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Empowercare Project Overview

EMPOWERCARE will create resilient communities and empower people to take more responsibility for their care using technology and local services to keep them in work, healthy and motivated. EMPOWERCARE will work in partnership with organisations supporting people over 65 (or 50+ with a health condition) to improve their digital skills and wellbeing. This will be delivered through the following activities:

⇒ The project will engage with the local community, including professionals, volunteers and citizens, to sustain the growth of technical skills through training and the creation of an Empowerment Strategy.

⇒ We will engage with individuals and showcase relevant innovations through technology hubs.

⇒ Develop a Technology Blueprint on initiatives and technology that support enablement at individual and community level.

⇒ Establish network of support groups and skills labs to develop peer support training.

The project began in November 2020 and will run until September 2022.

Meet the Project Partners

The project will benefit from a cross-border approach working with 13 partners across 4 countries to review relevant person-centered methodologies and consider their use in EMPOWERCARE and the wider social care system.

Our Project Partners are:

⇒ **The Health & Europe Centre** - UK

⇒ **Zorggroep H Hart** - Belgium

⇒ **Kent County Council -** UK

⇒ **Solidarity University -** Netherlands

⇒ **Conseil Dept du Nord** - France

⇒ **Provincie Antwerpen** - Belgium

⇒ **University of Brighton** - UK

⇒ **Canterbury Christ Church University** - UK

⇒ **Wieltjesgracht** - Belgium

⇒ **Familie Hulp Brussels** – Belgium

⇒ **Boone** - Belgium

⇒ **SWVO** - Netherlands

⇒ **Vito** - Belgium

Technology supporting healthcare through Covid-19

The Covid-19 pandemic has exacerbated social isolation and highlighted a number of existing problems facing our older population. The Empowercare team have worked together to produce an overview of problems across the 2seas area. Some of the key issues identified were:

● **Loneliness.**

● **Shrinking social circles.**

● **Mental well-being under stress.**

● **Not being tech-savvy, having access to communication tools, e- banking and e-shopping.**

● **Other problems include financial implications, access to medicine, healthcare and upkeep of daily care.**

Digital solutions that can support these situations are often unknown or are not part of a healthcare providers regular routine, however there are many solutions available and they are starting to be utilised to support older populations during the pandemic. For example in Kent, KARA devices are being delivered by Kent County Council and GrandPads tablets are being delivered by a care provider, the devices enable easy communication with health and care providers and family members.

Virtual Site Visits

Sharing the ESTHER philosophy: In April, Kent County Council hosted the first site visit sharing the person centered ESTHER philosophy with project partners. The visit took place virtually in April and included a virtual ESTHER Café, and discussion workshops.

ESTHER

Proud to be part of the Design & Learning Centre

The ESTHER philosophy was first developed in Sweden in 1997 and is a philosophy of care that asks, 'What matters to you?' ESTHER can be any individual regardless of age, gender etc. and their needs could be physical, mental or social. The philosophy allows for continuous quality improvement where professionals work in partnership with users of care and support services, here referred to as 'ESTHERS', with a joint target to improve services for both ESTHER and organisations.

ESTHER has been recognised world-wide for the good results it has accomplished, leading to the philosophy being adopted in several other countries including being rolled out in Kent by Kent County Council.

Family Conferencing: On the 10th July, Conseil Dept du Nord hosted Empowercare's second virtual site visit sharing their family conferencing approach. The approach focuses on family safeguarding and has successfully benefitted the Children's Social Services in Nord. The model creates a safe environment, lead by the family group, putting the wishes of the individual at the forefront of decision making. Conseil Dept du Nord aims to create a new digital tool through the Empowercare Project, and adapt the family conferencing concept to produce a model which will target the older population.

How will the partnership be delivering the Empowercare approach?

