



Snapshot Report

Report Title	Technology, Health and Work
Organisation	Healthwatch Wigan and Leigh
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Acknowledgements

Healthwatch Wigan and Leigh would like to thank service users across the Wigan Borough for sharing their views and experiences.

This report relates to findings observed on the specific dates set out above. Our report is not a representative portrayal of the views of all patients, only an account of what was observed and contributed at the time.

Background

Technology is a key enabler for improving health and wellbeing services and better use of technology is an essential part of modernising public services. However It is also known that people use technology much less in the sphere of health and social care than in other parts of their life (education, shopping, banking etc.). For these reasons Technology was chosen as one of the priorities of Healthwatch Wigan and Leigh for 2017-2018.

Supporting people with health problems to stay in work or get back to work is a key priority of the Greater Manchester Health and Social Care Partnership and of all the localities across Greater Manchester.

This report explores people's views about health and care related technologies and how they could be better utilised to improve health and care experiences more generally.

Topics/Themes

Tele-health; Technology Enabled Care (TEC); Telemedicine; Self-care Apps; Tele-rehab; Workforce Health; Health and Work

Who we spoke to

We spoke to **22** people who attended the November 2017 Healthwatch Wigan and Leigh Forum on Health and Work held at Sunshine House in Wigan.

This field work produced **101** comments. All the comments are used in this analysis.

Method

Field researchers facilitated group conversations with people of Wigan and Leigh in a community setting. All comments were recorded verbatim against the relevant question prompts.

Firstly the landscape and language of health and care technology was explored by the group, checking people's knowledge and overall disposition towards health and care related technologies. Prompts were given under the following headings: telehealth, telemedicine, tele-rehab, and self-help apps.

Secondly, questions around health and care related technologies were asked in the context of people managing their health independently and whether technology could be part of the solution.

Comments were analysed as follows;

- People's perceptions and overall disposition
- People's knowledge of existing health and care related technologies (telehealth, telemedicine, tele-rehab, and self-help apps) - this gives us a snapshot of views of the different basic technologies in use in health and care more generally.
- How people think health related technologies can support people in work

The Comments - Technology Enabled Care (TEC)



There are several overviews of TEC. The NHS Commissioning Assembly (NCA) defines TEC as:

“...the use of technology to enhance care by capturing and sharing information in new ways.”

However participants understood the term TEC to refer to all kinds of technological devices for health but also health related technologies more generally. In other words their understanding of the term TEC encompassed not just telecare but also telehealth and telemedicine applications.

- 'Refers to technology to support health and care'*
- 'Involves assisted technology'*
- 'Enables people to live safely at home or in the work place'*
- 'Uses electronic devices'*
- 'Concerns monitoring blood glucose levels'*
- 'Uses devices such as alarms to monitor health and medication.'*

We think
TEC...



The Comments - Telemedicine



Telemedicine refers to either:

- Remote peer-to-peer support between clinicians
- And/or consultations between patients and clinicians.

Most respondents in the forum had limited knowledge of telemedicine citing a whole range of technologies in this section.

- 'Skype'*
- 'mobile apps'*
- 'Keyhole surgery'*
- 'Ordering prescriptions via telephone'*
- 'Receiving health support via telephone'*

The Comments - Telehealth



The Telecare Services Association (TSA) defines Telehealth as a remote exchange of information between a patient at home and their clinician(s) to assist in diagnosis and monitoring of their conditions.

Respondents in the forum had a mixed understanding of telehealth. Some had limited knowledge of telehealth and equated telehealth to 'skype' or 'mobile apps'. Others had some exposure to telehealth and viewed telehealth as a form of 'telephone consultation' with a clinician. One respondent summarised telehealth as:

- *'Using technology to deliver health consultation/appointments'*

Another respondent provided a more practical example of telehealth:

- *'If you were sat at home and wanted a consultation you could do this via technology...you can have a conversation with GP or clinicians'*

Respondents with knowledge and exposure to telehealth viewed it as a way to:

- *'Engage with patients in the comfort of their homes'*
- *'Promote and support independent living'*
- *'Improve access to health and care more generally'*

The Comments - Self-care Apps



The NCA defines Self-care Apps as ‘applications that raise awareness and help people self-manage’.

