Questions for Carer and Elderly Person

For my task this week, I thought it would be useful to get feedback from a carer and an elderly person as the project is based on the communication between them.

Being a wheelchair user, I made the decision to have carers come into my home to help me from a very young age. I wanted the independence of doing things for myself rather than having to rely on my family.

Using this to my advantage, this week I asked my carer on her thoughts on our MVP and what improvements she thought could be made. My grandad has also had carers in the past and has been thinking about having carers again as his mobility is lessening so I also asked him his thoughts on the MVP too.

Q&A with Carer

To be certain that carers have knowledge of the individual, do they have a description of what they like and look like? Or don't they? Do they go to the individual's house and meet them sometimes?

“We get information about individuals from the care plan provided by the agency and their likes and dislikes are mentioned in that too but not too much about their looks. Care coordinators are the ones who will go to their house to visit them when required. Carers personally don’t go the clients house to meet them it comes under the responsibility of the care coordinator.”

Do you have a timesheet?

“We have an app that shows our rota, and it gives us an option to clock in when we get to the clients’ house and clock out when we leave. If we go over the time of the shift, it will appear as red on the app and the manager will call us and ask us why the call took longer than the allocated time.”

How do you log what happens in the shift?

“Once the shift has happened, on the app we have an option to write notes. In this section we type in the client’s mood and if there are any changes on their body such as bedsores, it should cover the basis of what happened and not be an essay but still have any important details that should be known. The care coordinators will be able to access these notes and any of the additional carers that come in so they are always in the loop and know if there are any changes.”

What happens if a client needs you and it’s not their call time?

“If the client has limited mobility and is living on their own, they are usually issued a fall button which is helpful as the elderly person can speak through it and get help. Usually, an ambulance will be called as we aren’t meant to lift them or move them once they have fallen.”

Do you think a button would be helpful if it sent an SMS?

“If it is an added feature, with the calling available, it would be helpful. Sometimes it can be traumatic and hectic for the family member or whoever takes the elderly person to hospital and as the carer we may not be kept in the loop and still turn up to the home when the person is not there. With an SMS we would keep aware of what is happening.”

What are your thoughts on the MVP? Are there any additional features you would like to see?

“The MVP you have produced is very innovative and interesting as it gives the elderly person control of their care. Person centred care is unfortunately something that the system usually overlooks and assumes that they can’t decide their care and how they would like it. With the training on how to use the app, I feel like this would be a great opportunity for the elderly to have more control over their care. A chatbot and the SMS both sound like they would be good ideas, the chatbot would be handy in case of the elderly person forgetting things, which can be common and usually they refrain from constantly asking as they feel as though they are a burden. If the chatbot gives all the information, it would help them be more independent as they have more information that they can access on their own.”

Q&A with Elderly Person (my grandad)

Do you think since using technology you have more independence?

“To be honest, I think as an older person I am quite stubborn, and I didn’t see the point of mobile phones until I started using one and now, I don’t remember how I did things without it. I can call family members without having to wait for them to call. I can keep up to date with all my family and even friends.”

Do you find booking care hard to do?

“Yes, usually I must call and organise it. This can be hard because of my hearing. Having it on my phone would be easier because then I can see it on a calendar.”

When looking at care do you find that agencies will discuss your care decisions with yourself or look to someone else such as a family member? If so, does that frustrate you?

“Yes, I understand that being an older person it makes people sometimes think I can’t make my own decisions when I can. Just because I’m less mobile it doesn’t affect my ability to make decisions. It does frustrate me because if they allocate someone to speak for me then I have to ask someone to organise my care and if I need to change a timing, I have to go through them first which makes me feel dependent when the point of me having care is to make me feel more independent in myself.”

What are your thoughts on the MVP? Are there any additional features you would like to see?

“For me, I would love to see this. I am now more confident in using my mobile and would like to be able to organise my care timings myself and be able to get information myself. This would make me feel independent as I can find all the information, I need myself. I would like to perhaps see if there is an option to make the text bigger as sometimes, I don’t have my glasses with me and that would make reading things easier. I also would think a reminder text maybe a day before the shift would be helpful as I am quite forgetful.”