Step Three: Conversations

It's important to remember that care planning should be more than just completing a template; it's a conversation to be directed by the patient, exploring their health and well-being. It also doesn't have to be just with the GP. Building an integrated team around a patient made up of other practice staff, healthcare professionals, health navigators and the voluntary sector ensures a multidisciplinary approach.

- There will often be more than one conversation and all of these build into a journey for both the individual and the team. By preparing correctly for the care planning consultation, issues of health ‘housekeeping’ and QOF, can be set to one side to focus on developing a personalised action plan with patient selected goals. Personalised care planning information sheet 1 and information sheet 2 are useful resources for healthcare professionals.
• **Training programs** focus on helping health care professionals develop skills to allow these conversations to take place. They encourage a shift from a disease-centred paternalistic approach to a person-centred holistic approach and incorporate the techniques of shared decision making and health coaching.

• **Shared decision making** is the conversation that happens between a person and their health professional to reach a healthcare choice together. This conversation needs the professional and the patient to understand what is important to the other person when choosing a treatment.

• **Health coaching** has been defined as ‘helping patients gain the knowledge, skills, tools and confidence to become active participants in their care so that they can reach their self-identified health goals.’ The use of health coaching techniques ensures that any goals set are done so by the individual and they are encouraged to develop plans around how they can be achieved.

• **Understandings a patient’s health literacy** also can allow tailoring of discussions to ensure patient participation. Health literacy is defined as ‘the cognitive and social skills which determine the motivation and ability of individuals to gain access to, understand, and use information in ways which promote and maintain good health… Health literacy is needed for patients and the public to understand and act upon health information, to become active and equal partners in co-producing health, and to take control of their health to help to shape health environments and health services for themselves, their families and their communities.’

• **The Gold Standard Framework** in primary care is an aid for more holistic consultations.

• Some care plan templates also help to direct the conversation for both clinicians and patients, e.g. [My Life Plan](#) and appendix D in the RCGP’s [Care Planning](#).

Finally, as the initial conversation approaches an end there needs to be plans put in place for review and follow-up with the patient.

**Other resources**

- [Care planning overview video](#)
- [Webinar link for health coaching](#)