

Local Investment Programme

Hampshire County Council – **Using voice-activated home audio speaker to promote independence and wellbeing**

CASE STUDY

April 2018

Local Investment Programme

Local Investment Programme is overseen by the Local Government Association on behalf of the funders NHS Digital

OPM Group and the Bayswater Institute were commissioned to evaluate the Local Investment Programme producing an interim evaluation report and case studies.

Hampshire County Council was one of 19 local authorities to be funded in 2017/18 under the theme – **promoting independence and wellbeing through the use of digital services and technology.**

The Local Investment Programme full interim evaluation can be found at www.local.gov.uk/scdip



Hampshire
County Council

Synopsis

Challenge & solution

The impact

Sustainability

Lessons learned

Project Summary: Trialing the use of the Amazon Echo (voice-activated home audio speaker) with 50 adult social care service users

Partners: Argenti, Amazon

Outcomes: Reduced social isolation, increased reassurance of family

Projected Savings: £7,700 of cashable savings for the 6-month pathfinder project. Estimate of £66,300 for 50 users (full year)

- Hampshire County Council have already won multiple awards for their care technology service which is run in partnership with PA Argenti.
- They now wish to trial the use of Amazon Echo / Alexa within its technology service for 50 people with social care eligibility.
- They will build an app which uses Alexa to record jobs and reminders for the home care provider carer to act on when they arrive for their visit which can be created by a service user or family member. It will also remind the carer to prompt the service user to do certain things like take pills, or to remind them about a visit.
- The Alexa device will also benefit those partially sighted or more socially isolated individuals who may want to use it to ask for information or utilise other features such as audiobooks or the radio.
- This focuses on using consumer technology (as opposed to telecare equipment), as they are often more user-friendly, offer other features, such as radio, are less stigmatising and propose a way of embedding care functions into connected homes and the Internet of Things.
- All 50 devices and some linked smart home devices such as plugs and lights have been deployed.

The Challenge

- Consumer technology could be used to offer care, as opposed to telecare equipment. This would be less stigmatising and more user friendly. It was also add the potential of additional personal connected devices.

The Solution

- Utilising or creating Apps to be used with Amazon Echo for social care

Impact for patients:

- A decreased feeling of social isolation as measured through pre and post project surveys and evaluations
- Level of assurance of family members increased as they can be alerted through the device.
- To move away from old fashioned model of care technology, where devices are made by specialised manufacturers without much input into how these work, with inflexible functions and with little cost savings

- Hampshire County Council will be able to support this project to move from pilot to full implementation from existing resources in the Argenti care technology team.

Anticipated lessons:

- Understanding how consumer technology can help deliver benefits in social care.
- Determine where benefits to the service user and council are identified to make recommendations for a wider roll-out.

Challenges to delivery:

- Ensuring that using Amazon Alexa is compliant with data governance protocols and ensuring an information governance model can be developed that enables the deployment of bespoke Alexa skills given that data will be held.
- Securing enough suitable volunteers for the pilot.
- Managing issues in relation to activation before Alexa communicates.
- Rapid product development by Amazon – there is a risk that functionality developed by bespoke skills is released as part of core functionality by Amazon within the lifetime of the pilot.
- So far more value has been achieved by focussing on supporting users to get benefit from existing skills than trying to develop new bespoke skills.



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The final evaluation report will be published by March 2019

