

Marketing your telecare service

The challenge

WDH Care Link supports more than 15,000 people in the Wakefield area, through both hardwired and community alarm systems, as well as its Response and Home Visiting Services.

How has its focused programme of marketing helped to raise awareness of the service, growing the number of connections and increasing the number of people self-funding?

What we did

Care Link was established 25 years ago, originally as part of Wakefield Council. The service has over 9,000 hardwired connections, mostly in WDH properties, and more than 3,000 community alarms in individual homes, which are a mix of tenures. Care Link also offers a Response Service, launched in 2007, which currently supports approximately 3,000 people. Other services include home visiting and daily welfare calls. All services are either provided as part of the customer's care plan, or self-funded.

Care Link wanted to raise awareness of all of its services to people living in the Wakefield area, to ensure that everyone who could benefit from the service knew it was available to them.

The service receives referrals from a number of sources including WDH; Health and Social Care professionals working in hospital or community settings; voluntary sector such as Age UK and Stroke Association; West Yorkshire Police; West Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service; Yorkshire Ambulance Service as well as from individuals and their families.

About Dudley Telecare Service

The Dudley Telecare Service, is a platinum member of the TSA, and have a reputation as one of the best performing Telecare services across the West Midlands, making a

huge difference to people's lives, supporting them to live independently and improving their quality of life.

Customers can choose from a number of packages, and can add additional telecare sensors to any of the following:

Standard – Lifeline unit and myamie pendant with monitoring and response from nominated keyholder or emergency services

Premium – Lifeline unit and myamie pendant with monitoring and response Care Link Responder

Premium Plus – Lifeline unit and myamie pendant with monitoring and response Care Link Responder and regular visits from a Care Link Home Visitor

Take a Break – the Standard, Premium or Premium Plus service with a daily welfare phone call on a short-term basis

Home visiting – regular visits from a Care Link Home Visitor at intervals to suit the customer

Tailored packages – devised to meet the needs of people with specific needs, such as dementia, epilepsy or learning disabilities

“ We're very proud of Care Link and the difference it makes to people's lives in Wakefield. We're keen to make even more people aware of how we can help them, and so we've implemented a comprehensive marketing plan to communicate what we offer to a wider audience to make sure the community benefits as much as possible from this service.

Peter Wade, Marketing and Events Manager, WDH



Results

The marketing programme has introduced a comprehensive strategy, including activities across the marketing mix:

Collateral – Newly branded leaflets, designed to appeal to a wider audience – used at events and in libraries, council offices and local large businesses.

Advertising – Adverts in local press and radio, prominent advertising at the railway station, on buses across the district, on pharmacy bags and in local shopping centres.

Events – A curved wall stand with integrated TV screen showing a rolling video about the service, and mobile exhibition unit which are used at local and regional events and to promote the service at shopping centres and large supermarkets. Talks are also given to local groups e.g carers clubs. Equipment is also on display in the meeting room when not being used at events. Promotional items such as pens are given away to promote the service.

Direct mail – Hardcopy mailings of leaflets including initiatives such as 'Refer a friend' offering a voucher for referrals sent out with the Christmas card to existing users.

Website – The site has been expanded to include more information on the services available and detail on additional telecare sensors. A contact form has also been added to enable customers to make enquiries 24 hours a day.

PR – Editorial is placed in local publications, often linked to relevant events such as Awareness Days.

Training – Care Link run regular stakeholder awareness training sessions for people referring to the service. Care Link staff have undertaken sales training to help them feel confident making sure customers are aware of all products and services available and their benefits.

Social media – Regular activity on Twitter and adverts on Facebook.

Customer feedback – customers are invited to visit Care Link offices quarterly to share their views on the service and view new products.



Annual review – customers are asked to fill out a form each year to establish whether their needs have changed; Care Link staff will contact them to offer additional services if so.

The campaign has been in place for approximately two years, and has seen approximately 700 new connections each year. Tracking which elements of the campaign have been most effective is difficult, as very often enquiries are received many months after the customer became aware of the service, in response to a life event. However, since the introduction of the marketing campaign there has been a rise in the number of family members getting in touch to request the service as reassurance for a loved one, rather than as a result of a crisis. The Christmas card refer a friend mailing which offered a £20 voucher if a friend connected to the Care Link service had a 5% success rate, much higher than the average 1-2% response rate for direct mailings.

Care Link is now looking into other marketing options such as advertising at GP surgeries, working with hospital discharge teams, providing medication dispensers in conjunction with pharmacies, and open days at WDH independent living schemes to promote both the scheme and Care Link.

Tunstall offers its customers a range of marketing support. Find out more at uk.tunstall.com/ marketing email marketing@tunstall.com or call **01977 660325.**