Enhancing older people’s independence through developing carers’ digital and caring skills

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Partners: Greece (1), Spain (2), Holland (1), UK (3), and Ireland (1).
Care across the EU

- Over 100 million people across the EU care for family member, partner or friend*
  - 90% of informal carers are related to care recipient

- Increasing ageing profile and increasing population living with long-term illness will lead to increased demand for quality care*

- Across EU 80% of family carers are women**, but number of women able to take on caring roles is likely to decrease due to
  - women moving into paid work to support households
  - Increase in retirement age for women

- In older age groups (65+) both men and women provide labour intensive care***

Family carers

- Carers are not defined by gender, age, race, ethnicity, culture or economic grouping
- Long standing physical and mental health problems, e.g. back pain, stress, anxiety, depression*
  - Health problems more prevalent when care exceeds 20 hours per week
- Likely to be financially less well off or living in poverty
  - 60% of participants in DISCOVER are not in paid employment
  - Across EU 42% of carers are in the lowest income percentile** (Eurocarers 2015)
- Likely to be socially isolated due to caring role

Being online

- 30% of Europeans have never used the internet, mainly older adults/people living with disabilities

- Adults not online felt less able to learn new skills

- Older people using the internet
  - Felt more in control
  - Hardly ever felt isolated or lonely
  - 78% felt the internet had improved their lives
  - 42% felt the world would not be the same without it
  - 23% felt it enhanced relationships

- Online carers in the UK report internet saves time (70%), saves money (40%) and reduces feeling of isolation (42%)

- DISCOVER: 90% of carers think computers could make their life easier and 27% think they enable more time for each other (Greece, Netherlands, Spain, UK)

- Use of tablets by people aged 65-74 increased from 5-17% (2012-2013)

The Skills Zone
Local and National Services

My map of local services

Websites of national organisations
Using the web

Choose a topic from the icons below.

- Digital Skills
- Dementia
- COPD
- Assistive Technologies
- Heart Disease
- Finance
- Diabetes
- Stroke
- Moving & Handling
- Communication Skills
- Brain Games
The busy carer - learning through quick reads and videos
Reducing the risk of falls
Findings: knowledge and recommendations

Carers feel more supported/would recommend DISCOVER

Carers new knowledge

Carers (%)

Carers feel more supported/would recommend DISCOVER

Carers (%)

Carers (%)
Digital skills

‘I have found that being internet literate has been brilliant because of getting the shopping delivered because now my spine has gone, even pushing a trolley round is terrible’.

Informal carer looking after husband living with stroke, UK

‘The session with the clients [how to download images from a digital camera and use Skype] was really successful.

Residential Care Home Manager, UK

‘It [playing brain games] keeps your brain active doesn’t it that’s why I do crosswords that’s how I keep my brain active, I won’t touch the maths side of it, I see numbers and I think I’m not touching that because I know I’m hopeless at it.’

Male informal carer looking after daughter with special needs, UK
Technologies aiding independence

‘[I] didn't know about automatic pill boxes and think this would be a great idea for my mother. Currently my sister is making sure she takes her pills on time’.

Informal carer, Spain

‘When you have epilepsy it’s really dangerous if you have a fit in your sleep... she {my mum} won’t wear her medical bracelet because she can’t stand things on her wrist and round her neck so the full sensors are out... but the one under the bed seems like a really good fit for her. To be honest I never even heard about it’.

Young adult carer, UK
Preventing falls

‘I have learned to help her do specific exercises to prevent another fall’
man caring for his mother-in-law, UK

‘I found the falls scenario interesting and have changed the living space of the older person that I care for to protect them.’
Informal carer, Greece

‘What to do yourself when you fall. Not to panic and do what you have to do (phone for help etc)’
94 yr old reciprocal carer/cared for person, The Netherlands
Coping with challenging behaviour

‘Dementia was an ‘unknown terrain for us’ ...I not only know more about dementia through DISCOVER but now understand the ‘change of behaviour that goes with that’
Informal carer caring for mother in law, Netherlands

‘[I wanted to know] how to better for the care person because Alzheimer is difficult to understand. Sometimes I became angry even I know it's not his fault. Now I can do this’.
Informal carer for father, Spain

‘I have changed the way I talk with my son [who has had a stroke]’.
Informal carer, Spain
Stakeholders’ perspectives

*It is an amazing concept, bringing it [Services etc] all together*  
Carer outreach worker, UK

*Generally, there was a better understanding of health conditions, but simultaneously there was an improvement of carers’ knowledge about the use of technologies*  
Psychologist at Care Home, Greece

*Caregivers who participated present generally a consistent positive feedback having also pointed out during consultations what they have learned with DISCOVER.*  
Psychiatrist at a Memory clinic, Spain
Findings - wellbeing

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Carers who felt this all or most of the time</th>
<th>Carers who felt this only some of the time or never</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Family carers</td>
<td>Employed carers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have felt cheerful and in good spirits</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have felt calm and relaxed</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have felt active and vigorous</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>58%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I woke up feeling fresh and rested</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My daily life has been filled with things that interest me</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>59%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Moving forward

DISCOVER

- Core shape but flexibility to be tailored for each country
- Working with other organisations that support formal and informal carers
- Providing a specialist service that complements existing provision and can be embedded by provider

Challenges

- Improving confidence of carers to use technologies
- Raising awareness of opportunities from being online/using telehealth and telecare
Using DISCOVER
contact

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