

TAPPI Personal Stories

From our testbed partner:



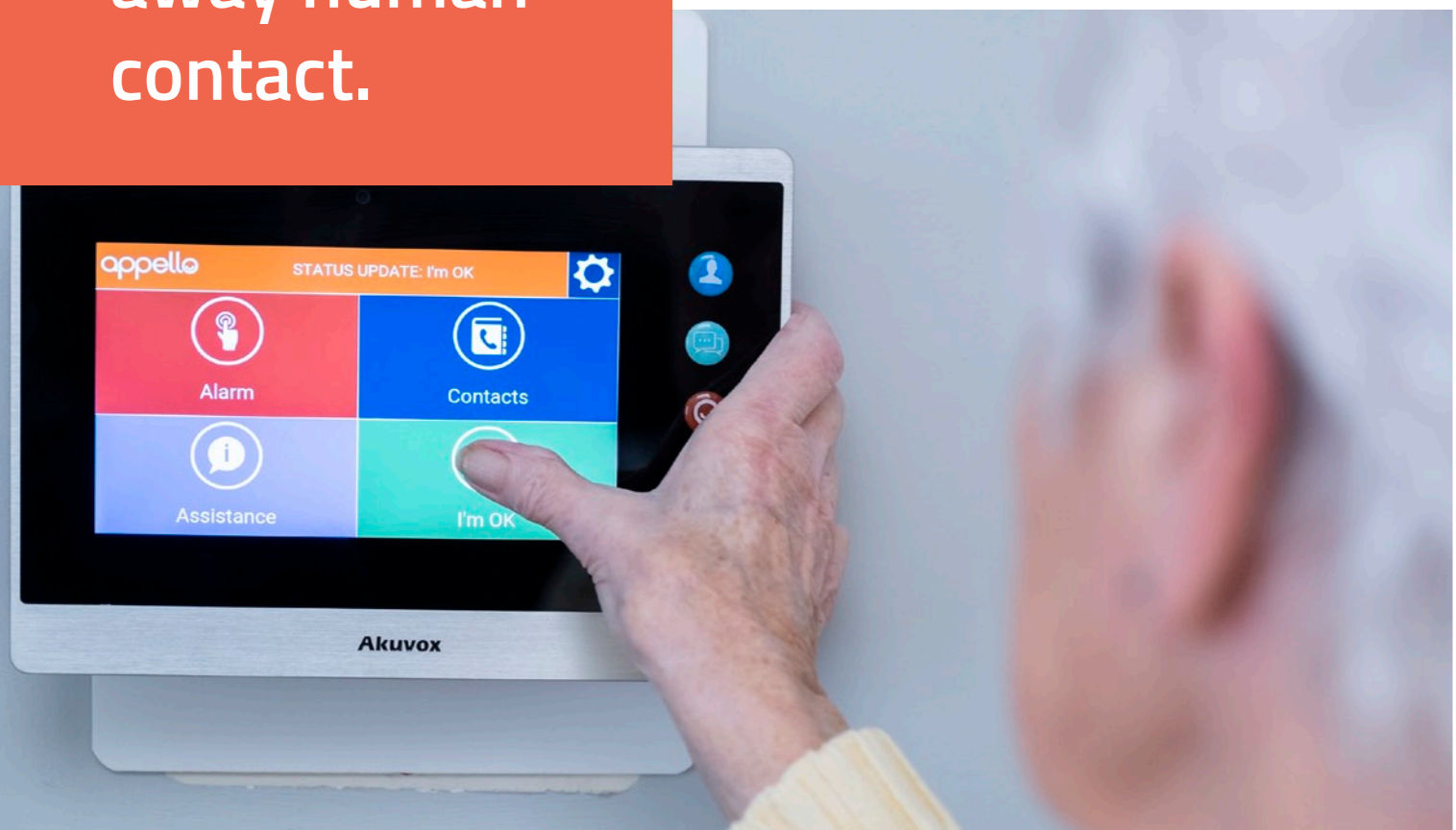
Rosemary's Story

Rosemary, 76, lives in a retirement village in Ledbury, Herefordshire. She has two children, six grandchildren and one great granddaughter. Her flat is one of 41 in the scheme, all owned and managed by Platform Housing Group.

How do you feel about technology?

Today's technology tends to worry many older people and really it shouldn't. Many of us have seen so much innovation in our lives. As a child, we didn't have electricity until I was seven and my mother never overcame her fear of it. The difference now, is that technology moves a lot faster and as you get older your brain doesn't move as fast. What we don't understand, we fear, and I want to change that through TAPPI.

“ Technology shouldn't take away human contact.



Residents at Harling Court try out different technologies

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What are the barriers?

My concern with technology for older people is that you can supply it, but you also need to supply someone who has the patience and time to explain how to use it. I've worked with computers a bit but even I struggle to remember. If you're telling me something, I have to write it down.

Trust is another big issue. I never did internet banking until Covid and then it was a case of necessity. I'm fine with it now but I'm still wary. I've only got banking on my iPad – not my phone in case I lose it. I have a grandson who works in technology, and he keeps an eye on everything I'm doing. I lost my phone once and he tracked it for me. We found it in my airing cupboard!

Technology shouldn't take away human contact. Before I lived here, I worked as a senior warden in this building and my role was hands-on with tenants. As you get older, your world gets smaller, and I brought the world into people's homes. I would chat with people, organise social activities and help them to do the things they love. You can also do that with technology, but it's not the same. When we had a new alarm system installed, family members could start contacting us on an app. One daughter said to her mother, "it will save me petrol as I won't have to drive over." So, it's not all positive.



How do you use digital gadgets?

I was adopted as a small baby and used a website and DNA testing to track my birth line and find out about my half-siblings, which was amazing.

Technology also helps me keep in touch with family. My great granddaughter was diagnosed with leukaemia when she was 12 months old and during the pandemic we kept in touch via Facetime. When I first saw her face to face after lockdown she said, "Look! They've let Grandma out of the phone!"

It can be a lonely life when you're older and I sometimes use Facebook. Some people have 200-odd 'friends'. I don't really like that word. I've got 18 and I know all of them. Facebook is another way my grandchildren send me messages. I use it to stay connected with the younger generation.

I love reading, but because of my arthritis, I can't hold a hard back book. Recently my eye was operated on for cataracts, so having a kindle makes things easier. I can enlarge the print and I don't have hundreds of books cluttering my small flat.

All the flats have a system that provides you with an alarm pendant or wrist band. The hub has a touch screen and a camera, and you can answer the outside door, seeing who is there before you let them in – although it doesn't always go to plan.

Every morning I call the on-site worker from the hub to let them know I'm well. It makes me get out of bed, whereas if I'm just lying there reading and there's nothing else to get up for, I could be there until lunchtime. It's important to keep moving when you get older!

Staff support a resident to choose the right TEC for her



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Acknowledgements

Technology for our Ageing Population: Panel for Innovation (TAPPI) Phase 2 is funded by **The Dunhill Medical Trust** and jointly project managed by the **Housing LIN** and the **TSA**.

Find out more about this project at:

www.housinglin.org.uk/TAPPI2



The voice of technology enabled care

A resident is shown how to use a TEC device

