

Investing in sheltered housing for a digital future

The challenge

Communication and alarm systems in sheltered housing schemes must be periodically replaced in order to ensure their reliability in what can be life critical situations. As digital technology continues to advance and improve most areas of our lives, how can sheltered housing providers upgrade schemes to ensure they offer resilient, flexible support today, and the capability to evolve into the future?

What we did

Loreburn Housing Association is a registered charity and social landlord established in 1982. It owns and manages over 2,500 properties across Dumfries and Galloway, offering a wide variety of accommodation to suit a range of needs.

In 2017 it was identified that seven Loreburn Housing Association schemes throughout Dumfries and Galloway had alarm systems that were nearing the end of their life, so the organisation began to evaluate the options for their replacement. Loreburn's strategy includes a focus on using technology to innovate and improve services,

and so it sought a digital solution that would enable rapid and robust communication and also be able to adapt to advances in technology throughout its life.

Tunstall's Communicall Vi IP was chosen, giving customers the ability to quickly summon help in an emergency, and feel secure in their homes with video door entry. In addition, the new system includes a touchscreen phone which enables customers to connect not just with staff, but also each other and their friends and family. The upgrade also ensures schemes have WiFi, to support the growing number of customers going online, and enables the use of telecare sensors, such as fall detectors, to support customers with assessed needs.

“ Loreburn is dedicated to creating great places to live, and to helping our customers to live independently and safely in their own homes for longer. We are continuously striving to improve our services, and technology plays a key role in this. We want to provide the best support we can today, but also make sure our investment provides us with a platform for the future.

Moira Charters, Head of Partnerships and New Initiatives, Loreburn Housing Association



Results

Loreburn Housing Association is the first Registered Social Landlord in Scotland to install Communicall Vi IP, demonstrating its commitment to providing its customers with the most advanced and best value solutions possible. Each dwelling has a digital touchscreen phone, which enables rapid alarm reporting, video door entry, free onsite video and telephone calls and the capability for the system to evolve over time to support new technologies such as apps.

The system provides a platform for the use of telecare sensors, enabling customers to be supported in their homes as their needs change. Customers are assessed, and will be offered telecare if appropriate. Sensors include pendants, which can be worn on the wrist or around the neck and enable the user to call for help from anywhere in the scheme, and various other devices such as bed occupancy sensors and property exit sensors, all of which wirelessly raise an alert with care staff or the monitoring centre. This includes smoke detectors, which ensures there is always a rapid response to emergency situations, protecting people and property.

Loreburn's aim is to provide free WiFi at all of its schemes, and sheltered developments are the first to benefit. The number of people living in schemes using tablets, smart phones and computers is increasing, and providing WiFi is one way for Loreburn to enable social/digital inclusion and ensure schemes will be fit for purpose in the future.

The schemes are also benefitting from other cutting-edge technology. The ARMED (Advanced Risk Modelling for Early Detection), solution by CM2000 combines data collected from a smart waterproof wristband with predictive analytics modelling to monitor the wearer's vital health signs and predict the potential risk of falling.



Gifhorn House, the first Loreburn Housing Association development to benefit from Communicall Vi IP

“ This investment will change the lives of more than 200 older people, helping them to feel safe and secure, and more independent. It will also enable them to connect with their friends and family, and participate in an increasingly digital world.

**Amanda Yellowley, Operations Director,
Loreburn Housing Association**