

case study



Sector: Housing
Client: Aspire Housing

Application: Older People's Services

the dilemma

The Borough of Newcastle-under-Lyme has a population of 123,300, a higher than average proportion are over 60 (22%) and 9.5% are over 75 (this is set to rise by nearly 15% by 2011). The Borough experiences high levels of deprivation and poor health, and people experience a higher level of poverty than average for the UK. Given this picture, how does Aspire Housing ensure the highest levels of support are offered to older people across North Staffordshire?



background

Aspire Housing is the largest Registered Social Landlord (RSL) in Staffordshire providing more than 9,000 affordable homes for rent in the Borough of Newcastle-under-Lyme. A non-profit making organisation, Aspire Housing's forward thinking approach and determination has seen a number of key achievements since its formation in 2000, including:

- Care CALL, the 24 hour emergency telecare service, obtaining national recognition through accreditation to the Association of Social Alarms Provider's Code of Practice and the Government's Charter Mark.
- The launch of a new website, allowing 24 hour access to information and advice about services.
- Development of a business directorate to seek out new and innovative business opportunities.
- The building of strong partnerships with Staffordshire Social Services and Newcastle-under-Lyme Primary Care Trust.

All the reassurance you need

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“Our purpose is to make our homes and communities a better place to live. By developing integrated strategies between key stakeholders in older people’s services, we are achieving improved outcomes for older people in terms of health and well being.”

Tony Billington, Chief Executive, Aspire Housing



the need

With a high proportion of older people, the Borough experiences continuous pressures on support services, especially as nearly half of those aged over 75 have a long term limiting illness or disability. This has forced Aspire Housing to take a look at new and innovative ways of looking after people in the community.

the solution

Telecare

Telecare uses discreet sensors and communications technology. These are installed in the home to provide remote support to people who are vulnerable. The sensors alert Care CALL - Aspire Housing’s 24 hour emergency call centre when help, information or support is required.

Benefits to telecare

To users

- Helps people feel safer in their homes
- Supports people, to enable them to retain an independent lifestyle despite increased frailty



Marian Preece with Tony Billington, Chief Executive and Wynne Gordon, Scheme Manager

To carers

- Provides reassurance that the person cared for will be responded to immediately if an emergency should occur

To care professionals

- Helps PCTs meet their NSF targets, eg dementia, diabetes, heart disease
- Allows MORE people to be supported in the community
- Improves quality of care and acts as a support mechanism for other caring professionals
- Supports early discharge from hospital

“We are delighted to be working in partnership with Aspire Housing on this project. We believe the project has delivered real benefits to service users with a range of disabilities, supporting them at home when they might otherwise have gone into hospital or residential care. The use of this technology provides a valuable addition to the range of services available to enable people to live independent lives. We would envisage that the positive results from this project will lead to Assistive Technology being provided to more people across the county.”

Jackie Owen, Lead Officer, Older People’s Services, Staffordshire Social Services.

“I am house bound so do not go far, I have help with my walking stick and my bungalow is very easy to live in. I am lucky to have so much help plus the alarm gives me that peace of mind if I should need it ”

Mrs X, service user.



Gem / Amie



Bogus Caller



Fall Detector



Flood Detector



Smoke Detector



CO Detector



Pull Cord



Pressure Mat



PIR (Movement Detector)

The sensors monitor a range of potential risk situations including walking about (particularly useful for people with dementia), falls and intruders as well as environmental issues such as floods, fire and gas leaks.

Project 1 - Telecare Haven

The Telecare Haven is an area within the Ashfields Grange sheltered housing scheme which demonstrates the benefits of telecare technology in providing better care and support for older, vulnerable and disabled people who are assessed as being 'at risk'. It is fitted out with a range of assistive technology which shows health professionals, social services and clients that technology can really help make a difference to people's lives and reduce the pressure on hospital beds and care homes by enabling people to remain within their own homes for longer.

Project 2 - Reablement Project

Working in partnership with the Staffordshire Social Services reablement team and the disability resources team, Aspire Housing set up the reablement project in May 2003 with the aim of complementing the personal and therapeutic care plans in place to support an older or disabled person in their own home; implementing bespoke solutions for service users following a comprehensive assessment, and enabling service users to stay within their own homes for longer with added independence and reassurance.

An interim report on the pilot scheme indicates the following potential benefits:

- Falls Management** - provides a means of quickly discovering any potential fall in a cold property and thus reducing the risk of hypothermia and pneumonia.
- Reduced hospital stays** - provides a means of reducing time spent in hospital as a result of a fall which has gone undetected for a long period of time.
- Dementia protection** - provides a means of supporting people suffering from dementia - preventing them from having to go into residential care, by minimising risk caused by the turning on of unlit gas appliances, of water taps left on, walking about and of undetected fire. This may cause a smoke alarm to sound but a person with dementia may not respond with a 999 call.
- Agency co-operation** - improves and opens up access to joint working and utilising cross agency expertise within social services and housing teams.
- Greater confidence** - provides a means to minimise risk for people of all age groups assessed as 'at risk' and provides them and their carers with a greater degree of confidence that independence is a feasible option.
- Environmental problems** - provides rapid detection of smoke, falls, gas leaks, flooding etc.

There are currently over 35 service users on the scheme from a variety of tenure. Here are some real examples of how the scheme is helping those in need:

- 25% of current users experience dementia and memory loss. The sensors which are of most assistance here are the passive ones which indicate a potential problem such as water taps or gas appliances left on or pans left on the stove.
- 71% of users are frail and liable to fall or have a history of falls, therefore to get help to them sooner via the fall detector or personal trigger, rather than being left on the floor all night, greatly reduces the stay in hospital.
- 20% are hearing or visually impaired to some degree which makes communication a problem, eg may think that a gas appliance is lit when it isn't or a stove turned off when it is still lit.
- Other conditions noted were strokes, heart attacks, angina, dizziness, blood pressure, hypertension, epilepsy and osteoporosis. These conditions are assumed to constitute the reason for the referrals and dealing with the symptoms (walking about, falling, leaving gas unlit and water taps running) via referral for Assistive Technology as the response to the risk assessment.

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the results

“At Aspire Housing we firmly believe in the potential for telecare to deliver big improvements in the provision of high quality care to our customers. We provide bespoke solutions for service users which look at the overall situation and the individual needs of the service user. Technology can be used to assist the development of Intermediate Care and Reablement Services, support carers and reduce delayed discharge from hospitals.”

Marian Preece, Development Manager - Older People, Aspire Housing.

Interim evaluation report findings - all information taken from interviews with referrers in December 2003

- A number of carers suggested that the service user had gained in confidence and were happier for the presence of the technology in the home
- Surveys returned by service users strongly indicated an improvement in their confidence as a result of having Assistive Technology
- All referrers were “definitely” convinced that risks inherent in the behaviour/frailty of users had been reduced by the technology. One commented that use of an outside toilet was now being made by one service user who had ceased to use it before having a personal pendant fixed on a bracket at ground floor level, for fear of falling and not being found.
- Referrers found calls data and information from the control centre of use. Most important were:-
 - a. The devices which had made the call
 - b. The frequency of the calls made
 - c. Whether the agreed protocol for a service user had been followed
 - d. How the service user “sounded” when contacted by the Control Centre

summary

It is clear that the use of Assistive Technology is helping service users to experience a more normal and less fearful life, and that it is a very useful extension to the toolkit of the field workers involved. It has the potential to help PCTs meet their targets, eg diabetes, dementia and help social care teams support MORE people in the community.

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Tunstall is a founder member of the Continua Health Alliance

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