

NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Care and Independence Overview and Scrutiny Committee

26th September 2019

Assistive Technology Service Update

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To provide background and information on how NYCC uses Assistive Technology to enable people to live more independent lives for longer.

2. Current Delivery Model

- 2.1 Since April 2018 NYCC has commissioned Assistive Technology services (AT) through Nottingham Rehab Services (NRS) following a competitive procurement process. NRS deliver AT services across the county to both Adults and Children.
- 2.2 NRS assess for and supply Assistive Technology products and work in partnership with Apello who operate a monitoring centre which connects to devices such as alarm call pendants, and also with Yorkshire Ambulance Service (YAS) who provide an emergency response.
- 2.3 At present approximately 800 people have some form of AT assessed through the current contract with NRS. The range of equipment being used is extensive, ranging from simple lifelines to complex AT equipment such as GPS trackers, epilepsy sensors, property exit sensors and many more. At present an average of 140 new referrals are made to NRS from NYCC assessment staff each month.
- 2.4 The service commissioned in 2018 differs greatly from the previous iteration. Rather than specifying certain pieces of equipment and relying on NYCC Occupational Therapists (OTs) to understand and assess for this, the new contract operates as a more direct partnership between NRS and NYCC. NRS directly employ their own OTs, who receive referrals from NYCC assessment staff. These OTs are supported by NRS' technical experts who are able to identify the most appropriate piece of equipment to support a person's assessed needs and outcomes. This allows people to be supported with a far wider range of equipment and allows the contract to stay up to date with new and emerging technologies.

3. Nature of support offered and AT available

- 3.1 The AT contract allows for a wide range of products and solutions to be supplied to individuals to meet assessed needs, including:

- Fall Detectors
- Epilepsy (seizure) sensors
- GPS trackers
- Property exit sensor
- Carbon monoxide detector
- Smoke detector
- Bed / chair sensors
- Lifeline Pendants
- Door sensor
- Heat Detector
- Fob door systems

- 3.2 Depending on the level of support required by individuals, sensors can be connected to NRS' emergency response centre via Apello or to family or friends who are able to respond.

3.3 Where people require physical support Yorkshire Ambulance Service provide an emergency response service to people's homes if friends and family are not in a position to support.

4. Assessment and Eligibility

4.1 Assistive Technology for Adults is a chargeable service although costs are included within a person's financial assessment. Only people with an assessed eligible care and support need can be funded for AT by NYCC.

4.2 There are currently four AT service levels determined by assessment as shown below:

- Extra care schemes, NYCC Elderly Persons Homes and Resource Centres – Pendant not connected to monitoring centre at £2.00 per week
- Standard - base unit, pendant and friend and family response at £3.40pw
- Standard plus - base unit, pendant, mobile response - up to 2 add-ons at £6.00pw
- Standard extra - base unit, pendant, mobile response with 3 or more add-ons at £7.00

4.3 Consideration of AT forms a core part of the needs assessment completed by HAS Care and Support staff, with access to the AT referral embedded within Liquid Logic. Where cases are escalated for review consideration of AT support is always a priority.

4.4 NYCC provides a free of charge period of AT for reablement of up to 10 weeks, where the person may or may not have other eligible needs, to date approximately 120 people have accessed AT as part of their reablement package. This enables an assessment to be made of whether people would benefit in the long term from any sort of assistive technology.

4.5 Where people complete a period of reablement but not have assessed eligible needs, they are able to access AT through NRS' private pay offer.

4.6 As a service for people with assessed eligible needs, the AT service is focussed on ensuring that technology is used to maximise people's outcomes and to:

- Enable people to live healthier, independent lives for longer
- Enable people to live in their own homes for longer
- Reduce demand on social care services
- Reduce demand on health services
- Prevent or delay unnecessary hospital or care home admissions
- Facilitate early hospital discharges
- Enable market innovation
- Provide solutions that complement our existing services
- Support our strength based assessment processes
- Deliver services that provide value for money for the customer and the County Council
- Provide Assistive Technology solutions that changes lives, that enhances and compliments personal contact
- Improve access to Assistive Technology services

4.7 And providing a service that;

- is focused on prevention and early intervention
- has a clear process pathway, with a simple access to services for professionals through a self-referral route or information and advice on products to private paying customers

- Works with the private paying market which has a huge potential for expanding the service, offering more people more choices before the necessity to access statutory services
- Provides improvements in value for money, quality and efficiency
- Targets the reduction in the cost of care with a technology first culture
- Delivers increased opportunities for complex installations, delaying escalation in care and/or support needs
- Ensures there is a place for all types of technology to meet all types of needs
- Has clear and accessible information and promotes the use of Assistive Technology through social media and other methods of Marketing.

