

CARE TECH ASSEMBLY 2025

What we heard and what's next - planting seeds.

Over 140 people joined us in June to explore what's happening in Care Tech in Scotland. Here's what we heard, what it means, how we can act, and what's next.

FOUR THEMES EMERGED

- 1. CONNECTION AND COLLABORATION**
- 2. SUSTAINABILITY FOR PEOPLE AND PLANET**
- 3. EMERGING TECH, ROBOTICS AND AI**
- 4. SKILLS AND RECOGNITION**

Care Tech is about how technology can be used in social care to support people to live with independence, dignity, and connection. It grew from work by Scottish Care and partners to explore new workforce roles like Care Technologists, Connectors and Navigators, and has since developed into a wider movement across Scotland and England.

1. CONNECTION AND COLLABORATION

What we heard

The Assembly was about much more than the panels, it was about the conversations in between. People valued hearing from such a wide range of voices: social care and housing providers, researchers, designers, tech start-ups and action on climate networks. For many, it confirmed that care tech challenges and opportunities can't be solved in silos.

Participants spoke about the importance of local, place-based collaboration as well as national policy. They stressed that we work better when we work as a community, and that learning across sectors sparks ideas and avoids duplication. For some, the Assembly was the first time they had connected with providers and innovators outside their usual circles.

What this means

Care tech thrives when systems connect. Collaboration must be built into how we design, commission, and deliver services, not left to chance. It's about strengthening both local ecosystems and national networks, so innovation can take root and scale.

How we can act

- Create regular spaces for people across sectors to meet, share and co-design.
- Support place-based collaboration, amplifying what's already working in local ecosystems and communities.
- Build ongoing communities of practice so momentum continues beyond single events.

What's next

Use Care Tech Unplugged to strengthen these connections and build the sense of movement. Co-design pathways that link local innovation with national strategy, ensuring care tech is grounded, scalable, and sustainable.

“It was confirmed to me that regardless of sector, we are all aiming for similar: to facilitate person-led services which can be enabled by digital products which support proactive and preventative supports.”



2. SUSTAINABILITY FOR PEOPLE AND PLANET

What we heard

Sustainability can't just mean funding pilots. It's about building roles and innovations that last, supporting people to join the workforce, helping them stay, and creating space for them to thrive.

We need to recognise financial realities too. Within current commissioning models, collaborative cross-sectoral and multi-disciplinary teams can provide good homes for roles like Care Technologists and Care Connectors.

It also means making sure people, in our communities and in the workplace, are never left behind. Every digital transformation initiative should come with a human role alongside it, someone who can bridge technology and care, and support real adoption.

The 'green and ethical tech' conversation struck a chord. For some, it was the first time they had considered how technology choices in care also carry environmental and ethical consequences. Examples of remakeries and circular approaches to devices showed that it's possible to reduce waste, cut costs, and extend the life of equipment.

What this means

Sustainability is about more than funding: it's about workforce, commissioning, and place-based ecosystems that support roles and innovations to flourish. And it requires collaboration across disciplines and sectors, locally and nationally. It also means embedding sustainability and ethics into every stage: commissioning, procurement, and practice.

How we can act

- Make human roles part of every digital initiative.
- Design commissioning models that support long-term roles.
- Use procurement to favour ethical, sustainable suppliers.
- Adopt circular economy approaches like remakeries.
- Share examples of good practice so services know what's possible.

What's next

Care Tech Unplugged will focus on place-based collaboration and sustainable models that allow roles to grow roots in local systems.

We will work with partners to share practical guidance on ethical and green technology choices in care.



3. EMERGING TECH, ROBOTICS AND AI

What we heard

There was strong interest in what's on the horizon for tech, particularly robotics and AI. Participants recognised the potential for these tools to support independence, ease workloads, and enhance efficiency. Speakers reminded us that good technology is designed with people, not just for them. We heard that there are home-grown tech start-ups and innovators in Scotland keen to work alongside the care sector, co-designing tools that meet real needs. We also heard about the importance of widening participation, with initiatives encouraging more diversity, particularly welcoming young women into robotics and tech careers.

