Social Care Digital Innovation Programme Discovery Phase Review

Cambridgeshire County Council
Funded by NHS Digital

Our challenge

"How can digital tools and technology enabled care be used to increase the independence of adults with learning disabilities?"

Cambridgeshire County Council serves a population of over 800,000 people and it is estimated that around 3,800 adults (0.4% of the population) have a learning disability (LD).

Cambridgeshire's Learning Disability Partnership (LDP) has the highest spend for long-term care in the organisation. Individuals with LD are given skills training for developing their independence at school and college. However many people still require ongoing support with travel and carrying out tasks independently both at home and in their communities.

Transition period

Our initial focus for this project was for those who were transitioning from children's to adult's social care. The size of this cohort is 35-45 individuals whose total spend amounts to £1.25m per annum. The transition period presents a time for professionals to think creatively about a person's support plan and to support an individual's choice over employment and community opportunities in place of more invasive and traditionally expensive options. A review in November 2017 showed that 24% of LD cases had opportunities where technology enabled care (TEC) could have been utilised where it wasn't.

Impact of independence

People with LD are more likely to be exposed to poverty, poor housing conditions, unemployment, social exclusion, violence, abuse and discrimination. Only about 6% of adults with LD in Cambridgeshire are in paid employment and 5% are in unpaid voluntary work. Social care requirements for people with LD, in England, are expected to increase by 14%, up to 2030.

Kick off

A kick off event was held and we invited people from across the organisation and community to join us. The event allowed us to start building relationships, explore the problem space and put together a high-level project plan.

The plan

We planned for 2 research sprints, followed by feedback sessions where insights would be drawn out by our co-creation group. Following that would be ideation, prototype building and testing!
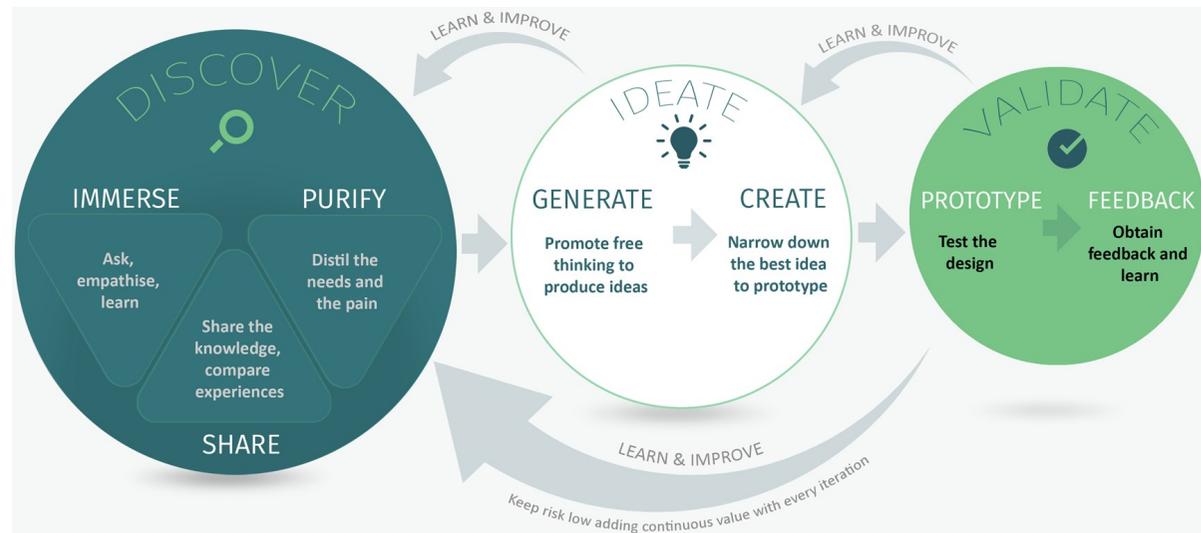
Avengers Assemble!

The following stakeholders were key to making this project a success and to ensure any solution was co-produced and truly met their needs.

