



mPower Project 2017-2022

Impact



Key statistics



6,900+
older people



5,550+
eHealth
interventions



2,700+
wellbeing
plans



380+
community and
voluntary
organisations



360+
clinical
services



1,300+
shared learning
experiences



2,800+
devices

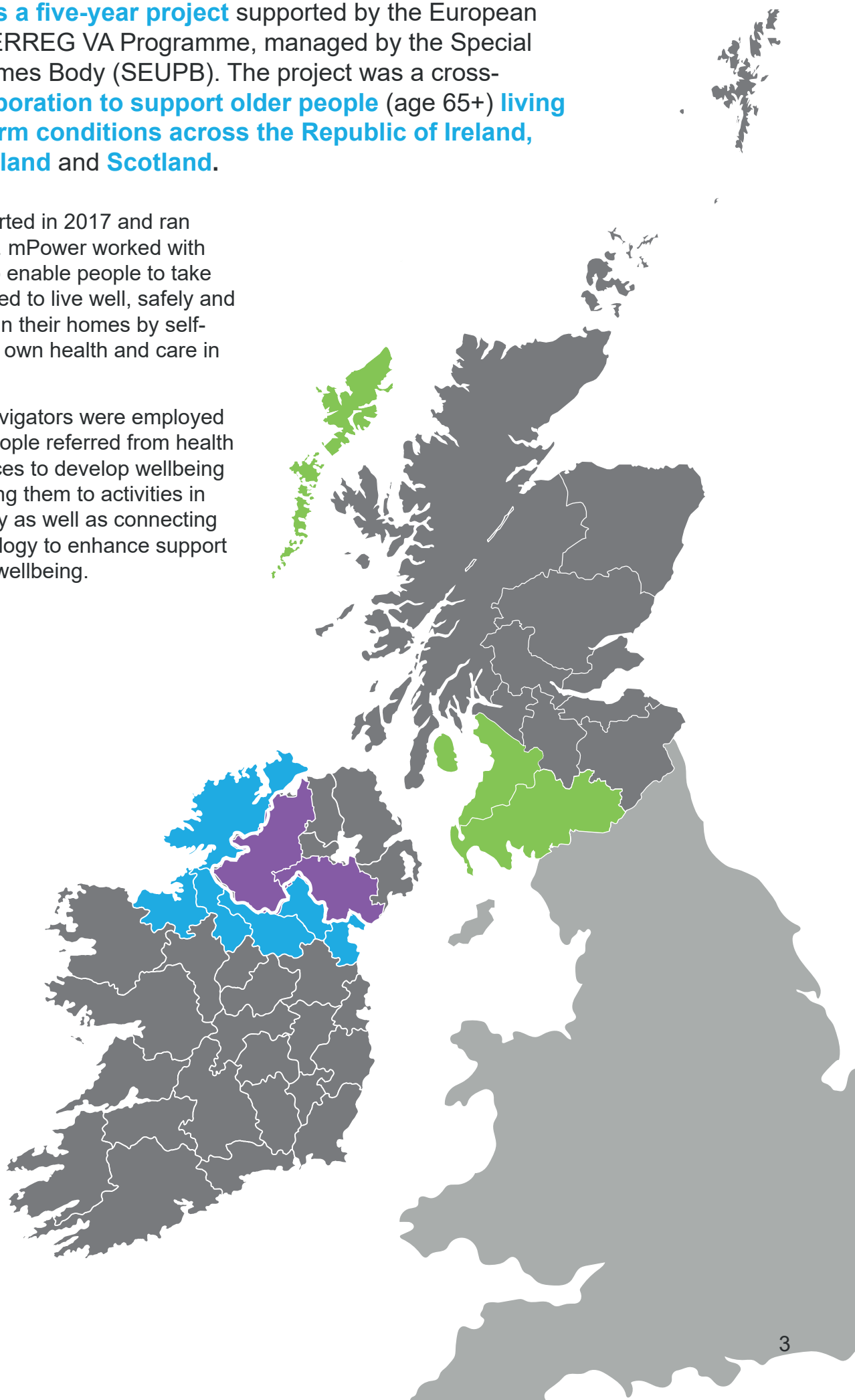
“I’m seventy one. I didn’t think I’d a lot of skills in technology, in IT but if I can do it anybody can do it. Just go for it.”

