

Tunstall Response Managed Call Services

The challenge

bpha was founded in 1990 having purchased the housing stock of North Bedfordshire Borough Council. Today **bpha** owns/manages around 17,000 homes in Bedfordshire and the surrounding counties, and provides a range of services including rented homes, housing for older people and low-cost home ownership.

bpha also offers a Carelink community alarm service, with approximately 2,510 scheme and dispersed connections and an optional 24/7 Visiting Support Officer response service.

How did working in partnership with Tunstall enable **bpha** to deliver a more efficient and cost effective community alarm service to the people it supports?

What we did

In 2013 it became clear that the existing PNC5 monitoring platform at **bpha**'s Carelink centre needed to be upgraded. Exploring the options for achieving this also prompted wider discussions on how the service could be provided in a more efficient way.

Due to the relatively small number of connections there was often only one operator on shift at any one time, meaning the operator would sometimes have several calls coming through at once.

bpha had an existing relationship with Tunstall and so reviewed the options available with their team of specialists, and decided to partner with Tunstall Response for the delivery of their Carelink service.

In order to help Carelink deliver a more effective service, Tunstall Response suggested a cloud-based solution (a virtual PNC), enabling both Carelink and Tunstall Response to call handle from the same data on the same PNC platform whilst remaining geographically separated (**bpha** based in Bedford and Tunstall Response based in Doncaster).

Facilitating this service required full migration of **bpha**'s data, review and provision of additional telephony infrastructure, reprogramming of outfield telecare equipment and a complete sharing of call handling procedures and day to day operational processes.



This has been a true partnership. Both parties were clear about the goals of the project, and experienced staff and a 'can do' attitude on both sides meant the transition of a critical service was managed with the minimum of stress. It continues to be a great working relationship, and one that's delivering excellent results.

Mary Wille, Assistant Retirement Services Manager (Agreements), bpha Limited



Carelink operators would manage calls as normal from 6.30am until 10.30pm daily, at which point calls would divert to Tunstall Response. Tunstall Response also acted as disaster recovery if Carelink was unable to handle calls for any reason.

In April 2014, and after jointly handling calls for four months, **bpha** reviewed the service and made the decision to end in-house telecare monitoring and the Carelink service was fully migrated to Tunstall Response 24/7.



Results

bpha and Tunstall Response have built an excellent working relationship which has provided very positive feedback from staff and service users alike.

Transferring service delivery has resulted in significant improvements including:

- Improved efficiency with multiple operators
- Reduced number of complaints from service users
- Tunstall Response is a TSA Platinum accredited centre
- Cost savings:
 - ✓ PNC platform no longer required
 - ✓ PNC service agreement no longer required
 - ✓ Future software upgrades are no longer required (these are now realised through Tunstall Responses' own infrastructure upgrades)
 - ✓ Disaster Recovery no longer required (this is now included within the 24/7 monitoring agreement)
 - ✓ No telecare call handling operators required at **bpha**

Introducing the new service also involved reviewing the existing infrastructure and general day to day procedures of the **bpha** service.

During the review process, it was identified that a large number of calls were being received from residents of extra care homes via their personal pendants; these calls resulted in Carelink operators then contacting care home staff on their mobiles to request that they visit the resident. In many cases a resident would press their pendant several times during the course of an incident, all adding to call traffic and call congestion.

By providing handsets to carers in **bpha's** four extra care schemes and enabling the carers to answer resident alarm activations directly, carers are able to respond more quickly to residents and there has been a **reduction in call traffic by approximately two thirds each year.**

This relatively simple process change has seen call traffic reduction from 120,000 calls to circa 42,000 per annum with **bpha realising a further saving of approximately £10,000 each year due to lower weekly connection charges.**

As a result of the success of the partnership so far, Tunstall Response is now also undertaking Emergency Repairs Calls, Fire Alarm Test Calls and Anti-Social Behavior Calls during out of hours on behalf of **bpha**.

Next steps

bpha is now actively promoting its Carelink service throughout the local area, offering dispersed alarms with 24 hour monitoring, and Visiting Support Officer response service if needed.



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