TAPPI Personal Stories

From our testbed partner:

Southend Care
excelling in care
enhancing lives

Steven's Story

Steven Plume is an assistant manager at Southend Care. He manages an extra care complex for 15 tenants and supported living accommodation for 27 tenants, both in Southend-on-Sea, Essex. Steven has worked in care since 2002 and he's passionate about supporting adults with learning disabilities to live independently.

How do you feel about technology?

I have two sites that I look after: West Street and Longmans. West Street is for adults with a learning disability and autism. Longmans is an extra care unit for adults that need some assistance to maintain their current level of independence.

I ensure that there are enough staff on site to manage the daily needs of the tenants. Any issues that arise with the tenants I try and resolve with them or for them. I work with the tenants and social workers to achieve the tenants' desired outcomes so they can lead the life they want. We arrange for staff to go on holiday with tenants where possible.

I was in publishing before coming into care. While I loved the job in London, when I moved to Southend, I continued for a year but then didn't want to do the commute every day. I decided to get a job local to me and this is where I started my care journey – I find it more satisfying to help people grow and become as independent as possible.

I have been working at Southend Care since June 2019, but I have been working in care since 2002. I have worked for numerous care companies, starting out as a care facilitator in a residential home for older people.

What do you love about your role?

My passion is working with adults with a learning disability. It is really rewarding watching them grow, gaining independence where possible.

My favourite part of the job is helping the tenants, seeing them become part of the community, and having the same choices as everyone else.

What technology do you use with tenants?

There is a big digital tablet in the communal area at Longmans where tenants can do colouring or play games.

Some tenants have Oystas which are wearable telecare devices with GPS tech that give them peace of mind when they're out and about.

We also use a PainChek app to see if our tenants who find it hard to communicate are in pain. We've used this recently for a gentleman who is deaf and doesn't always tell us when he's in pain. Some tenants have had strokes in the past and this app will quickly identify if this happens again.

Southend Care has an Amba system which brings together data from different tech products. We've integrated the PainChek app into the Amba system so our support staff don't have to open up five different systems – they just check one app on their work phone/tablet.
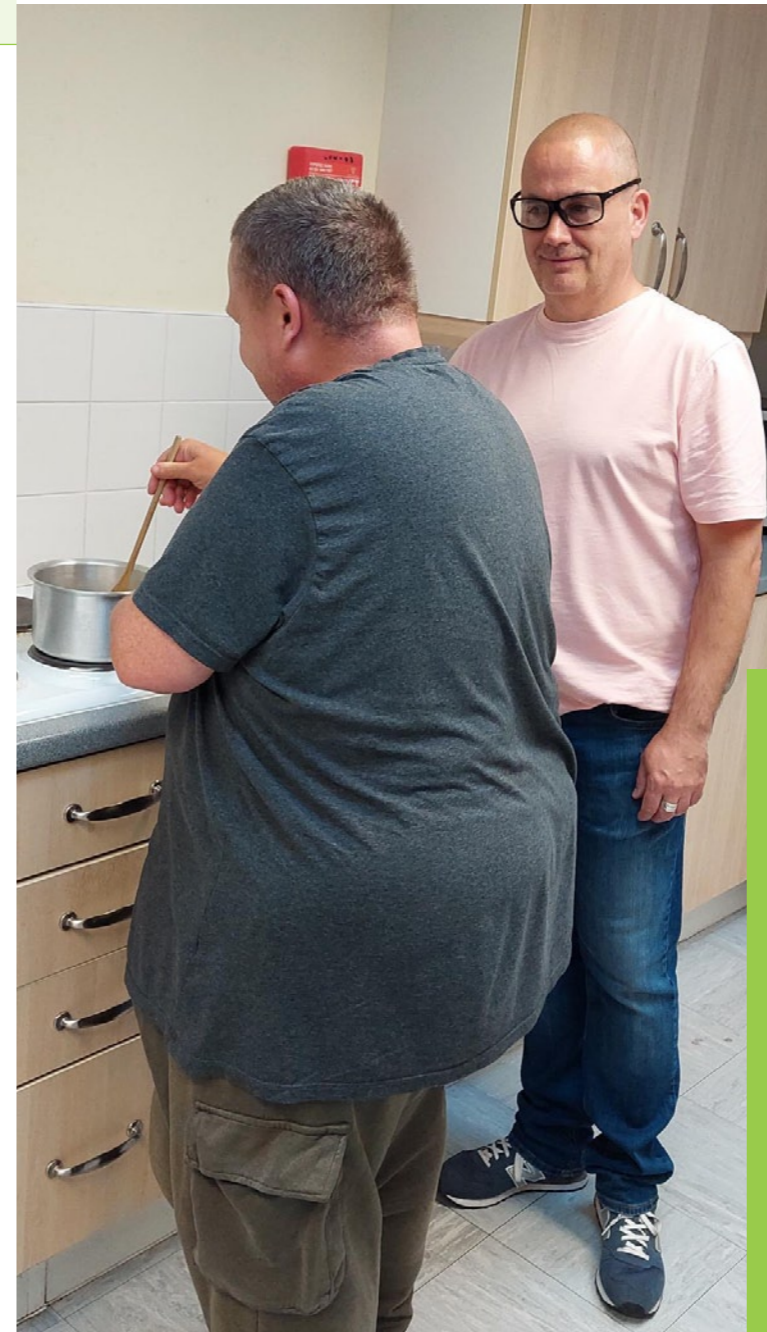
> " We are hoping the technology will become part and parcel of how the care is delivered to new tenants in the future.