**- Shirley Prahms, Beneficiary,
Dumfries and Galloway**

mPower was a five-year project supported by the European Union's INTERREG VA Programme, managed by the Special EU Programmes Body (SEUPB). The project was a cross-border **collaboration to support older people** (age 65+) **living with long-term conditions across the Republic of Ireland, Northern Ireland and Scotland.**

The project started in 2017 and ran until May 2022. mPower worked with communities to enable people to take the steps needed to live well, safely and independently in their homes by self-managing their own health and care in the community.

Community Navigators were employed to work with people referred from health and care services to develop wellbeing plans connecting them to activities in their community as well as connecting them to technology to enhance support for health and wellbeing.





Patrick MacLauchlan
Beneficiary



Patrick MacLauchlan lives alone in Drogheda. mPower Community Navigator Karen worked with him after he was discharged from hospital.

"I wasn't inclined to go out and search for all of these things myself. I was living a perfectly quiet alone life and wondering what to do next and my prime interest was to stay healthy. And not go to hospital. But Karen came along and said there are things you can do which even though you're in your eighties now you can stay active for much longer, both mentally and physically.

She brought her wellbeing plan to my attention. And we agreed what elements came to interest me. And I picked several of them and I activated several of them.

Well, it's nice to have somebody come and talk to you from time to time because I like the idea of having an alternative to just looking at television.

There's a lady that comes and does physical exercise with me and that was very useful. And it's really activated me and now I do quite a lot of walking and I've an interest in being well.

Karen put me in contact with people who provide food. So I've been in contact and I get a new food supply every week.

Alexa was new to me. I turn it on first thing in the morning when I come down to breakfast and I see what's happening in the world.

I can call and get phone calls from my family and they can see me pictorially and my son, who lives down in Dublin, particularly, he's a doctor and he looks at me quizzically and he says "ok you're ok". "Are you walking a lot?" And I said "yeah I'm walking a lot". "Are you eating good food?" "Yeah look at my breakfast" and so we can see my face and he says "yeah this guy's still ok".

I don't know what I would have done without this. I might have been sliding back into a quiet time and not a lot of interest in life or activity. Just wondering when the next hospital appointment might come along. And so this was a big change. It was like, it woke me up essentially. And said there's more life left. Let's get on with it."

"It woke me up essentially. There's more life left. Let's get on with it."

Over the lifetime of the project mPower worked with over 6,900 older people and over achieved the original targets to deliver:



2,700+ wellbeing plans



5,550+ digital health interventions

The personalised wellbeing plans focussed on supporting self-management and included:

- **Social prescribing** – connecting people to local activities and services which support health and wellbeing – often a key component of any plan.
- **Digital health interventions** – including home and mobile monitoring solutions, digital health and wellbeing apps and video enabled care solutions.
- The project also successfully delivered at least **1,300 shared learning experiences** for project staff, health and care professionals and volunteers and staff in the community sector.

“This project has been fundamental in flipping the conversation from ‘What’s the matter with you?’ to ‘What matters to you?’ And the beauty of listening.”

- Tommy Whitelaw, National Lead, Caring and Outreach, Carer Voices Health and Social Care Alliance Scotland (the ALLIANCE)





Barbara Fraser
Beneficiary

Barbara Fraser, Lakeland Community Centre, Belcoo, Enniskillen.

"I come to the ladies club on a Friday. I've met some lovely people. We've had some outings and we generally chat and we have people come in to talk to us, show us different things, different crafts and it's really, really good. Good for the mind. I've been able to join in lots of activities while we've been learning all about the iPad.

