

Views and experiences of professional home-care providers for older adults on the use of technology in the home



Research project led by Aston University and funded by the Ministry of Housing, Communities, and Local Government in England

[Link to online questionnaire: www.egrist.org/ldf-professional-carers](http://www.egrist.org/ldf-professional-carers)

1 Introduction

Aston University invites you to take part in a research project funded by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government.

All the information you provide is entirely anonymous and no stored information can be traced back to you.

Before you decide if you would like to participate, please read the information about the questionnaire carefully, which you are welcome to discuss with others.

If there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information before you make your decision, feel free to contact one of the researchers whose details are given in Section 1.6.

1.1 What is this research about?

This research is aimed at professional home-care providers who are carers of more than one person aged 55 or older.

We are interested in your views and experience of using technology at home. This is to help identify opportunities where technology might enhance the quality of life and promote the independence of the people for whom you are providing care.

‘Technology’ is a general term that covers a range of electronic devices and systems that help people perform tasks that they would otherwise be unable to do, or increases the ease and safety with which the task can be performed. Computers, smart phones, and the internet are examples of technology.

This research involves completing a questionnaire which includes questions about the care you provide; the type of technologies, if any, that you use; and your views on the use of technology to help older adults with care needs to be as independent as possible. The questionnaire should take no more than 30 minutes to complete.

The questionnaire is completely anonymous. It does not include any questions that can identify you.

Your involvement in this research is voluntary. Whether or not you take part in the study will NOT affect your employment role or any services or support that the person you care for may receive.

1.2 How the results will be used

We will use your views and those of other informal carers to write a report which will be available to the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government Local Digital Fund and interested councils. The results may also be used for further research and analysis and published in scientific journals or conference proceedings. If the results of the study are published, they will not be able to identify you because we do not store any personal data about you. This means we are unable to provide you with copies of reports but they will be made accessible from the questionnaire website.

The aim of the report is to help councils and other care providers to identify where technology might be able to enhance the quality of life and promote the independence of people living at home with care needs.

1.3 Who is leading the study?

Aston University is the lead organisation for this study and is responsible for looking after the data.

1.4 Who has reviewed the study?

The study was given a favourable ethical opinion by the Aston University Research Ethics Committee.

1.5 What if I have a concern about my participation in the study?

If you have any concerns, please speak to the research team identified below and they will do their best to answer your questions.

If the research team are unable to address your concerns or you wish to make a complaint about how the study is being conducted you should contact the Aston University Director of Governance, Mr. John Walter, j.g.walter@aston.ac.uk or telephone 0121 204 4869.

1.6 Research team contacts

If you would like to discuss this research with someone, please contact:

Dr Christopher Buckingham: Email, c.d.buckingham@aston.ac.uk; Tel, 0121 204 3450.

Dr Lilit Hakobyan: Email, l.hakobyan2@aston.ac.uk; Tel, 0121 204 3000.

Thank you for taking time to read this information and for completing the questionnaire if that is what you choose to do.

2 Questionnaire

1. What is your gender?

- Male
- Female
- Other

2. What is your ethnic group?

- White - English/Welsh/Scottish/Northern Irish/British
- White - Any other White background (write in) _____
- Mixed/multiple ethnic groups
- Asian/Asian British
- Black African/Caribbean/Black British
- Other ethnic group

Please state:

- Prefer not to say

3. How many years have you been a professional carer?

- less than 5
- 6 - 10
- 11 - 20
- 21 - 30
- more than 30

4. What is the highest level of educational qualifications for which you received a certificate?

- No qualifications
- Certificates normally passed by the age of 16 (e.g. O level, CSE, GCSE)
- Certificates normally passed at the age of 18 (e.g. A level, BTEC, VCE)
- Higher education certificates (e.g. from a university, polytechnic, or other equivalent institution)

5. As far as you are aware, do any of the older adults you care for use any of the following technology at home (select all that apply)?

