SCDIP Discovery Phase – Cambridgeshire County Council

TECHknow is an online resource that allows adults with learning disabilities, or those who care for them, to find out more about the technology that can help them.

TECHknow

The context

It is estimated that 3,800 adults in Cambridgeshire (0.4% of the population) have a learning disability (LD). The project team (comprised of members of Cambridgeshire County Council and LGSS Digital, an organisation which supports councils develop better digital services) believe that Technology Enabled Care (TEC) could be a cost-effective way of providing services but is currently being underutilised. TEC uses a range of technologies (such as telemedicine, telecoaching and self-care apps) that enable people with long-term health conditions to have more control over their healthcare.

The challenge

A review of adult social care in November 2017 showed that 24% of LD cases had opportunities where TEC could have been used but was not. The importance of TEC is forecast to grow as social care requirements for people with LD in England are expected to increase by 14% by 2030. Mid-way through the Discovery Phase, the project team held a referendum to narrow the scope of their research in which they proposed five potential problem statements to service users. The statement that received the most votes was *"how might we show you how to find out more about technology that can help you and make sure you are happy and confident using that technology?"*

What did the project involve?

The project started with two "research sprints" to gather initial insights, which were then showcased in a gallery (physically and virtually). The ideation, prototyping and testing phases followed. Ideation involved consultation with adults with a learning disability, the TEC team, Transformation, Commissioning and the Learning Development Partnership. At this stage the project team decided to focus on a tool to connect people to resources, linked to their specific needs and available local resources. They then prototyped the tool using the GOV.uk prototyping kit and tested it with over 60 users.

Stakeholder engagement and user research undertaken

- **Research sprints**: Held in May and June 2019. The first comprised five workshops with over 50 people and aimed to gather insights from a wide range of potential service users and to understand their high-level needs. The second aimed to gain a deeper understanding of service user stories and engage further with professionals. This involved eight interviews with service users, social care workers and therapists, shadowing the TEC team and a survey of social workers. The key insights gained through these research sprints were that people don't trust technology, one size doesn't fit all and that there isn't enough awareness of TEC.

- **Gallery and referendum:** The team held a referendum with stakeholders to narrow down the scope of their project and showcased their insights in both a physical and a virtual space.

- **Testing:** The prototype developed was tested by over 60 users at two sessions. One session was held with co-workers at Switch Now, St Neots (a community interest company that provides supported training to young adults with LD). The other was held at a Speak Out Day event, attended by people with LD, carers, parents, commissioners, social workers and volunteers.
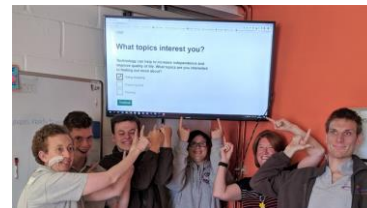
Benefits of the proposed solution

The project team has identified the following benefits as having resulted from the discovery phase (note that most of the benefits at this stage have been non-financial/non-quantifiable):

- the project team have made a number of valuable stakeholder contacts throughout the project
- a deeper understanding of accessibility that the team will utilise on all future projects
- skills and capacity developed within the team, primarily problem-solving.

In the implementation phase, the council proposes to achieve the following benefits:

- early interventions at the right time before more expensive care is put in place
- more referrals to the TEC team
- increased adoption of technology using a person's own device, saving the service user money
- less intrusive packages and greater control of care by service users
- increased awareness of TEC amongst service users and staff
- increased communication between teams and greater sharing of knowledge across the organisation
- money saved through not financing unnecessary interventions.

Key strengths of the project

1. **Engagement with stakeholders** was frequent and successful. The team ensured that there were plenty of opportunities for stakeholders to engage, feedback and test the prototype. This ensured that the team kept the interests of the service users at the heart of their design.

2. **Application of past learning:** the team utilised lessons learned from past projects in which they struggled to engage people who work in social care due to their busy schedules. As such, they ensured that they had booked in appropriate time (i.e. during non-busy periods) with team members and social carer workers.

3. **Broad scope:** Starting with a wide problem statement allowed the team to identify what was of most importance and use to their potential service users. Had they started with a narrow problem statement, they would not have been able to develop this solution.

4. **Shared learning:** The gallery of insights allowed the team to share learning, not only with stakeholders, but with others interested in the project. This will prove useful for other councils hoping to replicate the work elsewhere.

The potential impact

During the discovery phase, the council developed a logic model to guide the implementation phase and to help in quantifying the inputs, activities, outputs, outcomes and impacts which are likely to result from the delivery of this project. From this, a number of key outcomes and measures of impact have been identified as follows:

- **referrals**: they will measure the number of referrals to the TEC team monthly using Mosaic (digital social care case management software)

- **use of own devices**: they will measure the number of people using their own devices and spend on apps monthly via the TEC team

- **independence:** they will measure the independence of individuals through individual studies conducted quarterly with service users and their support network

- **awareness:** they will measure the number of attendees after each engagement event and the number of TECHknow users monthly via Google Analytics

- **savings:** they will measure the savings resulting from TEC adoption for individual service users annually via Mosaic

- **user satisfaction:** this will be measured using a satisfaction survey on TECHknow and user research. This data will be gathered continuously after launch and at points aligning with iteration development.

Challenges to delivery and lessons learned

- The team found that setting up and maintaining co-production throughout the project required a lot of effort.
- Collecting quantitative data proved challenging but the team adapted to include more qualitative measures and storytelling.
- After the kick-off event, the team received feedback that the materials used on the day were not considerate of people with learning disabilities. To address this, the team attended Government Digital Service Accessibility training and sought advice from the Adult Learning team. This has ensured they will consider accessibility needs at the start of any future projects.

Next steps, including sustainability and spread

The team would like to scale the project so it can be used by other user groups in the future and believe that it has the potential to be scaled up to any cohort. Of particular interest to the team is how TECHknow could be developed to work for children with learning difficulties as they are more likely to engage with TEC and digital solutions. The potential is not limited to this age group, however. The team believe that it could also be scaled up to help older people, people with dementia or people with a physical disability. Essential to the project's scalability is that the team have focussed on creating a base platform that could be applied to other services.

One potential barrier to the project being scaled up is that people's definitions of independence and the assistance they require to achieve it are very individual. As such, the team will need to ensure that TECHknow is a flexible solution that takes this into consideration.

In the next phase of the project, the team intend to start building TECHknow using an iterative process. They will focus first on streamlining the content, questions and resources and ensuring the solution is accessible. They will then focus on personalisation, progress tracking and evaluation. They plan to run a series of events and campaigns to help raise awareness of TECHknow. This will include events for service users and their support networks and internal events for colleagues in the Learning Development Partnership.

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Link to relevant documents

Cambridgeshire County Council Discovery Phase review report:

https://www.local.gov.uk/sites/default/files/documents/Cambrigeshire%20Discovery%20Phase%20Review.pdf