Because there is no standardised Nursing Home transfer letter available nationally in Ireland, patient information at the time of transfer can be patchy and uncoordinated.

We set out to ensure that the transfer letter sent was comprehensive for the patient’s nursing and medical assessments. This information helps to formulate the nursing care plan and ensures that the patient receives a person-centred approach to care.

This was a joint venture involving St Michaels Hospital and St Vincent’s University Hospital in consultation with Nursing Home Ireland.

A baseline audit was carried out in 2011 on existing transfer letters.

A one page transfer letter was introduced with the pertinent information required by acute hospitals. This was sent to Nursing Homes in the catchment area of St Michaels Hospital and St Vincent’s University Hospital.

Details about personal and medical information, infection risk, palliative care/end of life requirements, falls risk, nutrition, diet modification, continence, mobility/transfer, functional level, skin integrity, communication and cognitive ability are all available on one page.

Subsequent transfer letters were re audited (four times) – results showed a good uptake by Nursing Homes of the transfer letter.

A grant was received from “The Irish Hospice Foundation” (2015) This allowed us to expand the catchment area to seven counties.

An audit of these Nursing Homes was carried out in April, 2016. Response rate was 42.8 % (81).

68 (83%) of those who replied to the audit used either a standardized or an adapted version of the transfer letter.

37 (45.6%) used the standardized version

31 (38.2%) used an adapted version – this included 7(22%) who used Epicare (computerized system)

13 (16%) did not use the letter

Discussions are in process with the National Clinical Programme for Older People to make the transfer letter a national document.