

FAMILIES, HEALTH & WELLBEING SELECT COMMITTEE

Assisted Living Technologies major review – minutes from previous meetings

03/06/21	COMMITTEE REVIEW: ASSISTED LIVING TECHNOLOGIES <p>The Committee considered the scoping report on Assisted Living Technologies.</p> <p>It was confirmed that the terms of reference outlined the process for understanding the current offer, exploring examples of better practice, understanding the market, exploring demand and care provisions and considering opportunities available to improve the service. The review was considered to be timely in light of the pandemic.</p> <p>It was agreed that of the terms of reference be amended to reflect the inclusion of managing long term conditions and Members were keen to investigate the limitations people faced in accessing services. It was decided that the terms of reference be expanded to include wider market engagement. The Committee would also have an opportunity to have sight of the apps used by services users and a demonstration would be provided.</p> <p>It was noted that topic of review had been proposed from the previous Social Care, Housing and Public Health Committee.</p> <p>In order to explore the topic in depth and make meaningful and practical recommendations, the Committee decided to expand the variety of witnesses to include Brunel University, advocacy groups such as AGE UK and local service users and their carers (both in person and surveys). Members were keen to meet with service users to hear their thoughts and were open to exploring this as witness sessions outside of the usual Committee meetings to create a more comfortable environment.</p> RESOLVED: That the feedback and suggestions be considered, and the scoping report be updated and noted.
27/07/21	COMMITTEE REVIEW: ASSISTED LIVING TECHNOLOGIES <p>The Committee heard an update on the witness session plan for the review, with the suggestion to include Hillingdon4all as a potential witness. Members were keen to hear from different sectors including the voluntary sector. It was agreed that a site visit would take place to an extra care home and supported living unit and Democratic Services would liaise with Members regarding suitable dates and times.</p> <p>The Head of Business Delivery & Support and the Community Development Manager presented the report on Assistive Living Technology (ALT) and delivered the first witness session.</p>

Classification: Public

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It was noted that mapping and geographical spread sat alongside the wider digitalisation agenda where connectivity speed was being tested. There were some areas in the Borough that had low connectivity speed and it was agreed that this could be explored further.

ALT was generally described as a range of equipment technology that supported people to live independently and have greater control over their health and wellbeing.

It was highlighted that the review considered the Council's current offer of ALT for the benefit of residents and what further developments could be used to ensure the promotion of self-management, independence and the management of demand on social care budgets.

The report had detailed information regarding the current offer and data regarding service users. It was highlighted that Hillingdon had a core offer of Telecare and associated products for the remote monitoring of resident wellbeing. Alongside this the Council provided a responder service 24 hours per day, seven days a week for residents without suitable contacts. The core offer included pendants/call buttons, sensors for movement, gas & fire sensors and GPS tracking technology.

It was noted that there were more opportunities available now to support residents with supported living with the increase in range of products on the market.

The Committee heard information on Hillingdon's demographics including statistics on the number of people that had dementia and the number of residents that had taken up the Telecare offer. The Committee heard how ALT was implemented in different care settings, noting that care homes had not been big users of the technology.

Members discussed the barriers to using ALT services and were keen to explore this further with service users and providers and noted the action plan. It was considered that the action plan would inform Members' engagement with service users and partners to enable the Committee to create practical recommendations.

In response to Member questions, further information regarding the B12 take-up would be provided.

RESOLVED: That the Committee noted the current position regarding the local ALT offer and agreed the action plan and future aims.

08/09/21

COMMITTEE REVIEW: ASSISTED LIVING TECHNOLOGIES

The Committee heard an update on the witness session programme for the Assisted Living Technologies (ALT) review. It was noted that due to scheduling, it had been difficult to secure the attendance of a service provider witness at the meeting.

Site visit to Park View Court

The Head of Business Delivery & Support provided an update following the Member site visit to Park View Court on Wednesday 11 August 2021.

The Committee Park View Court was an extra care facility in the south of the Borough. As part of the session, Members were provided with a tour of the facility where they viewed an empty flat containing ALT equipment, common areas including a bath facility with reflective lights, a relaxation area and a treatment room. Following the tour, Members met with a range of staff that worked at Park View Court including the Head of Home and Extra Care.

General questions were asked around service users' thoughts and the feedback was generally positive. Park View Court reported that they had moved all their systems online making it easier to record and follow up actions. Care plans could be updated in real time to record prescription changes and family visits. This had previously been done through manual care records.

