

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 or apps, can work in a variety of ways to empower and support independence, manage risks, improve health, be enjoyable and aid loved ones.

Hospital discharge teams tell us that the main service issues they face when managing people with dementia include:

- The push to save money and reduce staff numbers, whilst still providing safe, quality care.
- Identifying a way to discharge patients safely and quickly.
- For many people, discharge is delayed due to homes not being suitable, care packages not being in place, informal carers not being able to support their loved ones after discharge, reablement not being available and patients not having capacity to cope on their own.

How does technology help hospital discharge teams overcome these issues?

- 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 to have access to 24-hour support through low-cost equipment in their homes.
- Reduce anxiety and provide reassurance to family carers.
- Facilitate medication adherence.
- Improve physical healthcare monitoring in care homes (without nursing).
- Delay care home admissions by enabling the person to stay independent longer.
- Support family carers.
- Reduce hospital admissions/readmissions and length of stays.
- Telehealth can be invaluable in reporting on signs and symptoms related to a health condition.

Dementia-friendly technology should be part of your post diagnostic pathway. Technological solutions are not about replacing human contact or restricting independence. Technology can only be effective when combined with good care.

What does my organisation need to do next?

Sign up to the Dementia-friendly technology charter which recommends:

- **Awareness** – Ensure that professionals who come into contact with people living with dementia know about the latest technology solutions and are able to explain the benefits and drawbacks for that individual.
- **Discharge** – Hospital discharge plans include the use of technology to help people once they are back at home.
- **Referral route** – Discharge teams and consultants expect technology to be included in the home support that is offered following a person's discharge from hospital and know how to refer to technology services.

Technology that could help if...

You are worried about how to manage more than one health condition

A telehealth system

A telehealth system checks vital signs at home and sends a response to the doctor if conditions deteriorate.



Environmental sensors

A gas detector installed in the kitchen will ensure an alert is sent if the gas is not switched off. A temperature extremes sensor alerts if there is a potential fire or if it gets too cold.



Medication reminder

A medication reminder will send prompts to take the right pill at the right time.



‘As well as dementia, I have heart disease and diabetes. I have regular visits from carers and from a nurse to manage my conditions.

I have always done the cooking in our house, but I’m scared that I’ll forget to turn the gas off or burn myself. Is there something that can help me?’

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

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