

project review



Sector: Health & Social Care
Client: West Lothian Council

Application: Opening Doors for Older People Project

introduction

Despite increased frailty, older people in general wish to remain in their own homes for as long as possible.

After totally examining its provision for older people services within the area, West Lothian Council is now committed to one of the most radical programmes of housing and telecare in the UK, and is putting technology packages into older people's homes to support them in the community.

The project vision by the council states:

"The proposal to replace residential homes with care based in people's individual houses and Smart technology is probably one of the most advanced projects in Europe. It will be pioneering new approaches and new systems in

patterns of human service delivery combined with the development and integration of technological services. The partners to the project are all committed to evaluating the result of this programme, so that it can assist similar technical developments throughout Scotland. There is a clear commitment towards informing wider developments of this kind, both within Scotland and further afield."

This innovative new housing partnership initiative is called:

opening doors for older people project



West Lothian
Council

All the reassurance you need

Tunstall

“I am excited by the possibilities that this new technology offers to help older people lead fuller and more independent lives. I know that this whole issue will have to be handled sensitively to ensure that people perceive the technology as a help to them rather than an intrusion. I do hope that this project is only the beginning of developing a better and more cost effective service for what is an increasing elderly population in West Lothian. I firmly believe that it will offer substantial benefits to our senior citizens”

Councillor Heather Smart

Convenor of Health and Care Committee, West Lothian Council

aim and objective

The overall initial aim of this visionary and exciting project is to provide an innovative form of housing for older people with support needs that will sustain independent living through effective physical design, focused individual care planning and the efficient use of new technologies.

The project involves a fundamental shift in the provision of housing and care for older people, with radical movement of investment from residential homes to people's homes.

Four of the six council-owned residential homes will be replaced by newly built housing with Smart technology. In addition, older people's existing homes are being modified by the introduction of Smart technology tailored to their particular needs. Indeed, by the end of January 2003, 1200 homes will have been modified.

The following outputs were anticipated in the early phase of the initiative:

- Independent living for a number of people within a care environment
- Support through Smart technology in a person's own home
- A broad range of individual support and care supported by Smart technology and social work home support teams
- Intensive day support for some people
- A new design of house that will sustain independent living
- The transfer of a West Lothian Council new build sheltered housing complex to a housing association
- Additional sheltered housing for a number of residents
- Rigorous testing of new technologies and integrated support procedures

partners

Partly funded by a Scottish Executive New Housing Partnership grant of over £5m, the initiative includes several partners:

- West Lothian Council
- Community Scotland
- Bield Housing Association
- Hanover (Scotland) Housing Association
- Lothian Health
- West Lothian Healthcare NHS Trust

industry partners

A consortium of industry organisations have partnered in this project also. Headed by Tunstall it includes:-

- **West Lothian Council** - A joined up team of dedicated professionals which has vision, drive and leadership
- **Technology in Healthcare** - Creators & designers of innovative telecare concepts and services
- **Tunstall** - Recognised leader in technological innovations that protect vulnerable people
- **Possam Controls** - Leaders in assistive technology
- **Motion Media** - Leaders in image transfer and processing technology

level of need

The target client group are older people who are currently experiencing difficulties in the community and are being considered for other care options. This client group are usually at risk from:

- Falls
- Walking about
- Medical problems
- Security
- Fire



assessment process

The assessment process has been developed and managed by West Lothian Council's Health and Care team, supported by Tunstall and its partners. The general policy relating to the service is as follows:

- The technology has to address a person's appropriate personal risks, needs and lifestyle issues and should not be solely linked to clients interest in a particular piece of equipment
- The technology must not increase dependency levels of clients
- To ensure that the client and carer are helped to use the technology properly and they understand what has been specified and why
- That older people are only given the Smart technology they feel comfortable with

core package

A core package of telecare Smart sensors has been developed. Every client has the following core package of technology issued and installed in his or her appropriate home environment. This consists of a PERS unit with:

1. Temperature extremes detector
2. Smoke detector
3. 2 flood detectors
4. 2 movement detectors (PIR)

Additional sensors are included in the package where appropriate, such as fall detectors and bed and chair sensors, in order to meet personal needs.

the developing programme

Evaluation

One of the aims of the pilot study was to commence an independent evaluation by the University of Stirling.

The aim of the evaluation is to:

- Develop and pilot research instruments to use in the main evaluation
- Monitor at intervals the expectations, views and experiences of stakeholders in the project i.e. clients, their carers and a range of relevant professionals
- Examine the impact of the new support and care packages on the quality of life of service users and their carers

Mainstream

Opening Doors for Older People can no longer be described as a pilot project, as the care and support packages with Smart technology are now mainstreamed into council community care provision. Several major developments will be important in the next stage of evaluation:

- The first tenants moved into the new build houses with Smart technology in May 2002 and more are following.
- The evolution of rapid response will merit attention. This is to answer the question of whether those who have received rapid response will continue to work with Smart technology once their intermediate needs in the initial implementation are satisfied and they are more independent again.
- Another issue in the initial implementation of the new care and support packages has been the difficulty of involving medical staff and of moving towards the development of telemedicine.
- The call centre has now evolved into the Home Safety Service and is now providing a service to a greater number of clients.

For further information please e-mail Andrew McIntosh at a_mcintosh@tunstallamerica.com

summary

From the point of view of the local authority Smart technology is an extremely effective additional tool in West Lothians' ongoing care planning process.

From the point of view of older people Smart technology helps them to maintain independence and remain in familiar surroundings for as long as possible.

Therefore West Lothian Council and its partners are making:-

[A SMART move for older people](#)

[A SMART move for carers](#)

[A SMART move for their families](#)

comments on the impact of the Smart sensor technology

"From clients"

- It has made me feel more confident
- It has taken the strain off my family
- It has made me feel safer in my own home
- It will allow me to continue living in my own home

The clients appear, on the whole, to have coped with the demands of learning how to use the various pieces of equipment, or at least with the monitoring aspects of the technology.

"From the carer"

- I find it really reassuring (daughter)
- Knowing if there's a fire, help is just at the end of the line, probably quicker than 999

- I can spend a more normal life, go away at weekends, go shopping and spend time with my family (daughter-in-law)

The carers are usually satisfied with the installation and with using the technology, a system that offers them a reassuring backup.

"From the Health and Care Team"

- It definitely works with some people, it's brilliant
- It will keep them (older people) out of more supported types of accommodation
- We've got to focus on who we can help

The Health and Care Team reflects a sense of pride in their own hard-won achievements and a growing confidence in their specialist abilities.

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Tunstall is a founder member of the Continua Health Alliance

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Tunstall Group Ltd, 10N. Martingale Road, Suite 400, Schaumburg, Illinois 60173, United States

Tel: 1800 892 2205 Email: sales@tunstallamerica.com