In terms of system failures and backups, it was noted that if a service user was not wearing their pendant, this could cause issues. The Committee heard that service users were sometimes unwilling to ask for assistance to avoid any inconvenience and work had been done to educate service users about the technology. Service users were encouraged to ask for assistance when required.

It was confirmed that training for staff was part of their contractual obligations and they needed to comply with Care Quality Commission requirements. The Council also provided training to staff.

The Committee raised some concerns with the gaps with online services, particularly in domiciliary care, where the systems were not always accessible. Questions were raised on how users with dementia would be able to update care providers and elderly residents who were not familiar with smart phones and Alexa. The concerns were noted and Members had an opportunity to ask these questions directly to families and carers at the informal witness session arranged with service users.

Following service user feedback, it was noted that there had been adequate demonstrations of the technology and users were comfortable.

Witness session programme

The Committee had regard to the witness programme which provided details of upcoming witness sessions. A session had been arranged open to all the

Committee for Monday 13 September 2021 at 2 pm, involving various representatives from:

- 55. Hillingdon Autistic Care & Support;
- 56. Carers Trust Hillingdon;
- 57. Hillingdon Mind;
- 58. Alzheimer's Society; and
- 59. a service user that lives in a supported living service.

Although the witness session had been arranged at short notice, it was noted that the session had been set around the availability of service users in an informal setting to enable an open environment.

The Committee was informed that a virtual headset training session was also being proposed for Tuesday 26 October 2021 and Democratic Services would finalise details in due course.

It was noted that a provider had been identified for another site visit to consider wider technology however the unit was not in the Borough. The Committee was also informed that extensive efforts had been made to secure witness attendance, however this was dependent on engagement.

Some concerns were raised that only three Members were able to attend the site visit on Wednesday 11 August 2021, that there was no service provider present at the meeting, that there had been a late notification of the meeting on Monday 13 September 2021 and the October meeting had missed out local authority exemplars. It was explained that given the nature of the settings and the Covid -19 pandemic restrictions, only a selected few Members attended. It was also confirmed that witness sessions had been arranged the availability of witnesses.

Contact had been made with the community engagement team in respect of an online surveys. Many local authorities were in the same stage of delivery as the London Borough of Hillingdon and efforts to find a suitable direct exemplar that would add value to the review would continue. Members were also keen on hearing from younger service users in addition to elder residents.

RESOLVED: That the Committee:

1. noted the feedback from the site visit; and
2. agreed the witness sessions arranged for Monday 13 September 2021 and Tuesday 26 October 2021.

13/09/21

COMMITTEE REVIEW: ASSISTED LIVING TECHNOLOGIES

List of organisations attending:

- Hillingdon MIND
- H4All
- Alzheimer's Society
- Carers Trust
- Hillingdon Autistic Care Services (HACS)
- Hillingdon Carers Partnership
- Comfort Care Services

Witness session notes

Officers introduced the witness session with a short explanation of what exactly was meant by Assistive Living Technology (ALT). ALT was explained using several examples, including wearable pendants, home and door sensors, gps trackers, Alexa, apple watches, etc.

Attendees at the meeting were then split into two groups to facilitate more open discussion on the topic, before reconvening to the whole group at the end of the meeting. The groups agreed that there were many benefits to using technology to assist independence and care. It was echoed that technologies like pendants and Alexas were beneficial. It was noted, however, that it was difficult for service providers to keep up with the many new developments in ALT. It was suggested that it would be useful to have some form of information hub for service providers to be able to get information on these developments.

A major strand of discussion for both groups was the concern that some service users were left behind by the move to more technologically based care and assistance. Several barriers to service user take up of ALT were noted, including a lack of access to wifi or the lack of know-how or confidence to be able to use ALT effectively. Mental health issues could also inhibit service users' take up of ALT. Paranoia about online fraud and person data theft could make the use of the internet triggering for service users.

It was also noted that many people had a general resistance to change, and that this could be an impediment to the take up of ALT. This problem was not just related to the service users themselves; often it was family members who were most resistant to changes in services due to technology. For example, family members might be used to their relative having four calls from a carer per day, and would be upset if this were to be reduced and replaced by remote meetings through technology. However, in some cases, the service user preferred the new format more.

A related strand of discussion related to the use of ALT during the COVID-19 pandemic. Similar concerns as the above were raised, but additional issues were also highlighted. The use of zoom/teams over the pandemic for services was discussed, with zoom being used for a variety of services, including exercise classes, social events and games. Some service users liked this move online, but

others found it confusing and distressing when lots of people were on a call. Problems had arisen as a result of the transition back to in-person services, particularly due to the negative impacts of the pandemic on service users' personal development.

