

# Blackburn with Darwen – Improving efficiency and outcomes through telehealthcare

## The challenge

Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council is ranked as the 17th most deprived Local Authority in England out of 326 on the Index of Multiple Deprivation 2010, and the area faces some significant demographic challenges in the future with the number of people aged 85+ set to increase by 12.5% between 2010 and 2021.<sup>1</sup>

The Borough has had one of the highest rates of admission to residential care in the North West, and the number of people aged 65+ with dementia is projected to increase by 53% between 2010 and 2030 to 1,910.<sup>1</sup>

Blackburn with Darwen is also home to above average numbers of people with long-term conditions and mental health issues, with both groups being high users of health and social care services. NHS Blackburn with Darwen CCG has the fifth highest rate of unplanned hospitalisation for chronic ambulatory care sensitive conditions in England with 1,446 emergency admissions per 100,000.<sup>2</sup>

The Council needed to address these issues in order to manage current and future demand, and improve outcomes for local people. At the same time, budget efficiencies meant considerable savings needed to be made from the social care budget.

How could the Council deliver improved health and social care support and at the same time significantly reduce costs?

“ Despite facing significant cuts to adult social care funding, we have been able to deliver an improved service for our residents. Our decision to invest in Telehealthcare underlines our ongoing commitment to delivering the best possible care services to our residents, and our willingness to embrace new technologies in order to achieve this.

Harry Catherall, Chief Executive, Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council



## Highlights

- Total net savings achieved for telecare and Reablement £2.2m in 2011-12
- Further reduction of £1.2m 2013/14 (direct budget costs)
- Residential care admissions reduced significantly, with Blackburn with Darwen having moved from 23rd in the northwest to 17th in terms of care home admissions out of the total of 23 authorities
- Telecare users have risen from 60 to 1,900 (2010/11 - 2013/14)

## Background

The North West Joint Improvement Partnership (JIP) (since superseded by Transition Alliance) was formed to drive improvement in social care commissioning and outcomes, health and wellbeing. Working in partnership with a range of local organisations, including the NHS, from 2009, it began to examine a range of options to support the delivery of continuously improving Adult Social Care.

The JIP reviewed approaches taken by a number of authorities facing similar challenges and as a result began to consider the way technology could help to improve the quality of life for people in the area.

Following examination of delivery models in other areas (particularly North Yorkshire); Blackburn with Darwen Council set objectives for supporting more people to remain independent at home by increasing its own use of Telehealthcare.

## Aims

- Increase the number of telecare users from 60 to 1,800 within three years
- Reduce/delay residential care admissions
- Incorporate telecare into the Reablement process to reduce re-admissions to hospital
- Provide support to informal carers, improving their health and wellbeing and ability to care for longer in a more stress free way
- Achieve overall savings of £1.9m

The adult social care department was charged with making efficiencies of £17M between 2011 and 2015, meaning that the promotion of independence became a crucial driver to the delivery of cost savings whilst at the same time looking to improve user outcomes.

## Solution

Working in partnership with Tunstall and Care Services Efficiency Delivery programme (CSED), the Council put in place a 'hearts and minds' engagement programme for stakeholders, identifying barriers to the successful implementation of the telecare service and putting in place plans to overcome them. A particular concern for social workers was that they would need to manage or might be liable for any problems with equipment should they occur, and this was addressed by ensuring they were clear about the structure and processes in place to support the service. Real life case examples were used as a powerful way of illustrating the benefits and impact of telecare to a wide and diverse range of stakeholders.

The change management programme also included an exercise to ensure the referral system was simple and easy to use and that associated processes such as assessment, installation and review were simple, transparent and robust.

It was also vital to integrate telecare into the community Reablement process and rapid response service, creating a universally accessible service.



“ Safe and Well has made a huge difference in Blackburn with Darwen. Without it we would simply not have been able to realise the savings. Over and above this, we have managed to keep people in their own homes, connected with their history, community and identity. And that's something I'm really proud of.

Sally McIvor, Executive Director People, Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council

## Results

The number of telecare service users in Blackburn with Darwen has increased from 60 in 2010/11 to 1,910 in 2013/14. The Council undertook a robust evaluation of the service with assistance from CSED, tracking results by individual service users and reporting outcomes monthly and quarterly. Each social worker noted the alternative outcome had telecare not been in place in order to assess the impact of the service. This was in turn used to calculate cashable and cash avoidance savings in detail.