Participants were able to identify a range of self-care apps as follows:

Apps that provide health advice, support and/or motivation

- *‘Quit smoking apps’*
- *‘Eat and stay healthy’*
- *‘Mindfulness apps’*
- *‘Fitness trackers’*
- *‘My fitness pal’*
- *‘Fitbit’*
- *‘Calorie counters’*

Apps that help people to manage their interactions with health services

- *‘Appointment reminders’*
- *‘Access or make GP appointments’*
- *‘Order and manage prescriptions’*

The Comments - Tele-rehab



Tele-rehab enables patients to undergo their rehabilitation exercises at a time and location of their choice.

- *‘Home based exercise programmes’*
- *‘Skype based consultation with physiotherapists’*
- *‘Telephone or computer based CBT’*

The Comments - Using Technology to Support People in Work

Supporting Employees: People felt that technology can help individuals to (re) adjust, settle, feel better supported, better monitor and manage their conditions and be more independent in a working environment;

- *‘Keeping the person’s independence’*
- *‘Check things out remotely’*
- *‘Remote consultation with professionals for less time off work’*
- *‘Mindfulness app’*
- *‘Alexa device’*

- *'24hr services'*
- *'Telephone help'*
- *'Feel a flare up coming on access online support to reduce time out of work, telemedicine, quicker response to something predictable and instant access to meds to suit different working conditions'*
- *'Skype conversation with GP and other clinicians'*
- *'Exercise programme linked through telerehab'*
- *'Assume person has access to phone/internet?'*
- *'Encourage use of mental health apps'*
- *'videos of rehab processes and live feedback'*

Supporting Employers: People felt technology could be used to inform and support employers and help them to manage some of the actual or perceived risks associated with employing people with health conditions. People suggested various support ideas that might encourage employers to get involved and take positive steps.

- *'Query (is there) funding for assisted technologies ?'*
- *'Home working arrangements- develop employer's relationship and understanding through the use of technology to allow dialogue with physios'*
- *'Ethical Employers Charter for big businesses'*
- *'A desk that's 'yours''*
- *'Speak to employees'*
- *'Allowances to use various technologies in work'*
- *'Provide examples of how it can help employees and employers'*
- *'How do we get the message out there - it would be easier for larger employers'*
- *'Better for the employer and employee as less time out of work for appointments and physio sessions'*
- *'Less time off work due to his conditions - by feeling better he is more settled and happy at work'*
- *'Happier employer as less employee absence'*
- *'Promote use of technology in the workplace'*
- *'Make funding available to employers to support and improve accessibility'*

People felt that the use of a variety of technologies can provide support and reassurance to carers who are working.

- *'Skype'*
- *'Falls alert'*
- *'Motion sensors'*
- *'Pendant'*
- *'Dementia buddies - Guardian Angels'*
- *'Reassurance and peace of mind (for carers)'*

Conclusions

Overall, respondents found health and care related technologies very practical and useful. In particular they found:

- People have mixed understanding of the different health and care related technologies available to them.
- Health and care related technologies could be embedded in primary care, and would help patients to manage their health conditions more independently.
- Health and care related technologies could be beneficial for people with special needs (eg communication needs or physical disabilities).

However, some respondents raised the following concerns about health and care related technologies:

- Some health and care related technologies may not be appropriate for people with 'chaotic' lifestyles or low tec knowledge or people with specific impairments.
- Some people see technologies as a threat to 'traditional' roles and relationships with clinicians.
- Health and care related technologies are seen, in varying degrees, to rely on self-motivation which can very difficult to elicit or sustain.

Generally people felt that health and care related technologies have the potential to support both people with long term health conditions and people who are carers to remain in work.

- There is a need for more information and support for employers on this topic.

Recommendations

To commissioners and providers

1. All individual assessments, care plans and personal development plans (for organizations supporting people to stay into work) should explore health and care related technology options.
2. A TEC workstream should be added to local and GM activity on worklessness. This workstream could in the first instance explore the information and practical needs of employers with regards to TEC support with a view to developing campaigns and support for these kinds of approaches.

The comments

What is telehealth?

