TECHNOLOGY TO HELP YOU STAY INDEPENDENT

LONDON BOROUGH OF
RICHMOND UPON THAMES

INTRODUCTION TO HOW TECHNOLOGY CAN SUPPORT YOU

Technology is all around us and when used safely and correctly it can make a huge difference to quality of life and daily living. You may have heard the term **'care technology'**, this simply means any digital or smart device that can support your independence, to help you better self-manage and monitor your own (or someone else's) health and wellbeing. Care technology can provide accessibility, convenience, choice and control that enables you to have an improved, independent quality of life at home and in the community.

There are many different types of smart devices and technology available, and it is important to choose the ones that best suit your needs. This is because using the right device and technology can help you support your independence, health and wellbeing. In this leaflet we have explained some of the terms used to describe different types of technology.

Smart home technology

Smart home technology allows you to remotely control appliances around your home using a smartphone, home hub or tablet connected to the internet.
Some examples of smart home technology:

- Smart or video doorbells will provide extra security as you can see who is at the door and talk to them before you answer it. It is a safe way to talk to cold callers.

- Smart plugs can be integrated into other smart home technology allowing you the ease and flexibility to turn appliances on and off remotely, such as individual lights, portable heaters, garden sprinkler hose.

- Smart speakers and virtual assistants such as Alexa are voice-activated devices that can perform certain tasks like play music and record your shopping list. This is how Mary uses Alexa:

Mary lives in her own home. She was diagnosed with Dementia two years ago and although she has some memory loss and impaired cognition, she is still able to do many things for herself. Mary wishes to remain as independent as possible. Mary asks Alexa to open and close her smart blinds at the right time of day so Mary remains better oriented.

Using smart lightbulbs, she can slowly lighten and darken her room in the mornings and evenings and keep her oriented to the time of day. She uses Alexa to wake her up in the morning and remind her of an appropriate time to go to bed. Mary also has a smart doorbell, which is connected to Alexa which enables her to see who is at the door before opening.
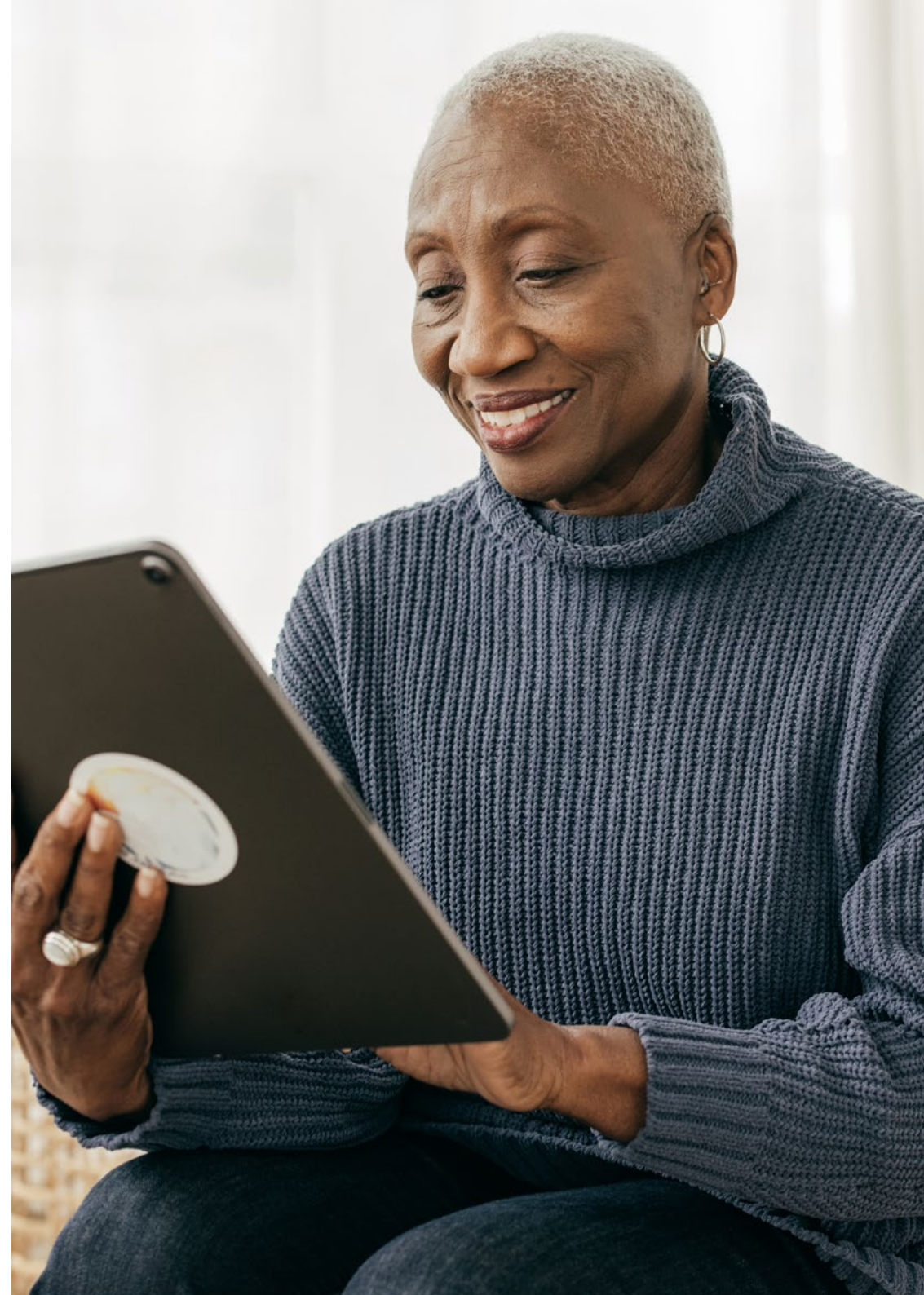
Movement sensors and home monitoring systems

