

Inclusive Technology for People Living with Disability: a cost benefit analysis

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The objective of this trial was for LSA to gain a deeper understanding of the prospects for a reduction in whole of life support possible through the take up of advanced forms of automation and inclusive technologies

This project involved:

1. A practical trial comprising 11 participants selected from the Lifetime Support Authority. The trial was designed and delivered by Stretchy Tech, with researchers from JFA Purple Orange.
2. A validated cost benefit analysis on the value of home automation and assistive technology.
3. An assessment of the ways in which the uptake of inclusive technology could assist in helping participants to reach these goals.
4. The extent to which changes in each participant's level of dignity and independence were observed and assessed, which are fundamental in assisting people living with disability to advance their life chances.

At the commencement of this project all participants identified key goals that they wished to work towards achieving over the life of the project. Following commencement of the trial, all participants had made significant improvement towards their goals with the majority reaching all goals.

Some of the outcomes obtained for all participants following the uptake of technology included:

- greater independence;
- increased dignity;
- advancing their life options;
- Decrease dependency on informal supports and direct reduction or repurposing of in-home paid supports for some participants.

The financial cost-benefit analysis performed in this trial demonstrated that early investment of a tailored fit-for-purpose inclusive technology package into participants' plans will allow for a steady return on investment in years to come.

Based on the successful outcomes for participants, the key findings of this trial highlight several recommendations, with particular emphasis on the following factors:

- The need for funders to recognise that inclusive technology needs to be specifically tailored on a case by case basis to optimize its utilization and sustained outcomes.
- The need for funders to recognise the value of inclusive technology in saving time in regards to in-home support for people living with disability, resulting in direct reduction of support requirements.
- The need for funders to recognise the outcomes associated with independence and dignity are equally if not more important than the monetary savings involved, when contemplating investing in inclusive technology.



- The need for funders to recognise that the devices in the inclusive technology space may not always meet the categories or tick boxes of standardized disability package equipment yet may still provide personal benefit and financial savings.
- The need for funders to recognise that the benefits in introducing technology to participants in a graduated, sequential way as this trial has demonstrated with participants slowly embracing technology across a 2-year period.