

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.

GPs tell us that the main issues their patients with dementia face include:

- Frailty, memory loss, difficulties in maintaining their independence and managing their medication.
- 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. They may become less confident in what should be an enabling environment.
- When coupled with the impact of long term conditions this can lead to time and money being wasted with people not having their conditions fully treated due to difficulties in attending appointments, communicating symptoms or not taking medication. This can ultimately result in unnecessary hospital admissions.

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

How does technology help GPs and CCGs?

- GPs and CCGs can use technology as a key element in post diagnostic support because it can help:
 - Promote independence and positive risk-taking, for example, 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 support 24 hours a day through low cost equipment in their home.
 - Ensure that people feel more safe and are less anxious in their own homes.
 - Support medication adherence.
 - Improve physical healthcare monitoring in care homes (without nursing).
 - Delay care home admissions by enabling a person to stay independent for longer.
 - Support family carers by providing reassurance and 24/7 support
 - Reduce hospital admissions and length of stays.
- Enabling someone to stay at home for longer and discharged from hospital in a timely manner is not only better for the individual, but better financially.
- Telehealth can also be invaluable in reporting on signs and symptoms related to a health condition.
- Dementia-friendly technology should be part of your post diagnostic pathway.
- Prevention – People can self-manage and healthcare issues can be detected early, reducing admissions to hospitals or care homes or increased care packages and carer stress.

What does my organisation need to do next?

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

- **Awareness** – It's important 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.
- **Sign-posting** – Health teams should know how to signpost people living with dementia to relevant sources of information and advisers on dementia-friendly technology.
- **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.
- **Holistic assessment** – If a person is coping with other illnesses as well as dementia, it's vital that a holistic needs assessment is carried out involving all of the professionals who are helping to manage the person's different illnesses.
- **Person at centre** – The person living with dementia should be kept at the centre of decision making with regard to any processes that develop the right care or support for them. To help professionals do this, we have outlined in [section 3 of the charter](#), key actions and best practice for service providers.

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