



“Standards can make a significant contribution to the development of innovative solutions that enable more people to live more independently as they get older”

How standards could make a significant contribution to addressing the growing need for long-term care in the UK

In his 2012 report, *No stone unturned: in pursuit of growth*, Lord Heseltine recommended that we work closely with the Technology Strategy Board (TSB) and Research Councils to create standards for new technologies and services at the earliest opportunity.

Currently, we're working on four TSB pilot studies, one of which concerns assisted living, more specifically, the TSB's new Long Term Care Revolution project.

In September 2013, at a “revolutionary sandpit workshop”, TSB brought together organizations and people willing to work together to bring novel ideas to institutional long-term care, with £2.4m of funding available.

We delivered a presentation on the contribution that standards can make to revolutionizing long-term care, enabling the creation of new products and services, while ensuring that they can function together.

We also explained how standards could support assurance schemes, regulation and government priorities. A thought-provoking discussion session with workshop participants followed, focusing on how standards could be applied.

Consumer expectations

We've since commissioned research to gather opinions from the public, carers and nurses to find out more about consumer expectations for long-term care and the results will be published in 2014.

We also plan to hold workshops and roadshows at which we'll be seeking to find out more about consumer attitudes to standardization in revolutionizing long-term care. A framework document will be created and we expect to start developing two pilot standards in 2014, in support of the TSB Long Term Care Revolution project.

This provides an opportunity for early standards setting in an area of disruptive innovation (ie one that helps to create a new market by disrupting an existing one), as well as the chance for consumers to take the lead in setting standards for long-term care.

Cost implications

If nothing changes, the demand for long-term care will continue to grow because more of us will live longer, as a result of major advances in food, nutrition, health, medicine and hygiene that began in the previous century. This has major cost implications (the Local Government Association estimates that by 2019-20, adult social care spending will exceed 45 per cent of council budgets).

The TSB wants to “eliminate institutional long-term care through business-led projects with the potential for real commercial value in the UK”. To achieve this, it wants to “harness creativity and innovative capabilities” in various sectors to provide more options in the future “that will enable people to live with more dignity and autonomy, as well as help decrease the financial pressure that government and individuals will face if they need high levels of care.”

According to the TSB: “Despite numerous initiatives, the UK still grapples with affordable long-term care that delivers quality of life for older adults and their families.” Standards can make a significant contribution to the development of innovative solutions that enable more people to live more independently as they get older.

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