

# Just enough support

## Embedding telecare into services for people with learning disabilities

### *Working together*

Dimensions, the specialist provider of services for people with learning disabilities and people who experience autism, is working in partnership with Tunstall Healthcare to include telecare as part of the person-centred support it offers. The aim is to help more than 3,000 people review the way they are supported and consider using telecare to give them more choice, control and independence.

Also known as Assistive Technology, telecare will help to deliver Dimensions' Personalisation Journey, and in particular the *Just Enough Support* element, by enabling care to be delivered more flexibly, taking account of the needs of the individual and what is important to them.

Tunstall is the world's leading provider of telecare and its specialist teams are working with Dimensions staff to ensure the people they support can benefit from the latest solutions, enabling them to live life to the full.

### Just Enough Support

*Just Enough Support* is about people having neither too much, nor too little support, and not seeing support only in terms of paid formal support, but in the rich way we all receive support i.e. from friends, family, and the wider community.

Helping people with learning disabilities and those living with autism to connect with their communities and have choice and control in their lives means we need to think differently. This is what *Just Enough Support* is about: the practical and creative ways we can plan and shape services that will encourage a full life through exploring the alternatives to paid support and traditional service solutions.

Telecare has a key role to play in providing *Just Enough Support*, promoting independence by managing risks and enabling support services to be delivered in new ways. It can also protect the privacy and dignity of the people we support, giving them more flexibility in how they spend their money by freeing up staff time to be used in more creative ways.

### For the people we support

Telecare helps to safeguard the people we support, but at the same time increase levels of independence, privacy and dignity by enabling care personalised to their needs. It also helps them to make their own choices and decisions about their lives.

### For families

Telecare gives additional reassurance that their loved ones are being supported 24 hours a day, and that their safety and independence is being maintained.

### For professionals

Telecare supports the changing nature of social care, helping to drive up the quality of service, improve outcomes, and increase the quality and continuity of care in a person-centred way.

### For commissioners

Incorporating telecare into care plans can help to transform the lives of citizens by increasing their choice, control and independence. It can also help to deliver better for less, supporting the sustainability of services as well as improving individual outcomes.

## About telecare

Telecare helps to manage risk and support independence by means of unobtrusive wireless sensors placed around the home which detect possible problems such as smoke, gas, floods or a person falling or having an epileptic seizure. Sensors automatically raise a local, audible alarm, as well as alerting a support worker, ensuring the right help can be delivered at the right time 24 hours a day. Telecare gives the user control, enabling them to ask for help if they need it but minimising unnecessary disruption, such as night time checks.

Telecare packages are carefully created on an individual basis, with Tunstall's technology experts working closely with Dimensions staff to ensure that the people they support are benefiting from the best solution for them. See below for some examples of how telecare can help.

### Reducing waking night provision

Waking night provision at several registered and group living services in Sheffield had increased over time due to various factors, and in some cases three waking staff were being deployed to support 12 people. The third member of staff was sometimes deployed as a 'floating' support who could be called upon should the need arise. This level of support was costly and unnecessary.

A pilot project was introduced with Dimensions and Tunstall working together to assess the individual needs of six services and identify solutions to meet these needs. Staff, families and the people we support were consulted to ensure they understood the reasons for change and to address any concerns.

One of the major reasons for waking night staff was to monitor the wellbeing of people with epilepsy, undertaking regular routine checks during the night in case of seizures. Using epilepsy sensors provides continuous monitoring throughout the night, and if a seizure is detected sleep-in staff will be alerted immediately on a vibrating pager.

Telecare has greatly improved the safety of the people we support by providing constant monitoring. Removing the need for intrusive physical checks has increased privacy and improved the quality of sleep that people experience, and this has had a positive impact on their wellbeing and happiness.

**The project has also generated significant savings. Overall investment in technology across all six services was approximately £33,000. Reconfiguring services to withdraw five waking nights has reduced costs by £3,800 per week.**

### Joan's story, independent living

Joan is an 86 year old woman who has recently moved from a group living service to a flat which had warden service. Whilst Joan does not require or want 24/7 support, the warden service was being discontinued and Joan's circle of support felt that to enable Joan to continue to live safely and independently, telecare should be researched.

Joan has strict routines and is unhappy when unexpected visitors disrupt these. She is also nervous and anxious on occasion. Her eyesight is failing, and so she required accessible assistive technology.

Joan has been given a personal pendant which enables her to easily call for assistance should she need it. She still receives 10 hours support from staff each week, but otherwise lives independently.

The telecare system means Joan can live the life she chooses with support from staff on her own terms. She feels less anxious now, and is enjoying living in her own space with minimal support.

