



## Can technology revolutionise care?

**Chair:** Pam Creaven, Services Director, Age UK

**Speakers:**

- Dr Elisabeth Boulton, Research Associate, University of Manchester and Chair of Board of Trustees, Age UK Calderdale & Kirklees
- Jeremy Myerson, Helen Hamlyn Professor of Design, Helen Hamlyn Centre for Design, Royal College of Art
- Ed Russell, Director of Innovation and Delivery, WCS Care

The Government's 'Grand Challenge for an Ageing Society' in its Industrial Strategy sets out the aim of 'investing in new technologies that will revolutionise the way we age'. Dr Elisabeth Boulton, Professor Jeremy Myerson and Ed Russell led this discussion exploring the role new technologies play in revolutionising care along with the advantages and challenges this poses.

**Key points raised in this session:**

Design and usability is key - what are their personal motives behind requiring new tech and what do the people in need want? It is vital to understand people, the grain and the history that makes up their life, in order to introduce them to a new piece of tech.

It is important to remember that technology is one of a range of options and it should never completely replace human contact, which is the ultimate form of care and technology can be used to assist. An interesting question to ask yourselves is "In the future, do we want humans or robots to look after us?" Studies show that 75% of people answer humans & that the older and younger generations have very different relationships with technology.

New services can have a huge impact not only on the recipients of care, but also for the carers. For example, Ed Russell referred to the example of Electronic Care Planning that WCS Care have trailed, which is proven to save the carers 1 hour a day.

**Audience questions**

Q1. Do you have any knowledge on the ethics of voice assistants?

Ed Russell responded that in his experience, ensuring that everyone using the device has full understanding of the benefits and that consent is given is very



important. It goes back to really understanding the individual and ensuring it is an active decision they have made.

**Q2. What is really going to encourage those people who aren't interested at all to use apps?**

The panel stated that the biggest drive would be personal motivation – what drives them? Is it contact with their family? Is it the freedom to be more mobile at home? Once they have established their needs they can find the most suitable technology to provide support. Technology is personal.