

## case study



**Sector:** Learning Disabilities  
**Client:** Community Lives Consortium  
(formerly West Glamorgan Housing Consortium)

**Application:** Telecare

## dilemma

According to the 2001 Valuing People White Paper, the condition learning disabilities is defined as:

A significantly reduced ability to understand new or complex information, to learn new skills (impaired intelligence) with:

- A reduced ability to cope independently
- Which started before adulthood, with a long lasting effect on development

An estimated 1.5 million people in the UK have a learning disability, with 13,000 of these people living in Wales. 93% of this group are between the ages of 16 and 64.



How is the Community Lives Consortium using telecare, to enable people with learning disabilities to live independently in South West Wales?



All the reassurance you need

**Tunstall**



## the need

Community Lives Consortium (The Consortium) is a non profit making organisation, that provides care and support to people who have a learning disability and who wish to live in the Swansea, Neath and Port Talbot areas. The Consortium helps people to live in ordinary houses, in ordinary streets, with additional care and support as necessary.

The Consortium has always sought ways to ensure people have the best opportunity to increase their independence and meet their full potential. In addition, traditional methods of support were becoming too expensive and inflexible for the whole range of people that require it. Therefore The Consortium needed a cost effective and more flexible approach of providing 24 hour support for its service users. Four years ago The Consortium began researching how technology may assist in meeting these aims.

The solution that stood out was telecare.

## the solution

The Consortium's telecare journey began in 2003, when it started to carry out basic installations in the homes of service users who particularly needed extra support.



The first step was to carry out assessments for a small group of service users and identify the areas of their lives that service users wanted more independence in and how risk in their home was currently being managed. These assessments identified the various items of telecare that would help. Following the installations, The Consortium was surprised by the difference the equipment was making and how it was sometimes providing unexpected positive outcomes.

**The Consortium widened its installation programme** and continued to see that telecare made positive differences to the way support can be provided, allowing people additional independence. In particular, The Consortium started to install intruder management systems across a network of houses. As well as supporting service users, the equipment also helped staff feel a lot more secure, especially whilst lone working during the night.

**The systems proved to be so successful that The Consortium is now installing the equipment in all 60 of its properties.** The core package is funded through housing benefit and the significance of this is that it's not the client, local authority, or The Consortium who pays for the core equipment, it is revenue funded.

In addition to intruder management systems, the Consortium is **also providing specialist assessments** for additional telecare sensors for individuals. One Local Authority The Consortium works with has provided the funding for these additional sensors, recognising the difference telecare makes to peoples lives and the potential for significant cost savings.

For example, **providing someone with an Epilepsy Sensor costs on average £600.** The sensors can alleviate the need for staff to be awake all night and can **save an incredible £20,000 per tenant, per year.** These are significant cost savings and have helped raise the profile of the potential benefits of telecare in the local area.

# The Consortium is constantly pushing the boundaries of telecare

Some of the equipment it is utilising is detailed below:

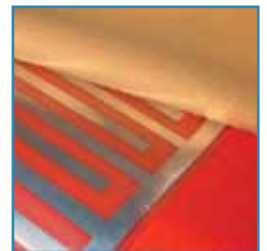
## Epilepsy Sensor

Around 50% of people with severe or profound learning disabilities have epilepsy and managing the condition can be difficult and expensive. The Consortium employed wakeful staff to make regular checks and listen to sound monitors during the night, to ensure people were ok. Since the Consortium introduced Epilepsy Sensors, (which send an immediate alert to staff members if a fit is detected,) it means that in some cases they no longer have to pay staff to be awake all night, but they can sleep instead. In some cases where secondary support is required to administer medication, the staff can be on call in a separate property within five minutes of the tenant and can attend quickly if they receive an alert.



## Enuresis Sensor

The Enuresis Sensor works on much the same principal as the Epilepsy Sensor. It provides an immediate alert if an event occurs. The sensor can reduce the amount of staff hours needed as instead of having to make hourly physical checks, they don't have to be permanently on site and can be notified if they need to attend. There are also numerous other benefits of the sensor. It helps support independent living, privacy and dignity and can help tenants with behavioural problems, where interaction can lead to an increase in stress on the individual and can often aggravate the situation.



## Bed / Chair Occupancy Sensor

The Bed / Chair Occupancy Sensor works by sending an alert to a member of staff if a person leaves their bed or chair. It can also be linked to an X10 Controller which can light up the corridors to help people get to the bathroom more easily.



## Case Study

Mr T, who has severe learning disabilities, had fallen out of bed and badly hurt his hip. He was admitted to hospital and couldn't return home without a member of staff being available to sit beside him all day. Community Lives Consortium installed Bed and Chair Occupancy Sensors to eradicate the need for staff to be constantly by his side. Instead staff had pagers and received an instant response if Mr T tried to get out of his bed or chair, they could then visit him immediately to ensure he was ok.



## Zoning Function

Some people's families were worried that other people who lived with their son or daughter may enter their bedrooms at night, which is a common concern. The Consortium set up the zoning function on an intruder alarms system which identifies if a person enters a room that they shouldn't be going in to. Staff can then detect the problem early and it can be dealt with quickly.



## Lifeline and Pendant

Consortium staff are often lone workers and as they deal with people who are prone to unpredictable or challenging behaviour, on some occasions there were concerns for their safety. One solution was to provide staff with a pendant each which they wore discreetly on their wrist, so that they could use it to call for help quickly if they ever felt they were at risk. Since using the pendants, staff confidence has increased greatly.

For further information please contact marketing on 01977 660325

Pete Russell, Head of Community Solutions, Community Lives Consortium



## conclusion and next steps

The Consortium is going to continue to use telecare in innovative ways to help provide support for people with learning disabilities. The Consortium has demonstrated that telecare has a significant role to play in targeting support only when it is required, rather than staff continually managing the just in case situations. This has led to an appropriate reduction of support hours and significant cost savings.



Working in conjunction with Neath & Port Talbot County Council, the Consortium is also exploring how its assessment service can provide specialist telecare systems within special needs respite and residential units.

Pete Russell, Head of Community Solutions at Community Lives Consortium said *"The people we provide support to, want to live independent lives. Telecare can help them achieve this goal, by providing low level, unobtrusive support, 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. We are always looking for new ways of adapting the equipment, and we will continue to do so in order to help the people we support live their lives to the full."*

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