Alzheimer's Society
United Against Dementia

How dementia-friendly technology can improve lives

Technology can offer huge potential benefits for people living with dementia, their families and care providers. Whilst not a solution for everyone, technology, such as telecare and apps, can work in a variety of ways to empower and support independence, manage risks, improve health, be enjoyable and aid loved ones.

Adult Social Care Directors tell us that the main service issues they face for people with dementia include:

- Many people have a strong desire to remain in their own homes but are not able to get the care and support they need to make this safe or easy. Frailty, memory loss, difficulties in maintaining their independence and managing their medication are key issues.

- Since 2010, 40p in every £1 has been taken away from local government funds. Adult social care specifically faces a £4.3bn funding gap by the end of this decade.

- Demographic pressures are significant – increase in demand is tough and the financial equation still looks very difficult for the next five years.

- The Care Act has added increased pressures, however it does provide a long term stable and flexible framework for effective care.

How does technology help adult social care?

- Technology is a key element in the assessment because it can help:
  - Promote independence and positive risk-taking, for example by supporting people to get out and about safely, or raising alerts at home in the event of fires, floods or falls.
  - Enable people living with dementia to have access to 24-hour support through low cost equipment in their home.
  - Reduce anxiety and provide reassurance for family carers.
  - Support medication adherence.
  - Improve physical healthcare monitoring in care homes (without nursing).
  - Delay care home admissions by enabling people living with dementia to stay independent for longer.
  - Support family carers.
  - Reduce hospital admissions and length of stays.

- Technology solutions are not about replacing human contact or restricting independence and can only be effective when combined with good care.

- As a person's dementia progresses, technology will help the person living with dementia to maintain independence, choice and self-determination so they can live life to the full.

- Technology can help you deliver your duties outlined in the Care Act by improving access to information and advice, prevention and self-care.

What does my organisation need to do next?
Sign up to the dementia-friendly technology charter which recommends:

- **Assessment** – The statutory right to a social care assessment should always include a consideration for dementia-friendly technology. Someone living with dementia should consider using a personal budget to support funding of technology appropriate to their needs.

- **Awareness** – Councils and OTs know where to go to for advice on technology that can support individuals living with dementia.

- **Carers** – Carers' assessments also consider the role that technology can play in improving the life of a person caring for someone living with dementia.

- **Access to information** – Accessible and easy to find information that lists where technology services are available in the local area with a link to the charter is advised.

- **Commissioning strategies** – It's important that commissioners of services develop a greater understanding of how technology can lead to good outcomes and incorporate the use of technology into their commissioning strategies.

- **Person at the centre** – The person living with dementia should be kept at the centre of any processes that aim to develop the right care or support for them. To help professionals and commissioners do this, we have outlined in section 3 of the charter, key actions and best practice for dementia-friendly technology services, covering before diagnosis; after diagnosis; help in a crisis; and more complex needs.

Technology that could help if...

You are worried about falling

Fall detector
A fall detector will send an alert to the carer or a 24-hour response centre in the event of a fall.

Movement sensors
A sensor that can detect both movement and lack of movement.

A bed sensor
A bed sensor will alert the carer if he leaves the bed at night and does not return within a short period of time, indicating a possible fall.

'I've just been in hospital following a fall. It got my wife really worried and she wonders how we'll cope. Can technology help when I get home?'

Sign up to the charter at
alzheimers.org.uk/technologycharter

or for further information, email
programmepartnerships@alzheimers.org.uk