These are devices which can be worn by you or fitted around your home. They can help keep you safe by alerting others that you might need help. For example, if you have a fall, a wearable alarm will either send automatic alerts or can be activated by you manually. In an emergency the person who cares for you will be alerted. You can even have lights which come on when you move, to keep you safe. Smoke and fire alarm detectors are also a type of sensor.

David lives on his own and contacted the Adult Social Care team after a few falls at home. We recommended a wearable alarm and a key safe installed to make sure he could get help if he had another fall.

We also got a walking frame for him and a short reablement independence plan to re-establish safe day-to-day personal care routines. This has given David the confidence to live more independently.
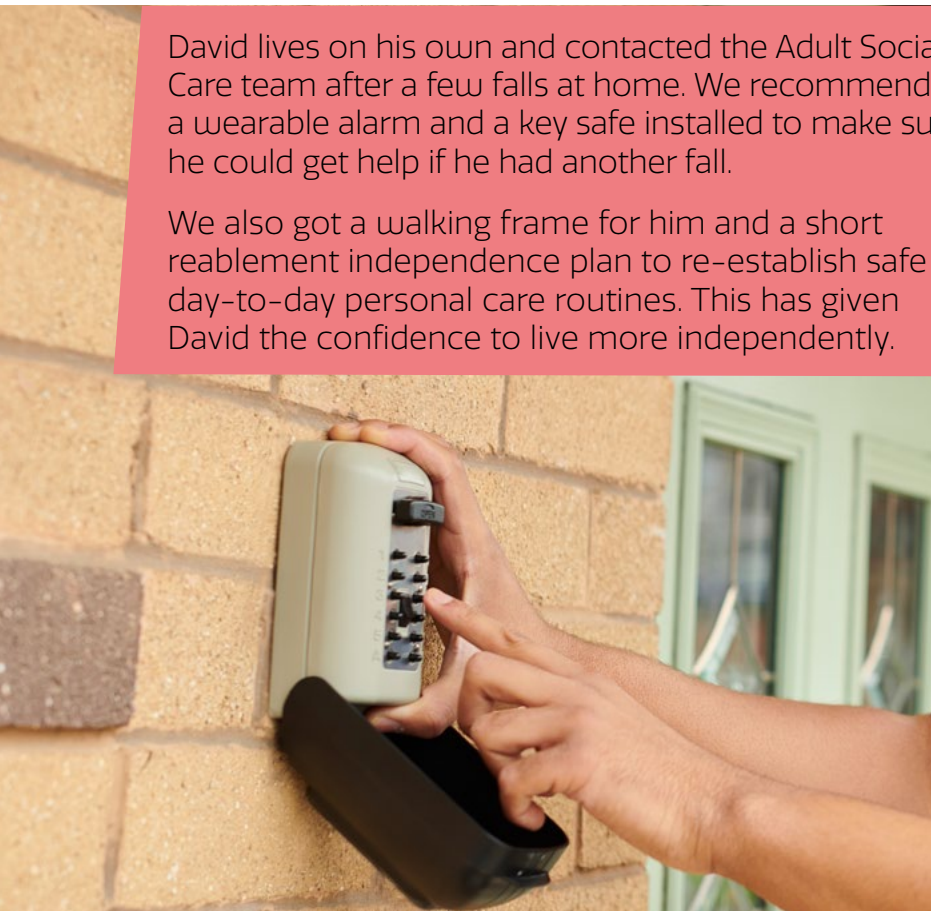
Smart phones, video devices and wearables

