

Case Study : Care Messenger™ Service – i-Spy Digital Ltd

Loneliness and isolation can be a tipping point for referral to adult social care and can be the cause of a significant number of attendances at GP surgeries for worsening medical conditions or mental illness.

Recent estimates place the number of people aged over 65 who are often or always lonely at over one million. In England, 51% of all people over 75 live alone and 5 million older people say the television is their main form of company.

Background Summary

i-Spy Digital Ltd have developed a unique care messaging system (Care Messenger™) which enables messages, pictures and videos to be transmitted to a television screen using a mobile phone or computer. The service includes a free app for Android and IOS platforms.

The Care Messenger™ system is aimed largely at the elderly, who may not be confident with computers, smart phones and tablets, but spend more time than any other demographic in front of their TVs.

The system can be used by family and friends and by domiciliary care providers or healthcare professionals to remind their clients about visits or to check if they will be at home. Housing associations and social landlords can also use it to conduct surveys or send news to their tenants.

“ Loneliness and isolation are as detrimental to your health as smoking – social isolation kills. i-Spy Digital’s TV based messaging system targets this social challenge directly – I can see children and grandchildren of elderly relatives using it every day and it even going viral on Facebook! Bringing older people into the world of texting and modern communications with no pain of entry on their part would make a massive difference to their feeling of being ‘included’ and their psychological and physical wellbeing ”

Professor Peter Gore

*Head of Institute for Ageing and Vitality,
Newcastle University, UK’s leading research
establishment in ageing and assisted living*



So useful for helping to deliver Telemedicine Services

Support Provided by NHS Innovations North

Specifically, this assistance included:

- identification of named local authority contacts in the North East including Directors of Public Health and Directors of Adult Social Services
- contact listings for North East care homes, nursing homes and sheltered housing managers
- contact listings for the major UK care home groups
- identification of specialist housing construction groups
- identification of relevant trade publications for advertising the service
- preparation of an events calendar of relevant trade exhibitions and shows
- identification of the key contact for the National Housing Federation's Health Programme

In addition, NHS Innovations North facilitated a meeting with the Telehealth Lead Consultant to NHS England Northern Senate and TECS Clinical Advocate to NHS England which in turn led to the instigation of a Care Messenger™ trial by South Tyneside NHS Foundation Trust.



NHS Innovations North Contact

NHS Innovations North
1 Hylton Park
Wessington Way
Sunderland
Tyne & Wear
SR5 3HD
T : 0191 5164400
E : enquiries@nhsinnovationsnorth.org.uk

Outcomes

Care Messenger™ has now been installed in Housing & Care 21's Winton Court, an Extra Care Scheme in Gateshead. Additional installations include Housing 21's community tenants in North Tyneside and a new build in Sunderland (Dovecote) with 170 apartments opening June 2014. Housing 21 commissioned Care Messenger™ to help address social isolation, early dementia, and to raise awareness of tenants about organised activities, significantly improving communications.