⇒ **Provincie Antwerpen:** We will work in partnership with local communities, primary care organisations and services. We are developing a support package for local communities, to implement and realise community-oriented care. Find out more **here.**

⇒ **VITO:** We are taking up the challenge to empower the elderly in their own health management through the BIBopp technology. We provide Citizens with tools to monitor his or her health through evidence-based screening algorithms, all developed in co-creation with the citizen. Find out more **here.**

⇒ **Canterbury Christ Church University:** We are the EMPOWERCARE project evaluation partners. This means that we will be working to report the outcomes (results) and assess the impact (lasting effects) of the EMPOWERCARE Approach so there is evidence of what works well and an explanation for the reasons why. Project partner, Solidarity University in the Netherlands, will be working in the non-UK sites that will be testing out the EMPOWERCARE Approach. Find out more **here.**

⇒ **The Health and Europe Centre**: We work on behalf of our stakeholders (NHS Trusts and Local Authorities), and across health and social care in the UK and beyond. We bring people together, and solve problems through co-operation, collaboration and co-production. EMPOWERCARE is a great example of a project we developed with partners, driven by local needs assessments, and resulting for local public health and social care research originated from the bottom up, rather than from an academic agenda. Find out more **here.**

⇒ **SWVO and Solidarity University:** All too often, the elderly are not completely involved in decisions regarding their own health and wellbeing. Also lacking is the required support to enable them to live independently for longer – aided by their local community. Through Empowercare we will tackle these problems in Zeeland across various sites: the municipality of Tholen (SintMaartensdijk) and the municipality of Schouwen-Duiveland. By adopting the Zeeland Living Room approach, we will focus on the use of local narratives to develop solutions aided by, and for, the community. Find out more **here.**

⇒ **BOONE:** We were founded in 1950 and have, over the past 30 years, come to specialise in the development and production of space-saving solutions. We are integrating the Empowercare ideology of CARING IS SHARING into our European think tank PRoF. Despite the pandemic, on the 24th June, PRoF consulted its members through online conferences asking: 'how can we implement the innovative concept of caring is sharing?' Find out more about the study **here.**

⇒ **Kent County Council:** We will engage individuals and showcase relevant technologies through digital hubs. The project will create Digital Ambassadors from the local community, to sustain the growth of digital skills. The Ambassadors will be supported to develop their own digital abilities and learn methods to deliver support that is manageable for the target group. The project will also incorporate the 'Esther' approach to ensure the strategy provides individual solutions for people and what matters for them. Find out more **here.**

⇒ **Wieltjesgracht:** We will work in partnership with, and strengthen, local organisations supporting older people by introducing technological and digital solutions for those who are not tech-savvy. As well as those who are not using new tools and aids to support and improve their own wellbeing. We want to engage these individuals and point them to the relevant technologies. Find out more **here.**

⇒ **University of Brighton:** We will be using Community Asset Based Development approaches and our Digital Health Living Lab to get to the heart of what matters most to local communities. Harnessing skills and expertise of local people, to co-create innovations that make a real difference to lives, health and wellbeing. The project will bring together stakeholders including citizens, health and social care professionals, local government and industrial partners, to ideate, co-create, trial and evaluate digital health solutions that could be implemented across the borders and healthcare systems. Find out more **here.**

⇒ **Zorggroep H Hart:** With this project, we will confirm our role as an innovator, contributing to a new empowerment-oriented approach by learning from and with all project partners. Our staff will be coached through training and will be given support tools. We will also deploy new technologies so that residents and clients can live **and** work independently for longer. Through our test and experience lab in Budalys, supporting tools and innovative solutions will be made available to a wider audience. Find out more **here.**

⇒ **Familiehulp:** We aim to be the preferential partner for care and support at home in the region of Flanders. Our organisation will be there for each individual at every stage of their life. Supporting daily life activities, our customers can count on our professionalism and integrity. In Empowercare, Familiehulp is taking up the challenge to empower the elderly in their own care through different objectives. The Empowercare Approach will help us in realizing one of our projects: Care together: Now and tomorrow. In this internal project, the strategic objective is that each customer receives appropriate care and support, which we realize in collaboration with the best partners for them. Find out more **here.**

Kind Regards,

Empowercare Project Team | Kent County Council | Adult Social Care and Health