5. Long Term Support through Assistive Technology

- 5.1 The service is focussed on meeting a person's individual outcomes. To achieve this referrers no longer assess for specific equipment, instead they identify what outcomes a person is wanting to achieve i.e. reducing falls, keeping safe etc. By working together, NYCC assessment staff and NRS OTs and specialists are able to identify which piece of equipment or technology will best enable people to meet their outcomes and remain independent. NRS hold a catalogue of commonly used items but are able to special order more specialist items based on assessments. Where items such as this come into more general use they can be added to the catalogue.
- 5.2 As a service for people with assessed eligible needs, AT is very much focussed on augmenting existing care packages. Items such as fall detectors and epilepsy sensors give peace of mind to the person as well as friends and family and often allow a reduction in the need for direct care visits. In many cases people prefer this non-invasive approach, preferring a small piece of equipment to unnecessary visits from care workers who are 'just checking'.
- 5.3 People receiving ongoing care and support either through NYCC or a commissioned provider will have an annual review of the services they receive. This will include a review of their AT needs, assessing whether existing equipment still supports outcomes or if new or additional equipment is required due to a change in circumstances.

6. Case Study – Tim

- 6.1 Tim moved into The Cuttings, an Extra Care scheme in Harrogate earlier this year.
- 6.2 Tim likes to get out and about with his dog, Daisy, but he can be affected by short-term memory loss following a serious accident several years ago. This has caused him to be lost on a couple of occasions resulting in the police being called. To improve his confidence and independence, he now wears a GPS tracker on his wrist, which looks like a conventional watch.
- 6.3 The GPS tracker can be monitored by staff in The Cuttings, which means Tim and Daisy can be easily contacted when they are out, if need be. The tracker has a 'Geo Fence' which was agreed with Tim and will alert staff at The Cuttings if Tim and Daisy move beyond their usual routes. The two way communicator in the tracker means Tim and the staff at The Cuttings can easily communicate and can arrange to pick Tim up if he becomes lost or disoriented. This simple piece of AT has greatly restored Tim's confidence and his ability to go out walking, shopping and to the local pub to enjoy a quiz night with friends he has made.
- 6.4 This example highlights how the combination of a strong assessment by NYCC to understand what matters to a person – in this case the ability independently walk Daisy –

followed by the technical expertise of NRS has allowed an innovative approach that allows a person to maintain their independence and live the life they want to live.

- 6.5 Tim lives with the impact of an acquired brain injury, however this example could just as easily apply to people with other cognitive impairments such as dementia. Given the rising prevalence of dementia and the importance of delivering on the ambition of the North Yorkshire Dementia Strategy the AT service is focussed on supporting people and their carers.
- 6.6 AT can be particularly beneficial to people living with dementia and their carers - GPS trackers allow people the freedom to wander safely and offer peace of mind to carers and family who are able to unobtrusively ensure people are safe. Basic smart watches or phones with alerts and reminders can support people to comply with medication regimes and act as a prompt for daily tasks such as washing and dressing. More standard pieces of equipment such as fall detectors and smoke alarms linked either to a family member or response centre can offer safety and peace of mind.
- 6.7 Products such as property exit sensors are being used both out in the community and within our extra care housing schemes. These sensors are connected to a person front door and alert family, friends or staff, that a person has left their home. The person can be guided back safely or supported to go where they want to, but accompanied. Bed occupancy sensors are also regularly used, which alert family/staff if someone has left their bed and not returned. This could be due to a fall or confusion about the time – a time delay can be set on the equipment, to allow the person time to return to bed themselves, before someone responds, so it is less intrusive for the person.

7. Management of the Service

- 7.1 The Assistive Technology service is managed by the Housing Market Development Team (HMDT) as this team has a wider remit around Digital and online service development within HAS. Rebecca Dukes, HAS Housing Market Development Manager is the lead officer for the day to day operations of the contract.
- 7.2 HMDT work closely with Jon Tilley, Senior Occupational Therapist and operational staff to ensure that appropriate referrals are made and that equipment supplied to individuals supports the achievement of their desired outcomes.
- 7.3 Monthly service development meetings are held with NRS to ensure the contract is functioning effectively and meeting the needs of NYCC and individuals. These meetings allow individual instances to be discussed where a particular bespoke piece of equipment may be required but also wider strategic discussions around the direction of the contract such as how the digital telephony switchover can be handled. There is a strong working relationship between NRS and HMDT and where issues are more urgent these are raised and dealt with immediately. NRS have a dedicated contract manager who is in regular contact with the team, with national and strategic leads joining meetings and discussions as appropriate.
- 7.4 Throughout the contract so far NYCC officers have found NRS to be forward thinking and proactive in addressing issues as they arise, the partnership ethos of the contract is well understood in these meetings and this allows for open discussions and innovative thinking.

8. Evaluation

- 8.1 To enable close monitoring of the AT service, NRS provide NYCC with monthly Management Information reports through a secure portal. These reports contain valuable

information that has not previously been collected in this format, allowing an overview of all the different aspects of the service delivered by NRS. The data from the monitoring service also enables the monitoring of call types i.e. people who have fallen, frequent callers, emergency service response, types of equipment being used, numbers of referrals for reablement etc. Receiving this type of data means that for certain aspects of the service, such as frequent callers, we are able to be more proactive, feeding data back to Care and Support teams who can then work with people to ensure their care package and AT support is appropriate and investigating any other issues.

