



Barriers to Assistive Technology Uptake Workshop Oxfordshire County Council, 17th April 2014 9.00-12.45

Summary report

The AKTIVE consortium was invited to coordinate a workshop with Oxfordshire County Council in April 2014 following the successful launch of the findings at the end-of-project conference. The Council were at a particular point in the re-commissioning process around telecare, with the aspiration of bringing together both the telecare and standalone equipment into a single service. The workshop was attended by members of the AKTIVE project (Sue Yeandle, University of Leeds; Kate Hamblin, University of Oxford; Pete Buckle, Robens Institute) and a mix of senior management from the Equipment and Assistive Technology Board and operational staff from within the county.

The session began with a brief introduction from PI Sue Yeandle and Eleanor Crichton (Oxfordshire County Council, Commissioning Manager for Older People), followed by short presentations on the AKTIVE project's findings from Kate Hamblin and Pete Buckle.

After these initial introductions, the attendees broke out into three groups to explore the following issues:

A. *Telecare service principles*- questions considered:

1. Criteria for provision - should eligibility be based on Fair Access to Care, on prevention or on a universal service for older people?
2. What is the telecare service aiming to achieve?
3. Should telecare be a chargeable or free service?
4. Is telecare prescribing by health professionals feasible / appropriate?

B. *Telecare delivery*- questions considered:

1. Role of specialist / generalists within social care and health professional teams
2. How best to support this, e.g. mandatory AT training for prescribers?
3. Roles and responsibilities - who should do what, in-house (everyone/specialist team) and provider roles, re: assessment, installation, maintenance, de-installation, recycling, training, publicity, advice support, research

C. *Supporting users and those involved in their care and support*- questions considered:

1. How do we support users and those providing their 'caring network' to get the most out of telecare?
2. How do we support self-assessment, self-funders to get the best out of telecare?
3. What can / should Equipment & AT information provide?



Group A suggested that perhaps FACS assessments came too late if the aspiration is to create a preventative telecare and equipment service. The ideal would be for a principle of self-care where the telecare service could help individuals to help themselves. This would entail expanding the service from generally being installed following a crisis to a more preventative measure, however. In view of resource constraints on the local authority, funding of the service was also raised; it was felt that it was important to ensure those self-funding were well supported to make decisions about telecare and other services.

The delivery of telecare was discussed by **Group B**, who advocated training for all stakeholders involved in potential referrals for telecare, including GPs and other health professionals. Currently it was felt referrals were somewhat disjointed; raising the profile of telecare as an enabling tool was suggested, alongside training, as a means of combating this.

Group C focused on information, arguing this was key to empowering older people and their carers to get the most out of telecare. Better signposting within health and social care, in particular via GPs' surgeries, to help align telecare delivery with a preventative agenda, was strongly advocated.

The workshop provoked some interesting debate and ideas. It also provided a forum for both operational staff and management from both health and social care to meet and discuss the future of the telecare and equipment services. Eleanor Crichton, Oxfordshire County Council's Commission Lead commented:

"OCC have found the results of the AKTIVE project very useful in the re-commissioning of the equipment and assistive technology service. In the new service, the Council has tried to address the barriers to technology uptake which were highlighted by the project and aims to prevent these issues where possible in the future. The workshop was a great opportunity to share this research with a wider audience of health and social care professionals, as well as facilitate discussion on the future of assistive technology in the county".