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Poster abstract

“It does what it says on the tin!” Fostering consumer confidence in Assistive Technology (AT)

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Abstract

Introduction: Demographic changes and financial pressures are leading to radical changes in statutory provision of simple AT [1]. Retailers are increasingly offering simple aids to daily living through their outlets and the Transforming Community Equipment Services initiative has further advanced the ‘mainstreaming’ of such AT items [2]. However, there are challenges for this as an emerging market. There is evidence that the public’s awareness of the benefits of AT is low, that take-up is limited by stigma and negative associations of old age and that healthcare professionals are nervous about such developments [3].

Study: This partnership study, by The Institute of Ageing and Health, Newcastle University and years ahead partnership, looked into the feasibility of a consumer-led product accreditation, approval or rating scheme which would improve consumer confidence, help to de-stigmatise the use of products and offer reassurance to professional prescribers.

Methods: For the feasibility investigation phase of the project a range of methods have been used for data collection including; focus groups, semi-structured interview and surveys.

Findings: This paper will report the key findings from the feasibility study and detail approaches the partnership will take to overcome emergent issues. The crucial issues of consumer and stakeholder engagement in the process are discussed as well as the impact a scheme could have on developing this market.

Keywords

assistive technology, accreditation, rating, consumer confidence

References

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2. <http://www.dhcarenetworks.org.uk/csed/TransformingCommunityEquipmentService/>.
3. <http://www.yearsahead.co.uk/news>.