



**Open Report on behalf of Glen Garrod,  
Executive Director - Adult Care and Community Wellbeing**

Report to:	<b>Adults and Community Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee</b>
Date:	<b>24 May 2023</b>
Subject:	<b>Adult Care &amp; Community Wellbeing Digital &amp; Technology Update</b>

**Summary:**

This report provides an update on how digital initiatives are supporting services in Adult Care and Community Wellbeing.

**Actions Required:**

That the Adults and Community Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee note the progress being made to implement digital initiatives to support services in Adult Care and Community Wellbeing.

## **1. Background**

### **1.1 Adult Care & Community Wellbeing (ACCW) Digital Roadmap**

The ACCW Digital Roadmap was developed in 2018 to explore whether the use of technology could address the pressures caused by the increasing demands for services coupled with a reduction in available resources. A strategy was co-produced with practitioners, care providers and people who use services, focused on the following three themes:

- **Empowering the person** and, where appropriate, their families and carers to maintain their own independence, manage their care and support needs, and interact with the council and care services in a way that is convenient and effective for them.
- **Supporting the care workforce** in always delivering high quality care, as part of a network of professionals who can communicate easily with each other, with access to people's records and care plans at the right time, supported by the best decision support and monitoring tools.

- **Integrating services across health and care** so that people receive support and care in the place that is most convenient to them, whilst using health and care resources in the most effective way. Care providers are supported to take advantage of digital solutions to help deliver care efficiently and safely.

At the commencement of this programme work was largely funded through external, one-off funding and delivered by a small internal team. In 2022, ACCW DLT approved funding to create additional capacity of two permanent and two temporary posts to progress the care and wellbeing digital agenda. These included a digital social work practice lead, senior public health officer and two Information officers. Recruitment is currently underway to these posts which will focus on:

- Managing demand at the front end, provision of online and self-service resources
- Increasing use of technology to meet people's needs.
- Support for care providers to increase digital capacity and capabilities.

## **1.2 The Policy & research context**

The government has started to set out expectations around use of technology in social care. Publishing two white papers in 2021 *People at the Heart of care*<sup>1</sup> and *Next Steps to Put people at the heart of care in 2023*<sup>2</sup>. Both set out standards and funding proposals for digitising social care providers, which have influenced our approach to supporting the market. The council has also developed its own Corporate Digital strategy which provides a useful framework and context for the focussed work in ACCW.

In February 2023, the County Councils Network (CCN) published *Adopting the right technology to transform social care*<sup>3</sup>. This report sets out a recommended approach for local authorities to adopt digital and technology to support its care and wellbeing transformation. The four themes and main points detailed in the CCN report are summarised in Appendix A. Sections 1.3 to 1.6 of this report details the work that LCC is progressing under each of the themes.

## **1.3 Systems & solutions to manage demand**

### **1.3.1 Self-serve tools**

A key driver in the ACCW digital roadmap is the use of technology to promote and support people to self-serve, self-manage and self-help where people have the ability to do so.

The Council's website ([Lincolnshire.gov.uk](https://www.lincolnshire.gov.uk)) and Connect to Support online service directory ([Connect to Support Lincolnshire](#)) enable people to identify and access care and support services in the county themselves. The additional virtual wallet tool enables people to use their own funds or personal budgets to manage services accessed through the directory.

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<sup>1</sup> [People at the heart of care 2021](#)

<sup>2</sup> [Next Steps to put people at the heart of care 2023](#)

<sup>3</sup> [CCN Adopting the right technology to transform social care](#)

The online financial assessment tool allows people to find out how much they will need to pay for care in their own home, and how to apply online for financial assistance from the council. Approximately 80 people per month use the tool, which is a smart form which will expand dependent on the information input by the individual. A residential care version is currently being developed and is due to be available in late May 2023. This addition will mean that from July 2023, the council will offer the online route for financial assessments as a default. For those who need a paper form, a shorter 10 page form has been introduced and will be provided on request from the social work practitioner.

The council is also working with a technology provider on an online care needs assessment tool. Social care practice leads are currently examining where in the assessment pathway this will be placed, with an aim to introduce this for people to use in September 2023.

### **1.3.2 Links to the NHS & Care market**

The council has led on the implementation of the NHS England digitising social care programme in the county. This programme, which started in 2022, is the largest major investment by the government into digital social care and builds on existing work with the care association LinCA in building care market digital skills and capacity.

To date, using the NHS England funding, the council has grant-funded 33 care providers to invest in digital care record systems. The benefits of an electronic care record has been proven in terms of safety, quality & consistency of care and will ultimately enable a shared care record across health and care services.

### **1.3.3 Shared care record - Care portal**

The requirement for Integrated Care Systems (ICS) to implement a shared care record is well underway in Lincolnshire. The 'care portal' system allows care and health professionals to appropriately access (with agreed privacy controls) a person's care and health record to give a more complete picture of their situation, in order to improve the care and support provided to the person.

ACCW has led the development of this tool in LCC, which went live in early 2022 with two-way visibility of records. Health records such as medication, hospital attendance and planned care, are now visible to social care practitioners through the MOSIAC care record system. Conversely, health professionals can see planned social care provision. Data and informal feedback from practitioners has shown that this facility is welcomed and regularly used. Further plans for expanding the scope of the shared care record will see primary care and social care providers being able to access the records.

