

White paper summary

The transformational potential of telecare

Service users and their family

Social care

Healthcare

Allied public services

A picture of technology enabled care in Europe: Extending the independence of older people at home and managing social care costs

Independent European research has revealed how advanced use of telecare is helping older people stay independent at home for longer – supporting them to feel safer and more self-sufficient, delaying a move to a care home by over 8 months and helping local authorities redeploy millions in social care funding.

The new research, involving three separate studies, includes analysis by the Autonomous University of Barcelona and the University of York. It considers the benefits of proactive, reactive and personalised use of technology to support ageing populations in their own homes, in Spain and the UK.

Commissioned by world leading telecare technology provider Tunstall, it is the first independently-evaluated¹ international research of its kind, looking at the socio-economic benefits of telecare for older people that is enabling extended independence in the community. Researchers compared those receiving telecare support with similar groups who were not offered the technology.

“It’s not all about the tech, it’s about how tech is used. Spain is recognised as a world leader in technology supported care, and first introduced proactive telecare in the 90s. It has become more sophisticated over recent years – with greater levels of personalisation enabling local authorities across the country to provide the tailored support people need in their own homes.”

Abel Delgado, Managing Director, Tunstall Healthcare Spain

Telecare in the community: a story from the UK to Spain

Tunstall’s technology is used by five million people around the world and the research focuses on the impact of reactive telecare (emergency response) in the UK, alongside the extended proactive and personalised (preventative) telecare approach that is well established in Spain.

In the UK, the University of York’s York Health Economics Consortium (YHEC) studied the impact Lancashire County Council’s advanced telecare programme has had on the local social care economy. The programme is one of the largest of its kind in the UK.

Technology used includes home emergency alarm base units, automatic fall detectors, smoke, heat and carbon monoxide sensors, movement detectors, key safes and other DDA compliant equipment for those with complex needs. All devices are linked to monitoring centres and operators help to ensure people receive the right help at the right time - such as a family member, carer, keyholder, health or care professional or the emergency services.

Collectively the research provides new insight into the economic value of advanced telecare services and the impact it is having on the independence of ageing populations.

New insights into technology in social care:

- In the UK, with the Lancashire Telecare Service, £4,500 per person per annum was avoided in home care and other social care costs when reactive telecare was included as part of the care services. Based on the 6,000 service user numbers at the time (which has since doubled) this equated to £13.3m per annum.
- In Spain - a global leader in telecare – older people offered proactive and personalised technology were able to stay independent at home for on average 8.6 months (262 days) longer, before moving to a care home.
- Proactive and personalised telecare also reduced pressure on emergency services. Emergency calls for help were reduced by 54% and ambulance mobilisations by 36%. There were 256,000 service users in Spain at the time of the study (which has since increased to 320,000 people).
- Proactive telecare service users reported feeling significantly safer (96%) and more self-sufficient (78%) – with 98% feeling it gave peace of mind to their family, including family members caring for them.

“Until now there has been lack of independent analysis on the impact telecare is having on health and social care systems – and this is the first time the socio-economic value has been studied in this way. Technology is adapting to support the need of ageing populations around the world. While the ability to provide a reactive, emergency response is a crucial and founding strength of telecare, its capability to assist in a more proactive and personalised way is changing the way it is deployed – as services move to a more preventative approach.”

Zillah Moore, Marketing Director UK & Ireland, Tunstall Healthcare

The future for commissioning:

The findings provide a picture of how technology enabled care can be used by local authorities and integrated health and social care systems to:

- Support ageing populations to stay independent in their own homes for longer.
- Use telecare to reduce the need for other, potentially more expensive social care services, so resources can be used more effectively.
- Move from a reactive to a proactive model of social care assistance in the home setting, with advanced use of telecare and outbound call programmes.
- Reduce the number of inbound emergency calls and need for ambulance services – through a tailored call provision and technology enabled homes.
- Assist capacity in residential care through telecare and help alleviate ‘bed blocking’ in acute hospitals.
- Rapidly switch to increased technology and outbound care call support when needed (such as during the Covid-19 restrictions).
- Improve service user satisfaction and wellbeing of residents and their families.

This research findings can also help local authorities to calculate potential social care cost savings at a local level.

To download the whitepaper visit www.tunstall.co.uk/transformationalwhitepaper

“We are now doing further analysis to find out whether telecare makes a difference in the use of NHS resources, for example visits to A&E and admission and readmission to hospital.”

Nick Hex, Health Economist, York Health Economics Consortium

¹ About the research

The Transformational Potential of Telecare white paper was commissioned by Tunstall with independent analysis and compilation by Ignetica Ltd.

Involving three separate studies, it includes analysis by:

- **University of York’s York Health Economics Consortium (YHEC)** – which evaluated of the impact of Lancashire County Council’s telecare service on other social care services, in the period 2016-17.
- **Strategy and transformation consultancy, Ignetica** – which evaluated of the operational and economic benefits of proactive and personalised telecare based on all Tunstall Televida (Spain) service users between 2011 and 2018.
- **Foundation for Health and Ageing at the Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona** – which studied user/family improvements in safety, self-sufficiency, and peace of mind in a PROMS study of 1200 service users in 2016.

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