Nottinghamshire County Council

Report to the Adult Social Care and Health Committee

29ᵗʰ October 2012

Agenda Item: 12

REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR FOR PROMOTING INDEPENDENCE AND PUBLIC PROTECTION

USE OF ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY TO SUPPORT VULNERABLE PEOPLE AND CARERS

Purpose of the Report

1. The purpose of this report is to update the Committee on the Adult Social Care, Health and Public Protection department's use of assistive technology to support the independence of vulnerable service users and their carers.

Information and Advice

2. Nottinghamshire County Council first began to provide a mainstream assistive technology service, when it launched a telecare scheme in 2007 to support vulnerable older people. The scheme formed part of a national Department of Health initiative to increase the number of older people provided with telecare by 160,000 by April 2008.

3. Telecare is a more advanced version of the community alarm or 'Lifeline' service which has existed primarily in sheltered housing for a number of decades. Telecare links a range of home safety and personal hazard sensors in a vulnerable person's home to a 24-hour monitoring centre. The monitoring centre staff can receive alerts from the sensors and arrange an appropriate response, such as contacting the person through the main telecare unit in their home to provide advice and reassurance, calling an ambulance if there is a medical emergency, or asking a nearby friend or relative to call round.

4. Telecare sensors are available to monitor a range of risks in the home, including:

   - Falls
   - 'Wandering' by people with dementia or other cognitive impairment
   - Night time incontinence
   - Poor medication compliance
   - Night Time epileptic seizures
   - Flood, fire and carbon monoxide gas.

5. The Nottinghamshire County Council's telecare service was initially only available in five of the seven Nottinghamshire districts (Gedling and Rushcliffe had no

service provision), but following a tender process a contract was awarded to Tunstall Healthcare Limited to provide a countywide service from October 2011. Since 2007 over 2,000 people in Nottinghamshire have benefited from telecare.

6. In addition to the telecare service, a new service, 'Assistive Technology for Carers' was launched in October 2011. The scheme provides similar equipment to the telecare service, but alerts from the sensors are received by a portable pager used by the carer, rather than being directed to a 24-hour monitoring centre. The scheme is targeted at carers who provide regular and substantial care to a loved one in their own home, and helps to reduce carer stress by enabling the carer to go about their day-to-day activities at home, or sleep soundly at night, safe in the knowledge that they will be automatically alerted if the person they care for requires assistance. Fifty-five carers have benefited from this service since it was launched. A similar scheme aimed at using technology to improve the dignity of people with learning disabilities in supported living schemes has also provided significant benefits both for the authority and service users. In one scheme, efficiencies of £44,000 per annum were achieved by using assistive technology to alert on-site staff to risks, rather than using more intrusive one-to-one supervision.

7. A further assistive technology service provided by the department, 'Just Checking', uses movement and door opening sensors placed around the home to log the daily living activities of a person with dementia. The system can show what time a person went to bed and got up, their use of the kitchen and bathroom, and any periods when they left the property. Unfortunately, in cases where people have more advanced dementia the person maybe unable to accurately convey how they are managing at home, and decisions about their future care needs are made on the basis of information provided from neighbours, family members and professionals. The 'Just Checking' system provides a voice to people with dementia by enabling objective information to be collated about their daily living activities at home.

8. An initial pilot scheme, which was funded jointly by Nottinghamshire Teaching Primary Care Trust and ASCH in 2009/10, was evaluated by Nottingham University. The researchers concluded that in 11 out of 14 cases the use of Just Checking had delayed admission to residential care and helped to inform the provision of more appropriate community care support. On the basis of the positive findings of the report, the system was rolled out from April 2011 to all of the department's older person's care management teams, and also to most community mental health and specialist intermediate care teams for older people with mental health problems. Between April 2011 and the end of June 2012, 213 individuals with dementia had been assessed using 'Just Checking'.

9. A number of other studies of telecare and other assistive technology have demonstrated that it can help to provide more cost effective care for vulnerable older and younger disabled adults. For example, a 2011 report, *Telecare and Telehealth: Progress and Opportunities in the East Midlands,* commissioned by the East Midlands Joint Improvement Partnership, examined the impact of telecare provided to 642 people across the region. The report found that annual savings for social care were between £449,512 and £499,458. A more recent

analysis of Nottinghamshire cases where telecare had been provided between October 2011 and August 2012 showed that in 23 cases, equipment had been provided to prevent an immediate admission to residential care, saving £108,000 on long-term residential care costs, compared to the actual cost of supporting those individuals in their own home with community care services and telecare.

10. Due to the success of telecare and other assistive technology the County Council will be expanding its use to support vulnerable individuals during the second half of 2012/13, and also streamlining some of the current referral processes, which prevent timely referrals by occupational therapists and colleagues in the NHS. A new fast-track telecare assessment process for people who are eligible for assistance from the Council is being introduced. The department is also working in partnership with the Council's telecare service provider, Tunstall Healthcare Limited[1], to enable service users who do not meet the Fair Access to Care Services eligibility criteria[2] to access the telecare monitoring service, as self-funders. This will form an important part of the department's preventative approach to social care, by ensuring people can access telecare to help prevent the need for ongoing health and social care support.

Statutory and Policy Implications

11. This report has been compiled after consideration of implications in respect of finance, equal opportunities, human resources, crime and disorder, human rights, the safeguarding of children, sustainability and the environment and those using the service and where such implications are material they are described below. Appropriate consultation has been undertaken and advice sought on these issues as required.

Implications for Service Users

12. Greater access to assistive technology will enable more vulnerable older and younger disabled people to maintain their independence at home, remove or delay the need for residential care, prevent the need for more intensive community care support, and facilitate safe and timely discharge from hospital. Assistive technology will also reduce carer stress and provide reassurance.

Financial Implications

13. Designated grant funding in departmental reserves is being used to fund assistive technology services in 2011/12; £180,000 of funding has been allocated from reconfiguration of existing budgets from 2012/13 to fund assistive technology equipment. The impact on reducing community care and residential care expenditure will be monitored to ensure that savings offset the costs of providing assistive technology services.

Crime and Disorder Implications

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[1] Tunstall Healthcare is a market leading provider of telehealthcare solutions.
[2] Prioritising need in the context of *Putting People First*: A whole system approach to eligibility for social care - *Guidance on Eligibility Criteria for Adult Social Care, England 2010*

14. Telecare bogus caller buttons can help to reduce doorstep crime by enabling service users to call for assistance from the 24-hour telecare monitoring centre. Conversations with doorstep callers can also be recorded if the service user presses a discreet button and these recordings can be used as evidence in criminal prosecutions for doorstep crime. The use of movement activated playback devices can remind vulnerable people to take extra precautions when opening the door to an unknown caller by playing an advice message when the householder moves towards their front door. A Home Officer evaluation of these devices, showed that there was an 80% improvement in good doorstep practice in a trial involving 1,300 homes.

RECOMMENDATION/S

It is recommended that:

1)   the contents of this report are noted.

2)   a further report is presented to the Adult Social Care and Health Committee in September 2013 to update on the progress of assistive technology use in maintaining the independence of vulnerable people.

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Constitutional Comments

15. Because the report is for noting only, no constitutional comments are required.

Financial Comments (RWK 05/10/2012)

16. There are no financial implications arising from the report.

Background Papers

Except for previously published documents, which will be available elsewhere, the documents listed here will be available for inspection in accordance with Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972.

(a)   Telecare and Telehealth Progress and Opportunities in the East Midlands - May 2011 (Updated July 2011) Realising the potential of Telecare and Telehealth in East Midlands.

Electoral Division(s) and Member(s) Affected

All.

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