

Making decisions about smart care

Smart care uses digital technologies to help people with conditions like dementia live safely at home.

There are lots of different ways that digital technologies can help:

- They can give reminders about appointments or taking medication
- They can help to keep in touch with video calls
- They can monitor people for falls or health scares
- They can check that people are going about their daily activities as normal
- They can track people who might wander or get lost

It can be difficult to choose which is right for you. Here are some questions you might ask to help you to decide.

What can it do?

Video cameras can be a good way to see how someone is, but they can feel intrusive.

Sensors can tell if someone is moving about without needing to see them.

Smart plugs can tell us whether the kettle has been boiled.

Smart watches can track movement and health measurements such as pulse and blood oxygen levels or how we sleep.

It's important to think about the kind of monitoring that you might feel comfortable with.

How do you set up and maintain it?

Many devices are quite simple to install and need little day-to-day attention.

There will often be small tasks like changing batteries or regularly charging a smart watch or tablet

You may be able to keep track using an app on a smart phone or a website, and these may need updating occasionally.

Who will do these tasks?

Where's my data?

People often want to make sure that the personal data being collected about them is held safely.

You will need to think about which friends and family, carers and healthcare staff you might want to be able to see your data.

You might want to check terms and conditions that you are signing up to, to make sure you trust your data are held safe.

How does it do that?

We need to be clear what smart care can do and what it cannot do - it's a false security if we're thinking that a system will detect a fall immediately when it can't.

Some systems use artificial intelligence to spot trends and patterns while some need a human to keep watch or trigger an alarm.

How much would you want to know about how it does what it does?

The humans in the loop

We often do not want technologies to take decisions by themselves and instead we want a human to oversee decisions.

Smart monitoring is usually set up like this, with either NHS staff or a call centre following up alerts. Often a carer or family member will then need to be involved to make sure all is OK.

Who will be involved in your smart care, and what do they need to do?

Consent

Our choices about care are very personal to us and our unique situations.

It's important to think about who needs to agree to a smart care system. What choices do people have? How can they express their views about their care in the future?

How can we be sure that smart care is enabling people to live as well as possible?

For further information see www.surrey.ac.uk/smartcareethics

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