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This International Women's Day, let's talk about a group that often gets overlooked in conversations about empowerment—older women. With women living longer than men and many finding themselves living alone after 65, technology isn't just a convenience; it's a game-changer. It's about more than gadgets and apps—it's about independence, safety, and staying connected in a fast-moving digital world.

The Reality for Older Women

The numbers tell a clear story. Women consistently outlive men, often by several years. In the UK, nearly 35% of women over 65 live alone, and in Australia, 39% of women living solo are over 70, compared to just 19% of men. Across Europe, from the Nordic countries to Spain and France, the pattern repeats—older women are more likely to be on their own and in need of solutions that help them maintain their independence.

At the same time, health and social care systems worldwide are under pressure. More than ever, technology is stepping in to help people maintain their independence for longer, and that's exactly where smart tech, digital health, and telecare come in.

Technology as an Enabler of Independence

- 1. Smart Homes & Assistive Tech:** Think voice-activated assistants, automated lighting, and fall detection systems. These innovations are transforming daily life, making it easier to navigate everyday tasks and ensuring help is always within reach. In Spain, the **Smarthabit programme** has already shown how proactive telecare can reduce emergency interventions and help people stay in their own homes longer.
- 2. Telehealth & Digital Healthcare:** No more long waits at the GP's office—virtual consultations and remote monitoring let older women take charge of their health.
- 3. Social Connectivity & Digital Inclusion:** Loneliness is a major issue for older women, but technology can offer a lifeline. Video calls, social media, and online communities help bridge the gap, keeping relationships strong even when physical distance is a challenge.
- 4. Financial & Digital Literacy:** With banks and essential services moving online, digital literacy is key. Learning how to manage finances digitally not only offers convenience but also provides better protection against fraud and financial vulnerability.

Breaking Down Barriers to Tech Adoption

The benefits are clear, but many older women still face hurdles when it comes to digital access. Common challenges include a lack of confidence, affordability, and accessibility. So, how do we bridge the gap?

- **Community Initiatives:** Tech literacy programmes designed for older women can provide hands-on support in a way that feels accessible and welcoming.
- **User-Friendly Design:** Technology needs to be **intuitive and adaptable**, making it easy for people of all abilities to use.
- **Stronger Policies & Advocacy:** Governments and organisations must ensure digital inclusion is a priority, recognising that technology isn't just for the young—it's a vital tool for everyone.

A Future of Inclusion and Empowerment

As we celebrate International Women's Day, let's ensure that older women are part of the digital revolution. Countries like **Spain, Finland, and the UK** are already integrating **telecare and digital health services** into national strategies, proving that when done right, technology can improve both health outcomes and economic efficiency.

This isn't just about gadgets—it's about ensuring that longevity is matched with **quality of life, autonomy, and connection**. Empowering older women through technology isn't just a nice-to-have; it's a necessity. Let's work together to create a world where every woman, regardless of age, has the tools and confidence to thrive.