How the TAPPI Project is inspiring us

Daniel Rock, Platform's TAPPI TEC Project Officer

TAPPI Phase 2

"The Technology for our Ageing Population: Panel for Innovation (TAPPI) project aims to improve the way technology is used in housing and care for older people."
-Housing LIN

- Platform successfully bid to be one of six test-beds in England, Scotland and Wales to collaborate on Phase 2 of the TAPPI Project (TAPPI2).

- TAPPI compliments Platform's corporate commitments and provides us with a great opportunity to share our learning with others, in real time.

THE TEST SITE

- Harling Court in Ledbury, Herefordshire, has 41 apartments. Customers must be over 60, and demonstrate a care or additional support need.

- It was built in 1991 with very limited integration of technology.

- Last year, the existing hardwired call alarm and door entry system needed replacement. With 2025's Digital Switchover and the opportunities that come with it in mind, Appello's Smart Living Solutions were installed in late 2022.

WHERE ARE WE AT?

- Platform are at the beginning of a journey to introduce Technology Enabled Care more extensively to it's customers. We understand the benefits it can bring to both the organisation and its residents, and we know the two can exist symbiotically.

- For example, if the health of a resident deteriorates to the extent they must leave their home, immeasurable distress is likely to be caused to the resident, their family and carers. It may place excessive strain on social workers and housing staff. For Platform, it means lost rental income whilst suitable new customers are found.

- By assessing for and providing suitable TEC solutions the customer may be able to remain in their home. The customer will feel safer, more independent, and better connected, improving their quality of life. Platform Housing Group retains a valued customer.

PREVENTION

- One of the 10 TAPPI Principles is **_Preventative:_**

  - Every Harling Court resident is issued the Appello LivingHub touchscreen unit, integrating video communication, and wearable pendant for emergency use as standard. We will also be issuing tablet computers to each apartment to further increase digital opportunities for personal independence and social connectivity.

  - All Harling Court residents were offered a TEC assessment, carried out with our TEC partner Community Housing, to discuss individual needs and identify additional solutions. We are beginning to procure these solutions- Tipper Kettles, motion lights, beacons, Alexa Show, bed occupancy sensors are just some examples.

  - Any new Harling Court resident will be offered a TEC assessment in the beginning stages of their tenancy. Existing customers who have already been assessed will be offered regular reassessments to ensure changes in health and attitude are considered.

This way, Technology Enabled Care will be used to it's full potential in that it can **prevent** a crisis point from being reached.

MISCONCEPTIONS OF THE WORD 'TECHNOLOGY'

- The word 'technology' evokes fear in many residents at Harling Court.

- It has connotations of super complex computers and unfathomable software systems.

- It's a word many associate with change for the worse: people can feel it is a threat to their way of life.

- General fear of change; *"the old system worked, why do we need a new one?"*

CHALLENGING THE MISCONCEPTIONS

- Residents are surprised when they are reminded the pendant they wear around their neck is a TEC device.

- Reassuring that the suggested TEC solutions are not there to *change* the way they live, but *support* them to continue living how they want to.

- We appreciate that change is stressful and takes time to adjust to- one-one support and mentoring is on site.

LOSS OF PERSONAL TOUCH

"One daughter said to her elderly mother, 'it will save me petrol as I won't have to drive over'."

- Rosemary, one of Harling Court's TAPPI Champions, on video calling.

- A reoccurring concern is that technology, in any form, is replacing human contact. Carers won't have to attend as often, family can email rather than visit in person, neighbours can video call each other rather than meet for a drink in the Lounge.

LOSS OF PERSONAL TOUCH

- TEC won't replace in-person care, but help to make it more effective, and enable a person as much independence as is safely possible.

- When used correctly email, instant messaging and video calling can bring people together in ways they couldn't previously.

"Technology also helps me keep in touch with family. My great granddaughter was diagnosed with leukaemia when she was 12 months old and during the pandemic we kept in touch via Facetime. When I first saw her face to face after lockdown she said, 'Look! They've let Grandma out of the phone!'"

- Rosemary

BRIDGE THE GAP

- The TAPPI Project provides us an opportunity to dispel the myth that technology is replacing personal contact, both at the test site and far beyond.

- We have a vision to create a TEC Hub in the currently underused Communal Lounge, to showcase what's available- a place to learn, explore, and build up digital curiosity.

- We have some very digitally-confident residents. I'd like them to become ambassadors for technology- real life examples of how it can *enable* people to achieve outcomes.

What better way to dispel the myth that technology forces people apart, than by using technology to bring people together?

INCLUSIVE

- Each resident will very soon be provided with an Android tablet, combined with both group and one-to-one education on how to use it. Such devices unlock an infinite digital potential, one which many would not have the financial means or inclination to purchase.

- The communal areas of Harling Court have access to reliable WiFi; many residents have concerns about affordability of broadband in their homes. We can utilise our benefit and budgeting advisors to maximise income and identify eligibility for Ofcom's recommended social broadband tariffs.

- Such a device is useless without *incentives.* As part of the TAPPI project, targeted workshops on independence-enabling subjects such as online shopping, online banking, researching local history, ancestry, video streaming will be provided for free.

WHAT'S NEXT?

- Platform's TEC journey begins at Harling Court – we're thrilled to be able to collaborate with the other TAPPI test beds to apply and test the 10 TAPPI Principles, and build a framework for other Housing Providers.

- Platform have much to learn- we're only in the first few miles of what will be a challenging, but rewarding adventure for the Group, its residents, and the wider community. As participators in the TAPPI Project we recognise our responsibility to share this learning with others, so that more can benefit from TEC.

- But our journey does not end at Harling Court with TAPPI Phase 2: work is ongoing in developing a 'Platform Standard' for the integration of Technology Enabled Care and the inclusion of digital solutions.

Thank you!

Daniel Rock, Platform's TAPPI TEC
Project Officer