

Is that it?! Technology and the registered manager



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Taking out my smart phone and flicking through the open apps I can see on the family's cloud account that three new pictures of my grandson have been uploaded. At my mother in laws the home CCTV system shows me that her carer is putting her eye drops in. On another app her heating system is telling me that it may get colder over the next few days and would I like to adjust the temperature?

One of my friends is a registered manager. Every day she checks the electronic summary care reports on how her workforce has supported residents over the last few days; looks at which families have explored their loved ones' electronic care records and who doesn't seem to have had much contact recently. She wonders if a phone or video call to the family might be a useful follow up.

Before writing this blog, I tweeted my boss, turned my email off so it's doesn't 'ping,' photographed my train receipt from yesterday and uploaded it via my expenses app for processing. If this is what I can do now with the technology in my pocket - what might I be able to do in the future?

At the beginning of the 20th century it was unusual for a household to have running water or electricity. Whilst television was invented in the 1920's it wasn't until the 1950's that it began to take hold. The internet came properly into being in the 1980's. I can remember a colleague telling people how big the internet was going to be and none of us having any idea what he was on about.

20 years ago email was a relatively new thing. Most people I knew printed out their emails, wrote their replies on the email in pencil and then went back onto the PC to type their response.

If we look at technology from a care and support perspective, we've gone from the letter and paper files, to the phone and fax, to email for the few sat at a desk to email on the move for the many. From buff envelopes containing our medical records, to electronic records, to app based recording systems that are accessible to families when they are in the home of their family member with care and support needs. Assistive technology has gone from hand rails and commodes to remote monitoring, acoustic alarms, bed alarms and robot carpet cleaners.

One thing we can say with certainty is that technology will continue to impact on how we work, what we understand to be work, how we support people, supervise and manage our workforce and ensure that the people our teams care for get the right support in the right way at the right time.

Commentators say that we are entering the fourth industrial revolution and that the pace of technological revolution is similar to when we went from the horse to the steam train.

A revolution where electric, driverless cars, lorries and ambulances transport each and every one of us from home to hospital, deliver our groceries based on diets defined for us by our electronic nutritionists - using sensors in our wearable device to check that we are getting right balance of nutrients based on our age, height, gender and genome profile - advising us when we might need treatment for emerging health conditions. No taxi drivers. No lorry drivers. No couriers. No dieticians. No General Practitioners.

For the registered manager this could mean...

Artificial intelligence that enables us to make better decisions; particularly when our work role means that we are often making decisions on our own, with limited access to two-way feedback from others with similar but different knowledge and experience. The registered manager could use artificial intelligence to sense check their thinking about what the best ways to support people are that we are responsible for. This use of artificial intelligence could be particularly useful for registered managers who don't get regular supervision or don't have regular contact with other registered managers inside

and outside their organisations. Going beyond the web search to a technological system that answers, challenges, reflects and explores ideas and solutions with us.

Hyper-connectivity and mass automation enabling us to draw on a broad and diverse range of knowledge and skills to help us identify solutions to the issues people we support face. Hyper-connectivity enables people with care and support needs to seek out people with similar needs to themselves, compare and contrast support offers and make more informed choices about their own care and support. Mass automation enables routine support tasks to be managed from a central hub. The reassurance of remote video/audio monitoring for vulnerable people living alone. Remote alarm systems enabling people to maintain their independence and dignity.

Virtual reality and augmented reality enable us to widen the horizons of people no longer able to leave their homes. Enabling people to visit shops, go on holiday, see friends and family, attend live concerts and sports events and feel they are part of the crowd. Enable the workforce to test out and learn in virtual environments, able to take risks and make mistakes without harming people they care for as they learn new skills and test out new ways of working.

However technology develops and whichever technological vision of the future comes into being, the registered manager has a key role in making sure that the fourth industrial age is implemented in care and support in a way that enhances people's lives meaningfully. Technology is there to enable and empower you, your workforce and people your workforce supports. The most important things to remember in your relationship with technology is that it's there to support you and the people you support.

When assessing your use of technology and how your workforce and the people they support might benefit from technology it's important to not make assumptions about how 'tech-minded' your workforce is.

There are two things you should aim to keep in mind when looking at the digital future of your part of social care and support:

- Will the digital solution you are considering deliver meaningful benefits for the people you support and your workforce?
- Will the digital solution give you more time to care?

More time to do the human stuff that (as yet) technology just can't do as well as a real human.

You can find out more about Skills for Care's work on digital working, learning and information sharing look [here](#)

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