Reflections from 2017 PMG conference

I thought I knew quite a bit about wheelchairs prior starting my job at the wheelchair service. I soon realised how severely I underestimated the sheer amount of variety and options as well as knowledge and skills required to do the job well.

As a newcomer to the world of wheelchairs and seating, I also would have found attending the PMG overwhelming. The knowledge and experience gained in my previous months have helped to process what was around me, find familiar products and faces and make me want to learn more about all things new that may benefit my service and clients in the future.

Besides the range of up and coming products and the opportunity to introduce myself to other company representatives, the show presented a variety of interesting talks and lectures.

There were (amongst many) a couple of lectures that I personally found interesting and memorable.

The first was the use of mobile app technologies in pressure ulcer care, presented by Dr Lorna Tasker. The technology in healthcare is continuing to progress further and faster. One of the most important areas of development for healthcare professionals working in wheelchair services is pressure care.

Prevention of pressure ulcer development and aftercare is paramount to many of our clients. The study focused on clients living in remote areas with potential difficulties of accessing services in their communities. As well as opening doors to other technologies helping clients to get the right advice, support and treatment at the right time, it is empowering clients. This form of technology can be also seen to help educate clients to take ownership in managing their own pressure care.

Client centred care has been often diluted by limited resources in healthcare services. By looking for innovative solutions of this costly issue, further impetus will hopefully be provided which will lead to the application of digital mobile technology nationwide.

The second lecture was presented by Hans Candeborn, an orthopaedic engineer from Sweden who was discussing matrix seating and what can be achieved using this system.

Although Mr Candeborn’s knowledge and skill of his subject was undoubtedly impressive, what impressed me was the dedication and passion that was evident during his presentation. It was through his expression when sharing his stories that I personally found inspiring. It was apparent he loved what he did and described that during his career when treating clients he was not only able to help them through his work but has made friends for life.

At times during our working lives, we all find ourselves in stressful and demanding situations. It is perhaps not always clear to us why we do what we do. And it is good to have people around us that can teach, challenge and inform us but most of all to motivate and inspire us.

It is important to be reminded that what we do has an enormous value to people we help and also for those we assist to help themselves. Perhaps every now and then, we should try to be more like Hans Candeborn.