

case study



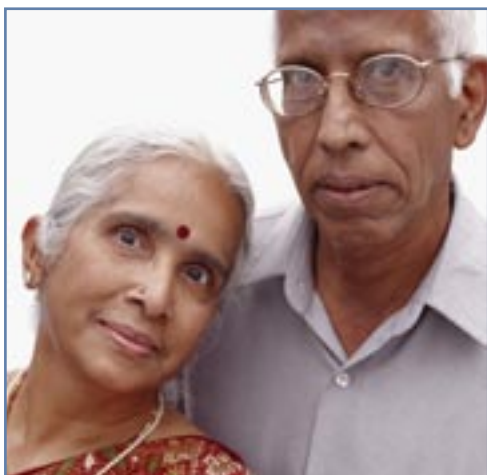
Sector: Assisted Living

Client: Servite Houses

Application: Upgrading for digital telephone networks

about Servite Houses

Servite Houses was founded in 1945 by Joan Bartlett OBE DSG, as Hearth and Home Limited, when it opened a home for 22 older people whose homes were bombed in the blitz. Initially the organisation provided housing and care for older and disabled people, but the Association's objectives have since expanded to include general families, student, keyworker accommodation and shared ownership. Servite Houses is now one of the largest Housing Associations in England with over 18,000 homes, including assisted living schemes and residential care homes.



the challenge

As telecom providers upgrade their UK networks in order to accommodate the next generation of communications traffic, some older social alarm scheme equipment will be rendered obsolete. How can Housing Associations and Registered Social Landlords ensure that the safety of vulnerable people they support is not compromised by the conversion to digital networks?

What are digital networks?

Traditionally telephone networks have delivered extremely high reliability however they have offered very limited features and as communication techniques and demands advance such networks will limit the services that networks suppliers can offer. Initiatives such as Digital Britain are also driving the need for innovation to keep the UK at the forefront of the new media age. As a result, telecom suppliers are converting their existing analogue based networks to digital systems. These upgrades are primarily designed to support the increased use of multimedia communications and increase the availability of high speed broadband allowing more advanced services to be offered both now and in the future.

All the reassurance you need



“Servite Houses and its residents have really benefitted from using Tunstall’s expertise for this project. It’s been a partnership from the start, resulting in a solution that does exactly what we need it to with an efficiently delivered installation programme.”

Karl Linder, Planning and Investment Manager - Servite Houses

why do digital networks affect social alarm equipment?

Digital networks rely upon new equipment at local telephone exchanges and different communication techniques which are not fully compatible with some older social alarm equipment.

Potential problems include:

- Personal triggers/pull cords failing to raise an alarm call
- The monitoring centre being unable to speak to or hear a user during an alarm call
- Alarm calls being unexpectedly dropped
- Monitoring centres being unable to view full client information

Tunstall has undertaken a full review of its product portfolio and carried out performance tests using dedicated BT facilities in order to establish a comprehensive list of products affected by the emergence of digital networks. The table of results can be found at www.tunstallhealth/digital.



Communicall Connect providing 24/7 communication for residents and staff.

defining the project

Once Servite Houses had become aware of the potential issues arising from telephone network upgrades, it was keen to assess exactly how its schemes would be affected, and concluded that approximately 100 site audits were required in order to identify non compliant properties.

Next, the Asset Management and Assisted Living Teams worked together to develop an equipment specification that would meet the necessary technical requirements and deliver new functionality, helping to meet the future needs of Servite and residents.

Having established an equipment specification and identified schemes requiring an audit, Servite Houses progressed to formal tender. Keen to provide its residents with the safest technology available and to provide a flexible platform for the future, only manufacturers whose products were fully compliant with EU Directive regarding Class 1 receivers (ETSI EN 300 220-2 V2.1.2) were invited to tender.

the tender process

As part of the tender process, Tunstall undertook site audits of 100 assisted living schemes which incorporated social alarm equipment of various makes and models. It concluded that 41 sites could not be guaranteed to provide full functionality as digital networks are introduced. Of these, 13 could be partially upgraded, and 28 needed to be fully replaced.

Servite Houses chose to appoint Tunstall to undertake these works, as it concluded that:

- The contract offered the best value
- The replacement equipment (Communicall Connect) exceeded the required specification and provided a ‘future proof’ platform
- The tender response fulfilled all requirements
- The scheme audit had been undertaken comprehensively and with minimal disruption
- The project implementation plan proposed was of an excellent standard
- Old scheme equipment would be recycled in line with Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment (WEEE) regulations
- Tunstall has a proven track record of delivering such large scale projects



"I have to admit that I was apprehensive about the system being replaced, but we've had no problems at all. The engineers have been great - working safely and tidily and communicating well with myself and the residents. The new technology is amazing - the old system took up half my office, now I can do everything with what looks like a normal phone."

