



# Telecare in England: how well is it working and could it work better?

**UTOPIA: Using Telecare with Older People In Adult Social Care**

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**Sustainable Care Conference 2020/2021**

**CARE: challenges and solutions for a sustainable future**

# Background

## Assistive technology and telecare

- Origins: sheltered housing
- UK: 1.7 m telecare users
- Government: guidance and funding
- Research: Whole System Demonstrator project (2008-2011)
- Austerity in the public sector



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# UTOPIA study

Using Telecare with Older People In Adult Social Care



## Objectives:

- What strategic aims is telecare intended to serve for older people?
- What local evidence is collected to enable local authorities to assess if these aims are being achieved?
- How are these aims operationalised and delivered?

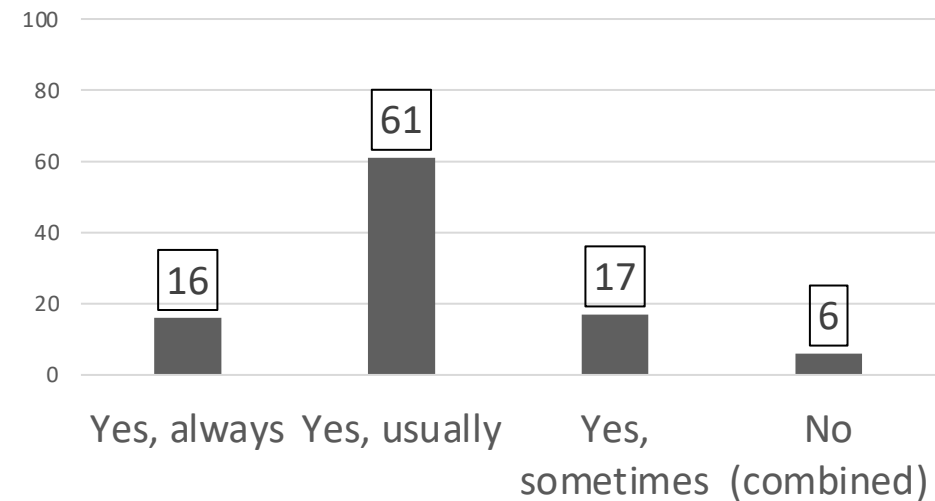
## Multi-method approach

- Online survey of all 152 English local authorities: 75% response rate
- Interviews with telecare leads in 25 English local authorities
- Case Studies in 4 English local authorities

# Assessments

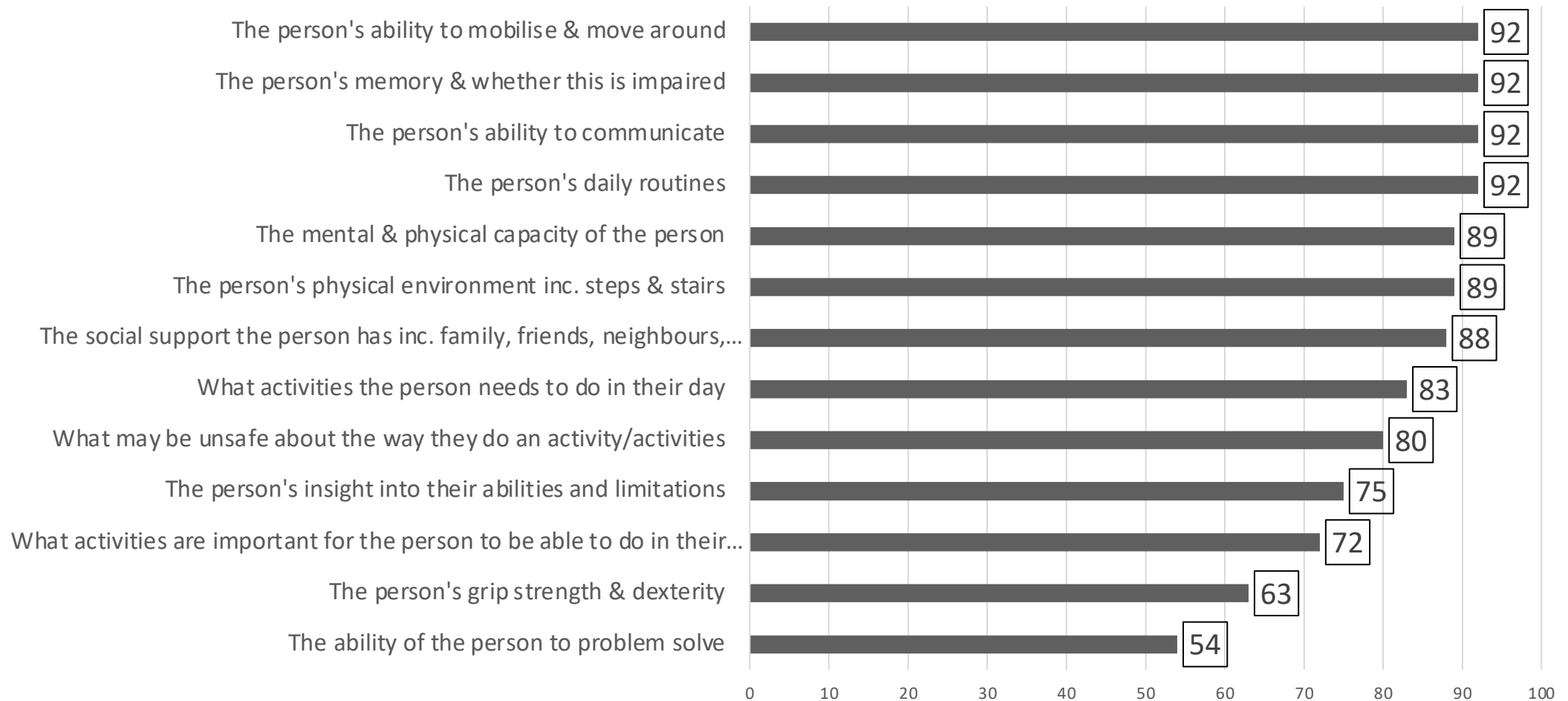
- **Assessors:**
  - Three groups: Care Managers/Social Workers, Occupational Therapists & Telecare Specialists
- **Integrated assessments:**
  - Allows matching needs and telecare directly
  - Quicker assessment and installation process
- **Separated assessments:**
  - Specialist and up-to-date telecare knowledge
  - Assessment combined with installation
- **Installation without in-home assessment:**
  - For some devices
  - Hospital discharge
  - Self-funders or Direct Payment users
  - Reviews

