

Connect helps the Boro

Dec 15, 2020

The COVID-19 emergency has been uncharted territory for all of us, and as a service providing support to some of the most vulnerable in our Borough, Connect was quick to adapt to the pandemic and ensure we not only continued to deliver our own service but also help the Council to provide additional services where they were needed most.

The Connect team contributed to supporting people in Middlesbrough in a number of ways:

- Writing to all service users to ask if they were self-isolating, and requested they contact us to let us know if they were happy for us to enter their property in an emergency, or if they'd prefer only their family to respond.
- All staff were retrained in donning and doffing of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE). Connect vans were stocked up with extra equipment, bins and bags to enable staff to double bag PPE as soon as they left a person's property, and used the sinks provided in the back of the vans to enable staff to wash their hands as soon as the PPE was removed.
- Connect's administration staff were drafted in to support with the Council's welfare calls to all the elderly and vulnerable residents of Middlesbrough, helping to preserve the wellbeing of citizens and signpost to other services at an early stage if required.
- Connect customer advisors took all of the Out of Hours calls for the 'Help Boro' campaign. This campaign was implemented to support the residents of Middlesbrough stay safe and well during lockdown by providing shopping, food parcels, health advice, emotional support / conversation and other practical help. Staff received calls, providing as much support as possible before forwarding details to 'Help Boro' staff to contact them the next working day. This approach has also been adopted during the second lockdown for people shielding at home.
- Connect responders also supported with the delivery of the 'Help Boro' food parcels to the elderly and vulnerable residents of Middlesbrough.
- Telecare engineers configured a large number of IP units paired to relevant equipment to enable rapid installations in resident's homes, and make it easier for Connect responders to support with installations if needed.
- Connect Telecare Assessors have been working closely with the hospital and the installation team to install systems in COVID positive patients' homes before discharge from hospital, to expedite discharge, ensure support was in place from the moment they arrived home and also reduce the risks of cross infection.

Connect provides an amazing service 24/7/365, and we've always been proud and honoured to be able to serve our community, but the pandemic has seen the team go above and beyond, working long hours in challenging times to give people essential and sometimes life-saving support. The last few months have brought into sharp focus what a valuable resource our alarm/telecare services are, and how much more they can offer to their local communities if given the opportunity.