

# Innovating the future of independent living

## Ministerial visit celebrates groundbreaking project.

A new project is revolutionising the way technology and data are integrated into independent living solutions, offering transformative benefits for individuals across Scotland.

Neil Gray MSP, Cabinet Secretary for Health and Social Care, praised the Peoplehood Project, a transformative initiative by Blackwood Homes and Care in collaboration with The Data Lab, Scotland's innovation centre for data and AI during a visit last week.

The visit took place at the Edinburgh Community Rehabilitation and Support Service, where Mr Gray experienced first-hand the innovative use of technology and data designed to support healthier, independent living for Scotland's elderly and vulnerable populations.

Launched in 2022, the £12.5 million Peoplehood Project has engaged over 500 participants across Buckie, Dundee and Glasgow. The three-year project has co-designed new independent living models, incorporating cutting-edge assisted technologies and digital skills training aimed at improving quality of life while reducing dependence on social care services.

Neil Gray MSP commented: "The integration of technology into every-day lives is a key requirement in supporting individuals to live well at home for longer, and to support our health and social care services. We recognise that innovation must be at the heart of how we deliver these services across Scotland.

It is therefore important to recognise and to take the opportunity to learn from projects, such as Peoplehood, which are paving the way for a more sustainable and person-centred approach to social care.”

During the tour, Mr. Gray explored a Blackwood Home, equipped with state-of-the-art technology, and witnessed how the Edinburgh Community Rehabilitation and Support Service is using the technology to the benefit of users.

Steph Sutherland, Development and Commercial Director at Blackwood Homes and Care, said: “At Blackwood, our vision is to help people live their lives to the full.

“The Peoplehood Project has demonstrated the transformative potential of assistive technology in creating homes and communities that support independence.

“The learnings from the project will help shape our approach to independent living, ensuring that we can support as many people as possible to thrive in their homes and communities while leading healthier, more connected lives.”

Heather Thomson, Interim CEO of The Data Lab, added: “This collaboration demonstrates Scotland’s immense potential for innovation in health and social care. Through the power of data and AI, we are delivering ethical, impactful solutions that benefit communities across the country.”

The Peoplehood Project aligns with the UK Government’s Healthy Ageing Challenge Framework, addressing critical themes such as reducing social isolation, promoting independence, and fostering healthier lifestyles. The project’s insights are expected to influence Scotland’s social care sector on a national scale.

[Blackwood Homes and Care](#), operating over 1,700 homes across 28 local authority areas, is renowned for its innovative approach to accessible housing, exemplified by the award-winning

Blackwood House and CleverCogs technology.

Collaborating with The Data Lab – which is supported by the Scottish Government via the Scottish Funding Council National Innovation programme – the University of Edinburgh, CENSIS, Carebuilder and Mydex, the project harnesses data science to develop sustainable solutions for healthy ageing and independent living, contributing to Scotland's leadership in data-driven social care innovation.

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