

Camphill Village Trust

Camphill Village Trust (CVT) is a national charity supporting around 450 adults with learning disabilities.

People are supported to be independent in their homes and given opportunities to develop vocational skills and be active in the community through social and cultural activities.

The charity encourages people to take an active role by co-producing projects that have a real impact in their communities.

One particular project was CVT Connect which is a digital platform produced by adults with learning difficulties.

What we wanted to achieve

The 'GOT IT' team (a group of people with disabilities from Gloucestershire) recognised that people with learning disabilities are increasingly using digital technology.

They had noticed the growing use of tablets and smart phones amongst their peers, but many felt anxious about using social networking sites due to complexity and perceived risks associated with sharing personal information.

Keen to explore how digital technology could enhance the lives of disabled people as well as support the co-productive approach across the charity, CVT commissioned Made Open to help co-design a digital App.

The App had the following aims:

- to keep people informed
- allow people to share ideas and set goals
- recognise personal achievements
- develop digital skills
- be able to do this in a safe environment.

What we did

The result was the co-production of 'CVT Connect', a digital platform for people supported by the charity. The initial brief was simple in that it has to be highly intuitive and easy to use. The app has been designed around four key functions:

1. Create a personal profile which replicates a online and easy to update.
2. Share profiles and connect with other people.
3. Set goals and celebrate achievements.
4. Share Ideas - users can joined themed sticky walls. These allow members to post ideas, inspiration, learning or just celebrate what is happening
5. Keep Informed through digital noticeboards linked to where people live and work. There are also noticeboards where trustees and staff can post accessible information and policies.

What we achieved

CVT CONNECT encourages people to network digitally but with additional safeguards of local administrators. They know each person in their CVT community and offer help to ensure people have full control over what they do online.

Other positive outcomes include:

- People having co-produced an App and developed skills through this process.
- People are able to influence the direction of their community and the charity through the use of digital media.
- It is fun and supports social interaction through technology.

In the future the hope is the benefits of CONNECT can be transformational in other support services for disabled people.

What we learnt

The work of the people involved in co-designing CVT Connect is an evolving and at times challenging process. Some of the key areas of learning are;

- The sign up process needs to be as simple as possible.
- Support workers need to appreciate the benefit for the people they work with.
- Do not make assumptions about what people want the App to do.
- Do not make assumptions about what skills and abilities people have when using digital media.
- Involve people at all stages in a co-productive approach. You are then more likely to get it right!

The learning from the initial take up including unseen challenges and opportunities is not only informing a revamp of CVT Connect but is informing how other developers are also looking at how digital platforms with different groups can be developed.

It is also inspiring others to think about the benefits of developing bespoke digital solutions and how they can ensure that disabled people are not left behind in the digital era.

The message from the people involved is that the only way to start getting these developments right is to engage people co-productively from the very start.

Co-producing CVT connect was just extraordinary. People had lots of ideas which they all wanted to see happen in the APP. I love what we have done!

Participant

The charity (CVT) is committed to co-production, which enables people to work together in teams and bring about the positive changes they wish for. CVT Connect will help people with disabilities collaborate on projects using digital media.

Kathryn (Made Open Communications)

For more information please visit:

www.cvt.org.uk

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Skills for Care recommends

Skills for Care produces resources around digital working in social care. We would recommend reading the following:

[Digital working](#)

Find out what digital working means in adult social care, the implications and the opportunities.

www.skillsforcare.org.uk/digital

[Assistive living technology](#)

Assisted living technology is used as a part of a range of services that help people maintain independence.

A learning development framework and resources hub can be accessed on this page to help you see how to use it.

www.skillsforcare.org.uk/alt

[Information sharing, collection and storage](#)

Access resources to help you get to grips with data protection, cyber security, digital leadership and change videos and much more.

www.skillsforcare.org.uk/digital

