

ADULT CARE AND WELL BEING OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL 14 JULY 2023

THE ROLE AND COST BENEFIT OF ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY IN CARE PLANNING

Summary

1. The Panel will receive an update on the role and cost benefit of Assistive Technology in care.
2. The Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Adult Social Care and the Director of People have been invited to the meeting to respond to any questions the Panel may have.

Background

3. The Council's Corporate Plan 'Our Plan for Worcestershire – The Corporate Plan 2022 to 2027' makes specific reference to assistive technology as the Council will be *“investing in technology to enable people to live healthily and independently in their own homes for longer and supporting preventative measures to reduce incidents which require NHS or care services such as falls.”*
4. The People Directorate *“will explore opportunities to enable people, carers, and the social care workforce to understand the benefits of Assistive Technology”* with the aim of achieving even better outcomes with the support of technology.
5. Assistive Technology (AT) is a term for assistive, adaptive, and rehabilitative devices or systems that support a person to achieve the outcomes they cannot achieve otherwise, often due to disability or frailty. It can be used to manage independence and risk so people can continue to live meaningful lives, inside and outside the home.
6. Assistive technology can help:
 - restore confidence for people who feel vulnerable in their own homes
 - support carers to continue with their caring role
 - enable people to remain independent both in their home or support them out and about
 - monitor some health conditions and reduce the need for hospital admission
 - give carers' peace of mind that their loved ones are safe whilst they are not with them
 - reduce the risks of trips and falls
7. Examples of assistive technology include:
 - a range of pendant alarms that can raise assistance

- sensors that can detect falls automatically
- equipment for those with hearing impairments
- GPS tracking to help those living with dementia and their carers
- a wide range of equipment that supports the ability to remain independent within their own home

8. The number of people being supported with AT by the Council continues to increase. The table below is a snapshot of the number of people in April for last 4 years.

Month and year	Number of people using AT
April 2020	579
April 2021	684
April 2022	774
April 2023	955

9. The Council spends £340k per year on assistive technology. As of June 2023, there are 976 people who are in receipt of AT with an average weekly cost of £6.62 per person.

The Use of Technology in the Care Planning Process

10. AT is considered for people at the Adult Social Care Front Door (the initial point of access to Adult Services for a professional or member of the public).
11. AT is embedded in care planning across Worcestershire. Social work teams are encouraged, wherever reasonably possible, to support people with the use of technology. Following a Care Act Assessment, in the Care and Support Planning process, consideration of all ways to meet a person's needs is given, AT being one of them, given it promotes independence, is less intrusive than carers and enables people to be in control. It is also cost effective and can be used to support people to manage in a range of different settings. The Council also supports people who have been through a reablement service, often after hospital discharge, to look at types of support that will help them to remain at home safely and could help prevent future admissions to hospital.
12. To support Social Work teams, the Council has a contract with Community Housing to deliver a technology enabled care service. The service supports social work teams to:
- **help identify the most appropriate technology:** this is delivered through a technology assessment which considers the requirements of the individuals, those supporting them and the environment in which they are living. The assessment also considers any risks to the individual in using or relying on the technology. A recommendation is made to the Social Work team, which can then query the recommendation and request further work, or sign off the recommendation and the associated costs.
 - **Install, monitor and uninstall the AT:** Community Housing will install the technology, monitor the technology and uninstall and reuse the technology

where appropriate. Community Housing have around 20 thousand AT connections across the United Kingdom. In Redditch and Bromsgrove areas, Community Housing work closely with New Lifeline, a local technology enabled care provider, to deliver the service in those areas.

- **Monitoring the AT:** Once installed the AT is monitored 365 days per year and 24 hours a day. Should any issues arise, whether the technology is not working, or the person needs some assistance, Community Housing have tried and tested processes by which they can ensure the right support is delivered to the person as required. This may be support from a relative/neighbour/friend, from a care provider or if required a response delivered by an emergency service.

13. The anonymised examples below show how technology is used to support a person to remain independent:

- Person A has been diagnosed with early Alzheimer's and suffers with Acute Delirium and has had a fall in the road. The family believed the person needed a care home, but the person wanted to stay at home. AT was installed to support person and family and the person remains at home. The family has stated "*He Absolutely could not remain at home without it, it has been life changing.*"
- Person B was being reminded by family of every part of his daily routine, and wanted to become more independent. AT was installed to help remind the person to help manage daily tasks, and the AT supports B to remember daily tasks in a way that is simple and clear to understand. B is starting to manage their daily life with a view to increased independence.
- Person M lives in Worcester, is independent but suffers with falls and does not want the falls to limit him going out. AT was installed which allows M to go out into the community where he can be monitored and has the capability to call for help via the AT if required. The person continues to remain as independent as possible.
- Person K lives within a supported living property where the care provider indicated that additional care was required to prompt the person to undertake daily tasks. K can undertake the tasks but requires reminding and motivation. AT was installed which prompts the person, and there was no increase to the care being delivered.
- Person X had in the past, when unwell, expressed concerns that other people were accessing their medication even though it was in a locked cabinet. AT was installed to alert X should the medication box be opened. This helps to reassure X as well as supporting him to take his medication independently by reminding him. X is currently well and taking his medication.