Well the iPad to me is a really good piece of equipment because it's very easy to use, even for dummies, you can find your way around. We had a really good teacher, Mark. How to set it up and to do the basic things. But other things - social media, radio, television and communication, which is really important. I've got two children who live abroad. One in Australia, one in Brazil and with the Whatsapp I can talk to them like I'm talking to you.

I learned more about security...passwords, you know, how to change passwords because we just tend to use the same password for everything. But Mark said you shouldn't really.

I think it's wonderful because you know I'm married and I've only retired about two years so I'm used to being with people and being busy. However, when you retire or if you haven't got a partner or you're on your own sometimes just going out by yourself can be a bit daunting. Whereas a centre like this you come here, there's lots of people who are on their own. You meet people. You find different interests. You find interests that you think, "oh I'd probably never do something like that".

When you're older or when you're retired...I always say I have six Saturdays and one Sunday. It doesn't matter how old you are there's things out there that we can still learn. We can still do and as long as you motivate yourself you can do anything."

"It doesn't matter how old you are there's things out there that we can still learn."

Project funding and partners

The mPower project was funded through the European Union's INTERREG VA Programme, managed by the Special EU Programmes Body (SEUPB). It is designed to promote greater levels of cross-border co-operation. Match funding is provided by the Northern Ireland Executive, the Irish Government and the Scottish Government.

The project budget was €10,100,000.

The mPower partners:



“It keeps me active and from getting too depressed otherwise.”

**- Philip Allan on Newry Allotments Southern Age Well Network,
mPower Community Funds project**



Philip Allan
Beneficiary

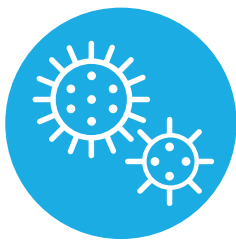
Project outcomes

The mPower project is a real success story. The project over-achieved the targets set and the learning that has been achieved paves the way for future opportunities for service transformation and for potential future cross-border collaborations.

Importantly, the project has made a significant positive impact on the lives of older people. The independent project evaluation findings from University of Highlands and Islands (UHI) show that beneficiaries found interactions with mPower to be positive experiences.

Specifically beneficiaries highlighted feeling decreased social isolation, decreased loneliness, increased feelings of empowerment and confidence, increased digital literacy and a facilitation of self-management behaviours.

The achievements of mPower demonstrate the added value to be gained from collaboration amongst partners in Scotland, Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland. Because the teams worked together and supported each other there has been a huge amount of positive change to the wellbeing of our citizens and to the training and learning of our staff.



mPower's response to Covid-19

As a result of Covid-19 the project had to quickly adapt and find new and effective creative solutions. In response to the pandemic, people were actively looking for digital solutions to support new and different ways of working. Because of mPower's previous work with digital health interventions, we were quickly able to implement innovative solutions to a range of challenges.

We connected Care Home residents and older people to their family after they found they were suddenly very isolated because of the lockdowns. We provided specific Covid-19 recovery guidance to the most vulnerable to the disease, and we were instrumental in rolling out virtual appointments across the Republic of Ireland with HSE colleagues, helping staff and patients to stay safe and minimising service disruption.





Staying connected

We know that being connected to others and to your local community has a positive impact on our wellbeing. We've supported many third-sector and voluntary groups either through funding to get their groups up and running again post pandemic or through referring our beneficiaries to them. We know that when people get together it's good for everyone. Social isolation and loneliness is a big issue for older people and especially in rural areas, so whether it's connecting people into their online coffee morning, supporting them with a weekly audio visual engagement call, taking them to a local dance group or supporting a local allotment project, mPower has facilitated people to stay connected.



Staying connected through technology

The mPower project has achieved a huge amount of success connecting older people, many of whom were socially isolated, with their communities and to their friends and families. We've worked with other programmes to get older people access to devices and we've supported them in learning how to use the technology to improve their connections, enhance their leisure activities and improve their wellbeing. We've taught people and given them confidence to get set up with online banking and shopping, using the internet to access things they enjoy such as music or films, and we've shown people how to use various apps to connect with friends and family all over the world.