Ann Adams, Scheme Manager, Elizabeth Prout Gardens

delivering the project

Teams from Servite Houses and Tunstall finalised and agreed a programme of works to ensure new equipment at all 41 schemes would be in place and fully operational well ahead of the April 2009 target date in order to ensure continuity of service to residents.

Ahead of each installation, a member of Tunstall's installation team would meet with the Scheme Manager and residents to explain the process and the impact of any works and answer any questions. All Tunstall installation engineers are CRB checked to ensure the safety of vulnerable residents, and are also experienced in working in retirement communities.

The full programme of works was delivered on time, having been adapted to accommodate Scheme Manager annual leave for example.

Tunstall Managing Director Jon Lowe commented, *"Servite Houses took a really proactive approach to the digital switchover issue, which enabled us to work closely with them at every level to plan and deliver a smooth running project. Their prime concern is the welfare of their residents and their foresight and commitment to the upgrade has not only ensured this but also resulted in future proof, state of the art technology for residents and staff alike."*



Telephone networks are being upgraded to accommodate the next generation of communications traffic

outcome

Servite Houses can now offer its residents the assurance that all scheme equipment is digital ready and will be unaffected by digital network upgrades. Residents can continue to enjoy peace of mind knowing that help is at hand whenever they need it.

The success of the project also means that as individual residents' needs change in the future, Servite Houses are able to offer increased levels of support and reassurance using telecare sensors and optional facilities such as remote door opening. Scheme Managers are also benefitting from a more flexible, modern system with clearer speech and increased functionality.

recommendations

Having successfully planned and executed the upgrade of its systems, Servite Houses can offer the following advice to other organisations facing the same challenge:

- **Refer to the NHS PASA National Framework for Telecare** (www.pasa.nhs.uk/telecare). Even if you choose not to purchase via this route, it provides valuable information that will inform your procurement process.
- **Insist that responses to the tender include an audit** of all sites which may be affected.
- **Some schemes may only need a partial upgrade** - ensure tenderers can offer this.
- When upgrading ensure you choose a **platform that can be tailored around the needs of individual residents**, and that it can support the full range of telecare sensors.
- **Ensure installation staff have specific experience of working with your client base** and are CRB checked to ensure the safety of residents.
- **Make sure new equipment utilises Class 1 Receivers**, in accordance with ETSI EN 300 220-2 V2.1.2.
- **Check that your old equipment will be recycled** by the successful bidder.

For further information
please call 01977 660525



case study

Elizabeth Prout Gardens was one of the assisted living schemes that required its old social alarm system in its 76 self contained flats to be replaced. Works were carefully planned to ensure residents were never without means of raising help and that the fire system was always fully operational. When arriving on site each morning the engineers met with the Scheme Manager to outline the schedule for the day, and so residents were also always kept up to date with the progress of the project.



The door entry system has been particularly welcomed by the Scheme Manager. Previously the monitoring centre had to supply individual codes for internal and external doors and the relevant keysafe to emergency services, which has in the past caused such delays that the Police broke down a door to gain immediate access. With the new Communicall Connect system, monitoring centre staff are able to open doors remotely to allow access in case of emergency.



The residents are also fans of the new system, and are especially pleased to be able to see callers at their door on their TV screens before deciding whether to allow access. They also enjoy the added reassurance of having pendants to raise an alert, where previously most only had pullcords which restricted their availability to raise an alarm when they needed it.

next steps

Tunstall's Digital Compliance Team assists customers with any queries relating to the digital switchover, and can arrange a full audit of social alarm equipment. Please call **01977 660543** or email enquiries@tunstall.co.uk for further information.

what is Communicall Connect?

Communicall Connect is Tunstall's grouped housing communication system, providing an effective single system for both residents and staff which can also be tailored to meet the specific needs of individual residents.

Key features include:

- New unobtrusive design with integral alarm and privacy buttons and high quality speech
- Optional combined door entry, fire alarm, emergency lighting, security systems or telecare sensors
- Sounders, lights and pagers can be employed to support residents with sensory impairment
- Test mode enables scheme managers to test peripheral equipment such as pullcords quickly and easily
- Optional remote door control facility to assist residents with limited mobility

**If you would like to know more about Communicall Connect,
please visit www.tunstallhealth.com/literature**

Tunstall

www.tunstallhealth.com

Tunstall is a founder member of the Continua Health Alliance

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Tunstall Healthcare (UK) Ltd, Whitley Lodge, Whitley Bridge, Yorkshire DN14 0HR
Tel: 01977 661234 Fax: 01977 662450 Email: enquiries@tunstall.co.uk

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