

Knowsley Older Persons Voice and Sefton Older Persons Forums

Position Statement on Digital Technology, Digital Communications, and Digital accessing of Services (Draft)

There is little doubt that developments in technology continue to enhance the lives of the majority of people across the globe. Technological advancements can allow us to do more, save time, and reduce costs.

This also applies to advancements in communications technology where the advent of smart phones, personal computers, and the internet allow people to obtain information and access services in new ways, and at a time and place that suits them.

In our region as elsewhere, this technology is enabling the delivery of health, social, and statutory services in ways which many service users find more convenient, and which can undoubtedly bring cost benefits for providers of these services.

However, not all residents are able, or wish to use the new technologies, or have access to the devices and infrastructure necessary to access it. Knowsley Older People's Voice and Sefton Older Persons Forums have undertaken research amongst their members, and although there are many older people who are happy to take technological advancements on board, others are not. For some, there is a level of interest which requires the support of training and encouragement to learn the new skills required. For others though, there are real issues about cost, complexity, concerns over security, or simply no interest in participating. This final group represent a cohort of residents who are unlikely ever to embrace the technology on offer.

Position Statement:

- We welcome and support all forms of technology where it can enhance the lives of older people, and promote their participation in family and community life
- We will support and encourage older people to take advantage of the benefits of technology through additional learning and information

- We will continue to highlight the needs of those who do not wish to use digital or other technology to access information or services, so they will not be excluded but be able to continue to use those more traditional routes that they are more familiar with
- We encourage service providers to promote and publicise alternative contact routes such as telephone numbers and addresses alongside websites and emails
- We further encourage providers to regularly review websites and technology developments to ensure they remain user-friendly for their intended audience and involve older people in testing their suitability.