

Social Telecoms compliment South Tyneside Homes' Decent Homes programme with digital inclusion, CCTV & telecare



Working in partnership with
South Tyneside Council

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Established in 2006, South Tyneside Homes is an arms length management organisation (ALMO) created by South Tyneside Council to manage, maintain and improve its council homes and estates. It is a non-profit-making company that is 100% owned by South Tyneside Council.

South Tyneside Homes manages approximately 19,000 homes and is working to improve council housing within the borough.

The Challenge

As part of the Decent Homes Standard for public housing, South Tyneside Council and South Tyneside Homes (STH) set their own standard for the programme of works - exceeding those set the Government in some areas.

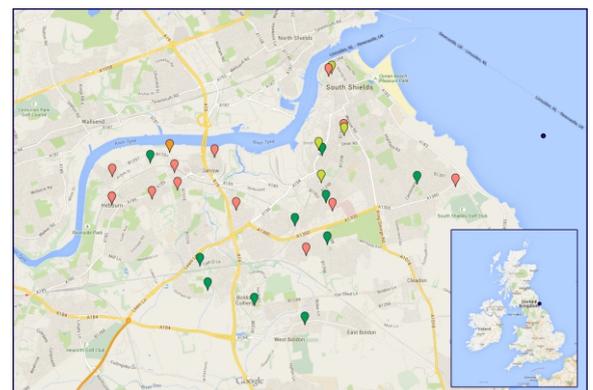
South Tyneside Homes, just like most social housing providers, recognised their residents were at a massive disadvantage financially and socially compared to the general population - around 70% of social housing tenants have no Internet access, compared to 27% of the population as a whole.

In sheltered and supported housing schemes, residents are less inclined to subscribe to broadband services and invest in the computer hardware to access it.

As part of the Decent Homes Standard and South Tyneside Standard programme to bring the quality of their Housing Plus accommodation up to and beyond the minimum level, STH implemented a programme of improvements to internals covering rewiring, heating systems, kitchens and bathrooms.

STH sought Social Telecoms as the No.1 ranked telecoms framework supplier to provide the following services as part of STH Standard programme to 26 Housing Plus locations across the borough:

- Wi-Fi to all Housing Plus apartments
- Communal access touchscreen KIOSK terminals with Smart Noticeboard functionality
- Communal access Windows PC's with all-in-one printers
- Replacement of Warden Call Telecare systems
- Installation of CCTV surveillance infrastructure



The Solution

Wi-Fi - Social Telecoms' Wi-Fi solution is a digital inclusion product that brings affordable, flexible internet access to residents of sheltered schemes, apartment blocks and estates.

Tenants are able to access the internet in the privacy of their own homes without being tied into a long term contract or paying for more than they need.

KiOSK Terminals - STH desired an electronic device with the capability to visually broadcast new and messages to their residents by onsite wardens and other senior staff in lieu of leaving handwritten messages on a notice board.

Social Telecoms' KiOSK terminal managed service provides this service with the ability to add, edit and remove messages and content via an online portal accessible from anywhere.

By using an online portal, Housing Plus officers and other senior staff can leave messages, notices and display information to their residents - and by being installed into high traffic areas of their Housing Plus schemes, they will be noticed.

Traditionally, it is common for noticeboards to be used, with hand-written notices on display. South Tyneside Homes have been provided a bright, colourful and visually stimulating device that they use to display:

- 1) the name & contact details of the on-site Housing Plus officer
- 2) the Housing Plus officer's hours on site
- 3) any off-site messages (i.e. back at 1 pm)
- 4) advertise events and occasions
- 5) a streaming national news ticker
- 6) a local 5 day weather forecast



The KiOSK terminal went beyond meeting STH's smart noticeboard requirement by providing an easy to use touchscreen Internet interface. The touchscreen is simple enough for anyone to use, even those who struggle with a keyboard and mouse. Computer novices can go straight to important services at a touch while more advanced users will appreciate the browsing feel of a tablet.

Designed specifically for Registered Providers, it is ideal for head office waiting areas, neighbourhood offices and other public and communal spaces. South Tyneside had their KiOSK terminals installed near to the front door of each of the 26 schemes included in the project. This allows them to be seen by most residents as they came and went from the building.

Warden Call Telecare - Partnered with Tunstall Healthcare, Social Telecoms provided an upgrade solution to STH's existing telecare overlay system to be able to handle both telecare and telehealth products.

Installed into each apartment and replacing the legacy units previously used, the new speech modules have been designed to be either landscape or portrait and can be flush mounted. These new devices have additional functionality such as an "away button" to simple identify the user has gone out and a "I'm OK" button which helps focus the calls made by scheme managers from on site or off site to the individuals who require that contact. The system allows for the answering of external alarm calls from other schemes with resident information spoken to the answering Housing Plus officer so they handle the call proficiently and without the need to be in a fixed location. The operation can significantly increase efficiency by allowing one scheme manager to handle calls from multiple schemes.

Each Housing Plus officer has been provided a portable tablet showing Tunstall's Housing Service's Portal (HSP). This system has the ability to display the status of each resident, assisting with the "call around" usually made by a scheme manger. The HSP offers a pictorial display which shows whether the end user is OK, away or requires to be contacted. This can be accessed remotely and therefore the scheme call around could be carried out from a central location. All scheme information is recorded on the HSP and this will allow a full history of the calls to be viewed and reported on.

Door entry panels - The new door panels are Fully DDA compliant and have A,B and C along with numbers to assist in reflecting actual flat numbers. They also have a camera mounted in the door panel which will present a video picture to the resident's own, apartment based television. A fob reader is also present which is integral to the system and therefore can be configured in line with the warden call system.

Providing a functionality boost as well as increasing longevity and reducing costs, the door entry system was integrated with the warden call system. This allowed for the remote control of door entry fobs and trades access via a PC.

CCTV - Social Telecoms installed **fully managed and maintained CCTV surveillance systems** into all 26 sites of the project. Whereas previously each location had three to four analogue video cameras covering entrances and key areas, with recording via an onsite Digital Video Recorder installed into the office, we installed scalable, high security IP video cameras with high definition video viewable from a secured portal anywhere in the world.

It's central management interface enables the efficient administration of an entire surveillance installation including all connected cameras and security devices, regardless of its size or if it is distributed across multiple geographic locations.

If an incident occurs, efficient video search tools enable users to easily find relevant video clips and export evidence. Users can view live footage, search recorded video and export video clips using any of three interfaces:

1) Smart Client - access via the on site CCTV server

2) Web Client - via a browser on a PC, laptop or tablet with internet access

3) Mobile - using an easy to use App, footage can be viewed on the move from an Apple or Android device anywhere in the world.

The Benefits

The provision of these products and services to South Tyneside Homes have enhanced the safety and social well-being of their residents.

South Tyneside Homes have equipped their residents - many of whom were digitally excluded, with the means to access crucial online information and basic services through easy to use and well supported technologies.

The Wi-Fi is provided to residents and their visitors free of charge and is widespread throughout the Housing Plus locations.

The project has demonstrated significant benefits in using telecare solutions to help manage the falls in high risk residents. When used in conjunction with training for care home staff and with input from other key stakeholders, telecare can radically improve outcomes and quality of life for residents.

All aspects of this project is accompanied by online portals and accessible by South Tyneside Homes' and Social Telecoms' staff from any location. The flexibility of these enables for increased efficiencies & functionality and lower maintenance costs.