- Is it telephone consultation
- Is it triage rather than going to surgery?
- Seeing GP by Skype
- Nothing
- Telephones
- Skype
- Television
- Mobile phone apps
- Multimedia
- If you were sat at home and wanted a consultation you could do this via technology
- Using technology to deliver health appointments

What do you understand by tech enabled care?

- Using technology to support independence
- Assisted technology
- Helping people to live safely at home or in the work place
- Electronic devices
- Sensory rooms and equipment
- Diabetes - monitoring your blood glucose levels
- Alarms to monitor
- Medication
- Using technology to manage their condition to live independently
- Technology to assist in monitoring and being sent to consultants
- Apps that you can get support ways of living and interact
- Emergency call button
- Stuff to enable you to work

What do you understand by Telemedicine?

- A way of ordering prescriptions via mobile
- Crosses over with telehealth
- 'Homes under the hammer'
- Re-ordering prescriptions using tec enabled devices
- Operations, e.g. keyhole surgery
- Prescriptions online
- Advert on TV to ring gp on Skype and they fax prescription to chemist

What do you understand by Self-help apps?

- Mobile phone apps
 - Hospital appointment booking
 - Quitpal - stop smoking
 - Step counters / fit bit
 - Food smart
 - Fitness trackers
- Resources to help you lead a healthy lifestyle - maintain healthy lives

- My fitness pal
- Mindfulness
- Books on prescription

Eating disorders

- NHS app- healthy eating, fit bits, smoking and drinking, contemplating change can access info
- Will send you reminders
- Something that helps you put a thought into action such as government Change for Life, Fitbit calorie counting and step counting

What do you understand by telerehab?

- Exercise programme
- Physio
- Need to be using authoritative sources
- Physio - on your ipad instead of going to a session
- Computer based CBT

How technology can support people at work

- Home working arrangements- develop employer's relationship and understanding through the use of technology to allow dialogue with physios
- Feel a flare up coming on access online support to reduce time out of work, telemedicine, quicker response to something predictable and instant access to meds to suit different working conditions
- Skype conversation with GP and other clinicians
- Exercise programme linked through telerehab
- Assume he has access to phone/internet
- Query funding for assisted technologies
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- Make funding available to employers to support and improve accessibility
- Provide examples of how it can help employees and employers
- How do we get the message out there - it would be easier for larger employers
- videos of rehab processes and live feedback)
- Telephone help
- 24hr services
- Technology and learning is tele an acronym
- Using YouTube
- Rehabilitate non Tec users
- Tele could be the telephone- call centre
- Access immediately- Samaritans or childlike o

- Mindfulness app
- Alexa device
- Skype
- Falls alert
- Motion sensors
- Pendant
- Dementia buddies - Guardian Angels
- Remote consultation with care professionals for less time off work
- Reassurance and peace of mind
- Keeping the person's independence
- Check things out remotely
- Ethical Employers Charter for big businesses
- A desk that's 'yours'
- Speak to employees
- Name and Shame - charter
- Allowances to use various technologies in work
- Improving relationship between employers and health care provider- can come up with other solutions and better adaptations, think about alternative training to do other roles during flare ups
- Apps related to employment to remind them to do something specific exercise regularly
- Look at equipment to prevent flare ups under guidance of physio improve adaptations
- Person could access telerehab to have specific exercise suited to role
- Apps can reduce isolation for those already in work by keeping them in work but for others it removes some of the social elements of travel and consultations leading to more isolation
- For some a visual language is really important so tech wouldn't be
- How can we get work well to enable people to access and use tech as part of their strategy ?
- Individual care plans to explore options
- For many who have limited language they'd have to be really adapted to have supported text- to minimize risk of misunderstanding for profoundly deaf would need to be face to face
- Person centered solutions to explore but not expect tech to meet all the population's needs
- Expectation to have support for people to build confidence around TEC
- Does this TEC mean less jobs?
- Super market self-serve makes me think about people's jobs, I try not to use them
- Is it a band aid when we want people to take responsibility? Apps do rely on self-motivation though
- Our clients are too chaotic, they regularly buy and sell phones to fund habits
- How can you explain mindfulness to someone who is profoundly deaf?