Embracing technology

Throughout the project we've seen time and time again how older people can and will embrace digital technology to enhance their lives, specifically to improve their health and wellbeing: if they are supported to develop the necessary skills; removing barriers and build their confidence. We've successfully introduced a range of both health and citizen technology to vastly improve people's life, whether that's through facilitating better self-management of their long term condition, such as using apps like My Diabetes My Way or fully using devices like an ECHO or KOMP, everyone who has given these new things a try has benefited.



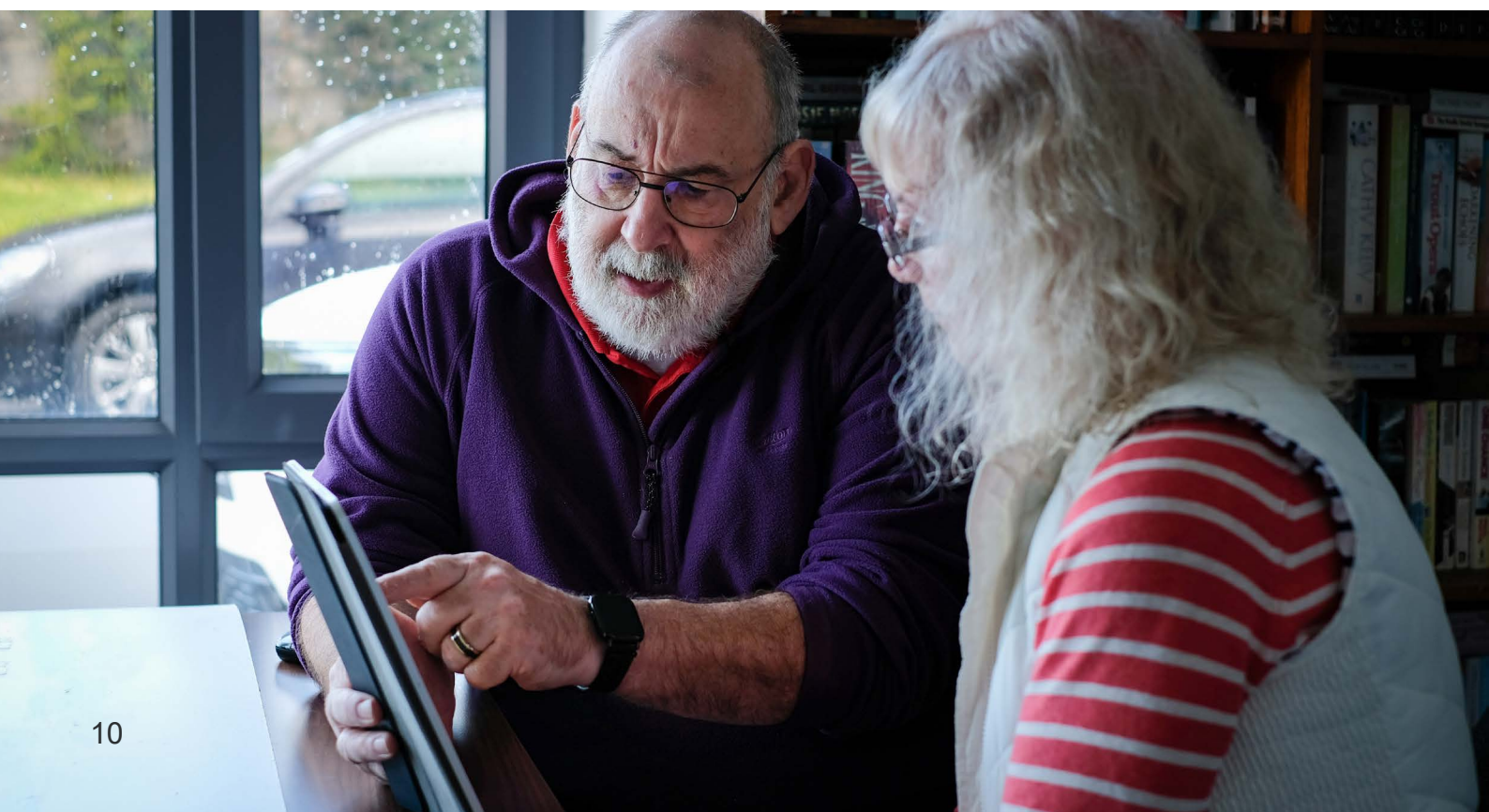
A person-centred approach

A person-centred approach to digital health and care has been instrumental to the success of mPower. By giving beneficiaries choice and listening to what really matters to them we have built trust, and empowered people to really be in control of what makes a difference for them. Often, people know what they need and just need a little help to put things in place. The Wellbeing Plans we've implemented are a holistic approach, acknowledging chronic conditions, but crucially recognising the positive impact on people's health from staying active in mind and body, improving their wellbeing in a whole manner of ways.



Cross-border shared learning

Many of our successes have been in part down to fantastic cross-border working relationships with colleagues. We've shared our ideas, resources and learning to be able to improve services, implement new initiatives and to roll out technology enabled care nationally.





Moira Gilfeather – Carer for her husband who lives with Vascular Dementia and engaged with ADAM through mPower.

“I’m a carer for my husband who has vascular dementia. Kieron (Community Navigator) came to visit and offered lots of digital things, I thought the two best things for my husband would be the cat (a toy) and the clock.

The cat is obviously extremely helpful from the point of view of keeping my husband’s attention and giving him an interest and pleasure...he loves cats and we used to have three cats...he was completely fascinated with it right from the word go, so it’s been a huge boost to him I think. Definitely, he sits and talks to it, you know. It’s amazing, it’s not like a toy, it’s just like a normal cat. It behaves in the normal way. She sits quietly for a long time, and then suddenly she will meow or start to purr or, you know, want some attention. I think for somebody with dementia it’s a marvellous thing really. Because they lose connection with so many things. Even with people who are close to them. But to see him respond to a cat, a toy cat like that is just amazing.