LGSS Digital team	**LDP**	**Transformation**	**Switch Now**
The TEC team	**Commissioning**	**Speak Out Council**	**TAG Bikes**

Research sprints

Sprint 1 (13th May—24th May)

Mission: to gather insights from as wide range of people as possible and to understand the high level needs.

The day-to-day experiences of people to include:

> What do they do?

> What annoys them?

> How do they do it?

> What would they change?

Result:

> **5 workshops** with over **50 people** at various day opportunities for adults with LD

> In the spirit of co-production, colleagues from the TEC team helped to facilitate and talked with service users

Sprint 2 (3rd June-28th June)

Mission: to dig further in to stories, to speak to professionals and spend time shadowing the TEC team.

We'd had amazing levels of engagement from service users and we had not yet heard the voices of professionals and teams within the organisation.

Result:

> **8 interviews** with individuals, professionals and therapists

> **Shadowing** the TEC team to **see the process** from referral to fitting TEC in someone's home.

> A **survey** of social workers was launched!
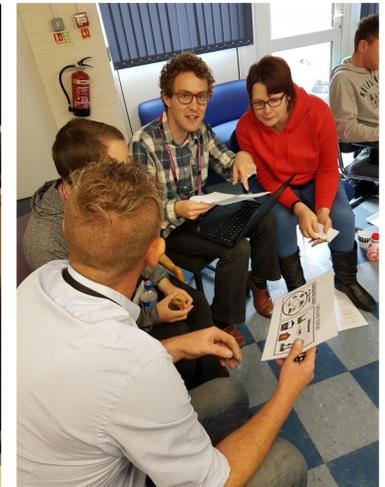
Insights

The insights listed here are only a fraction of the hundreds of post-it notes we generated within our research sharing sessions!

People don't trust technology

"What if I break it?"

"What if it goes wrong?"

"What if it replaces my job?"

When people don't fully understand the piece of tech, they are reluctant to use it and can hinder someone's independence if they are worried about it going wrong.

Staff are wary of recommending devices if they aren't confident or know enough about it

However, around 2/3 of the people with LD we spoke to had access to a device and are confident using it! People use apps for travel (MyBusTrip) and weather.

People love Slimming World! It's a common app used by many people with LD; it produces meal plans, shows calorie counts, has recipes and provides links to online shops.

One size doesn't fit all

Independence means very different things to different people

We assumed there would be a gap in the market, our silver bullet, a problem everyone had that we could solve. This wasn't the case!

We did identify core needs across the cohort around: feeling safe, feeling confident, memory, building routings, the need for clear instructions

Awareness

The TEC team do a great job at showcasing new technology and this work needs more exposure.

"The lack of information is a really poignant issue with TEC. We want to know what's available and how available it is" – a social worker

There's an assumption by social workers, and other professionals, that you need to ask for a specific device – rather than thinking about the need a piece of technology could support.

There are lots of resources available on the web about TEC and assistive devices, but it's often quite hard to find and uses complex language such as "Augmentative and Alternative Communication Devices"…err, what?

"I feel confident that we should have be using TECH (sic), but it is not always easy within LD to be very specific and we need recommendations to be broader" – a social worker

Gallery & referendum!

Updating the problem statement

When we looked at our insights, it was clear that our original problem statement was too broad and needed to be more specific. So, we turned the insight themes in to "How might we...?" statements and asked people to vote for the most important problem to solve.

Our referendum!

We had over **50** votes, and **statement B** won with over **45%** of the responses! We had a good mix of respondents as well, with 80% coming from beyond the organisation.

"How might we..."

A. *Support you and your parents/carers to help each other. This might be helping you to meet someone else who likes the same things, travels on the same transport as you or who can help you to learn to cook.*

B. **Show you how to find out more about technology that help can you. And make sure you are happy and confident using that technology.**

C. *Create a free app to help you plan meals and if you wish, count calories and track your progress.*

D. *Help your parents and carers, and all the people that work with you, to be more aware of what you can do (especially if they aren't with you all the time)*

E. *Make sure you feel comfortable and safe when trying a new piece of technology (such as a new app or device) and supporting you to tell people how you feel about using it.*

We were really happy with the result, especially as the winning statement could apply to anyone—not just people with LD, but the people who support them and within the organisation too.

