

Alzheimer Scotland

Digital Dementia Advisor

Briefing Note

Nov 2021

Technology Advisors

Descriptor

The role of the Digital Dementia Advisor (DDA) is to support people living with dementia at home to retain their independence and quality of life using a range of technology, and working closely with other teams, including the telecare service.

This DDA works directly with individuals in their homes to identify outcomes, using the ADAM (About Digital and Me) tool as a basis for discussion, and matches them with a bespoke technology solution to meet their needs. They then support the installation and use of the solution to ensure those outcomes are met. Regular reviews update and change the use of, or the type of technologies used as the individual's needs change.

The DDA also delivers upskilling and support to other staff both within Alzheimer Scotland and the other teams involved in health and social care in their localities. Although this organisation is focused on people with a diagnosis of dementia, the role could easily be replicated for other cohorts.

Features

- The DDA often sees people before they have been assigned to a dementia link worker, so early intervention is possible and can delay the need for more formal care.
- The DDAs have access to the Alzheimer Scotland Digital Dementia Resource Centres, where technology is integrated and can be demonstrated to allow people to “try before they buy” as well as working with partners who have demonstrator sites.

Benefits

- Staff involved in the delivery of care for an individual have a named point of contact for support to utilise tech-based solutions and to understand how they connect with telecare services and/or utilise items the individual already has.
- Staff have the opportunity to gain a good level of understanding about the use of technology without feeling they have to be expert, and are confident in its use knowing that there is support.

Impact

- Allows options for family to be involved in the delivery of care and support, even remotely.
- Provides options for earlier intervention, reducing resource intensive crisis support.
- Can support reduction of delayed hospital discharge with the provision of a “technology prescription” where personal care is not required.

Considerations

- Review of referral procedures to embed Digital Advisor in support routes from social work.
- Changes to assessment procedures to incorporate the consideration of technology.
- Use of Self Directed Support is important to achieve equity of results where service users will supply technology.
- Knowledge of the challenges faced by people living with dementia is as important as technical ability for the Advisor

Potential Costs

- Approximately £50,000 per annum per post, including on costs
- Equipment budget £10,000 per annum for testing and trials