

## Sunderland – telehealthcare at the heart of a whole systems approach across all FACS bands

### The challenge

Situated in the North East of England, Sunderland is a city of approximately 280,000 residents. The decline of the shipbuilding and mining industries left a legacy of poor health and high deprivation, and despite transforming itself in recent years into a vibrant, forward-thinking city, significant challenges remain. Not least of these is an ageing population, with the number of older people above 65 years of age in Sunderland forecast to rise from 46,000 in 2009 to 68,000 in 2030 (an increase of 46%). The number of people in Sunderland aged over 85 years – those with the greatest care needs – will more than double from 5,000 to 11,000 over the same period.\*

In response to this, the Council's Care and Support Preventative Services, including telecare and telehealth, were reshaped to place them at the heart of a Social Care and Health 'whole systems' approach, with the key aim of delaying/preventing people requiring further care and support and reducing the demand for services. How has this approach helped the Council achieve its goal of achieving better health outcomes for local people and delay the onset of needs for care and support?

### What we did

Sunderland City Council is the only local authority in England that still operates across all four 'Fair Access to Care Services' eligibility criteria (FACS) offering support for people with moderate and even low social care needs. Sunderland's approach is not about focusing on the FACS criteria but about taking a whole systems approach to the health and wellbeing of the individual, with the emphasis on prevention, rather than just setting limits on when people can start to access services.



The telehealthcare service protects people's peace of mind and wellbeing, acting as an 'insurance policy' that they will have help if they need it, and offering numerous possibilities depending on the customer's needs and desired outcomes.

**Philip Foster, Head of Care and Support Health, Housing & Adult Services, Sunderland City Council**



The Council's strong preventative agenda for both health and social care services espouses the value of low level prevention and access to both universal and specialist services, as well as higher levels of prevention such as (jointly with health) reablement and intermediate care services. Both telecare and telehealth have been pivotal to the successful delivery of Sunderland's proactive, integrated care and support services.

\*Sunderland Joint Strategic Needs Assessment 2011, Sunderland City Council & Sunderland Teaching Primary Care Trust

## A combined approach

Both the telecare and telehealth services are run by Sunderland Telecare which works in conjunction with colleagues in health, housing and social care to provide support to people with varying levels of care and independence. This approach ensures the consideration of telehealthcare throughout the customer pathway, from the earliest point of contact right through to complex, care-managed cases, with the aim of supporting people to maintain or improve on their level of independence and avoid hospital or residential/nursing care.

People using the services have varying levels of need according to their life stage and health and social care circumstances, whether they are in their own homes or in some form of residential or nursing care and the amount of paid and unpaid care available to them.

## Telecare

The Sunderland Telecare service has been successfully developed in partnership with Tunstall, Housing Providers and the Health Trust with prevention at the core of the service offer. Significant investment has enabled the deployment of the telecare service on a widespread basis with the goals of:

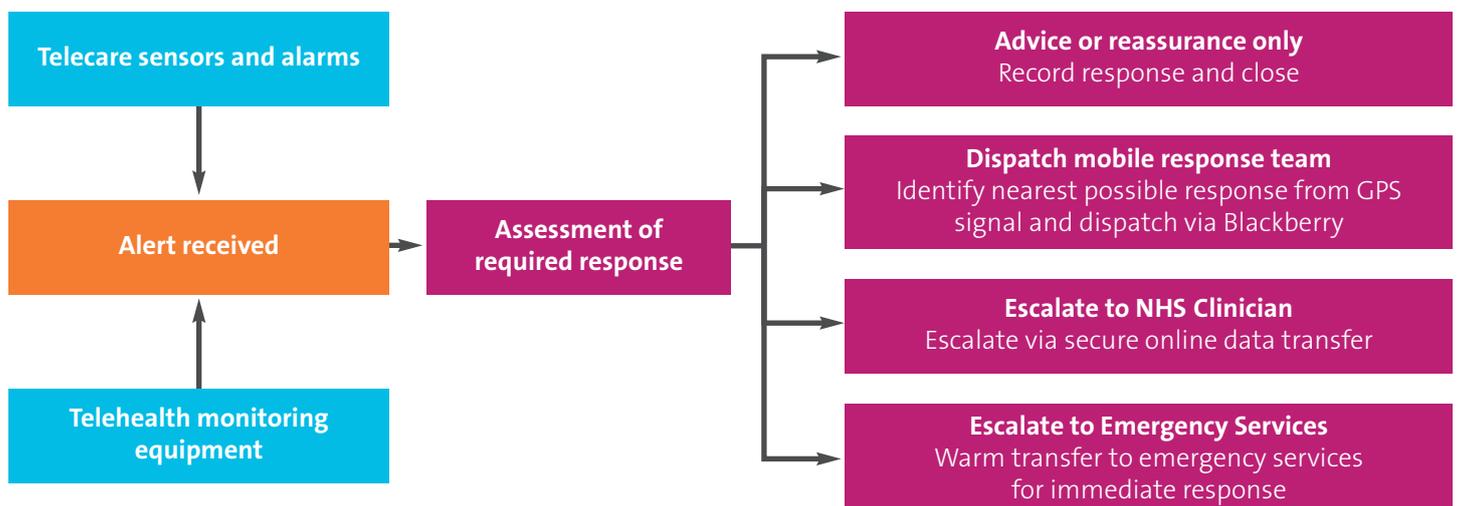
- Supporting independent living
- Keeping people safe
- Improving quality of life
- Improving quality of support/care
- Providing reassurance to service users and their carers
- Reducing face-to-face care/support (where this is for routine monitoring of wellbeing)

Users may benefit from a simple Lifeline™ home unit and personal radio trigger to allow them to call for help from anywhere in their home, or this may be augmented to include other telecare sensors such as smoke detectors, fall detectors or bed occupancy sensors depending on the needs of the individual.

