

A day in the life...

Kevin Allen, Regional Contracts Manager – South West

Tunstall has a team of Contract Managers operating throughout the UK, whose role is to oversee installations and ensure they meet our high quality standards as well as our customers' expectations. Kevin Allen, Regional Contract Manager for the South West tells us more about how they work.

As Contract Managers we work from the very beginning to the very end of the installation process at Tunstall. From initial enquiry stage, we work with the sales team to make sure what we design, specify, supply and install meets our individual customers' needs in line with relevant industry regulations and standards. And it's not just for Communicall systems. As a business we pride ourselves on being an installation partner, so we can also provide and maintain fire systems, emergency lighting, access control, emergency shutters, automatic doors, barriers and gates. Whatever the customer needs, if we can help, we will, often thinking creatively to help them achieve their goals. It makes it so much easier for them, not just at the point of installation, but throughout the life of the development as the systems have all been specifically designed to be integrated, and managers have a single point of contact for any queries about any of the onsite technology. There are also times when customer needs can change once we're on site, and we work with all parties to adapt.

We work on everything from upgrades and refurbishments of existing schemes to brand new builds and specifications at design stage. Sites can be relatively small single buildings, or extensive multi-floor developments with large communal facilities and associated individual dwellings. We work with architects, specifiers, construction managers, Quantity Surveyors and M&E contractors to make sure every project runs as smoothly as possible. Post completion, we're closely involved in training staff on new systems to not only make sure they feel confident in using them to ensure resident safety, but also to help them make the most of all the features so that they and the people they support get maximum benefit.

One of my favourite parts of the job is interacting with residents. We usually engage with them throughout the process, even before an order is placed to help them decide which system they'd prefer. We visit to explain the proposed system to them, describe how it works and the benefits to them and any choices they may have. We take questions and show examples of the equipment, and it's great to see how much more reassured they feel once we've been. It's brilliant to meet the people who are going to be using the system for years to come and to feel they're involved in the process.

All of our engineers receive a wide range of in-depth ongoing training, which isn't purely technically focused, it also ensures they act with courtesy and consideration towards residents throughout the installation process. We look for these qualities when we're recruiting, and we also provide advice on how to alter working processes when interacting with people who may have different needs, such as dementia or a learning disability. We always treat people's homes with respect, causing minimum disruption, explaining what we're doing and cleaning up afterwards.

Once the system is installed and commissioned, we make sure the customer is happy and hand the site over to them. On larger sites in particular, I'll invite the local service engineer to visit. Our engineers are experts in what they do of course, but we try and make it part of our commissioning process to give them an introduction to how each particular system has been configured and any other aspects of the scheme it would be helpful

for them to be aware of. We also like them to meet the scheme manager where possible. We have the largest specialist engineering force in the country, and we try to assign the same service engineers to the same schemes whenever we can, and they often build strong professional relationships with scheme managers.

Post-installation, we work with colleagues internally to ensure that the systems we install are documented accurately so that we can offer appropriate ongoing support where and when it's needed. Our Customer Satisfaction Centre is on hand 24/7/365, and our Help Desk has team of experienced advisors available day and night to answer technical queries, so we need to play our part to make it easy for our customers to get any help they may need by providing the right information.

I've been at Tunstall for nearly 17 years this time, it's my second time here and I still get the same satisfaction from knowing what we do makes such a difference.