

# Riverside – using telecare to deliver better for less in supported living

## The challenge

Riverside is one of the UK's leading Registered Providers of Social Housing, providing support and affordable housing to people of all ages and circumstances throughout England. A significant proportion of its tenants have long-term health issues and by 2020 it's estimated that 50% of them will be 50 or over. Riverside serves 85,000 tenants and residents, with 70% of them living in regular housing stock.

As many local authorities reduce funding for housing and care, how can adopting commercial models with technology at the core help Registered Providers to deliver services more efficiently, and yet still retain their customer-focused values?

## What we did

Riverside's approach is to apply commercial processes to its operations, linking with other agencies to proactively manage tenancies and support people so they're able to live independently in its properties for as long as possible. Not only is this of benefit to Riverside as an organisation but it also has individual and societal benefits and correlates with the aims of health and social care.

Telecare is a key part of Riverside's strategy to help people remain in their homes, feeling secure and supported, yet combating isolation. Riverside believes that telecare can support and facilitate the development of integrated and sustainable communities, ensuring that there are effective mechanisms to ensure the right support reaches the right people at the right time. Services are built around the individual, creating a social fabric which ensures the agencies that are working with people have appropriate relationships between them. Unlike many providers, Riverside has retained managers in its sheltered schemes, and uses telecare as an extra means of support, enabling onsite staff to deliver personal contact where it's most needed.

Riverside's Helpline service was established to reassure its tenants that when they need help or advice they won't be on their own, and this has been developed over recent years to offer a wider range of telecare solutions.



Today innovative approaches to service delivery are critical given the increasing proportion of older tenants and the limited amount of public funding available. Telecare plays a key role in enabling us to address the commercial and social challenge of how to deliver better quality services at lower cost - keeping people out of acute care and in their homes.

**Dave Jepson, Deputy Chief Executive, Riverside**



Riverside has branded the telecare service Life Enhancing Technology (LET), to reflect its ethos that it improves quality of life and gives people control. By introducing technology appropriately at an early stage, Riverside aims to provide preventative support and educate tenants so that as they become older they are familiar with technology and more likely to use it in the future. This will put less reliance on more expensive methods of engagement, with telecare acting as a support tool to help its staff reach more people than they otherwise could. Telecare is a constant presence, helping to avert crises rather than manage them.

Tunstall is also working in partnership with Riverside to develop future solutions which empower tenants further, by creating working groups where users can give their opinions and shape the future direction of product development.





Riverside has always realised the importance of technology; the Helpline has been in place for many years and has been proven to save lives and help people feel more secure at home. However, we have only recently begun to use more advanced technology, making sure we're delivering the best for our tenants. Working closely with Tunstall as our partner we can make sure we provide creative telecare solutions which are right for the individual and the way they want to live their life.

**Jane Mindar, LiveTime Manager,  
Riverside**

## Next steps

Riverside's aim is to continue to use technology to transform its services, helping it to enable 80% of its tenants to remain in their own homes, and then providing a continuum of care through to sheltered and ultimately Extra Care, servicing its customers for as long as possible.

Its vision is to integrate with social care and health, to provide a seamless service to tenants and using technology as an enabler for integrated and sustainable communities for the future.

Riverside continues to work in partnership with Tunstall on product development, including forthcoming solutions such as a bespoke touch-screen tablet, specifically designed to enable older people to communicate with family and friends and access relevant online content.

Ultimately the ambition is to mainstream the telecare service, transforming the way people perceive the technology to the point that it becomes aspirational and is available as a High Street retail offering.

## Case study

The LiveTime project is part of Riverside's sustainable business model, which coincides with the Government and healthcare ethos of prevention rather than cure – making a low-cost investment to improve quality of life and prevent the need for more complex interventions in the future. The Livetime project is funded by Riverside until 2014, its final year, when it will be DALLAS funded and a further dimension will be added to the project as more specialist technology will be included and employed in homes in Liverpool.

The aim of the project is to be more proactive in supporting older tenants to have a better quality of life in their own homes, remaining independent, well and active and connected to their communities.

LiveTime focuses on four key areas so that services, projects and events are developed to provide older people with a network to ensure that they have all that they need to live a full and active life:

**Getting the basics right** – ensuring that people have access to the right benefits, support and care needs (including telecare), money advice, repairs and handyman services etc

**Physical Wellbeing** – access to services and activities which promote good health, good nutrition, and physical activity such as gardening clubs

**Social Wellbeing** – access to social opportunities in order to combat isolation and keeping hobbies and interests alive

**Connections with communities and society** – intergenerational work and finding a place in society as older people have valuable experience and so much to offer. This includes teaching people to use the internet, email and Skype.



The alarm makes me feel much safer. I know if anything happens someone will come to help me, but in the meantime I get out and about and make the most of all the clubs and things.

**Riverside Life Enhancing Technology user**

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