when the whole system is on board**. Our next steps include further work to make using the UCP business as usual for our care home, including increased collaboration with our local care home GP, and encouraging other homes to adopt the system too!