The evaluation covered the year period 30 June 2008 to 30 August 2010, and 114 service users in receipt of telecare were used for the evaluation, of which thirty four received no other services. In considering the outcome of telecare, 56% (64) of installations are purely to support prevention, either on top of an existing care package or provided to people who would have received no other services. In these instances there would be no immediate alternative to telecare.

### Telecare provided to the remaining 50 people avoided the escalation of care as follows:

- 1 escalation of 24 hour care
- 2 residential/nursing continuing health care
- 1 increase in day care
- 29 home care
- 2 nursing care
- 13 residential care
- 2 escalation of supported living

The service has built upon these positive initial results, and the latest evaluation shows that **residential care admissions have been reduced by 18%** (or equivalent to 57 people) in 2011/12. **Total net savings achieved are £2.2 million**, £300,000 over the target set, made up of £1.4 million savings from the telecare and Reablement service and a further £800,000 saved solely as a result of the telecare service. Case study

## Case Study

### The Concerns

Mrs O has epilepsy and is also very frail. She lives alone, with her family residing fairly nearby, and has fallen on a number of occasions due to her condition. When she has a fall following a seizure, she usually blacks out, and is therefore unable to call for help.

### The Solution

A Lifeline home unit and a fall detector were supplied. As a result of this, if Mrs O feels that a seizure is about to start or she begins to feel faint; she can press the button on the fall detector. This alerts the monitoring centre, who can then call her family for assistance. In the event of Mrs O falling without pressing the button, the fall detector will automatically alert the monitoring centre.

### The Outcome

Mrs O has now used her fall detector a number of times, and each time the monitoring centre has managed to get in touch with her family, who have then gone to her aid. Mrs O is very happy with the equipment as it has allowed her to stay at home and remain independent. She also feels a lot safer now, as she knows that her family, who live in Preston, will be alerted if she needs them.

Mrs O's family are pleased with the equipment as they know that they will be notified as soon as Mrs O requires their help. They are also aware that emergency services will be notified if they cannot be contacted, and this has given them peace of mind.



I have been extremely encouraged by the success of the Council's telecare service which has helped many people stay longer in their own homes and given them greater independence. The savings generated through using the technology has meant that other services could be preserved, and we continue to explore other innovative ways of working that give residents choice and control over their care.

Councillor Mohammed Khan, Leader of the Council,  
Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council



As a partner, Tunstall has proven that it is not only about the equipment, but about how you implement a service from the ground up and understand what needs to be done in order to change the culture of care – hearts and minds as well as process. Our Telehealthcare service will help us remain fit for purpose over the medium to long term through an integrated service that provides a seamless experience for the user and allows us to increase the scale of delivery even further.

Steve Tingle, Director of Adults (DASS),  
Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council

## Safe and well

In 2012, following the proven success of the telecare project, the Council took the decision to extend the service, and sought a partner who could offer telecare solutions and monitoring as part of a large-scale service. Tunstall was successful in this bid because of its track record of providing a solution which delivers all aspects of a successful telecare programme.

From 2013 the service has been known as Safe and Well, and its preventative/early intervention approaches, in conjunction with telecare, produced a [reduction in 2013/14 of £1.2 million](#) (direct budget costs).

The Safe and Well service was recognised as 'inspirational' and 'person-centred' at the Local Government Chronicle's 2015 awards, where it won the Service Delivery Model category.

## Today

Blackburn with Darwen is making Safe and Well a mainstream part of life in the community, raising awareness with local people about the opportunities it offers for them and their families. Through its Prevention Plus model, community coordinators are being trained in the benefits of telecare, and supported to promote its use. Social care staff and community development workers will take portable telecare demonstration kits with them to community centres and events, using a 'try before you buy' approach. Public pop-up shops will also be used, with promotional literature relevant and eye-catching to all ages and groups of local people.

In the face of massive financial challenges in 2015/16 and beyond, partnership working to embed telecare into service delivery is central to Blackburn with Darwen's strategy for supporting people in community settings.

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