And things like the clock, it’s simple. He can see it and he can understand it, so makes a big difference. It’s very helpful. Well, as a carer the most important thing is his physical comfort obviously.

“We’re certainly very, very grateful for it (the cat) because it’s not something I would have thought about really.”

You need to try and keep the brain, what’s left of the brain which is functioning stimulated, so these sort of things do stimulate extremely well, you know, without being too technical to use. Music is very good for them, so we have an Alexa and we have music on and he likes all kinds of music so, that’s a good thing.

Alzheimer’s Scotland put me in touch with Kieron from the mPower project who then came and visited us and showed us these tools to stimulate the brain in somebody with dementia.

The cat has had terrific impact on the family as well. Everybody loves her.”



Third-sector

Voluntary and community organisations have been crucial to the success of mPower. Exercise classes, befriending services, lunch clubs, walking clubs, arts, support groups for people who have particular health conditions and the whole panoply of activity which takes place in communities is usually run by independent charitable organisations of all shapes and sizes. Some are run entirely by volunteers and others were supported by some paid staff, but all are created by their local community to meet some local need.

It is the community and voluntary organisations, across all three jurisdictions who run the activities and services that mPower's beneficiaries need. Working with them has proved hugely successful to the outcomes of the mPower project.

mPower established productive relationships with local community groups from the beginning of the project, but the relationship became even more effective when the project was able to provide additional funding for activities and resources requested by the project's beneficiaries.



“mPower showed us a way to innovate digitally.”

**- Conor Keenan Joint
Co-ordinator Older People's
Community Project**

Evaluation

As research and evaluation partner to mPower, the University of the Highlands and Islands (UHI) Division of Rural Health and Wellbeing team has collected qualitative and quantitative evidence on the impact of mPower on beneficiaries and other key stakeholders.

