

Monitoring makes the difference

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16th to 22nd September is Gas Safety Week, which sees organisations from across the UK working together to raise awareness of the dangers of poorly maintained gas appliances, which can cause gas leaks, fires, explosions and carbon monoxide poisoning.

Connected Care such as telecare can play a key role in protecting people from these risks, providing cost-effective 24 hour monitoring. A wide range of sensors is available such as heat, smoke, carbon monoxide, and natural gas. Heat detectors can be used in environments where traditional smoke alarms aren't suitable, such as kitchens, to provide early warning of emergencies, and carbon monoxide detectors used to raise an alert to faulty boilers or gas fires. Natural gas detectors will automatically alert if a gas leak is detected, for example if someone tries to use a gas hob and fails to light the ring. All sensors will emit an audible alert, as well as raising an alarm at a specialist monitoring centre via a Lifeline home unit. Operators can then take appropriate action, such as calling the emergency services. In group living environments, systems can alert onsite staff, or divert alerts to the monitoring centre in the event that there are no onsite staff present.

Providing additional protection to tenants using telecare may involve initial investment by housing providers, but can ultimately make financial sense. Monitoring systems can reduce false alarms, as operators or care staff can talk to the tenant to establish the nature of the emergency, and determine whether a response is required. Telecare enables events such as fires and gas leaks to be responded to quickly, reducing the impact and resulting cost of repairs. It also protects properties when they are unoccupied. Of course, most importantly, technology enables help to be accessed quickly, avoiding potential injury or even loss of life.

As BT has announced the UK's communications network will complete its transition from analogue to digital by 2025, home technology services such as telecare will become faster, more efficient and more insightful. Digital technology enables a wide range of devices to connect intelligently and uses data analytics to provide insight and become increasingly preventative, and the platform used to manage risk of fire can also be used to support tenants at risk of other events such as falls, providing person-centred support.

Anyone interested in finding out more about how telecare can help to manage the risk of fire, or the digital switchover and how this may affect providers or the technology they use, can contact us for advice.