

# THE WAY FORWARD

**MANAGING THE BIGGEST CHALLENGE  
FACED BY THE CARE SECTOR**



**An interview with Claire Johnsen  
Head of ESG and Innovation  
Hallmark Luxury Care Homes**

**Extract from a report commissioned by:**



Powerful Accounting Software

# Introduction

As yet, the digital revolution might not have taken hold across the care sector – but it's going to happen, probably sooner rather than later.

The impact of robotics, artificial intelligence, machine learning, the internet of things will be significant, and should improve both quality of life for those who are being cared for and the viability of the companies providing that care.

Coupled with technology which optimises operational and administrative tasks, providing information which is of value to the provision of services rather than simply score keeping.

Such change could be the biggest challenge the sector has ever had to address. As one CEO put it, managing technology could be like constantly pressing on the fast-forward button on the television remote and trying to make sense of what you're watching on the screen. But how do we synchronise technology with humanity, a question which is going to be mission critical.

In a report commissioned by iplicit, the cloud accounting software company, to be prepared and published by DECISION magazine later this year, owners and directors in the care sector will be talking about the issues and how they can be reconciled.

This is one of the interviews to be included.



# Can we predict the adoption curve?

“Innovation can change an actual business model. Airbnb revolutionised the hospitality sector. Uber changed taxi and private hire operations. Both utilised technology to disrupt the existing business model, rather than the concept. Will technology deliver a different business model for the care sector that we can’t see at the moment?”

It’s a question posed by Claire Johnsen, head of ESG and innovation at Hallmark Luxury Care Homes (twenty-two across the country).

“What we all went through in the pandemic changed how we see the delivery of social care and created an environment where the whole sector was forced to use more technology,” she explains.

“I was reading my notes from an innovation roadshow two years ago, and it’s hard to believe the headway the sector has made since then. I was asked how I felt about wearables then, devices that are attached to someone by their clothing, perhaps a watch to collect health and fitness data. Now that’s a conversation which is over; wearables are mainstream now.





*Claire Johnsen*

“What happened is that the pandemic opened eyes to the potential, and government funding became available to digitise records with its intention that eighty per cent of providers would be recording and managing the delivery of care digitally.

“That means a shift from IT providing automated scorekeeping to enabling data analysis, to identify actionable insights and create real value. That is the gold standard, and the sector is at the foothills at the moment.”

“We know that more new technology is coming,” says Johnsen, “but what will it look like? Can we predict the adoption curve? What we are going to see is an increasing amount of fantastic



technology but innovation and adoption are intertwined. In other words, we have to define whether there is a real requirement in terms of the delivery of care for a particular technological advance.”

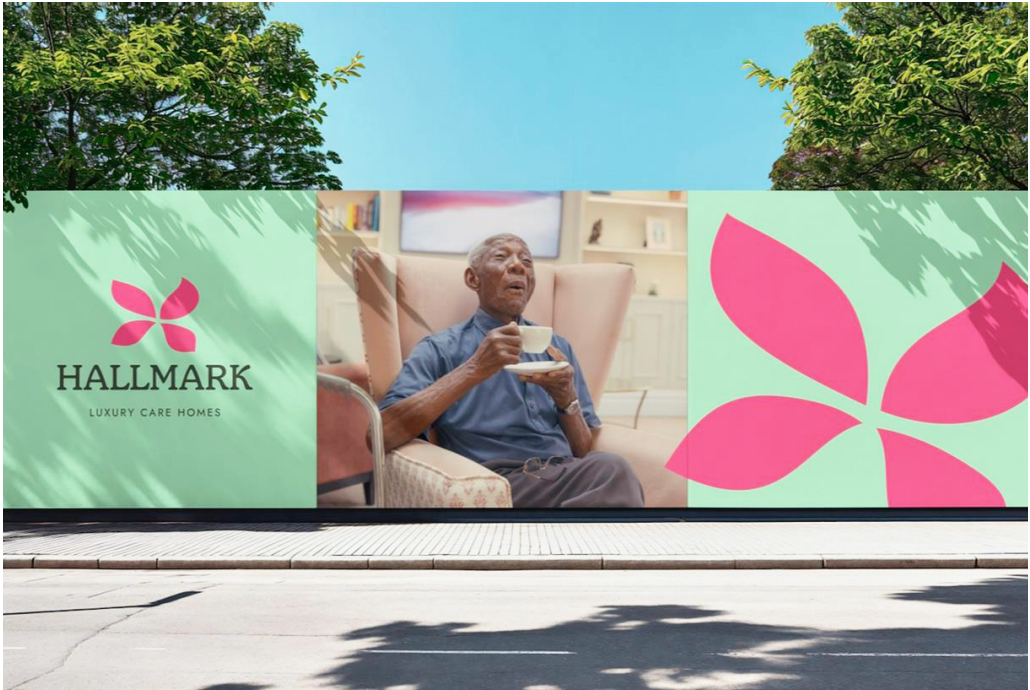
While Johnsen can see that low-level tech, such as robotic lawn mowing, will become more of a rule than an exception, she doesn't believe that in the care sector it will be introduced if it completely replaces human interaction. “The way I see it, care is what we provide and technology is a support mechanism,” she asserts. “Again, will the introduction of a particular technology better an existing way of doing something?”