- **Conducted in home of older person?**



# Assessments

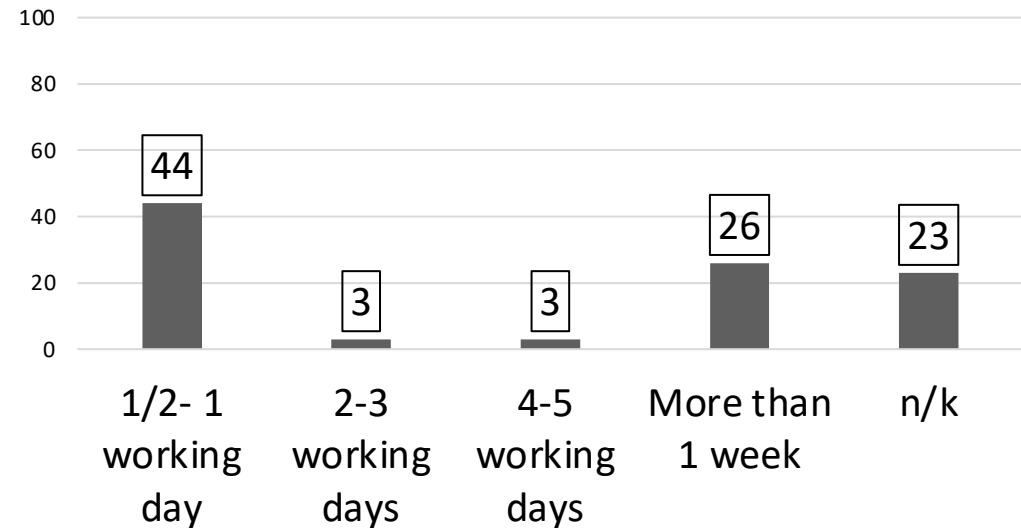
## What is assessed/considered?



# Training

- Over 80% of local authorities indicated training was available to telecare assessors
- Usually on-the-job and/or peer-led training
- By telecare manufacturers/suppliers
- Almost no training was formally accredited or led to formal qualification
- The length of the training course or session was usually short
- Focus may have been on how devices worked
- Marketing?

