Conference Abstract

Mainstreaming Surrey Telecare

Melanie Bussicott

*Correspondence to: **Melanie Bussicott**, United Kingdom, E-mail: mbussicott@elmbridge.gov.uk*

Abstract

Recognising our leadership role in promoting the wellbeing of all Surrey residents we saw the need to build on existing preventative services to improve independence and maximise budgets. This stimulated our innovative project to mainstream Telecare, making it accessible to all regardless of ability to pay, and open to people who do not meet eligibility criteria.

Our success can be seen in the figures - between October 2011 and September 2012 Surrey Telecare supported 2,436 people – of which 2,346 were new to the service.

Working to a model that will ensure the sustainability of services. As part of a care package, telecare's estimated potential is to reduce the average cost of care packages by approximately 38%, or circa £3600 per person.

How have we done it?

Partners: Commitment to working together was underscored by creating the Assistant Director for Borough and District Partnerships post. Borough and district Councils in Surrey have been the main access points for Community Alarms and Telecare. Now, by working closely together, a Telecare SLA exists between the County Council and all 11 boroughs and districts ensuring consistent service and access.

Universal Offer: We offer free telecare sensors to any resident who may benefit, for 12 weeks. The County Council pays for the equipment, meaning borough and district Councils can install a range of sensors for the same price as their community alarm service. This investment aims to significantly increase telecare take up. People who may have been deterred by the cost can try the equipment, before deciding if it's right for them. Potentially an additional 8,000 people could benefit.

Staff who really understand: Mainstreaming telecare would not be possible without engagement and understanding from front line staff. We held awareness sessions for over 500 staff, helping increase confidence in identifying who can benefit from telecare and how to promote it. 12 staff volunteered as Telecare Champions, promoting best practice and continued learning with colleagues and partners.

In the community: We are increasing Telecare awareness through demonstrator sites within 11 Wellbeing centres. Wellbeing centres are co-located in existing community centres supporting people with an early diagnosis of dementia, and have expanded to promote Telecare awareness.

They provide opportunities to demonstrate the benefits of telecare to individuals and partner organisations. From December 2011 and September 2012, 868 individuals visited our Elmbridge Demonstrator Site and demonstrations were delivered to over 30 local voluntary organisations.

Exploring wider benefits: Adult Social Care, Surrey Fire and Rescue Service and the borough and district councils have worked to mainstream telecare in order to protect people from fire. Over 800 people at 'high fire risk' are being contacted about a linked smoke alarm, resulting in a fivefold increase in activity over the last three months.

Understanding the pace of technological change, we are conducting trials investigating how new technologies can widen the range of groups benefiting from telecare. Collaborating with the University of Surrey we also hope to use our experience to help shape the direction of future research.

Keywords:

surrey, telecare, partnership

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