
POSTER ABSTRACT

South Lanarkshire Health and Social Care Rapid Telecare Rollout Through COVID-19. Pillar 7: Digital solutions

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South Lanarkshire Council's community alarm service supports some of our most vulnerable citizens to live safely and well at home for longer. Approximately 7,300 citizens have dispersed telecare alarms in their homes which are linked to the council's alarm receiving centre (ARC) and remotely monitor service users' safety and well-being.

In January 2021, worldwide chip shortages began impacting the supply chains of some telecare suppliers. South Lanarkshire Council (SLC) historically relied on one main telecare supplier and unfortunately this supplier was experiencing particularly long lead times for order deliveries. This difficult situation was exacerbated by a lack of communication from SLC's telecare supplier regarding changing lead times which resulted in great difficulty maintaining adequate stock levels at a time when the community alarm service was experiencing unprecedented levels of demand as a result of COVID. This had the potential to delay hospital discharges as well as increase emergency admissions to care settings.

Council and South Lanarkshire Health and Social Care Partnership (SLHSCP) staff worked together to urgently secure telecare from an alternative supplier on the Scotland Excel framework. The SLHSCP assistive TEC team undertook pre-market engagement with framework telecare suppliers and then worked with SLC procurement colleagues to secure a direct award with Doro Care UK, the supplier who met key requirements including stock delivery lead times, cost, training and customer support.

The assistive TEC team, Doro Care UK and the ARC then worked together to extensively test Doro telecare alarms and peripherals to ensure that alarm and peripheral alerts were received, identified and logged correctly by the ARC's alarm management system. All were working remotely at the time and effectively used MS Teams to meet, discuss test results and troubleshoot any issues. Once testing was completed and escalation procedures for alerts were agreed with the ARC, assistive TEC team began the staff training phase of the project.

SLHSCP's community alarm responders install the majority of telecare alarms and were the immediate training priority. Virtual training sessions on MS Teams were provided for responders by Doro Care UK and assistive TEC team with a focus on familiarisation with Doro telecare equipment, programming and installation. This was complemented by a step-by-step programming and installation guidance for responders which could be printed if required. A test of change was then carried out within one SLC locality and the following lessons learned:

- Some staff experienced difficulty programming alarms in service users' homes. Further MS Teams training was offered, and a short installation video was recorded for staff to refer to.
- Staff were comfortable installing the previous supplier's telecare and messaging regarding the need for change had to be compelling.
- Some programming protocols needed to be adapted despite prior extensive testing.

The Doro alarms were subsequently rolled out to all 4 localities with MS teams training and support. Disruption to SLC's telecare alarm supply chain has been avoided despite on-going worldwide shortages and telecare has continued play an important role in supporting hospital discharges and vulnerable people in their own homes.