There are many different types of smart devices, and it is important to choose the ones that best suit your needs. A smart watch is a wearable device that can monitor your step count, heart rate and you can also set reminders. On a tablet or smart phone, you can subscribe to virtual exercise programmes to join in with others, and be part of an online community to share similar experiences. You can also control your smart home remotely using your smart phone. Having a tablet, phone or laptop with a built-in camera will allow you to download video apps such as Whatsapp and Zoom so that you can video call your friends, family or carer.

David also misses his son very much, so we helped him find a device that allows him to video call his son on a regular basis. The video call also enables David's son to spot anything out of the ordinary or different about this dad and his surroundings.

HOW CAN I GET CARE TECHNOLOGY?

All you need to do is contact our Adult Social Care team (contact details on page back). We will have a chat with you and help you explore different types of care technology, including apps and devices that best suit your needs. We will talk to you about the things you enjoy doing, what your strengths are, what you would like to achieve and how you will benefit from using technology. Together we will agree on the type of technology that may suit you best. If required, our partnership organisations will install the equipment and provide support to help you get started. If your needs change over time or you have become more confident in using technology, we will support you to change to something different.

We are working with a technology partner to provide you with a range and choice of care technology products. This service is called Gloria and it features a range of devices that can be customised to be part of your daily life and help you live as independently and safely as possible in your own home and local community. Depending on your needs we can offer a combination of devices mentioned in this leaflet and more.

- Alexa Dot or Alexa Show
- Smart plugs
- Falls buttons and wearables
- Ring doorbell

What is available as part of the Gloria service?

Smart sensors

These small devices can detect and monitor your movements passively and can help you live independently in your own home. They do not use camera, video, or microphone but are linked to a smart device and can alert your carer or family member if there is a change to your routine or if you may need help.

Smart watch

This watch allows you to call for help if you need it either at home or when out and about. It can detect if there has been no movement/inactivity that may indicate a fall has occurred and send an alert for help.

Video Care Phone

The Video Care Phone is a tablet device that allows you to make two-way video calls with your family, friends and carers in an easy way by simply touching a picture on the screen.

Digital chair and bed mats

These mats are placed either under a bed mattress or chair. They send an alert to your carer when you get off / on to your bed or chair. Your carer or family member can see information and build a picture of your daily routine so they know if something out of the ordinary happens and when you may need help.

If the Gloria products are not suitable for you, we will explore other technology and apps that meet your needs for independent living.

WHAT SUPPORT IS AVAILABLE IF I AM UNSURE ABOUT USING TECHNOLOGY?

If you have never used a laptop or smart phone or your device runs an automated update, it can be a daunting experience. Or you may have some knowledge and experience but would like to learn more about using technology. Alongside our Adult Social Care team, the Connect to Tech Service can help. Connect to Tech is a group of local organisations who can support you to get online and help increase your confidence in using technology.

We have listed the organisations that you can contact for information and advice, find out more about upcoming workshops and training, and in some cases borrow a device to try at home.