At the same time, people said awareness is still patchy. Many don't know what's available, where to try it, or how to embed new tools sustainably. Questions were raised about interoperability: how do we make sure new technologies work alongside what's already working, instead of creating another silo?

What this means

Emerging tech is full of promise, but it won't have impact unless people can access it, understand it, and embed new tools responsibly into everyday practice. The challenge isn't just innovation, it's diffusion.

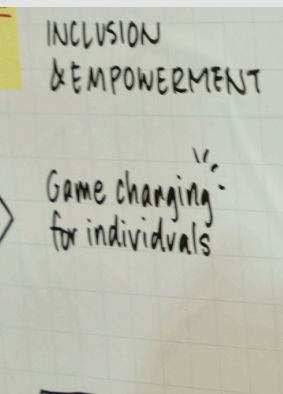
How we can act

- Partner with suppliers willing to co-design and support adoption.
- Create opportunities to see and test technologies, from robotics labs to care settings.
- Build interoperability and sustainability into every new deployment.
- Encourage diversity in the tech workforce so future solutions reflect the people they serve.

What's next

Strengthen partnerships with innovation hubs like the Robotarium and look for opportunities to link research and practice.

“Great to see the 'green' conversation as increasingly we need to be mindful of the negative environmental impact of digital services.”



4. SKILLS AND RECOGNITION

What we heard

The first-ever Care Tech Awards were a highlight of the Assembly. They gave us a chance to celebrate the creativity and innovation already alive in the sector, and to shine a light on people who are often working under the radar. Many said they came away inspired, encouraged to see this work recognised on a national stage.

At the same time, people pointed out what's still missing: structured training, clear career pathways, and recognition for those leading this work day to day. Attendees wanted more opportunities to learn about new roles like Care Technologists, Navigators, and Connectors. They emphasised that these roles need wrap-around support within teams, not to be treated as bolt-ons or "one-offs."

What this means

Investing in people is as important as investing in technology. Skills, recognition, and career pathways will sustain the movement and attract new talent. The work that began in Scotland is now influencing others, with colleagues in England developing a training programme for care tech roles that builds on our learning and strengthens the wider movement.

"I really like the good working examples within the services.... other events don't bring real examples to the table. I also like that the speakers were not speaking in jargon and service manager language."

How we can act

- Develop career pathways for care tech roles, making them part of the wider social care workforce.
- Provide structured training and peer networks so people don't feel they are "going it alone."
- Celebrate success stories, building on the momentum of the Awards to keep recognition visible.

What's next

Work with partners to design training, accreditation, and career pathways for these roles. Use future events and awards to continue shining a light on the people driving change and to normalise these roles across the sector.





PLANTING SEEDS, GROWING FUTURES

The Assembly planted seeds for a different kind of social care future: one that is sustainable, ethical, and inclusive.

We also heard concerns: about financial constraints, commissioning challenges and workforce availability. These aren't barriers to stop us, they are signals of where we need to focus next.

Together, these themes point to a regenerative approach: one that sustains the workforce and strengthens collaboration, makes ethical choices for people and planet, integrates emerging technologies responsibly, and invests in skills and recognition.

Thanks to everyone who joined us and to all who have been part of the journey so far - let's keep the momentum alive.

Next steps

Care Tech Unplugged, October 2nd 2025 with Glasgow School of Art, will be the next step in nurturing those seeds.

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Brilliantly put together - great sessions and mix of speakers

Wonderful event, thought provoking & inspiring- well done to all involved.

I can genuinely say that that's the best speakers I've heard at a conference for some time if not ever. Each panel was extremely informative, with each speaker professional & very interesting.

Would be great if this event was an annual event

Great event, and hope to see more in the future