Education was posited as one solution to breaking down the barrier for those who lack the technological literacy to use ALT. It was emphasised that, as more services return to in person delivery, IT literacy help schemes must also return in-person, with online schemes insufficient. Pre-pandemic examples included services offered at the library, particularly a scheme where Brunel students volunteered to sit with residents to help them use the computers. The issue of outreach was also raised. Service providers were concerned that, even with strong services provided to help people with technological literacy, some people would still slip through the net.

It was agreed that the barriers to the take up of ALT emphasised that a one size fits all approach to its use would be wrong. A tailored approach was preferable where it was acknowledged that technological solutions were not always appropriate.

Summary of key themes of discussion:

- Ability to access services/technology/internet
- Training requirements
- Financial implications
- Impact on mental health/social isolation
- Difficulty of booking online sessions/limited session time
- Importance of community hubs/safe spaces
- Overcoming resistance to change
- Balance of technology with personal interaction
- Overcoming health issues such as dementia and remembering how to use technology
- Digitisation of paper records
- Redundancy and resilience should records be lost/technology becomes unavailable
- Engagement with end users + carers/family/guardians/service commissioners and third party providers
- Promotion of life skills/independence
- Promotion of services available
- Early assessments to identify all available solutions at outset
- No one size fits all solution

26/10/21

COMMITTEE REVIEW: ASSISTED LIVING TECHNOLOGIES SCOPING REPORT

The Committee had its third witness session as part of its review on Assisted Living Technologies (ALT). Members heard from three service provider organisations as detailed below. Each organisation provided an overview of their products, insight into how their products benefited residents and future planning around assisted living technologies.

Tunstall

Members first heard from Tunstall which was a technology company that used technology to support people requiring care and health intervention to live independently in their chosen home setting. Solutions enabled independent living by defining new models of care and creating globally connected healthcare solutions. Tunstall's vision was to give people the freedom to live their lives so that people could stay at home for as long as possible.

The Committee heard about the different products available including the Tunstall Go, Connect Wellbeing App and Group Living Solutions. The future involved an emphasis on cognitive care by increasing the level of personalisation in care and health systems.

Following Member questions, it was confirmed that only the necessary data was held for users and this was not shared with third parties. In terms of obstacles to using Assisted Living Technologies, there was no specific cohort that encountered obstacles, however generally mental health during and post lockdown had impacted this area significantly. Although there had initially been a weariness of technology, this position had changed during lockdown as many people had become more familiar with IT devices. The pendant worked well as an option for elderly people prone to falls. There were several products available for the future however these were still in the testing stage and the aim was to have equipment that was compatible with all types of other equipment.

Buddi

Members then heard from Buddi which was a technology company that focussed on providing peace of mind by enabling people to live independently in their own homes for longer.

The Committee heard about the different products available including the Buddi Mini, Buddi Clip, Buddi Clip and Connect Wristband and the Buddi Hub. Members welcomed the different case studies involving other local authorities where products had assisted with travel training. These products had also assisted with dementia and falls risks enabling residents to continue to live in their own homes, whilst managing risks around seizures.

Following Member questions, it was noted that although the battery life for specific products was 24 hours, various alerts could be set up to act as charging reminders. There were alternative options available for services who were prone to losing their

devices and an example of this included cello taping the device to zimmer frames. The devices were numbered personally so were easily identifiable and there was also an option to disable tracking information. There were a number of products available for the future that were in the process of being completed.

Apello

Members lastly heard from Apello which was technology company that had developed products such as a monitored personal emergency alarm to enable people to lead independent and fulfilled lives.

The Committee heard about the different products available and the significance of everything now being digital. The Smart Living Solution was the main system and there were a range of cloud services including the digital bridge. The Committee watched a video on the digital transition. It was noted that Apello had also been awarded the best use of technology for housing.

In response to Member questions regarding response times, it was confirmed that as soon as the call was initiated a response would be almost instant, irrespective of the client base size. It was noted that all products were digitally designed and future proofed.

Virtual headset training

It was noted that prior to the meeting, the Select Committee took part in a virtual headset demonstration, where Members were guided through a range of experiences, had an opportunity to use the headsets and gain an insight into what a person with dementia and autism experiences. Members found the session to be powerful and insightful.

RESOLVED: That the Committee heard the witness evidence and asked questions of those present.