

TAPPI Personal Stories

From our testbed partner:



Darshan's Story

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Darshan Savani is TAPPI project manager in the adult's transformation team at Haringey Council. He works closely with residents, identifying how technology can help them lead the life they want. Previously, Darshan was the council's lead assessor for assistive technology where he evaluated people's needs and prescribed devices.



“ We take a really personalised approach and that's all about finding out what's important to residents.

Tell us about your role within TAPPI

It's very varied. One day I'll be out and about visiting residents and finding out what they want to achieve. I do a lot of outreach – meeting people in their own homes. We take a really personalised approach and that's all about finding out what's important to residents.

Another day I'll meet with Co-production Works who support us to involve residents in the project. And then I might focus on admin - creating reports and working with the council's procurement team and handyman team.

How have you recruited residents to the project?

I already knew Haringey Council's extra care and sheltered housing facilities before I started as TAPPI project manager. I was able to visit residents at these schemes and ask if they'd like to be involved. We now have over 20 residents on board from sheltered and extra care housing.

It was harder to find individuals living in their own homes. I did a lot of outreach work, contacting carers' forums, over 50s pensioner groups and local disability charities and we've now got over 10 people on board.

What support do residents want?

A lot of it centres on people wanting more control over their lives so they can do the things that matter to them.

For example, some people in sheltered housing told me they want to see who is at the door before giving them access. They are fearful of bogus callers and intruders, and they want to see the caller to determine whether to let them in or not.

Lots of residents want more control over day-to-day tasks like opening their curtains and switching on lights. Two wheelchair users both told me they'd heard Alexa smart speakers can do this for them. Someone also spoke about how it's difficult for them to open their front door and another individual said their kitchen surfaces are too high and it prevents them from preparing food easily.

Another resident is passionate about cricket and wants some sort of tech that can help him play back the cricket scores.

Several individuals find hoovering and cleaning quite difficult. They are proud of their homes and want to keep them tidy. We spoke about robotic vacuums that sense where the furniture is and how that little bit of help could make such a big difference.

I've also had a number of residents express concerns around health issues.

One person has their own private garden, but they are scared to access it in case they fall. We spoke about how technology could help them become more confident out and about, so they start gardening again and visit their local community.

Another individual living in sheltered housing told me about his epilepsy. He wants a device that senses if he blacks out or has a seizure and then calls for help on his behalf.

Quite a few people told me it can take a long time to get a GP appointment and they want to keep track of their own health. We talked about digital health equipment that can monitor their blood pressure and blood sugar levels.

Staying connected was another recurring theme. Several residents expressed that, post-Covid, lots of communal activities like coffee mornings and other get-togethers have reduced. They want to find ways of keeping connected with other residents, friends and family.

Have there been any challenges in the project so far?

Some residents are frustrated with the pace of the project. They feel the process is slow – in terms of procuring technology, getting a handy person in to make adaptations and so on. But generally, people are taking it well and they're excited about how certain devices might support them.

How will the technology benefit families and staff?

I'm currently having conversations with care workers at Haringey extra care and sheltered housing schemes, finding out how technology can help them too. I think falls detection might be a theme that comes out of these discussions. Automatic fall detectors give residents more privacy as staff don't have to do nightly checks. It also means that staff can quickly identify if someone has fallen, and that person isn't on the floor all night.

I also believe technology can support next of kin. Rather than having to ask their relative if they are drinking enough water, there are some devices that can monitor that for them. This frees up family members to have conversations about the things they love to discuss, and it adds value to their relationships.

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Acknowledgements

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Find out more about this project at:

www.housinglin.org.uk/TAPPI2



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