

Jul 16, 2019

In the UK, someone develops dementia every three minutes, and the Alzheimer's Society estimates that the number of people living alone with the condition will double to 240,000 in the next 20 years.¹

This Dementia Action Week (Monday 20th – Sunday 26th May) Gavin Bashar, UK Managing Director of market-leading provider of Connected Care and Health solutions Tunstall Healthcare, explains how technology such as telecare can help people with dementia and those who care for them in a way that promotes independence as well as managing risks.

“With 225,000 people developing dementia each year it has never been as important to introduce measures into people's lives to protect their dignity and support their independence, as well as reducing interventions which are currently costing the UK economy £26.3bn a year².

“Technology is crucial in enabling the delivery of care at home, which means people living with dementia can remain in a familiar environment for as long as possible, including those living alone. It can also help to relieve the pressure on carers, improving their quality of life and enabling them to care for longer. As our social care and health systems continue to experience limited budgets and rising demand, it's becoming increasingly important that providers employ solutions which enable care to be delivered in more effective and person-centred ways.”

A range of solutions

“Telecare systems can be tailored to the needs of the individual, helping to manage events such as falls, fires in the home, medication management and people leaving home and being unable to find their way back. They can be configured to ensure help is automatically provided in the event of an emergency, 24 hours day, from a keyholder, response service or the emergency services as appropriate. They can also enable live-in carers to carry out daily activities, or have uninterrupted sleep as they know they will be alerted in the event of an incident. The earlier technology is introduced, the easier it is to understand the eventual outcomes and how support can be given, especially at home, enabling greater patient-centred care.”

Telecare in practice

“Tunstall is working with organisations across the UK to help support people with a wide range of needs using technology as part of services. The Hertfordshire Telecare Service supports almost 4,000 people in Hertfordshire to live more independently in their own homes, many of whom have dementia.

Norman* has vascular dementia, and lives alone, although his daughter lives nearby. Technology is helping him to remain safe and at home, and provide reassurance to his daughter. Unobtrusive telecare sensors in his home will automatically raise an alarm at the 24 hour monitoring centre if they detect

floods, fires or carbon monoxide in Norman's home, and property exit sensors have also been fitted which will notify the centre if an external door is opened. A specially trained operator at the centre can

then talk to Norman through the speaker on the Lifeline unit to assess the situation, and make sure Norman is okay. If the operator is unable to get a response, they can contact Norman's daughter, or the British Red Cross Responder Service so they can check on him.

Norman has also been given a GPS tracker device, which enables his daughter to locate him should he leave home and be unable to find his way back. Together with the Telecare Service, this has already helped Norman to be found quickly and returned to his home, avoiding him being at risk. It also means that Norman is able to remain in his own home, rather than being admitted to residential care for his own safety.”

Integration is key

“Although technology is a fantastic resource when it comes to reducing the number of dementia sufferers in care homes and hospitals, it should never be used to completely replace human interaction and care. Technological solutions should always be connected to the wider cycles of care within housing, health and social care to reap as many benefits as possible. Dementia sufferers often express feelings of loneliness, so giving them the opportunity to stay in their home whilst also encouraging a carer, family member or friend to visit will make a huge difference to their life.”

Telecare and the digital transition

“No matter the technology that is being used, it is important to remember that a digital transition has been announced which represents a huge opportunity to make services faster, more efficient and more insightful. Anyone worried about the digital transition and how this may affect themselves, or a loved one suffering with dementia, should always seek advice.”

For more information, please visit [our solutions for dementia](#)

Source 1: <https://www.alzheimers.org.uk/news/2019-05-15/lonely-future-120000-people-dementia-living-alone-set-double-next-20-years>

Source 2: [Dementia Care Connected Healthcare Solutions](#)