## Telehealth

Sunderland Telecare is currently working in partnership with the health service and Tunstall to further develop and promote the use of telehealth which helps support patients who have long term conditions such as Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease and Chronic Heart Disease by enabling them to measure vital signs and symptoms in their own homes. Systems are installed by Sunderland Telecare and include a mymedic™ hub along with peripherals such as blood pressure monitors, weighing scales and thermometers, depending on the needs of the patient. Results are automatically recorded in a secure IT system that is monitored by Sunderland Telecare staff, and any that require further action (e.g. where a test has been missed, or shows abnormal results) are flagged to clinicians. Where necessary, alerts are escalated to a clinician within the NHS South of Tyne & Wear for early intervention.

### Integrated telecare and telehealth structure



# Providing integrated support using telecare and telehealth

## Case study – Margaret

### Background

Margaret, 67, lives alone and suffers from Emphysema and low lung function which means she can regularly face breathing difficulties and struggles to walk long distances.

### Solution

Margaret uses both the telehealth and telecare services to support her at home.

### Outcome

Margaret said: “The telehealth system has really helped me to deal with my condition better, you know what is going on with the illness more. It hasn’t meant having any less one to-one face time with my health team, but it has saved me making repeated trips to see a nurse or GP. The service helps you to spot any warning signs early so you can act straight away and avoid getting to the worst stage of your condition.

“I would recommend it to anyone in a similar situation to myself. It obviously can’t take away my illness, but feeling so reassured about how my body is doing and having the peace of mind that it is being monitored so thoroughly takes away the stress and anxiety which can trigger my breathing to get worse.”

Margaret also gets great peace of mind from her telecare service, “I am fortunate that I haven’t had to use it much but the peace of mind it gives to me and my family is fantastic. I like that it includes a silent button next to my front door which I can press if I am unsure about someone who has knocked at the door. This lets the team monitor the conversation and if anything is untoward they can send someone from the team out to help me. The two services work so well together and they make such a difference to me and my family.”



Margaret, telecare and telehealth service user

## Case study – Alison

### Background

Alison is 60 and suffers from a condition called Obliterative Bronchiolitis, which causes her breathing difficulties.

### Solution

Alison is visited twice a day by a carer and has used the Sunderland telecare service for over ten years and the telehealth service since the beginning of 2012.

### Outcome

Alison said: “I see the telecare service as being there more as a back-up in case I need help as opposed to something I need to use every day, but the peace of mind from knowing I have the support if ever I need it is really important to me. It’s such a simple system to use and I live alone so the service also provides great peace of my mind for my family too so they know I have 24 hours a day help if I need it.

Alison also recommends her telehealth system, “Once a day Monday to Friday I use the machine to send my readings off to the centre. I just put the sensor on my finger for 60 seconds and it sends my results to the centre from the pulse oximeter through my phone line. My oxygen level needs to be at least 87 per cent every day and if I send a reading off and it’s not, the team contacts me to see how I am feeling and asks me to send off another reading.”



If my second reading comes back still lower than 87 per cent, the team either advises me to start taking some oxygen or in a worst case scenario they can phone an ambulance on my behalf. The regular readings help to keep a clearer picture of how I am doing and it can be acted upon quickly if my levels are lower than they should be. It is really hassle free and it saves me lots of trips to my GP. The services have made a huge difference to my quality of life.

## Results

### Telecare – reducing admissions to residential care

The benefits of telecare have been felt across the city, and between the years 2008/09 and 2010/11 there has been a gradual reduction in the rate of admissions into residential care as telecare has supported people to remain independent in their own homes.

#### Key facts:

- Almost 19,000 people are supported in Sunderland through 13,712 telecare connections
- Sunderland Telecare in partnership with the Council's Customer Services Network who operate the telecare contact centre, assess calls and provide a mobile response to those judged priority – including all silent calls – within an average of 24 minutes
- 3,000 people have at least one item of 'enhanced' telecare equipment fitted in their home i.e. fall detector
- 2,000 people are frequent users and have telecare as part of a whole system approach to their care plan enabling them to remain at home
- In 2011 the service responded to over 44,000 alarms, referred over 800 people to the Health Service led Falls Service and carried out over 5,000 wellbeing reviews to people who were not receiving an ongoing care package
- In a survey of 71 telecare service users undertaken in 2011, 82% said they felt safer at home as a result of the service

### Telehealth – reducing admissions to hospital

Sunderland currently has 54 telehealth systems, and patient evaluation demonstrated less anxiety and an increased awareness and personal monitoring of their condition. Of 55 patients surveyed in 2010, 95% said they would recommend telehealth to a friend.



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