

Telecare Revolution

We are at the beginning of a revolution in providing care services. Driven by the growing demands from our ageing population and the spiralling costs of care in hospitals and care homes, technology is being developed to enable people to be cared for in the comfort of their own homes.

The aim is to improve care services while reducing, or at least containing, the cost of providing them. We need to:

- *reduce A & E admissions,*
- *reduce the need for transfer to care homes for those with long term conditions,*
- *enable recuperation at home earlier,*
- *provide mental health care, and*
- *support friends and family as voluntary carers.*

We need to span social and health care, and involve a wide variety of government, voluntary and commercial organisations to provide the full range of care services across a wide and diverse geographical landscape.

This is not straight forward as we need a combination of technologies. Old panic buttons can go so far but to meet all sorts of conditions for the person and their home a wider range of interactive and automatic monitoring devices is needed. Visual communications between the user and carer are required. New information processing techniques are necessary to provide real time analysis of changing lifestyle conditions to prevent serious incidents occurring.

Telecare systems need to span organisational boundaries with privacy, security and confidentiality preserved for all parties. All this including social and health care records have to be integrated and delivered on a highly personalised basis and a scale never previously achieved.

iTelecare brings together the partners that provide the 'best of breed' products and services, with the skills to understand the processes, information and management requirements, to design and build large scale working solutions, and to work with care organisations to help deliver cost effective high quality services to their clients.

Users will benefit from the opportunity to remain in the comfort of their own homes, with the ready facility to have "teleconversations" with carers, friends and family via the simplicity of a TV, which is therapeutic in itself. They and their family can be assured that if anything goes wrong their care service will be immediately alerted to provide whatever help is needed.

Care providers benefit from:

- *improved care decisions from greatly enhanced client communication,*
- *improved administration (as alerts arrive with patient records), and*
- *reduced travel time and costs of carers visiting clients for minor issues.*

Reducing the need for full time carers or to move people to residential care will reduce budget pressures. There are reports of these expensive needs being halved with people being able to live in their own homes three years longer than might otherwise be necessary.

Social care practitioners, GPs and clinicians will be able to provide a more personal service, to more clients, more effectively. Emergency services will be better prepared with visual and audio communications with the client before arrival.

Modern telecare operations will benefit clients, their carers, family, friends and our caring organisations' budgets.