- Duration:



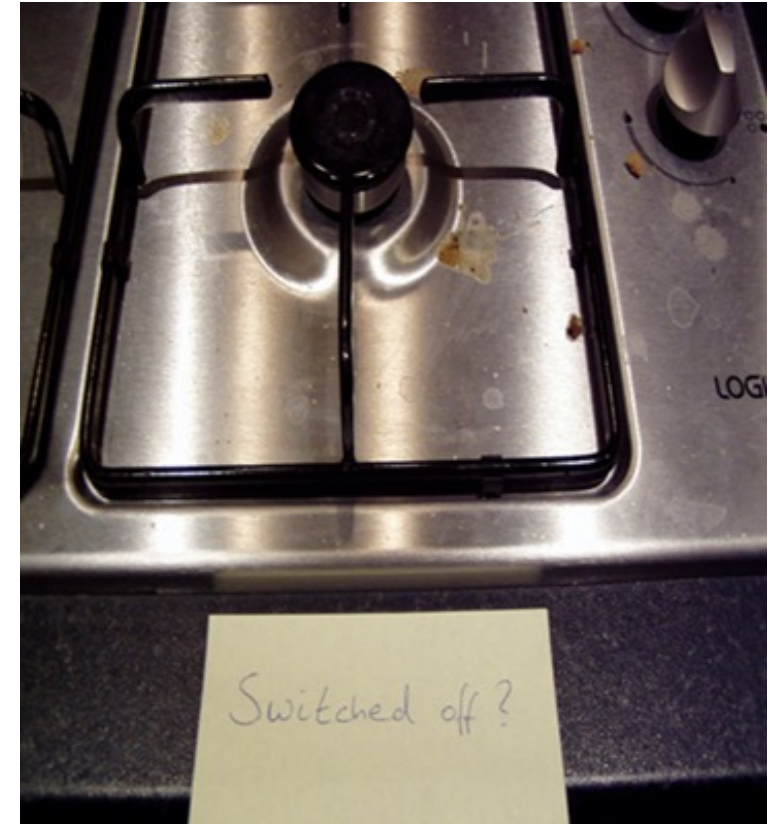
# Unpaid/family carers role

## Involvement:

- Attending service user assessments
- Maintenance of devices
- Responding to telecare alerts
- Managing the telecare 'package'

## Considerations:

- Plans for increased involvement
- Lack of carer assessments
- Taken for granted?



# How could it work better?

- Rigorous, person-centred assessments conducted in the home of the telecare user
- Seeing assessment more as a process
- Greater involvement of unpaid/family carers in assessment process
- Rigorous, repeated follow-up assessments and reviews
- Investment in accredited training for telecare assessors and installers
- Independent training
- Training that focuses on the complexity of telecare provision and use
- Greater acknowledgement of the unpaid/family carer role
- More and better support for unpaid/family carers
- Carer assessments



# Publications

## Study report:

Woolham, J. G., Steils, N., Fisk, M., Porteus, J., & Forsyth, K. (2018) The UTOPIA project. Using Telecare for Older People In Adult social care: The findings of a 2016-17 national survey of local authority telecare provision for older people in England. London: Social Care Workforce Research Unit, King's College London.

<https://www.kcl.ac.uk/sspp/policy-institute/scwru/res/utopia/output.aspx>

## Publications:

Woolham, J., Steils, N., Fisk, M., Porteus, J., & Forsyth, K. (2021) Outcomes for older telecare recipients: the importance of assessments. *Journal of Social Work*, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1468017319883499>

Steils, N., Woolham, J. G., Fisk, M., Porteus, J. & Forsyth, K. (2019) Carers' involvement in telecare provision by local councils for older people in England: perspectives of council telecare managers and stakeholders. *Ageing and Society*, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0144686X1900120X>

Woolham, J. G., Steils, N., Forsyth, K., Fisk, M. & Porteus, J. (2019) Making use of evidence in commissioning practice: insights into the understanding of a telecare study's findings. *Evidence & Policy*, <https://doi.org/10.1332/174426419X15730452200823>

Steils, N. (2019) Telecare Provision as Part of Community Social Care for Older People in England: Objectives and (Missed) Opportunities. in *Creating Empowerment in Communities: Theory and Practice from an International Perspective*. ed. by Anne, T., Hauppauge, NY: Nova Science Publishers Inc., Chapter 7, ISBN 978-1536149425

Fisk, M., Woolham, J. & Steils, N. (2020) Knowledge and Skills Sets for Telecare Service Staff in the Context of Digital Health. *Journal of the International Society for Telemedicine and eHealth*, <https://doi.org/10.29086/JISfTeH.8.e15>

# Acknowledgments & disclaimer

We are very grateful for the contributions of all participants in the reported study.

The Advisory Group for this study included service users, carers, industry representatives and representatives from NGOs. We thank the members for their advice and feedback throughout the project.

This presentation reports on independent research funded by the National Institute for Health Research School for Social Care Research (NIHR SSCR). The views expressed in this chapter are those of the authors and not necessarily those of the NIHR SSCR, NHS, the National Institute for Health Research or the Department of Health and Social Care.