Tell us about the work you've been doing through TAPPI. What has it enabled you to do?

Working with the TAPPI project has really opened up how care can and should be delivered. At the beginning I thought it would only be minor differences we would see. That the tenants might struggle to understand what we were trying to achieve. But having technology on board has really highlighted some changes to tenants' care plans.

We have introduced door sensors. We are able to look at the data supplied to ensure all care calls have been completed. The information provided has also enabled us to remove care that was not really beneficial to the tenant or service. Motion sensors have been installed and if no movement has been evidenced, we can either change the care package or more importantly find out if there is a health issue with the tenant.

We have introduced sleep mats to some of the tenants which has highlighted a couple of them having sleep apnoea and enabled us to get health advice. Without these we would never have known until it became a real issue.

Oysta devices have been our best achievement to date, they have given the tenants so much more confidence to be able to go out into the community by themselves. It is actually making them part of the community without being identified or labelled that they need assistance.

The Oysta technology also gives staff peace of mind that the tenant is not in danger, and it enables staff to concentrate on their other tenants and work with the knowledge that they can contact the tenant if necessary.

It also enables us to provide evidence to social workers when tenants need change, or if any complaints or safeguarding issues are sent to us - the information is always factual.

What are the challenges around using technology?

The biggest challenge I would say, is the staff - some are anxious around technology, some think it will take their job away, others think it is more work they have to do. Others are frightened of learning new technology.

We are looking at getting technology champions as we feel this will benefit staff, having someone to go to for advice or just to be shown again how it works and how it benefits the tenants and staff.

We are hoping with any new tenants moving in, the technology will become part and parcel of how the care is delivered to them in the future.

> ❝ **The TAPPI project has really opened up how care can and should be delivered.**

What other benefits have you seen?

We are more aware of some health issues, for example, with the sleep mat, if a tenant has had a sleepless night, then staff know to arrange a later call in the morning.

With other tenants who have the sleep mat and monitor their own data, staff have noticed that their anxiety has reduced, they are happier in themselves, it gives them confidence that everything is okay.

Our Oysta devices are benefiting tenants and staff. One example is Rita who recently took a trip to Canvey Island via bus and had a lovely time exploring the seafront. She hadn't been this far afield since 2019. Staff thought Rita was frightened of going out on her own, but she loved it and was out for five hours.

As Rita had her Oysta, it gave her confidence to travel further, and the shift leader could contact her. Also, when Rita hadn't come back when expected, our staff member looked at the data to see she was on her way home.

The tech has also given Rita the confidence to book a hairdressing appointment - a major step forward. I am hoping, with encouragement, we can get Rita more involved in community activities.

Acknowledgements

Find out more about this project at:

www.housinglin.org.uk/TAPPI2

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