- 8.2 Following the initial transition and implementation phases, work has begun with NRS on a full Benefits Realisation process. This process will enable NRS to report back to NYCC as to where potential savings or efficiencies could be made around reducing or delaying the need for more formal care, which pieces of AT are most effective and any gaps in the existing offer. NRS will use data from North Yorkshire as well as their experience from working with other local authorities across the country. This information will inform future service development as well as care and support practice and decision making.

9. Future Development of Assistive Technology / Digital Transformation.

- 9.2 The current service is designed to encourage and facilitate innovation and person-centred solutions. The specification was specifically written so that a provider could demonstrate innovation through their assessments, giving the autonomy to consider equipment outside of the standard catalogue for people with more complex or specific needs.
- 9.3 The technology sector is moving very quickly and the contract allows NYCC to stay at the forefront of any change. This development is true of both traditional AT products and consumer technology. We have reached a stage where many people have more powerful technology in their own homes than we are able to provide. In these instances it is important to link in to what people already have wherever possible. Increased use of products such as Amazon Alexa and Google Home offers tremendous opportunities as evidenced by the ongoing work by Stronger Communities in Sleights.
- 9.4 All equipment supplied to NYCC clients from April 2020 onwards will be fully compliant with the digital telephony switchover, meaning that we are able to gradually transition to these new products rather than having to replace all existing equipment in one go.
- 9.5 In the coming years we are likely to see an increase in wearable tech with a range of sensors and alerts to monitor people's health and predict events such as falls and UTIs which can have a major detrimental effect on outcomes. Smart Home technology is advancing rapidly with automated heat, light and security features, the benefits of these products need to be assessed and understood to ensure positive outcomes and value for money but there is much potential.
- 9.6 HAS are aware of the need to balance the use of technology with human contact. Social Isolation and loneliness are key factors in health and wellbeing and we are well aware that it is neither possible nor desirable to replace all human interventions with AT. Assistive Technology acts as a bridge between traditional hands on care and self-care, allowing people to remain independent with a safety net if the worst should happen.
- 9.7 From a HAS perspective AT also allows us to focus our workforce in the places that they are most needed rather than using valuable time on tasks that can be completed in other ways. This may mean completing what have been traditionally face to face visits with AT reminders or video calls whilst always being cognisant of the need for human contact and interaction. Where an individual has a strong social circle we can consider using AT in this

way, in cases where the carer may be the only visitor a person receives then we must consider the impact of removing that interaction.

- 9.8 More complex pieces of bespoke AT are also becoming available. We are also in the process of working with NRS and Dementia Forward to trial Yorkie, our first Robot colleague. Yorkie is a PARO Seal, first developed in Japan around 15 years ago and successfully used to support people living with dementia and other conditions all over the world ever since.

- 9.9 Whilst he may look like child's toy, Yorkie is a highly complex piece of equipment. He has five kinds of sensors: touch, light, audio, temperature, and posture, which he uses to perceive people and the environment. With the light sensor, he can recognize light and dark, he feels being stroked by tactile sensor, or being held by the posture sensor. Yorkie can also recognize the direction of voice and words such as its name, greetings, and praise with its audio sensor.



- 9.10 More importantly Yorkie seems to have a great impact on people's outcomes, trials across the world have been found to reduce stress, stimulate interaction between people and carers, and has been shown to have a Psychological effect on people, improving their relaxation and motivation and reducing challenging behaviour.
- 9.11 Yorkie will be spending three months with Dementia Forward where he will work with a range of people and groups so we can evaluate his impact on wellbeing. In addition to Yorkie we have also acquired a number of robotic cats which will be spending time in a range of services across the county over the next few months working in a similar way to Yorkie.

10. Regional and Collaborative Working

- 10.1 NYCC are full members of the TSA (Technology enabled care Services Association) giving full access to a wide range of resources, information and access to both regional and national events. The TSA has some initial involvement in supporting NYCC to shape our service specification.
- 10.2 The TSA the professional body that determines quality standards by which all AT and telecare services must achieve. For the purpose of NYCC's contract, NRS have achieved the TSA accreditation as outlined by the TSA.
- 10.3 A representative from the AT group also regularly attends both local and national AT/TEC forums for service development purposes. Good practice ideas from these forums are fed back into the monthly meeting with NRS.

11. Summary

- 11.1 The current Assistive Technology contract with NRS is considered to be a highly effective, outcomes and partnership led approach to supporting people. By moving away from a focus on products and instead concentrating on the outcomes people want to achieve, HAS is able to most effectively utilise existing and emerging technologies. The partnership with NRS is highly beneficial and allows access to innovative products such as PARO as well as access to deep knowledge of effective products and practice. This approach will allow HAS

to stay up to date as technology changes over the life of the contract and the demands and expectations of people receiving our services increase.

12.0 Recommendations

12.1 The Care and Independence Overview and Scrutiny Committee is recommended to note the information in this report.

Mike Rudd

Head of Housing Market Development, Health and Adult Services

Email: michael.rudd@northyorks.gov.uk

County Hall
Northallerton

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Background Documents: None

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