

Using PNC to support wider cohorts of service users

The challenge

The majority of individuals supported by community alarm and Telecare services in the UK are older people. How can monitoring centres use PNC to provide support much more widely in communities, and respond to the Covid-19 crisis to ensure services can be delivered cost-effectively in times of austerity for local authorities?

About NCHA

Nottingham Community Housing Association (NCHA) is a group of companies providing housing and care throughout the East Midlands. It manages approximately 10,000 homes, and was founded in 1973 with assistance from the charity Shelter. NCHA's Care and Support team work across the region to help a diverse range of people build better lives, including those with learning disabilities and enduring mental health problems, those who are frail and elderly or experiencing or facing homelessness, people escaping domestic violence, and young people and care leavers.

NCHA's Support, Management and Response Service (SMaRT) plays a critical role in underpinning the care and support services provided by the Care and Support (C&S) delivery teams, by providing an out of hours emergency response service, thus a seamless 24 hour person centred support service to all customers. SMaRT has 2-3,000 connections, some 200 of which are self-funded, and works with a range of stakeholders across a wide area to help achieve the organisational vision of 'More homes, great services, better lives'. Its specialist operators are all trained to handle a wide range of call types, from proactive wellbeing calls, to emergency alarm calls, domestic violence incidents and mental health helplines.



“ PNC is the only software that gives us everything we need in a single system. We are not a traditional monitoring centre; we have expanded our service offering to work with a range of client groups across health, housing and social care. PNC gives us all the vital information we need in one place and makes it easy for operators to switch between the various services we deliver.

**Sarah Wiest, SMaRT Centre Manager,
NCHA Care and Support**

Support to Care and Support

The SMaRT team provides 24/7 support and physical response to Care and Support (C&S) accommodation based service users via hardwired community alarm technology and individually tailored packages of care. SMaRT is the out of hours first contact point for all C&S service users, including a text and email facility to deaf customers and staff, and also manages out of hours maintenance calls on behalf of the NCHA Maintenance team to over 10,000 properties. SMaRT monitors CCTV and fire alarms on behalf of NCHA, and offers lock up, call out and response support for the NCHA Head Office locations. The service also provides 24-hour support and access to the Duty Manager for all C&S staff, and provides lone worker monitoring. The SMaRT team also manages the NCHA's anti-social behaviour reporting line, and operates a 24-hour complaints line for all C&S customers.

Domestic Violence

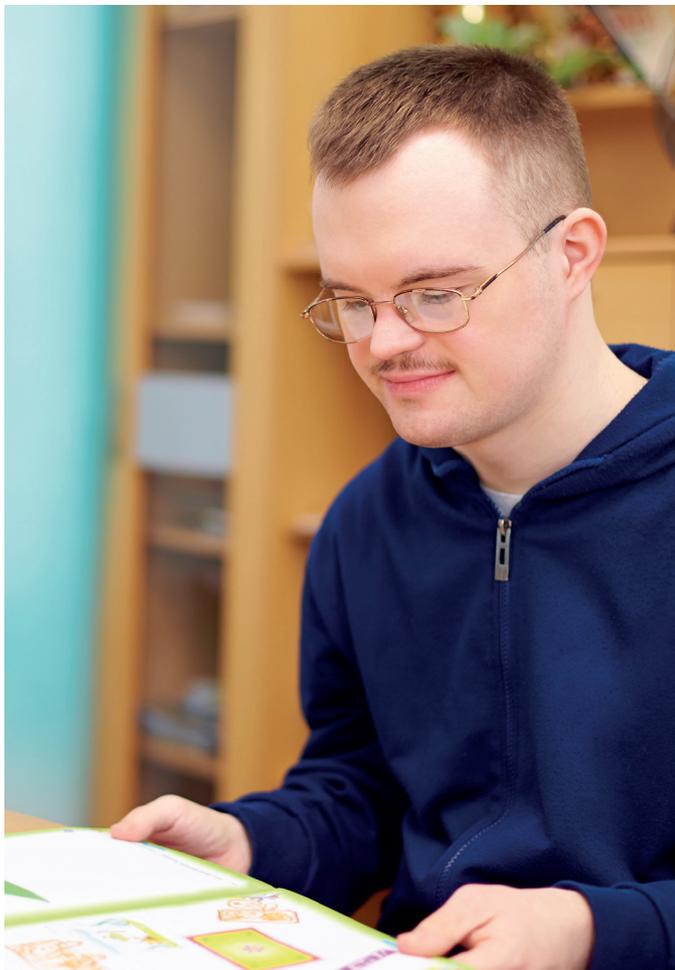
SMaRT supports three women's refuges in the area, all of which have wired emergency alarm call systems. Domestic violence satellite houses are equipped with Lifeline units.

Solutions are developed on a bespoke basis to suit the individual service user and their circumstances, but can include a bogus caller button or MyAmie pendant, which can be pressed to raise a silent call to the SMaRT centre where operators will act according to the protocol shown for that client. This can include recording the call, sending for the emergency services or another stakeholder. SMaRT also manages out of hours referrals for refuges, working with the Women's Aid Domestic Violence Helpline and local police.

Learning disabilities

NCHA provides supported housing to over 500 people with learning disabilities, providing person-centred care, which may include Telecare systems monitored by SMaRT. SMaRT also works with KeyRing, a registered charity that supports vulnerable people to live independently. Every month, the SMaRT team makes 1500 – 1800 calls to people with learning disabilities, whose purpose ranges from medication reminders, wellbeing checks, or prompts to make sure their doors are locked at night. In many cases, these calls can replace care visits, supporting the privacy and independence of service users.





Mental Health

SMaRT has been commissioned by a number of organisations to manage mental health support services, delivering critical calls, preventative calls, crisis calls and suicide prevention.

Mental Health Support Helpline

SMaRT delivers a 24-hour mental health helpline offering confidential help and advice, to anyone registered with a GP in Calderdale, Kirklees, Wakefield, Leeds and Barnsley. The service has been designed to support people who are diagnosed with or at risk of developing mental health problems, or are experiencing mental health distress. SMaRT responds to urgent concerns and operates within a recovery model, ensuring callers benefit from an effective intervention, in line with local mental health support pathways. We liaise with the single point of access teams (crisis team) emergency services and adult social care services. Ensuring a multi-agency approach.



Outcomes

PNC provides a platform for the delivery of more integrated care and support services, working across the housing, care and health landscape to support person-centred care. SMaRT acts as a central point for relevant information about individuals to be stored, accessed and used to provide a more complete picture of their needs. Data on their health, housing, care requirements and any risks can be reviewed to help build a support plan tailored to their specific circumstances. The system means operators have all the relevant information about each caller displayed clearly on screen every time they call, ensuring appropriate action can be taken quickly.

As well as offering management reporting on Key Performance Indicators, PNC can be interrogated to highlight areas of need, geographically or demographically to aid the development of strategies to target resources where they are needed most. Frequent callers can also be identified, along with the reasons for their calls, meaning they can be pro-actively referred to other services for support.

Inbound call volumes have increased by 60% because of the COVID-19 pandemic, particularly from people experiencing mental health issues. As the NHS was forced to suspend face-to-face clinics and therapeutic services, many people were unsure of how to access support, and SMaRT has provided a gateway to other services, in many cases avoiding ambulance call outs and presentation at A&E.

The SMaRT service has proven that the potential of monitoring centres is not always being fully realised. Whilst community alarms and Telecare provide a vital support to older people, PNC can provide an effective platform for the delivery of a vast range of services to a much wider section of the community, as well as enabling support to become more holistic, targeted and proactive.