There is much evidence that beneficiaries have found their interactions with mPower to be positive experiences. They particularly discussed decreased social isolation, decreased loneliness, increased feelings of empowerment and confidence, increased digital literacy and a facilitation of self-management behaviours.

mPower continued to support beneficiaries throughout the Covid-19 pandemic through the adaptability and resilience of mPower staff. Quantitative data shows no decrease in most mPower beneficiaries' levels of physical health, loneliness or life satisfaction at a time when general population health indicators were showing decreases.

The evaluation work has demonstrated some of the contextual factors and mechanisms associated with positive impact generation within mPower, including strong links with local health care and third sector services and a patient-centred approach delivered by Community Navigators.

“I don't know what I would have done without this. I might have been sliding back into a quiet time and not a lot of interest in life or activity. Just wondering when the next hospital appointment might come along. And so this was a big change.”

- Patrick MacLauchlan, Beneficiary



mPower legacy and the future

mPower leaves a strong legacy across all of our partners and services. We've demonstrated that the main approach of mPower can be adopted more broadly and sustainably, in the community and at home, in health and care, and by beneficiaries, carers and services. We've also proven the benefits of cross-border collaboration and that each jurisdiction has so much to bring to the table.

We are proud of what mPower has achieved and feel excited about what might come next. The impact the project has had, is paving the way for future work across all related areas within relevant health and social care settings.

It is very much hoped that the relationships that have been built and the proven success of the collaboration across all the partner teams will be built upon for the future Peace Plus programme.

“If we can intervene by video conferencing and give the required treatment on time I believe that helps everybody.”

**- Dr Etaluku, Consultant Old Age Psychiatrist,
Western Health and Social Care Trust**



Dr Etaluku
Consultant



Shirley Prahms
Beneficiary



Shirley Prahms using ARMED, Castle Douglas, Dumfries and Galloway.

"I had a back injury. When I came out of hospital the OTs asked me if I'd like to take part in this research project with the smartwatch.

When I was first given it I thought I wouldn't cope with the technology. I thought I wouldn't be able to remember to charge it, that I'd get fazed by the phone...but I didn't. And in fact I enjoyed it. And as a result I'm in the process of sort of moving towards a smart phone myself. And I've decided to carry on with the watch after the project.

I was interested very much in the sleep data – and Ewan (Community Navigator) would ring on a fairly regular basis. I think initially he rang probably once a fortnight. And it was made clear that that phone call was also a support and it was nice to know that they were there really.

When I got calls from the support team it was really nice. They asked how I was, how things had been going, whether there were any difficulties. And having that support was really important. I valued it a lot.

It was really important to know that somebody cared. There was somebody out there during these Covid times. There was somebody out there that cared and bothered to ring up.

I was interested in the daily activity because in my recuperation from the back injury it was good to know that I was increasing on a regular basis. So the steps and the percentage activity told me at the end of the day how much I'd done. The heart rate information was interesting. If I felt I was getting stressed or panicked I could actually look at that and think, "actually I'm not physically stressed. This is a mental stress". The sleep data was really important because with the back pain I was getting interrupted sleep and I got a bit anxious about that.

Because you don't always know how many steps you've done in a day. Some days I didn't think I'd done a lot but actually in just daily living I'd done more steps than I realised and it was encouraging. It was as though there was an encouragement that when steps increased over a week you knew, oh right this is getting better. You know, you had concrete evidence that your walking was improving and it was getting easier.

It was about much more, about a mindset...the injury was very sudden and very severe and it was a real shock. So the data helped me get confidence that I would improve and I would get better when I'd gone from being very, very active while swimming, all sorts of things, to literally being barely able to stand. So that data really helped the recovery."



A project supported by the European Union's INTERREG VA Programme, managed by the Special EU Programmes Body (SEUPB)



Brochure designed by NHS National Services Scotland Creative Services