## **1.4 Delivering Quality Care with Technology**

In Summer 2022, the Council commenced a review with an expert care technology provider, to understand whether technology could be used effectively to deliver and

support social care services. The type of care technology being considered includes sensors, video call devices, smart speakers and other smart devices designed to help people with their care needs. These devices may be linked to care agencies, response services or to family and friends as appropriate. The review concluded in January 2023 and found;

***Care technology and consumer technology are not being used to their full potential in Adult Care in Lincolnshire. The County Council should seek to use care and consumer technology more extensively as part of its wider strengths-based approach. In doing so, there is a significant opportunity to contribute to improved outcomes for vulnerable residents and increase long-term financial sustainability for the council.***

***The council has already built some of the foundations for success the Digital Roadmap, for example, places the potential of care technology within a wider digital plan for adult social care. Perhaps most notably, following the roll out of LCC's strengths-based training, we have found that staff are aware of the potential of technology and are willing and interested to develop their knowledge and skills in this area.***

In response to these findings, funding and staff resource has been approved by the Council's leadership to commence an 18 month pilot using technology to avoid, replace or reduce use of traditional care services. This pilot aims to develop an evidence base for the future commissioning of a prevention & care technology service. This is in line with the approach being taken by other councils with social care responsibilities.

It is not appropriate for technology to meet all care needs, but it can in some cases reduce or replace the need for more expensive and resource intensive care services, in turn helping to deliver better outcomes for the person, reduce pressure on care providers and cost for care users and the Council.

The pilot is being planned now and is intended to commence in September 2023, with a focus on people who would have previously received homecare, residential care, supported living or family-based care at home.

## **1.5 Ensure digital will work for people**

### **1.5.1 Understanding Digital inclusion**

A key recommendation of the CCN report is for Councils to develop an understanding of the digital capabilities of their local population. This can then shape the planning and delivery of services, along with appropriate support being provided to those who are 'digitally excluded'. Until recently, our awareness of digital exclusion extended no further than knowing whether fast broadband was available in an area. There are many more complex factors at play which determine whether someone may be digitally excluded. The Public Health Intelligence team, supported by University of Lincoln, has developed a tool to understand the level of digital exclusion across the county's population and the reasons for this. The tool is available on the Lincolnshire Health Intelligence Hub

([LHIH.org.uk](http://LHIH.org.uk)) to organisations from across the health and care system to help plan the delivery of digital solutions and engage with the population in the most appropriate way.

### **1.5.2 Digital Support**

During the pandemic, LCC supported thousands of people across the county who were clinically extremely vulnerable. A major barrier identified to those people was access to and the ability to manage online services. In response, the council commissioned charities Carers First and Lincs Digital to provide support to people in getting online. Since the end of lockdown, the service has continued – with LCC providing additional funding to October 2023.

To date, the scheme has supported around 500 people to get online and confidently carry out tasks that keep them safe, independent, and well. The status of both organisations has enabled them to provide simple devices and data bundles to people at no, or low cost. With the funding from LCC largely covering staff and travel costs. The impact of the project has been far greater than expected, with workers highlighting cases where people have been supported to secure accommodation, expand their social networks and financially benefit thanks to the inclusion work.

### **1.6 Embedding the Change**

Key to any successful transformation is support for those who will be articulating a different approach to the people they work with. This is captured in the council's TEC first approach. Through initial work with Impower (the Improvement Programme), opportunities were identified to manage increasing demand and promote greater independence through embedding a Strengths Based Approach. In parallel, a 'TEC First' approach was developed to encourage all social care staff in assessments and reviews to consider the use of technology. These approaches were combined to maximise impact. A major culture change programme began with practitioner teams in 2021 and 2022, extending to the Carers Service and Customer Service Centre in 2022 and into 2023.

The impact of the TEC first approach to date, gives confidence that LCC practitioners can identify situations where TEC can be deployed in place of traditional care options, are confident to discuss this and are supporting service users to adopt new technology; and that service users are open to this. As at the end of January 2023, TEC first sessions have been completed by almost all of the 48 teams. Over 50% of conversations measured during roll-outs included a discussion about using TEC, of those 50% resulted in the person using or planning to use TEC to enable them to achieve their outcomes. Crucially, this has resulted in identifiable savings in both domiciliary and residential care costs with over £100k pa in cost avoidance from just 12 of the cases examined for impact. The true figure is expected to be higher.

An ongoing programme of work is in place to ensure this focus continues and to capture the benefits realised, using the case management system MOSAIC. Staff report increased motivation and job satisfaction through the ability to source technology as well as 'in person' care services to meet people's care needs.

## 2. Conclusion

Digital and technology services can help the Council meet its statutory requirements to meet care and prevention needs in the county. They can also help people in identifying the right care and support for their situation. For those who need help to adopt to digital methods, the council is aware of their needs and providing targeted support.

## 3. Consultation

### a) Risks and Impact Analysis

Risks and Impact analysis will be carried out for the technology pilot outlined in this report.

## 4. Appendices

These are listed below and attached at the back of the report	
Appendix A	Summarised themes and main points from CCN report Adopting the right technology to transform social care

## 5. Background Papers

The following background papers as defined in the Local Government Act 1972 were relied upon in the writing of this report.

Document title	Where the document can be viewed
Adopting the right technology to transform social care - CCN	<a href="http://www.countycouncilsnetwork.org.uk">www.countycouncilsnetwork.org.uk</a>
Putting People at the Heart of care & Next Steps to put people at the heart of care	<a href="http://www.gov.uk">www.gov.uk</a>

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