## Sharing the knowledge

We also wanted to share and publicise our insights to a wider audience and so we opened up a gallery (in real life and in a virtual space!)

The gallery can be viewed here: https://www.lgss-digital.co.uk/scdip-gallery/

Ideation

We had an overwhelming number of attendees at our ideation session, it was great to have adults with LD, the TEC team, Transformation, Commissioning and the LDP all in the room and working to come up with ideas on how to solve our problem.

Who are we designing for and what are their needs?

Our users are people with LD, their support network, professionals and therapists and they need:

> *To feel **confident** and **safe***

> ***Reassurance** that technology is secure*

> *To know **what to do when technology breaks** or goes wrong*

> ***Up-to-date information** and knowledge of what exists*

> ***Specific information** suitable for their needs, their age and their location*

> *To see **examples and case studies** they can relate to*

> *Help to understand that **they have a choice** and **different options are available***

> *Reassurance that they should think about the **outcomes they want to achieve** rather than focus on a particular piece of technology*

Technology + knowledge = TECHknow!

We pulled in elements from lots of people's ideas and the group really liked the idea of a tool **which could connect people to resources**. One that wasn't as complex as marketplaces, would be **specific to user's own support needs** and have links **to local and national resources**.

Prototyping

From paper and pen...
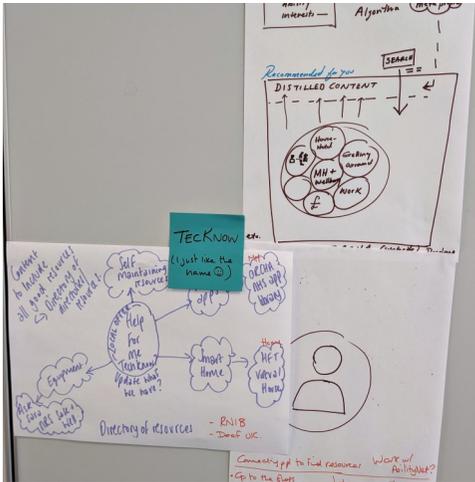
To testable prototype....

‹ Back

What topics interest you?

Technology can help to increase independence and improve quality of life. What topics are you interested in finding out more about?

- [ ] Going shopping
- [ ] Preparing food
- [ ] Working

Continue

In order to test whether TECHknow would be useful, we needed to make something tangible, to take out on the road and test with users. We wanted to receive feedback on the concept and idea itself, rather than the limitations of any prototyping tools we used and so it had to appear as real as possible. We opted to try the Gov.UK prototyping kit.

Positives:

> We could create something quickly

> It's has a familiar look and feel with clear fonts and minimal colours

> It's responsive and we were confident it would run, and look good, on people's own devices

> Accessibility has been built in from the start and screen readers had no problem parsing the content

> It can run locally on a laptop running NodeJS and so we were confident we could run it without needing internet access

Negatives:

> It doesn't easily facilitate the addition of pictures – with some code wrangling, we could have added some, but time didn't allow

> It has to sit as a password protected Heroku app and this added a bit of complexity during testing

You can test it yourself by visiting:

https://tinyurl.com/scdip

Username & password: **nolimits**

Testing

The prototype was tested by over **60 users** and we got some fantastic feedback, all of which will be rolled in to our first iteration should we be successful with implementation funding.

Co-workers at Switch Now, St Neots
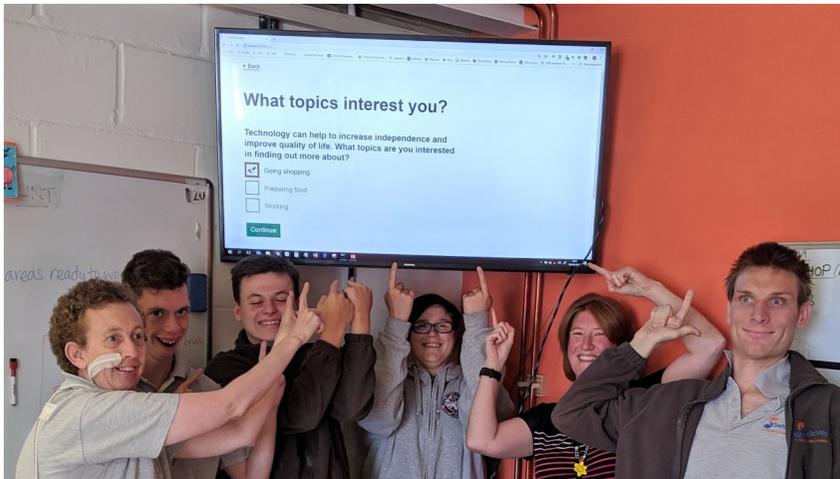
> "Good idea"

