

ARC Angels

Adam Innes, Lead Customer Support Engineer, Tunstall Healthcare UK

Adam Innes is Lead Customer Support Engineer, heading up our UK-wide team of engineers providing specialist support to Alarm Receiving Centres (ARCs). He tells us how the digital transition is transforming how they work and the challenges and benefits facing customers.

I've worked for Tunstall for over 13 years now, initially as a Customer Support Engineer, but I now lead a team of ten, offering this service throughout the UK. I began my career in IT, working as a 2nd Line Support Engineer in the NHS. It was through this role that I first came across Tunstall. I found what they did interesting, and when a position came up, I applied and was successful.

Our team specifically supports Tunstall ARCs (also known as monitoring centres) and their software, hardware, and people. Despite having a very particular remit, the role itself is quite varied. We work throughout the UK and Ireland with a range of organisations, from local authorities to housing providers, the NHS, retirement developments, and the private sector. Each customer is different and has their own service model with their own unique requirements. We offer preventative maintenance, responsive support, and urgent problem-solving, as well as ongoing training and advice.

Exciting times

Now is an exciting time to be working in this area, as the UK's communications infrastructure is changing from analogue to digital, which has a massive impact on our customers. They need to ensure that their entire service, from end to end, will be robust and reliable once their area switches to digital. So, every piece of equipment in the field and each ARC needs to be carefully considered and upgraded where necessary to ensure every link in the chain continues to operate and the people that need it can still get help in an emergency. It's the biggest change our industry has seen for decades, and because of our longstanding relationships with our customers, they're looking to my team and Tunstall for guidance and advice.

Top of the SaaS

As a result of digital, many of our customers are moving from onsite hardware and infrastructure in their centres to adopting a SaaS (Software as a Service) approach. Our team is instrumental in helping them manage this big change, building new hosted environments, and working with our customers to make sure the transition is seamless for them and the people they support. Some of these are very big, complex projects with multiple stakeholders and a myriad of areas to consider. We're here to help manage the process, answer any questions, and make sure everything happens as it should.

Moving to a SaaS model has multiple benefits. It offers much more flexibility in terms of when, where, and how staff can work, meaning the service can be much more agile in terms of responding to demand. Hybrid working has become the norm for many organisations, and SaaS makes that possible for operators, which helps with recruitment and retention. It also removes the need for local authorities to, for example, provide 24/7 support for the centre's infrastructure. There are also cost savings from not having servers and backup servers running in a data centre, taking up space, using electricity, and needing maintenance and updates. SaaS also means customers can move from requiring significant capital expenditure to a predictable monthly subscription, making it easier to budget and, at the same time, always be on the latest version of the software.

Remote control

We still need to visit sites, but a lot of what we do can also be achieved remotely, which means we can respond more quickly to customers as we're not spending time travelling. We have a very experienced team, and it's not often that we come across an issue that we haven't seen before. We always help and assist until the issue is resolved. We have a great relationship with our customers, and they trust us to not just fix any problems but to also understand the importance of what they do and how that impacts people's lives. It's really gratifying to see the compliments we receive as a team and how much our customers trust us. Christmas will soon be here, and as usual, the team will be providing a 24/7/365 response so that our customers can too.
