Conference Abstract

Caring is easier when you do it Jointly

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Abstract

As society both enjoys the benefits but grapples with the challenges of an ageing population, how we manage care and caring has started to reach the public and political consciousness as one of the greatest challenges facing 21st century societies.

The squeeze on public finances means that families have to take more responsibility for care at a time when many depend on dual incomes and are juggling other personal/family commitments.

The bulk of care is and has always been provided within families, with twice as many unpaid carers – nearly 6.5 million - as there are paid staff in the health and social care systems combined.

If we recognise the unsustainable pressures on the health and care systems that help older, sick or disabled people, so we have to recognise the unsustainable pressures on the families who often make up the shortfall in their services.

The impact of care on individuals and families can be challenging. Managing a care package for your mum with dementia 100 miles away or organising a hospital appointment for your dad when you are at work can be stressful. Distance caring and sandwich caring are more and more common and we need tools to help us manage care alongside our increasingly complex lives.

But we have not yet fully explored the role technology could play – from family members using online 'apps', to reviewing and purchasing care. Just as online tools, social media and 'apps' have revolutionised how we plan our lives, socialise and enjoy entertainment – technology has the capacity to bring radical changes on how families care for ill, older or disabled loved ones alongside work, family, community and social lives.

Effectively co-ordinating care between family and friends could make all the difference. But most people are not using technology to help with health conditions or care needs. A recent Carers UK YouGov poll showed that although more than 7 in 10 people use technology in their everyday lives, fewer than 1 in 3 use technology to support health and care.

Developed and recently launched by Carers UK, Jointly is a mobile and online tool designed to support families who look after an older, ill, frail or disabled loved one.

Jointly is designed to make caring a little easier, less stressful and a lot more organised by making communication and co-ordination between the people who share the care as easy as a text message.

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Jointly has been developed in consultation with carers and its inclusive, multiplatform design allows users to access the app both online but also through the app stores. No matter where accessed from, Jointly offers a similar user experience.

How does Jointly work?

Jointly works with circles of care. With Jointly a user can create a circle of care for the person they support. Once a Jointly circle has been set-up a user can invite others to join them and share the care.

Jointly features:

- Simple, intuitive group communication

- Profile page

- Tasks/lists

- Calendar

- Medication list

- Contacts page

Keywords