

Collaborating to enable a least restrictive approach

The challenge

There is a lack of appropriate housing for people with a learning disability or autism who may have behaviours that challenge. How has Torus, the North West's largest affordable housing provider remodelled its Alexander Court scheme in St Helens to meet these needs?

What we did

Alexander Court is an existing purpose-built property with independent living and sheltered housing elements, plus a care home which had become unoccupied. Torus, St Helens Council and NHS England worked together to plan a major remodelling to transform the care home into Heathside, specialist accommodation with eight assisted living apartments for adults with learning disabilities and autism. The building also offers communal areas such as lounge, kitchen and dining room, as well as a staff office.

In order to safeguard tenants and help staff to provide support when needed, as well as enabling independence, a telecare system was specified as part of the refurbishment. This needed to not only enable tenants to easily request assistance in an emergency, but also provide discreet technology enabled care which could be tailored to their individual needs. For example, fall detectors, epilepsy sensors or door exit alarms that would automatically alert staff and allow them to respond appropriately. The system also needed to integrate into other onsite technology, such as access control, fire safety and ligature alarm systems.



“ We wanted to offer a high quality environment that enabled a least restrictive approach, and technology played a key role in this. Tunstall worked closely with us and other partners to create a bespoke solution which enables tenants to have more freedom and choice whilst remaining safe.

Sarah Houghton-Grimshaw, Supported Housing Commissioning Manager for the Heathside development



ST HELENS
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“ Refurbishing the building to ensure it supported different levels of independent use and adaptable features presented many challenges. The Tunstall team was totally committed to finding creative ways to overcome these to create a safe and appropriately designed home for the client group.

Andrea Boughey, Commissioner

Results

Tunstall was appointed as technology partner, working with Torus, its contractor HMS and M&E companies to use technologies in innovative combinations, co-designing a system completely bespoke to Heathside.

The installation allows the staff to be alerted to the movements of tenants and to respond to those movements without restricting people unnecessarily, meaning care can be targeted where it's needed most. This increases freedom and choice for tenants, and gives staff greater insight into how and when tenants need support.

It was essential that the Tunstall telecare systems and other specialist equipment such as fire panels, door locking and ligature alarm systems were integrated effectively for ease of use. Although the Torus/HMS teams have delivered other complex care schemes, Heathside is the first that has incorporated so much specialised technology. All stakeholders worked together to coproduce a single system solution, thinking and planning creatively, to enable staff to control all onsite technology with a single handset, and therefore respond quickly to any calls for assistance.

Heathside will be home to people who have previously been living in NHS facilities, unsuitable accommodation or places that don't enable as much independence. This new environment will not only be able to be configured to meet the needs of its first residents, but will also be able to adapt over time as their needs change and offer a balance of freedom and support they may never have experienced before thanks to the careful combination of personalised technology and experienced carers.