

It takes two: Working together for the digital transition

Ian Jackson, Careline Team Leader, Newark and Sherwood District Council

As a stock-owning authority, Newark and Sherwood District Council has around five and half thousand properties spread across a large geographic area. Ian Jackson, the Council's Careline Team Leader tells us how Careline is working with Tunstall to ensure it provides an efficient service and is ready for the digital transition.

We support more than 2,000 people with our Careline service; some are tenants in our properties and others live in private housing or housing with care. Many are older people, but we also support people of all ages who have physical or mental health issues, or learning difficulties. So we need to make sure the service is of benefit to a wide range of individuals and their unique circumstances.

Careline is a 24/7/365 service, but this delivery model was putting too much strain on our fairly small team, so about 18 months ago we made the decision to ask Tunstall Response to provide the overnight service on our behalf. At 7.00 each evening the service switches to Response until 7.00 the next morning. It's completely seamless, and means we can continue to offer 24 hour support, but the team can focus on helping residents during the daytime. Sharon Stewardson, our Supported Housing Manager, and I will only be called upon if there's a real emergency, so that means we can get a good night's sleep knowing our residents are in safe hands. It's been a real game changer for us.

We've also been working with Tunstall for the last couple of years on preparing for the switch to a digital phone network. They've been helping us to ensure that our current stock and equipment is fit for purpose, and identifying where it needs to transition into something different. It's been a steep learning curve in terms of how the switch will impact on our service, and on the people who use it. Tunstall has been key in making sure that we delivered exactly what our customers needed, and that we can bring them along with us on the journey and they understand what we're doing and why.

It's really important that providers like Tunstall work with the people who use the devices every day to get their input into solutions to make sure they're involved in the process, alongside organisations like ours. They need to have a voice and say to make sure the right outcome is delivered. Not all of our customers are tech savvy, but as the next generation comes along they'll be much more used to using technology in their everyday lives, which means we'll see the growth in technology like wearables, GPS trackers and hydration monitoring. Technology enabled care is a growing market and there's a need for the market to change and develop alongside the digital transition that we're heading to at the end of December 2025.

Working in partnership with Tunstall and Tunstall Response means I can feel confident that our service model and our technology is ready for the digital world, and that we can help our customers to benefit from all the new products and services that are coming in the future to help them live comfortably and safely every day.

