

Working together to realise the benefits of digital TECS

The challenge

As the UK moves to a digital communications network, LHP has been working to understand the impact on its equipment, services and customers, and evaluate the options available. How has collaborating with Tunstall helped LHP to develop and implement an effective digital strategy that is integrated and inclusive?

What we did

LHP's focus for Technology Enabled Care Services (TECS) is on using it effectively to help people to live independently for longer, giving them a better quality of life, and maximising the length of their tenancies to enable continued investment into achieving the organisation's goals.

LHP has a longstanding relationship with Tunstall, and in recent years they have not only worked closely on a day-to-day basis, but have also collaborated to prepare a strategy for the UK's transition to a digital communications network and adapting its services to become more resilient and agile during and post pandemic.

LHP and Tunstall have worked closely together to audit existing schemes and equipment and scope a potential footprint for new technology and service delivery models. The relationship with Tunstall is multi-layered – all touch points within each organisation communicate and collaborate to create excellent service delivery across all elements. As well as working together to improve services to LHP customers, Tunstall has supported LHP's successful bids to provide TECS to other organisations, and enable initiatives with partners in health and social care.



Photo posed by model

“ TECS is a major part of the way LHP delivers excellent services for all stakeholders and working with Tunstall has helped us to shape our service to become more agile and maximise the opportunities presented by the digital future for both our tenants and colleagues. We are driven by the same customer-focused goals and working to achieve the same outcomes.

John O'Hanrahan, Customer Service Centre Manager, LHP





Mayfields Extra Care

About LHP

Lincolnshire Housing Partnership is a £53million social housing provider managing 12,500 homes across the Grimsby and Boston area with over 25,000 customers, and almost 400 staff, including those delivering their TEC service. LHP's vision is Great Homes, Strong Communities, and whose approach is to actively listen to customers and colleagues to gain insight to shape the future direction of the organisation, and continuously improve the customer experience.

LHP's Values are

- Customer first
- Together
- Listen, act learn

Implementing the digital strategy

LHP's approach to digital transformation isn't simply about buying new equipment; it touches many areas of service delivery, and the organisation has taken a holistic approach to creating a foundation for change:

Consultation and cultural change

In 2020 the LHP Way culture change programme was introduced to help employees feel valued and engaged, and to further cement the LHP one team ethos. The programme has helped to improve staff recruitment

and retention due to increased job satisfaction, as well as resulting in higher productivity and lower sickness rates.

LHP has also put in place a comprehensive customer consultation strategy, engaging with them using various channels to find out what they want from services and agree shared objectives and goals, including:

- Wellbeing Service Improvement Panels
- Stakeholder sessions – bringing in the experts
- Scrutiny panel
- Customer focus groups – TPAS (Tenants Participation Advisory Service)
- A range of communications (social media, website, customer magazine, emails)

Service transformation

Over the last two years LHP has restructured some of its key services, including its telecare and monitoring teams, utilising the latest technology to improve services to its customers, increase efficiency and create a better working environment for colleagues. This followed extensive engagement via working groups to ensure colleagues were involved in the design of the systems, over 1,000 hours of training, intranet and weekly team briefs, and gap analysis surveys with bitesize targeted coaching sessions to address any issues.

The Monitoring Centre itself has also been transformed. Previously, operators were based on dedicated call handling stations using a static in-office model. Due to infrastructure developments, LHP is now able to access Tunstall's hosted SaaS PNC 8.2 software from any given location, removing the need for operators to work solely from the centre. As colleagues are able to work from home, there are no longer geographical restrictions on the service, and the increased capacity means LHP can offer more proactive services to its customers.

Technology investment

LHP has put in place a comprehensive equipment upgrade programme in anticipation of the digital switch over. It has invested in Lifeline Smart Hubs, enabling both customers' wellbeing and the units to be monitored remotely via the portal, which means they can:

- Assess status such as the unit being connected to mains power and whether it has signal
- What other equipment is attached to the unit
- Change settings and functionality tailored to the needs of the service user with the click of the button

This significantly increases the efficiency of the service, as it reduces the need to deploy technicians to visit people's homes, which in turn reduces the associated carbon footprint. It also improves the service user experience, as changes are made instantly, and without the disruption of a home visit.



Lifeline Smart Hub

Self Install model

Working with Tunstall and Age UK (Lincolnshire Telecare Service), LHP has recently developed a 'Self-Install' model, which enables service users to install their own telecare equipment. Systems are programmed and tested at LHP, before being packaged and posted to the customer with an accompanying step by step guide on how to install. Once they have received the equipment, LHP can check the status of the unit by accessing the portal, to ensure it has been installed correctly and the service user is protected, all without leaving the monitoring centre. 181 Smart Hubs have been deployed in its partial schemes so far, no equipment faults have been reported and resident feedback has been extremely positive:

“ This unit is so much better than the previous system we had in place, as we no longer have to pull a cord, I have a pendant with me all the time.



“ The equipment looks great; it is discreet and for me that is important!

“ I would recommend this to anyone, it works great, and it is easy to use.

Results

The culture change programme has created one LHP team, and this would not have been possible without using technology such as SaaS PNC 8.2 to enable service delivery to be restructured. LHP's strategy has been created by focusing on outputs, rather than presenteeism, to ensure the right services and processes are in place to deliver the right outcomes.

Remote working has made the service more agile. The ability to work from home means colleagues can cover shifts or peak times more easily as they don't need to travel, or arrange childcare. This in turn has increased morale, as work/life balance is improved, and aids reduced staff turnover. It has also fostered team spirit – colleagues are more able to help each other out with shift changes or covering illness as it impacts less upon their life. Operators feel they have more parity with other colleagues now they are able to be partly home-based, making them feel more valued and able to work more closely with colleagues from other areas.

The service is also more robust as a result. Unexpected absence can be covered more easily, reducing the impact on both staff and customers, and staffing levels can be flexed according to demand.

The new approach has seen Average Handle Time decrease by around 10%, Average Wait Times reduce by approximately 30% (comparing the last quarter of 2021 to 2020), and even through the introduction of changes to working methods and the pandemic, all installation and TSA targets were met.

LHP's investment in new technology and systems has also created a platform for work with other organisations, such as providing a telecare service to 1100 South Kesteven District Council residents, working with Tunstall to onboard them to the SaaS platform, and providing a Smart Hub lone worker solution to St Barnabas Hospice.

LHP has also developed partnerships with health. Using Tunstall technology, LHP also provides an end-to-end

service with support pathways into Integrated Living and Support teams and the NHS Urgent Community Response teams, creating opportunities to help customers to remain in their properties for longer and avoid unnecessary hospital admissions. Created in partnership with Age UK, the Hospital Avoidance Response Team (HART) offers people up to 72 hours' support at home when it's most needed, helping them to build their confidence and regain and retain independence and wellbeing. From January to July 2019 HART:

- Received 821 referrals from hospital discharge and community health teams,
- Generated £164,000 hospital bed savings due to admission avoidance
- Generated £186,000 hospital bed savings due to timely hospital discharge
- Provided 659.5 bridging gaps days of support provided to acute settings



John O'Hanrahan, Customer Service Centre Manager and Hannah Wilson-Leary, Telecare Team Leader