

Partnership Project aims to Promote Long-Term Health and Improve Social Care

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Agency: **Context**

A partnership between Tunstall, Fold Housing Association, Housing 21, DigiTV and the University of Sheffield will deliver an innovative research project to develop a Virtual Extra Care Service (VIRTE_x) within local communities.

Following successful funding from the Government's Technology Strategy Board as part of the Assisted Living Innovation Platform (ALIP), the project will address the challenges created by an ageing population and the growing number of people with long-term conditions.

The aim of the VIRTE_x project is to build a virtual community of connected carers and cared-for, to deliver flexible community-based care, preserve social inclusion and maintain a healthier lifestyle and independent living by encouraging change in behaviour.

According to Melinda Phillips, Chief Executive of Housing 21: "Social isolation can often lead to a decline in health amongst older people, so by keeping service users in contact with other people as well as health and social care providers, the virtual extra care scheme will play an important part in keeping people active and in encouraging social interaction."

Kevin McSorley, Director of Telecare for Fold Housing said: "The extra care model has proven highly successful in providing round-the-clock care and support to older people, promoting a healthier lifestyle and ensuring they are able to play an active role in the community. Extending this model into the wider community will help to meet the growing demand for more independent living from older people and those with long-term conditions."

Steve Sadler Group Technical Director at Tunstall added: "A new generation of telehealthcare technology will allow us to create a connected community, providing access to health and social care services that flex across traditional boundaries and contribute to social inclusion through innovative information services."

This project is one of nine innovative research projects supported by the ALIP, which was set up to address the challenges created by the growing number of people with long-term conditions.

The Government has shown a clear commitment to developing innovative models of care and support to enable independent living by funding these innovative research projects focused on chronic health care, which will see a total investment of £11m.

The Department of Health has made a significant commitment to telehealthcare with the Whole System Demonstrator Programme. The ALIP activities complement this with support for innovative research to better manage long-term conditions and support older people at home for longer. The convergence of these activities will create an exciting environment for the delivery of health and social care services in the UK.

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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