
Meeting of the Health and Adult Social Care Scrutiny Committee – 14th November 2022

Report of the Director of Adult Social Care

Impact of the Dudley Telecare Digital Strategy

Purpose of report

1. To provide an update to members regarding the implementation and impact of the digital strategy and the progress of the Telecare Service Review.

Recommendations

2. It is recommended that: -
 - The impact of the digital strategy is appraised by members.
 - The awareness and impact of the analogue to digital switchover is realised.
 - The digital offer is appraised at Scrutiny.

Background

3. The demographics in Dudley detail a population of approximately 320,626 people. By 2031 the population is expected to increase by 13,990 (4.4%). Most of this increase is accounted for by the rise in the 65 and over age group, with the 85+ ages increasing by nearly 70%.
4. August 2022 Telecare has 8512 connections across the borough.
5. Adult Social Care staff through the development of a strength-based approach, must ensure they consider technology to support individuals and carers to maximise independence and make best use of the public purse.

6. A national digital shift enforced by phone providers across the country has meant that all Telecare solutions must switch from analogue to digital by 2025. The shift provides enhanced alarm systems and products, giving greater scope to what can be achieved from technology.
7. The vision for growth is maximised through the developments in the service to ensure that the technology provided continues to be fit for purpose, combined with the updated telecare brand, educating staff team's and developed policies and procedures.

Analogue to Digital

8. Several meetings have now taken place with all major stakeholders involved with the replacement programme, and a final decision was made by Procurement to go out to a full tender for the Telecare Monitoring Platform. Non-functional requirements have been collated from IT and we are finalising all requirements for Telecare, Housing, Systems and Reporting.
9. Regular information sessions are attended with the Local Government Association and Technology Enabled Care Services Association. They provide information on the latest from the telecommunication upgrade plans and best practices, which will support us with the implementation of the replacement programme and provides consistent communications to Telecare users to keep them up to date.

Re-branding of Telecare

10. The strapline 'delivering independence through technology" has now been incorporated into the Telecare literature, and a logo has been finalised. We have developed the look and feel of the information to better promote the service, which has been used to update The Telecare Guide.
11. A specialist telecare referral form is built into the Adult Social Care System which enables citizens and professionals to make referrals to telecare 24/7.

New Initiatives

12. Our community installation officers are going to be trained as Digital Buddies. They are deployed across the borough, to carry out assessments and installations. They will also be able to support customers to use the TEC that they already have in their own homes to

best effect. This can be TEC such as I-phones, I-pads, Alexa, smart plugs, and lighting for example.

13. The service review also looked at extending the hours of operation to increase accessibility out of hours. This has now been completed and the changes to working hours now means more of our installation team are available, to support the citizens of Dudley with the utilization of their own TEC.
14. External TEC forums were undertaken in March to drive the uptake of RITA (Reminiscence Interactive Therapy Activities) with support of ADASS (Association of Directors of Adult Social Services) West Midlands, Rethink Partners and My Improvement Network. RITA enables people with dementia to engage with the past to part of the present.
15. We intend piloting some new technology in October with a TEC provider, to assist us in recognising declines/changes in service user's everyday routines, allowing early interventions from services such as the Access Social work team and Reablement. We hope to engage with one of the services for the pilot duration, which will enable a proactive approach to planned care and review to assist teams to prioritise increasing demands on services.

Challenges

16. We are working with staff to develop their digital skills and promote the culture that is required across the team to ensure we are ready for the analogue to digital shift and the changes that the team need to continue to make to reach our full potential as a service.

Finance

17. The Dudley Telecare Service is funded through the Housing Revenue Account and private income. Additional investment for the replacement programme and SIM card costs in the future is being progressed with Housing, Adult Social Care and Commercial colleagues and any recommendations regarding future charges will be progressed through Cabinet and the appropriate Scrutiny Committee.

To make best use of resources the Corporate Steering Group have agreed the following:

- To stop buying analogue equipment, as this will become obsolete at some point in the next couple of years and purchase hybrid

equipment. The equipment works both on analogue and when the customer is switched over to digital.

- Costs have now been confirmed by suppliers of hybrid equipment and the SIM card charges currently are £35-£40.00 per annum, after 2 years from the date of purchase.

Law

18. Dudley Telecare Service supports statutory responsibilities. Section 2 of the Care Act 2014 states: where the local authority provides or arranges for care and support, the type of support may itself include support such as assistive technology in the home or equipment/adaptations, and approaches to meeting needs should be inclusive of less intensive or service-focused options.

Section 4 of The Care Act states that local authorities should facilitate local markets to encourage a sufficiency of preventative, enablement, and support services, including support for carers to make caring more sustainable where services such as Telecare are utilised to assist people achieve more independence and support the outcomes they want.

Risk Management

19. Working closely with stakeholders of the analogue to digital project team we have completed a comprehensive risk register for the project.

Equality Impact

20. The service is available to anyone in need living in the borough of Dudley. All reasonable adjustments will be made to individual technical architecture where and when needed to access this service.

Human Resources/Organisational Development

21. All necessary changes to the operating staffing structure have now been implemented following consultation with those affected, involving recognised trade unions, and ensuring Council HR policy and Procedures were adhered to. The service review is now complete.

Commercial/Procurement

22. Systems and equipment continue to move forward with the imminent nationwide telephony shift from analogue to digital by 2025. We are working with colleagues in Housing, Commercial and the Corporate Steering Group, to ensure the procurement of the digital enabled

equipment and monitoring platform for the replacement programme is realised.

Environment/Climate Change

23. We have and will continue to embed remote working where possible within the Telecare Team, as we recognise this is considerably more environmentally friendly, supporting the council's vision to address climate change. We will also plan and minimise travel for any planned installations/upgrades, to reduce our carbon footprint.

Council Priorities and Projects

24. Throughout the Telecare Service Review, we have been working to future proof the service. We strive to achieve the aims set out in the Digital Strategy. We are working with consideration to the Council Plan, to ensure we continually invest in Technologies to support not only our staff to work smarter and maximise remote working but to continually invest in TEC. To Empower people to be self-reliant, independent, and well-co-ordinated to grow strong, connected, and resilient communities.



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