# learn
## from others

**Birmingham City Council – Adults and Communities**

# Mutual benefits between Rehabilitation Engineers and Telecare Services

This project aimed to bring a new approach to improve the mixture of skills in telecare services. It aimed to build on the success of earlier Assistive Technology (AT) work focused on rehabilitation engineering that had been undertaken.

## Background

The Adults and Communities team within Birmingham City Council provide social care services that help adults in Birmingham to live as independently as possible and be part of their local community.

Responding to changing care needs, the Birmingham Telecare Service is being designed to be the largest of its kind in the UK.  This project focuses on workforce development in Telecare Services, specifically role development in Rehabilitation Engineers (REs).  These work in NHS assistive technology services such as wheelchair services, and communication aids services.

Traditionally, there has been very limited involvement of RE's in Telecare Services. It is suspected that very few if any services really utilise REs. The aim was to ascertain whether there could be and what improvements this profession could make to Telecare Service delivery and also

highlighting any potential for scalability. REs have a range of competencies based on engineering principles overlaid with clinical skills to assess, prescribe and fit technology solutions for clients.  Birmingham City Council wanted to help REs to develop wider equipment management expertise and effective matching of resources with a client's current or future needs, referral processes for more specialised services.

## What we wanted to achieve

The project aimed to produce a report to identify recommendations and guidance to improve telecare service delivery.

The learning would be shared between Telecare Services and RE Services in the hope that further closer collaboration be achieved to enhance the person-centred approaches that focus on dignity and respect.

> "Those of us working in Telecare Services need to embrace further integration and service improvement by seeking expert support from complementary services such as Rehabilitation Engineering"
>
> Chris Brothwood,
> Business Relationship Manager, Joint Commissioning Team Adults and Communities, Birmingham City Council

The project would consider the appropriate skill mix within RE taking account of defined roles at assistant, associate and practitioner levels.

## What we did

Following selection of an appropriate individual, a RE was placed with the Birmingham Telecare Service for one month to get to know the service first hand, spending time in all aspects of service provision and will reported back on observations of the service based on a competence framework. The RE was additionally supported in their learning by the Telecare Manager.

Opportunities for RE service input were then identified and this lead to the development of an agreed action plan. The action plan was then implemented and evaluated, a process that involved the wider participation of the West Midlands Rehabilitation Centre.

The learning from this process lead to the development of a report to enable future telecare models to adopt a model of RE which is transferable and sustainable across AT services.

## What we achieved

An internal report outlined potential business benefits that in the long term will improve the quality of the service which included some local training for all staff involved with the Telecare Service. The public report showed how the competencies of REs can be applied across Telecare Services to improve person centred care in these services

This project successfully improved the delivery of the Birmingham Telecare Service and the organisation identified the benefits of providing placements for students REs were realised.

RE professionals are able to add value to Telecare services in UK by providing a broad range of knowledge, skills, understanding and proficiency.

## What we learnt

In terms of delivery, the project group included a number of senior personnel, who had all got many additional responsibilities and pressures, and may have underestimated the amount of work and discussion needed to come to a consensus on aspects of the project. This was overcome by good partnership working and open and honest dialogue.

The results show that RE professionals can positively benefit Telecare services. Though not its original purpose, the project has also acted as a quality audit of the service currently supplied in Birmingham.

The internal report produced clearly demonstrated that apart from the original aims, there were some further business benefits from some inadvertent quality checks that will lead to some quality improvements in the long term which include improvement in local training for all staff involved with the Telecare Service.

Additionally, this project has identified that there is a large potential for research and development to be conducted in house, whether simply for service development and improvement or for device adoption and development.

“ Working in Birmingham Telecare Service has opened my eyes to the benefit and impact that could be realised by REs working in these services ”

Kate Jones, Rehabilitation Engineer Rehabilitation Engineering Unit, Rookwood Hospital, Cardiff & Vale University Health Board

## For more information please contact

Chris Brothwood,
Business Relationship Manager, Joint Commissioning Team Adults and Communities,
Birmingham City Council
chris.brothwood@birmingham.gov.uk

## Skills for Care Recommends

Safeguarding is important for all of those working in adult social care. From inducting new colleagues to their longer-term development, Skills for Care resources can help

### Assisted Living Technologies Learning and Development Framework

Learning technologies in social care: a guide for employers

May 2013

" we identify new and innovative ways of working "

skillsforcare

This aims to support staff development, by focusing on tasks related to roles and the associated specific knowledge and skills needed to supply an effective assisted living service.

www.skillsforcare.org.uk/
publications

### Commissioning Assistive Technology (CAT): guidance and tools for commissioners

Skills for Care has produced three resources to support people who have responsibility for commissioning assisted living technology (ALT) and assisted living services (ALS).

http://cat.skillsforcare.org.uk/

@skillsforcare

www.facebook.com/skillsforcare

www.youtube.com/skillsforcare

www.linkedin.com/company/skills-for-care

Skills for Care
West Gate
6 Grace Street
Leeds
LS1 2RP
telephone 0113 245 1716
email info@skillsforcare.org.uk
web www.skillsforcare.org.uk

skillsforcare