Richmond AID

Richmond AID's Connect to Tech service offers people with physical and/or learning disabilities, and unpaid carers training, courses, and informal groups to learn how to get online or how to do other new things online. Courses cover email, Zoom calls, WhatsApp messaging, internet shopping, finding information, online safety, and accessibility features and apps. Courses will also cover Wi-Fi and broadband. You can bring your own smart phone, tablet or laptop or borrow one.

- Email: **connecttotech@richmondaid.org.uk**
- Telephone: **020 8831 6070**

Ruils

Ruils' Connect to Tech service offers a 'Try before you buy' scheme which allows you to borrow items such as phones, laptops, tablets, and smart speakers for a period of time. They will work with you to identify a device that best suits your needs and help you to set it up and to purchase the equipment after the trial period.

- Email: **connecttotech@ruils.co.uk**
- Telephone: **020 8831 6088**

Ruils' Assistive Technology Project can assess your technology needs and agree an assistive technology package that enables you to live more independently. Their engineer may visit you at home to do a survey and have a chat. Once you have agreed the detail and ordered the equipment, Ruils can arrange an installation date with you if required.

- Email: **dpsupport@ruils.co.uk**
- Telephone: **020 8831 6088**

Richmond Mencap

Richmond Mencap's Connect to Tech service helps people with learning disabilities, Autism, ADHD, and unpaid carers to get comfortable with technology. They work with people who are new to technology and with those who want to improve their skills. You will be able to work in small friendly groups or have one to one support. You can bring your own smart phone, iPad, or laptop or borrow one of theirs.

- Email: **office@richmondmencap.org.uk**
- Telephone: **020 8744 1923**

Richmond Borough Mind

Richmond Mind's Connect to Tech service offers people with mental health needs, and unpaid carers weekly IT Peer Support sessions where you take your phone or tablet for support on a specific issue or to practice/learn new skills. You can also access a Digital Pod for a secure and confidential online counselling space. People with mental health needs and their unpaid carers can also access general IT training with Richmond AID and mental health specific training sessions. Find out more about appropriate apps, managing sensory overload, and to explore other digital solutions.

- Email: **referrals@rbmind.org**
- Telephone: **020 3137 9590**

Age UK Richmond

Age UK Richmond's Connect to Tech service is also supported by Multicultural Richmond. It offers a 4G enabled tablet loan to older adults and unpaid carers with low level digital skills and accessibility for a 6-week period to help you develop skills and recognise the benefits of using technology. Age UK Richmond can advise you on which devices to buy and how to connect them. Also on offer are one to one IT and technology support sessions, drop-in sessions, and group subject specific sessions.

- Email: **connecttotech@ageukrichmond.org.uk**
- Telephone: **020 8744 1965**

Citizens Advice Richmond

Citizens Advice's Help To Get Online service offers information and advice on local training courses that can help you gain the skills you need to use the internet.

- Contact Citizens Advice through their enquiry form at **citizensadvicerichmond.org/general-advice-email/**
- Telephone: **0808 2787873**

Richmond Carers Centre

Richmond Carers Centre support unpaid carers and their programme of technology workshops includes topics such as online banking and shopping to help unpaid carers use technology as part of their everyday life and caring role. They also offer IT drop-in sessions.

- Email: **info@richmondcarers.org**
- Telephone: **020 8867 2380**

Further information

For further information complete our online enquiry form **richmond.gov.uk/make_an_adult_social_care_enquiry**

Visit our web pages **richmond.gov.uk/adult_social_care**

Our contact details

Monday to Friday 9am to 5pm
Telephone: **020 8891 7971**
SMS Phone: **07903 738043**
Email: **adultsocialservices@richmond.gov.uk**

Write to us at:

London Borough of Richmond Upon Thames Council
Adult Social Care and Public Health
Civic Centre, 44 York Street
Twickenham
TW1 3BZ

For information on our Privacy Notice please visit **richmond.gov.uk/data_protection**

If you have difficulty understanding this publication and you would like this leaf et in a different language, large print or Braille please call: **020 8891 7971**

Ref: 01/11/22