

#### **PRESS RELEASE**

### **Bridging the Digital Gap:**

### **Senior citizens sharing their health data stories in video blogs**

The latest digital health accessories will be put through their paces in a new citizen engagement project that seeks to understand how health data can better support older people to stay healthy and independent; to better understand how older people really feel about health data, and if they think it could help them stay in control of their own wellbeing and care.

During sessions in October, researchers at The University of Manchester’s Health eResearch Centre (HeRC) will work with Community Reporter groups in Wythenshawe and Salford, giving participants the opportunity to try out some of the latest activity bracelets. They will share their thoughts and experiences by producing community reports in the form of online video diaries. To support this, participants will receive a training where they learn how to plot, shoot, and edit videos using a smartphone.

Community reports give members of the public a voice by giving them the confidence and tools to tell their story in their own way. It is all about bringing people together in a fun and creative way around issues that matter to them.

In addition to providing people with new technology skills, the project hopes to spark enthusiasm among participants for collecting and using health data in their everyday lives. At the same time, it should give researchers valuable insights into how to engage older people in studies around health data and technology.

**Dr Sabine Van der Veer** from HeRC said:

“The number of older people is growing, but the NHS needs to cut back on costs to keep the health system sustainable. One proposed ‘solution’ to this problem is that people should live at home longer and take care of themselves, supported by their family and friends.

This project will provide our team with valuable insights into how older people think health technology and data can help them stay well and independent for as long as possible. The videos that will come out of this project will be a great way for us to understand more about how technological solutions could better serve older populations, and will hopefully lead to new research.”

**Bernadette Elders**, CEO of Inspiring Communities Together, the organisation that run the Salford Community Reporters scheme said:  “The community reporters scheme helps provide a voice to members of the public by giving them the confidence and tools to tell their story in their own way.  It is an incredibly popular scheme that is about bringing people together in a fun and creative way around issues that matter to them.”

**Dr Joanne Taylor**, trainee doctor in Medicine for Older People said:

“The use of technology to monitor health and mobility in the community has the potential to transform elderly care. There is huge promise for these advances to benefit older people. For example, by promoting independent and healthy living, and by supporting the detection of impending health crises. To make progress, we first need to listen to what older people in the community think about it and get their feedback on our ideas. And this is exactly what this project is all about.”

All video blogs will be shared on the Community Reporters website using the hashtag #datasaveslives (https://communityreporter.net).

For more information, regular project updates, or to sign up for the training please go to <http://www.herc.ac.uk/research_project/community-reporters/>

#### -ENDS-

**Notes for editors:**

The Health eResearch Centre (HeRC) is delivering large scale, population wide health research by harnessing the power of information and technology.

Led by The University of Manchester and bringing together research excellence across the North of England (in partnership with the universities of Lancaster, Liverpool and York) the Health eResearch Centre is increasing the pace of progress in the UK’s health sector by turning under-used health information into new knowledge.

For more information please visit our website [www.herc.ac.uk](http://www.herc.ac.uk/) #datasaveslives

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