



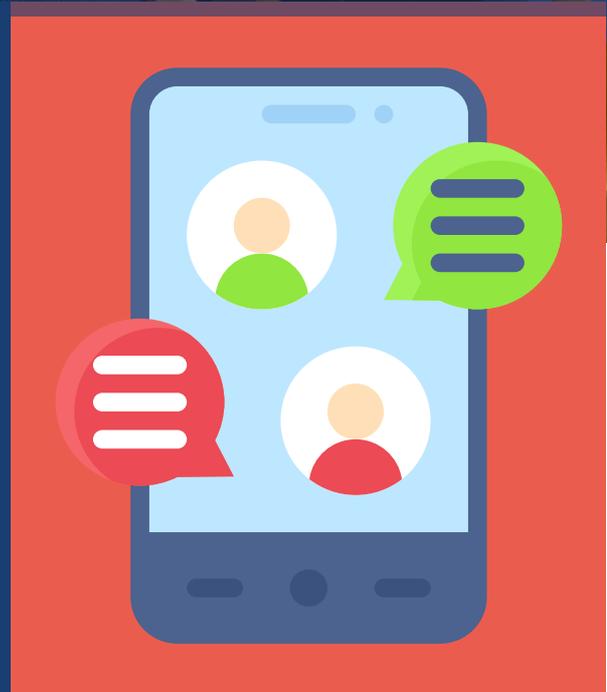
**NIHR** | Applied Research Collaboration  
East of England



Stevenage Dementia Involvement Group

# Social Wellbeing and Technology

November 2022



# Introduction

Stevenage Dementia Involvement Group provides opportunities for people with experience of dementia to have influence on research and the planning of new services. In each session the group will discuss a particular topic relating to living with dementia or health and social care services in Stevenage.

Stevenage Dementia Involvement Group met face-to-face on 17th November 2022.

In attendance were eight people with experience of living with or caring for somebody with dementia.

Attending the group was guest researcher Alison Tingle (University of Hertfordshire).

The topic of discussion was **social wellbeing and technology**.



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**IMAGE** | Members of the Stevenage Dementia Involvement Group on 17/11/2022

# What happened?

Alison introduced the study she is working on which is about exploring **digital technology use** by older people and how this supports **social wellbeing**.

Alison mentioned that the term Social Wellbeing can be defined in many different ways. Alison asked the group what the term "social wellbeing" means to them?  
(answers on the next page)





# Question: What does the term *Social Wellbeing* mean to you?

The group said:

- **Being confident** enough to use phone/laptop. A lot of people I know are frightened of technology. Friends refuse to text.
- **Access to networks of people** as a carer's social circle does diminish, keeping connected.
- **The Red Shed** meeting likeminded people.
- **Commonality**
- **Physical wellbeing**- getting outside.
- **Self-care**- making the effort with yourself
- **Making you laugh**- sending on funny pictures/memes to friends
- All of this- **holistic approach** to social wellbeing. Having social wellbeing provides **motivation** and purpose.



# Question: Did you use more technology during the pandemic?

The group said:

- Yes, most if not all members used Zoom. It is necessary to have help with this sometimes– e.g. grandchildren. Su provided practice sessions over the phone.
- Attending virtual exercise classes and quizzes.
- Most are no longer using Zoom these days but some still are: getting involved with research in Hatfield that would not be able to get involved with (as don't drive) without technology; Carers in Herts groups are still online.
- It is distracting seeing yourself on the screen.
- Prefer face-to-face meetings, you get to have eye contact. Extra conversations that happen on the side.



## Question: Would *dementia specific* technology be useful? Or would you prefer something *dementia inclusive*?

The group said:

- As long as it makes life easier then it would be good.
- Simple and fewer commands makes it easier to use.
- Not timing out would be helpful as sometimes need more time with technology.
- If people living with dementia could use this technology themselves it would boost their confidence.
- People living with dementia wouldn't be so bored if they had something they could do on the iPad.
- "Dementia Friendly is friendly to everyone"
- A portal that then opens dementia friendly apps would be good.



## Question: What kind of apps/social media do you use?

- The group weren't aware of any carers apps that Alison mentioned and were keen to find out more information.
- Some members were on the Alzheimer's Society mailing list
- Some members preferred paper forms/books to apps.
- Most if not all members use Whatsapp. Can contact friends abroad for free.
- Started sending around funny videos to friends on Whatsapp.
- One person with dementia used to use their mobile phone but not so much anymore.
- It is often difficult to keep up with changing technology.

# Next steps

This group provided people with experience of living with dementia the opportunity to share their opinions and experiences about technology and social wellbeing. Members of the group have been invited to be involved with the project if they would like to.

For the researcher, the session provided the opportunity to hear people's experiences and to get the views and opinions on potential users of this technology.

This summary report has been read and approved by the group members who attended.

This group is organised by researchers from the University of Hertfordshire as part of the National Institute of Health Research Applied Research Collaboration (ARC) East of England. For more information, or if you are interested in joining or visiting the group, please contact Nicole Jones ([nicole.jones@cpft.nhs.uk](mailto:nicole.jones@cpft.nhs.uk)) or visit our website <https://arc-oe.nihr.ac.uk/stevenage-dementia-involvement-group> (or use the QR code below)



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