



BIRMINGHAM TELECARE SERVICE (BTS) BIRMINGHAM

Telecare is a service for the older people living in Birmingham. It enables them to live on their own and in their own home for longer through the use of telecommunications.

What are the objectives of the project?

The Birmingham Telecare Service uses new technologies to support older people in living independently.

The service aims to reduce the number of people requiring high cost care or unnecessary admissions to residential and hospital setting through using these technologies.



Timeline

Telecare was launched in February 2012 as a long term programme.

Background

As the population is ageing, one of the main challenges is how to balance the need to provide care for older citizens between the family and the formal care system (health and social services). It is also necessary to look into ways of enabling older people to stay in their homes longer and to be able to take care of themselves. Another important challenge is the increasing age of carers who provide care to older people, either formally or informally. They also need new forms of support.

As part of the 'Understanding Future Needs' programme, on the future demographic profile of Birmingham, research was carried out on why people need support from the public services and compared these needs with the actual offer. The model was developed in a pilot project with service users as part of the council's business transformation programme.

The pilot programme was carried out amongst 1 215 people in 2009-10. Most of them were older people, with some younger adults (specifically those with learning disabilities). A smaller pilot project focused on evaluating and testing different types of equipment and a range of technologies to support more people with learning disabilities.

Who is responsible for the project's implementation?

The city of Birmingham launched the project in partnership with private healthcare company Tunstall.

How does the project work?

Telecare is offered to older citizens who approach the directorate for social care support of the city council. However, users can also be referred by their general practitioner's (GP), Older People's Access Service (OPAS)¹, occupational therapy service or enablement service staff². On receipt of a referral, Telecare contacts the person, assesses what equipment they need and installs it within five days.

The equipment typically includes remote monitoring or sensor alerts, for example to alert if the gas cooker is not turned off. If the user needs help, they trigger the sensor (pendant). They get a response within five minutes from the trained call centre staff (24hrs service). They check the nature of the call and respond either by contacting the carers or emergency services. They remain on the phone with the older person until help arrives.

In addition, an emergency home responder service is included as part of this service. It is aimed at people who have complex needs. The emergency home responder goes to a house and checks if person is safe when alarm is triggered. They call the monitoring centre staff if necessary.

There is no charge for the equipment to citizens, but they need a phone line.

What are the results of the project?

So far, it is too early to see the results of the service as it has just been set up.

Over the first few months of 2012, the service has supported over 800 people to remain safely in their own homes. Some cost savings can already be observed through interventions on targeting older people at risk of falls.

The programme focuses on prevention (such as turning the appliances off) and early intervention whenever a problem occurs (such as falling). As such, it potentially reduces the pressure on high cost services, such as accidents and emergency, rehabilitation following a fall, number of night care staff or individual home visits.

Was the project evaluated and were there any follow-up activities?

The service was evaluated in its pilot phase, with 500 service users and carers who rated their satisfaction and gave comments and complaints. The evaluation also measured the performance targets.

This information was used to help shape the new Birmingham Telecare service and address the identified gaps in public service provision. At the same time, the estimated financial saving for the council was completed. Workshops were held and the feedback from staff and other professionals was used.

At present, the service is monitored and assessed by the citizen quality assurance group that undertake reviews and liaise with the service users.

¹ Guide to services for older people of the Birmingham City Council:
www.birmingham.gov.uk/cs/Satellite/ServicesForOlderPeople?packedargs=website%3D4&rendermode=%27

² Birmingham's Enablement Service:
www.birmingham.gov.uk/cs/Satellite/Enablement?packedargs=website%3D4&rendermode=%27

How is the project funded and what resources (financial and human) are dedicated to its delivery?

The service is delivered by an external provider and funded from Section 256 NHS³. It was commissioned through a tender process awarded on a three-year contract with an option to extend for a further two.

Who is the contact person for the project?

Safina Mistry, partnership lead, Birmingham City Council

Website

www.birmingham.gov.uk

<http://www.birmingham.gov.uk/cs/Satellite?c=Page&childpagename=Adults-and-Communities-General%2FPageLayout&cid=1223092710292&pagename=BCC%2FCommon%2FWrapper%2FWrapper>

If you have an example of a good practice that you would like to include in the database, please send an email to caroline.greene@eurocities.eu.



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³ Section 256 of the National Health Act allows Primary Care Trusts to enter into arrangements with local authorities to carry out activities with health benefits. Such arrangements are known as section 256 agreements. More information: <http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/+/www.dh.gov.uk/en/Healthcare/IntegratedCare/Healthact1999partnershiparrangements/index.htm>