

Oakhill: Using digital technology to support memory, identity and connection

Oakhill, a care home for adults with brain injuries has introduced interactive QR codes to improve communication, engagement, accessibility of information and memory support for residents living with acquired brain injuries

Published: 28 September 2026 **Last updated:** 28 September 2026

Background

Oakhill, part of Accomplish Group in Swansea, provides specialist rehabilitation for individuals living with acquired brain injuries. The service has been operating for over 20 years, with Headway accreditation held since 2015.

Oakhill promotes a person-centred, strengths-based approach focused on independence, rehabilitation, meaningful activity and community engagement. Residents have access to communal lounges, kitchen facilities and garden areas, alongside opportunities to take part in local community life, including visiting shops, restaurants and leisure facilities.

A long-standing, experienced staff team know residents well supporting them to achieve personal goals and develop daily living skills at their own pace.

The Practice

Introducing QR code technology

Oakhill has introduced QR code technology throughout the service to improve communication, engagement, accessibility of information and memory support for residents living with acquired brain injuries. QR codes are placed around the home and, when scanned using a smartphone or tablet, link to a range of digital content tailored to different purposes and audiences.

How it works in practice

The QR codes are used in several ways:

Welcome and orientation information is provided for visitors and prospective residents, giving them an interactive introduction to the service before or during a visit. Virtual tours and information about the local community help people understand what life at Oakhill and the surrounding area is like.

For residents, personalised "Adventure Books" bring together photographs, videos, memories, achievements and meaningful moments in an interactive format, accessed via a QR code. These sit alongside resident-led activity records and goal-setting evidence,

which document progress and personal milestones. Visual memory prompts and reminiscence tools support residents to recall people, events and experiences important to them.

A key feature of the approach is co-production, meaning residents are actively involved in choosing what information, photographs and memories are included in their own Adventure Books and records. This gives residents direct ownership over how their story is told and what is shared with others.



Impact

The introduction of QR-coded resources has had a positive impact on residents, families, staff and visitors. For residents living with acquired brain injuries, the approach supports memory recall and cognitive engagement, orientation and reminiscence, and confidence and self-esteem. By involving residents in choosing what is included in their own records, the practice also promotes independence, choice and a stronger sense of identity, alongside meaningful engagement in activities and goal setting.

Families have reported feeling more connected to their loved ones' daily lives and achievements through the visual and interactive updates the QR codes provide, particularly when they are unable to visit regularly.

For staff, the approach has changed how meaningful outcomes and person-centred support are evidenced. Care records are brought to life through real experiences, photographs, videos and residents' own voices, rather than relying solely on written documentation.

Visitors and prospective residents also benefit, gaining more accessible and engaging information about the home, which helps provide a welcoming, transparent and informative environment.

Quote

"By embracing accessible digital technology creatively, we've strengthened communication, supported memory and well-being, and created lasting connections."
Clare Whomes, Registered Manager, Oakhill



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