ConnectED Briefing #8

Appendix 1: ConnectED: Practice Considerations

Technology-enabled care (TEC) for people living with dementia at home

These Practice Considerations are informed by research considered in the *ConnectED Briefing: Technology-enabled care (TEC) for people living with dementia at home* (May 2023)*.* They have been further shaped by conversations with adult social care practitioners involved in implementing TEC and the informal carer of a person living with dementia.

Language matters

The conversations you have with a person living with dementia and their informal or professional caregiver about installing technology are key. It could take time to build rapport, to build technology 'literacy', and to break down barriers of understanding. Consider:

- Talking with the person living with dementia and caregivers about how the technology fits into or supports day-to-day routines.
- Framing the conversation around how to improve wellbeing, rather than concentrating on risk or fears around safety.
- A caregiver or person living with dementia may be more positive towards the technology if they feel they have had an active choice in its installation.
- People may have very real fears about security or privacy related to technology.

> *"I think it's important to understand that technology isn't just safety related, using tech to improve the environment can reduce the unmet needs for the person with dementia, helping to reduce the situations where accidents can happen and contribute to carer burnout. By proactively engaging with the person and their carer to explain how this may improve their wellbeing it may help acceptance."* (Amanda Threlfall, Family carer)

Usability matters

To be effective, TEC should feel intuitive and fitted to a person's environment and how they live their life. Consider:

- Completing needs assessments in-person in the home. This will help identify more needs than if completed over the phone or when the person is not at home.
- Trialling equipment and involving caregivers in the process to help identify potential problems. For example, this might show that a Memrabel (a memory prompting alarm clock) has been placed somewhere the person doesn't expect it to be.
- Building relationships with caregivers. Their ongoing support could help identify and avoid equipment pitfalls and pinpoint if alternatives are needed. For example, a falls detector may not always alert on falling due to the type of fall; carers can help to regularly remind the person with dementia to also press the button if they fall, avoiding a loss of confidence in the equipment if it doesn't automatically alert.
- Reviewing regularly. Is the equipment still meeting someone's needs?
- Building an understanding of how TEC will fit into spaces shared with other family members or pets into your assessment and when recommending equipment.