**Helping those living with dementia – fact sheet**

**What is assistive technology?**

The term 'assistive technology' refers to 'any device or system that allows an individual to perform a task that they would otherwise be unable to do, or increases the ease and safety with which the task can be performed' (Royal Commission on Long Term Care, 1999).

**What are the benefits?**

Assistive technology can:

* promote [independence](http://www.alzheimers.org.uk/site/scripts/documents.php?categoryID=200349) and autonomy, both for the person with dementia and those around them
* help manage potential risks in and around the home
* reduce early entry into [care homes](http://www.alzheimers.org.uk/site/scripts/documents_info.php?documentID=150) and hospitals
* facilitate memory and recall
* reduce the stress on carers, improving their quality of life, and that of the person with dementia.

1. **Reminder messages −** When a person enters or leaves their home, a personal voice prompt recording can remind them to pick up their keys or lock the front door, for example.
2. **Clocks and calendars −** Automatic calendar clocks can be helpful for people who forget which day it is.
3. **Medication aids** − Automatic pill dispensers are also available. When the medication needs to be taken, the dispenser beeps and a small opening allows access to the particular pill at the right time.
4. **Locator devices** − These devices can be attached with a key ring or Velcro to items that are often mislaid. If a person wants to find a particular item, they press a colour-coded button on a radio transmitter and the device with the corresponding colour will beep until the item is picked up.
5. **Aids for reminiscence and leisure** − Multimedia software is available to evoke memories and stimulate conversation, by showing photographs or films, and playing music or videos that are familiar to the person
6. **Devices to enable safer walking** - Tracking devices use satellite technology to help trace someone who has got lost. A person's location can be viewed on a computer or perhaps on a mobile phone.

**Design Council**

1. **Dementia dog** - A sense of routine can often disintegrate for people with dementia. Dogs can be trained to live to a consistent routine. Ultimately, each dog will be trained with the person with dementia and their carer so all three can operate as a team.
2. **Buddiband** - A wristband personal alarm that people will be happy to wear and can send alerts from anywhere to buddi's support services.
3. **Grouple** - At the centre of each Grouple hub is a timeline. Members can post items such as visits, appointments, observations and questions, quickly seeing and filling in gaps in the schedule. Care decisions can easily be discussed and informed by everyone's observations.
4. **Ode** - A fragrance-release system designed to stimulate appetite among people with dementia. The mains-powered unit releases three food fragrances a day, adjustable to coincide with the user's mealtimes.
5. **Trading Times** - Carers will complete a simple profile describing their work skills and enter the number of hours they think they can work. A local community manager will welcome every new carer with a telephone call to help them on their way. Employers will either post short job adverts or search for local carers with relevant profiles.

**Memory boxes**

An individual box prepared by the person and carer at the onset of demetia