

Smart Homes & Independent Living Commission

Outcomes Briefing

Roundtable 2: Service Delivery and Workforce Development

June 2021

Overview

On 23 June 2021, the Smart Homes & Independent Living Commission held its second evidence session, focusing on issues specific to service delivery and workforce development.

This briefing captures the main insights from the session, which will inform the findings and recommendations of the Commission's final report.

Key Findings

The pressing need to develop the AT workforce is not matched by the availability of high-quality AT training frameworks and CPD

“The workforce is enthusiastic and wants to be involved - what is needed is training and support to do so.”

Claire Sutton, National Care Forum

- There is a significant need for more AT training options both in a wide range of existing roles (OT, nursing) and for AT specialists. One possible solution is the development of a staged framework of training such that people from many different roles could get training at the point where their knowledge ends, with clear routes to progression. Another possible solution is to increase the availability of AT-focused placements for students in a wide range of care programmes.
- For AT assessments to be successful, they should be holistic and person-centred, but assessors tend to be siloed within specific fields and only aware of limited AT options. A centralised tool for professionals could support holistic prescription and reduce workload. Such a tool should focus on functional need rather than product type.
- Improved national standards and training and registration programmes will help improve the standing of AT roles in the sector. One possibility is to update the Trusted Assessor Framework for general use.

Disabled and older people should be empowered to easily find and access AT, before hitting a crisis point

“We really feel that these sorts of [AT] solutions should be embraced at an earlier stage, but that would require greater awareness on the part of the population as a whole.”

Janet Seward, DLF

- A significant barrier to adoption of AT is low awareness of what AT is available and what outcomes it can help people achieve, particularly amongst older and disabled people and their carers. This is due in part to disabled people not having equal internet access nor opportunities to see people outside of care settings using technologies.
- To drive a ‘mass change in attitude toward technology,’ an awareness raising campaign (delivered by central government and/or industry collaboration) could be helpful. Another possibility is an AT Mentor scheme wherein people with lived experience of AT are trained and then act as mentors to the wider public.
- Current systems of AT provision are geared to people ‘already in the system.’ Prospective AT users should have opportunities to learn about AT before they are ‘in the system,’ in part to prevent them reaching crisis situations. These opportunities could occur at GPs, libraries, the first pages of council websites, etc.
- Self-assessments/self-selection could also improve adoption of AT, particularly with the current shortage of AT professionals available to do formal assessments. However, there are concerns about self-assessments leading to increased AT abandonment.
- Increased adoption amongst the public may necessitate tech suppliers moving away from thinking of their customer as health and care providers and toward thinking of their customers as individuals; communicating directly with the public requires careful targeting due to the heterogeneous nature of the audience.
- The government could take lessons from the success of Motability and apply it to AT.

Ensuring organisational readiness for AT provision and deployment is challenging; having disabled people at the heart of co-producing solutions is key

“To drive adoption of assistive technology by individuals it is essential to begin with their needs and aspirations from that technology... those using care and support should be central to the co-production process.”

Professor Sally Dibb, Coventry University

- Organisations should prioritise measuring outcomes that matter to disabled people; there should be a move away from measuring activity and speed and toward meaningful

outcomes. This may include a greater focus on support after the technology has been prescribed or delivered.

- Disabled people are uniquely able to give insight into AT barriers and enablers, and should be co-producers of any solutions developed.
- Good organisational readiness includes both having the on-site skills, knowledge, and processes in place to support AT provision *and* a clear understanding amongst staff that this is an organisational priority.
- Poor or no on-site tech support is a significant challenge to the on-going use of technologies.

Attendee List

Name	Position	Organisation
CLlr Sir Paul Carter CBE	Chair	Former Leader of Kent County Council
Liz Twist MP	MP for Blaydon	Labour
Julie Ogley	Director of Social Care, Health and Housing	ADASS / Central Bedfordshire Council
Steve Tyler	Director of Assistive Technology	Leonard Cheshire Disability
James Lampert	Head of Tech-Enabled Care	NRS Healthcare
Professor Sally Dibb	Centre for Business in Society	Coventry University
Claire Sutton	Digital Transformation Lead	National Care Forum
Janet Seward	Programme Manager	DLF
Dr Hannah Marston	Research Fellow	Open University
Clenton Farquharson MBE	Chair	Think Local, Act Personal Partnership (TLAP)
Aneta Armova-Levin	Education Manager	CEDIA
Dr Michelle Heward	Post Doctoral Research Fellow Dementia	Bournemouth University
Georgina Walton	Design and Learning Centre Manager	Kent County Council
Julie Eshleman	Assistive Technology PhD Researcher	Leonard Cheshire Disability
John Stacey	Sales and Marketing Manager	Pretorian
Philip Bridges	Business Development Manager	Oysta
Harriet Paul	Foundation Support Coordinator	The Disabilities Trust
Rohan Slaughter	Senior Lecturer in Educational Assistive Technology	University of Dundee
Alyson Scurfield	Chief Executive	TSA
Professor Louise Moody	Professor of Health Design and Human Factors	Coventry University
Lauren Walker	Professional Adviser	Royal College of Occupational Therapy
Brian Donnelly	Chief Executive	CECOPS

Rob Gregory	Sales Manager UK/Eire	Tobii Dynavox
Sharon Burgess	Head of Safeguarding Adults and Quality	London Borough of Enfield

Resources referenced by attendees

- www.atvisor.ai/en
- www.cecops.org.uk/
- www.dundee.ac.uk/postgraduate/educational-assistive-technology
- www.livingmadeeasy.org.uk/
- www.local.gov.uk/our-support/our-improvement-offer/care-and-health-improvement/systems-resilience/overall-approach/trusted-assessors
- www.motability.co.uk/
- www.nhsx.nhs.uk/blogs/building-the-evidence-base-for-digital-innovation-and-capability-in-adult-social-care/
- www.rcot.co.uk/adaptations-without-delay
- www.training.gov.au/Training/Details/10909NAT
- www.tsa-voice.org.uk/adass-tsa-comm/
- www.tsa-voice.org.uk/campaigns/telling-the-tec-story/tec-stories/
- www.warwickshire.livingmadeeasy.org.uk/
- [www.who.int/news-room/feature-stories/detail/personnel-training-in-priority-assistive-products-\(tap\)](http://www.who.int/news-room/feature-stories/detail/personnel-training-in-priority-assistive-products-(tap))
- www.who.int/standards/classifications/international-classification-of-functioning-disability-and-health