

Telecare Expected to Play Key Role in Improving Care Services as part of National Dementia Strategy

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Telecare is expected to play a key role in the Government's first ever National Dementia Strategy, and will improve models of care to better support people with dementia, their families and carers.

At the 2008 National Improving the Lives of People with Dementia Conference, leading telehealthcare provider Tunstall Healthcare joined leading researchers and charities including Age Concern and the Alzheimer's Society to demonstrate how telecare is helping to promote well-being, inclusion and quality of life for people with dementia.

700,000 people in the UK have dementia, a figure which is expected to double in a generation. The financial cost is over £17bn per annum, mostly made up of accommodation, lost earnings and unpaid tax. The Government has shown a clear commitment to dementia, and to tackling the wide-ranging and complex issues surrounding the condition in its first-ever National Dementia Strategy to be unveiled by the end of the year.

James Buckley, chief executive officer at Tunstall said: "Telecare will play an important role in supporting the goals of the national strategy, delivering flexible care services to support individual needs, and helping to promote a more integrated approach, enabling people to receive the support they need within the familiarity of the home and community environment.

"For social care providers, the economic evidence in favour of telecare is equally compelling. In North Yorkshire the number of people with dementia is expected to increase by 54% by the year 2020. Two pilot projects run by the County Council have shown that telecare has enabled people with a number of long-term health issues, including dementia, to remain in their own homes delivered net annual savings of £4,300 per person. In this way, telecare not only helps to preserve independence, it also helps to ensure the most efficient use of health and social care resources."

Tunstall is working closely with local authorities, housing providers and care support services, helping thousands of people with dementia to remain safe, well and independent in a familiar and comforting home environment for longer.

Telecare also supports the families and carers of people with dementia, helping to reduce some of the physical and emotional pressures they face, by providing the reassurance that risks can be effectively monitored and managed, and that help is on hand when needed. It enables them to socialise and have time to themselves, increasing their own independence and quality of life.

Tunstall is currently working with customers to trial its Vega "safer walking technology", a solution which has been designed to address the risk of people with dementia and cognitive impairments leaving their house at inappropriate times and being unable to return without assistance. This gives users greater independence and the freedom to walk about in a safe environment, and offers valuable peace of mind to families and carers.

The Vega service includes a wrist-worn device that uses GPS and GSM technology which recognises when the user goes outside a preset safe zone, alerting a monitoring center so that a timely and appropriate response can be taken to ensure the safety and well-being of the individual.

To coincide with World Alzheimer's Day, a new website was launched www.alzheimers-support.com, to provide information, advice and support to people with Alzheimer's, their families and carers across the world.

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About Tunstall

Tunstall Healthcare Group is the market-leading provider of telehealthcare solutions, with over 2.5 million users globally. Tunstall's solutions support older people and those with long-term needs, to live independently, by effectively managing their health and well-being. Tunstall provides technology, expertise and advice to millions of people enabling them to lead independent more fulfilling lives. For more information on how telehealthcare can improve quality of life, visit www.tunstallhealth.com

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