- Desktop or laptop computer
- Tablet computer (wireless touch screen personal computer that is smaller than a notebook but larger than a smartphone).
- Smart television (one connected to the internet and allowing you to interact with services)
- Motion sensors (sensors that monitor activity e.g. door/bed sensors, Just Checking etc)
- Personal emergency alarm (e.g. Telecare, Careline pendant etc)
- Smart phone/iPhone (i.e. a mobile phone with a touch screen display)
- Voice-activated virtual assistant (e.g. Amazon Echo and Alexa)
- Wearable fitness trackers (i.e. devices you wear to track your health and fitness)
- They don't use any of the above

6. What kinds of assistance do you provide to the older adult(s) you care for? (Select all that apply)

- Getting up/going to bed
- Washing/bathing
- Dressing/undressing
- Using the toilet
- Preparing meals/snacks/drinks
- Eating
- Drinking
- Taking medication
- Reminders/prompts to take medication, to eat or to drink
- Laundry
- Cleaning/tidying around the home
- Shopping
- Helping with the paperwork such as dealing with bills, filling in forms, writing letters etc
- Keeping the person company / providing emotional support
- Taking them out e.g. to shops, bank, social events etc
- Other

Please state:

USE OF TECHNOLOGY

7. Do you use any of the following technology in your own home (select all that apply)?

- Desktop or laptop computer
- Tablet computer (wireless touch screen personal computer that is smaller than a notebook but larger than a smartphone)
- Smart television (one connected to the internet and allowing you to interact with services)
- Motion sensors (sensors that monitor activity e.g. door/bed sensors, Just Checking etc)
- Personal emergency alarm (e.g. Telecare, Careline pendant etc)
- Smart phone/iPhone (a mobile phone with a touch screen display)
- Voice-activated virtual assistant (e.g. Amazon Echo and Alexa)
- Wearable fitness trackers (devices you wear to track your health and fitness)
- I don't use any of the above

8. How would you describe your general level of technical knowledge?

- I can understand pretty well any information technology.
- I am confident that I will be able to use most technology
- I have reasonable knowledge and can do things like sending emails, interacting with social media, using packages for creating documents and spreadsheets, etc.
- I know a bit but am only really able to do basic things like search the web and buy things online.
- I don't know anything about technology

*The following questions relate to the **use of digital technology** in home care (any computers, monitoring devices, the web and internet, etc). For each one, select the box equating to how useful it would be to you as a carer and whether or not you have ever had any training for it.*

9. Technology that helps with finding information and advice online

- Very useful Quite useful Not useful
- Have you ever been taught how to use it? Yes No

10. Developing content and publishing it online:

- Very useful Quite useful Not useful
- Have you ever been taught how to do it? Yes No

11. Maintaining privacy, confidentiality, and security of everyone's data held electronically:

- Very useful Quite useful Not useful
- Have you ever been taught how to do it? Yes No

12. Systems that monitor the health status/signs of cared-for adults
- Very useful Quite useful Not useful
Have you ever been taught how to use them? Yes No
13. Sensors that detect motion/activity of cared for adults (e.g. door/bed sensors, room movement monitors)
- Very useful Quite useful Not useful
Have you ever been taught how to use them? Yes No
14. Systems that provide alerts when a cared-for adult has a problem at home (e.g. falls over)
- Very useful Quite useful Not useful
Have you ever been taught how to use them? Yes No
15. Devices that prompt cared for adults to take medication, food or drink
- Very useful Quite useful Not useful
Have you ever been taught how to use them? Yes No
16. Equipment that helps carers with moving/handling situations
- Very useful Quite useful Not useful
Have you ever been taught how to use it? Yes No
17. Using digital technology to manage daily routines and tasks, including administrative work:
- Very useful Quite useful Not useful
Have you ever been taught how to do it? Yes No
18. Using digital technology to support the care relationship, including helping to bond with the care recipient and building trust and cooperation:
- Very useful Quite useful Not useful
Have you ever been taught how to do it? Yes No
19. Using technologies that allow people to take care of themselves in their own home:
- Very useful Quite useful Not useful
Have you ever been taught how to do it? Yes No
20. Setting up and managing digital devices and systems for yourself or the older adults:
- Very useful Quite useful Not useful
Have you ever been taught how to do it? Yes No
21. Training older adults how to use technology:
- Very useful Quite useful Not useful
Have you ever been taught how to do it? Yes No

22. Using online social networks and related communication technologies to collaborate with other health workers:

Very useful Quite useful Not useful

Have you ever been taught how to do it? Yes No

23. Using online social networks and related communication technologies to collaborate with the people you care for:

Very useful Quite useful Not useful

Have you ever been taught how to do it? Yes No

24. Using online social networks and related communication technologies for helping older adults support each other with their health care:

Very useful Quite useful Not useful

Have you ever been taught how to do it? Yes No

25. What, if anything, do you think might improve older adults' experience of home care?

Please state:

26. What changes, if any, might help you perform your home care worker role even more effectively?

Please state:

Thank you very much for taking the time to answer our questionnaire. If you would like to provide us with any additional information or comments, please email one of the researchers whose details are at the start of the questionnaire.

Any other comments: