

Change for Good

Clive Taylor, Housing Assets and Support Teams Manager, Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council

The digital transition is affecting all group living and community alarm services in the UK. Clive Taylor, Housing Assets and Support Teams Manager shares Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council's approach to preparing for the change.

Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council has 1,270 supported properties across 11 sheltered housing complexes, all using old Piper Haven alarms. We also have more than 60 additional supported schemes using Lifeline units, rather than hardwired systems, and over 1,100 Lifeline connections in private homes. All are connected to our 24-hour control centre. We also have a varied service user group. Whilst many of our customers are aged 70 and above, we also support younger people with disabilities or health conditions, people experiencing domestic abuse and victims of bogus callers. All of this means that we had many aspects to consider when developing our digital strategy.

Wider context

In addition to the digital switch and considerations around upgrading equipment to ensure reliability and future proofing services, we also wanted to plan for the increasing demand on services, and how we could best reduce maintenance costs and deliver more modern, flexible, and tailored services to customers.

The Council has been working with Tunstall for around 40 years, and all our systems, including the control centre, are Tunstall, so this made them a natural choice for seeking advice on our options for the digital future. I've personally been working with Tunstall for over 20 years, and we have a very positive relationship. We rely on them for their expertise in helping us deliver our service, by not only giving us the latest technologies but also advice on how we can solve our challenges and develop what we do.

Reliability

The most important thing about Tunstall technology is that it's reliable; it does what it says it's going to do. This enables us to provide support in a way that's unobtrusive to our residents, but it's there when they need it. If we have any technical issues or challenges Tunstall are there to support us, helping us to offer a resilient service to our older and vulnerable tenants across the borough.

It's important to us that we have 24-hour back up, and our service contract with Tunstall means we can be confident that if we have any problems with our service these issues will be resolved by experts whatever the time of day or night. Whether it's over the phone or on the ground, it matters just as much to the Tunstall engineers as it does to our team that we keep people safe and protected.

Looking to the future

The digital network will have a massive positive impact on our services, making them far more flexible and far more tailored to the support our residents need. Not only is this an exciting opportunity, but it's also necessary to help us empower people to remain as independent as possible, working with other partners like the NHS and social care to deliver more care in the home and people's communities. It's exciting to see what the future holds.