> "It's alright, I like the questions"

> "You should be able to select whether you have mobility needs as well as sight needs"

> "My Mum wouldn't use it as she wouldn't know where to find it"

> "The writing's too small, it needs to be bigger and it needs pictures"

Speak Out Day event (attended by people with LD, carers, parents, commissioners, social workers and volunteers)

> "The market place is so confusing, it's hard to know what to look for and it's not accessible. I like the idea of a tool to guide people through it and provide access to the right resources."

> "The layout is simple and easy to understand"

> "It was easy and not hard"

> "Good links for technology"

> "Resources are very wordy"

> "Safety and security considerations - carers aren't allowed to enter personal details of the person in to online forms"

> "It needs to have a choice about whose voice it is at the start"

> "It accepts any names, even rude ones"

Reflections on discovery

What went well?

> It was really easy to engage with service users – day opportunities were so happy for us to come and visit, meet their co-workers and run workshops. It has been an absolute pleasure to meet some fantastic people.

> We were mindful of the busy times in the social care world and worked around this from the start – though we didn't always get it right! We learned that you should not book meetings with social care professionals on a Monday or Friday (due to when crises are likely to happen). And also, routine is really important to service users, so no workshops during break or lunchtime!

> We made sure to use a variety of research methods in order to get the most out of people's time. We held research sharing sessions at the end of each sprint, telling the stories of people we had met. During these sessions, our co-production group were encouraged to write insights on post-it notes and stick them on the wall.

> The gallery of insights worked really well and we will definitely use this as a way to share research findings in future. The posters have since been taken to other events and used to publicise the research, which has been great!

What did we learn?

> Co-production requires a lot of effort to set up and maintain the momentum. It was a challenge to engage with colleagues from within the LDP.

> Collecting data has been a real struggle and so we adapted the discovery to more qualitative measures and storytelling

> After the kick off event, we received some feedback that the materials used on the day were not considerate of the needs of people with LD in the room. This was a real blow and it felt like we'd let people down and alienated them right from the start. We committed to fixing this and attended GDS Accessibility training and sought advice from our own Adult Learning team about best practice. Working on this project has ensured that we consider accessibility needs at the start on ANY project we work on in future.

> It feels a bit like the programme jumps really quickly from discovery to implementation with little scope to try an alpha phase between. We have tried to be mindful of this and have planned implementation to be iterative – building and launching with the functionality we know is needed first and then building in further discovery to understand additional needs.

Reflections on discovery

Our solution

TECHknow is essentially a layer that sits above other sites/ resources and filters out the ones that aren't relevant to someone's needs. It's a simple idea, and often simple ideas are all that are needed. With a simple question/answer system, it shifts the focus to what outcomes someone wants to achieve, rather than having to trawl inaccessible marketplaces for "a piece of kit". Our aim being to keep it simple and accessible for all users.

More widely, TECHknow has potential to play a large part in the culture change within the organisation and start prompting conversations about technology.

Co-production

The implementation phase application includes the provision of events and show cases to increase awareness of TECHknow. We have also planned to set up a co-production group to drive development and champion the resource from within their teams.

During this project, the TEC team had some nationwide exposure by appearing on BBC Look East with their therapy cat. They were seen all over social media, the BBC News website and the cat has now become a local celebrity! This is exposure we can definitely build on!

Look East (West)
Evening News: 03/09/2019

Thank you!

We were amazed by the engagement we got from the people and places we visited. Everyone who spoke to us gave us a little bit of themselves and gave us insight into their world and for that we are so thankful.