“Take as an example, photo-plethysmography, a brilliant innovation, which looks at the luminosity of skin, and harnessed to artificial intelligence can provide readings of oxygen and stress levels and continuously monitor blood pressure.

“Another is acoustic monitoring with AI appraising whether a carer needs to be alerted is an example of technology supporting the delivery of care. It means the care team doesn't need to look in on residents during the night if there is no requirement for them to do so.

“Then there is the whole piece around the virtual ward, the concept of providing hospital level care in people's own homes through the use of wearable apps and virtual visits by carers or the medical team.”





*Launch of the new corporate identity*

There's another consideration, says Johnsen, which will require more scrutiny as a consequence of technology. "At the moment there is a significant difference between a wellbeing and a medical device.

"A wellness device focuses on promoting and supporting general health, wellness and lifestyle enhancement without necessarily diagnosing or treating a medical condition.

"A medical device is specifically intended for diagnosing, treating, monitoring or preventing medical conditions or disease. These



devices undergo rigorous testing and regulation to ensure their safety and accuracy, and their use is under medical supervision.

“Technology means in the future we may see data gathered on wellbeing devices assisting medical decisions but medics will need to feel comfortable with that. Medical teams have to feel that the data gathered is rigorous. I am uncertain how this will develop.

“And because of technology, could a product start as being in the wellbeing category and then develop into a medical device?”

Which brings Johnsen back to the question of adoption. “This won’t be exclusive to the care sector,” she says, “but if you sufficiently train people to use new technology then they tend to be more comfortable with it and understand its purpose, and that results in them being motivated to connect with it.

“There is bound to be some nervousness because as AI and the internet of things are revealing themselves, we don’t know for sure where it is heading.

“And while we all want innovation, it doesn’t follow we all like change.”

[www.hallmarkcarehomes.co.uk](http://www.hallmarkcarehomes.co.uk)



## About iplicit

Providing a cloud-based finance and management software solution that allows the care sector to focus on what really matters.

Tailored for those frustrated by on-premise legacy software, iplicit provides greater flexibility and enhanced levels of reporting, integrating with other cloud applications for a seamless migration path from a user's existing system, enabling organisations to 'step up' to next generation finance software without losing the functionality they currently enjoy.

iplicit received the Accounting Excellence award for mid-market and enterprise software of the year in 2020, and the top product for enterprise accounting/ERP in the Accounting Web software awards, 2021.

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*The interview with Claire Johnsen was undertaken with Tim Bryars, specialist at iplicit in working with the care sector.*





## **About DECISION magazine**

First published in 1988, DECISION magazine reflects the business lifestyle, the trials and tribulations, the hopes and aspirations of directors and managing partners responsible for businesses with a turnover of £5million and above.

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