Falls Prevention

14. The NHS Herefordshire and Worcestershire Integrated Care Board (H&WICB) successfully bid £679,500 for NHS Transformation Directorate Digitising Social Care funding to support an eighteen month falls prevention project. The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) reports that the cost of falls to the NHS amounts to more than £2.3 billion every year. More importantly than the financial cost of falls, the impact that falls have on people is serious, and are the leading reason that older people lose their independence and go into long-term care. The Council is working closely with the H&W ICB and Herefordshire Council

to deliver the project and to identify the benefits of using specific pieces of AT to support people who may be at a greater risk of a fall or who have previously fallen, to remain as independent as possible.

Outcomes of AT in Worcestershire

15. The outcomes have shown the importance for the AT service to be bespoke to the needs of the individual. The overall outcomes of the AT contract are being achieved and these include:
 - a. To improve quality and independence for adults with care and support needs, the Council measures customer satisfaction including self-reported independence. The score is 100%
 - b. Support the reduction or prevent an increase in care package costs particularly in relation to domiciliary care packages
 - c. Increase the knowledge and understanding of AT across the Adult Social Care workforce in Worcestershire. Community Housing attend regular meetings with the social care teams to help ensure knowledge is shared and to support innovative ways of helping people to remain independent.

16. To support the training and understanding of the use of technology, the Heart of Worcestershire College, alongside Kidderminster College and Warwickshire College Group, secured over £1.6 million collectively to support the development of a SmartLiving – Technology Enabled Care Academy. The academy includes two apartments which demonstrate the potential of technology enabled care, highlighting the intersection of technology, care and education. The facility will provide a valuable resource in Worcestershire, supporting training and allowing people to experience using AT. Some members of the Panel have already taken the opportunity to visit the facility.

The Council's Plans

17. The Council is to build on the success to date of introducing AT across Worcestershire's Adults Social Care by increasing the use of AT through:
 - Supporting people with the use of AT to defer or avoid the need for more intensive forms of care. The Adult Front Door will play a significant part in this approach and can help signpost people to reputable organisations who can support them to identify the right technology for them.
 - Continuing to develop the skills and knowledge of the social work teams and further embed the role of AT in all aspects of Care Planning across Worcestershire.
 - Engaging with our local Integrated Care System Partners to support the delivery of the Digital, Data, Analytics and Technology ICS Strategy for Herefordshire and Worcester
 - Looking at different ways of working including cultural change around the use of AT. This will include working closely with the Reablement service and Independent Focussed Domiciliary Care providers.
 - Supporting the Council in developing the use of data to support the delivery of even better care services.
 - Working with district Councils within Worcestershire to understand how *“Assistive technology can be included as part of a DFG (Disabled Facilities)”*

Grant) award package to maximise the benefits of home adaptations.” This could include facilitating access to and movement within the dwelling, the preparation and cooking of food, accessing and using the bedroom and controlling sources of power, light and heat.

18. The Council has a contract with Community Housing which is due to end during 2023-24. The Council is required to offer the opportunity to the wider technology provider market and will therefore tender for a new AT contract during 2023-24.
19. Regarding digital switchover between now and 2025, most telephone providers will be moving their customers from old analogue landlines over to new upgraded landline services using digital technology. The switchover could impact on older analogue AT systems. The Council has been planning for this switchover for some time ensuring newer technology is used wherever possible and as a result the impact on Council funded recipients of AT is understood to be negligible at this point.

Purpose of the Meeting

20. The Panel is asked to:
 - consider and comment on the information provided within the report; and
 - determine whether any further information or scrutiny on a particular topic is required.

Contact Points

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Background Papers

In the opinion of the proper officer (in this case the Assistant Director for Legal and Governance), the following are the background papers relating to the subject matter of this report:

- Agendas and Minutes of the Adult Care and Well-being Overview and Scrutiny Panel on 14 January 2022

[All agendas and minutes are available on the Council's website here.](#)