

Connecting Neighbourhoods

Service Redesign incorporating TECS – A Case Study

Community Lifestyles Perspective

Introduction

Technology Enabled Care and Support (TECS) assessments have been taking place through the Connecting Neighbourhoods Project - which has been operating in the South and North East localities since late 2018 - with the aim of assessing the potential of TECS to replace or enhance existing support provision.

The specific risk assessment process meetings are led by the identified TECS provider (**SOL Connect**) and are carried out in conjunction with the care manager's Support Needs Assessment for the client.

This case study is taken from the Connecting Neighbourhoods Project and describes the assessment and TECS trial processes involved in what was a successful implementation of TECS to replace an existing and longstanding overnight support package. The importance of the partnership approach required to successfully implement TECS is demonstrated through the case summaries provided by social work, the existing care provider (**Community Lifestyles**), the TECS provider (**SOL Connect**) and advocacy services (**The Advocacy Project**).

Case Background

Both supported individuals had lived in a secure residential setting for most of their lives. Following multi-disciplinary assessment, Community Lifestyles was identified as the preferred support provider to support with their transfer into the community in 2006. There was extensive planning with the aim for both men to move to a property in North East Glasgow. They were to be provided with a 24/7, male only support Team.

We worked with the men to give them quality support and encourage inclusion, and to start their lives the way they wanted, but in a safe manner for all.

We were able to support both men to gain placements at a work placement and this was the beginning of their journey into settling into their local Community. One of the men has a part time job which has only enhanced his independence.

Over the years both men have gained in confidence and began to voice the wish for time unsupported. This began very slowly, with both men having time to go to the local shop on their own. This was developed further with them going for the bus to their work placement independently. This was such a success that it encouraged them, and their support team, to look at further reductions in support.

Transition Planning for removal of sleepover provision

At around this same time the Connecting Neighbourhoods Project was looking at how TECS could be used to enhance existing support arrangements for individuals. Community Lifestyles suggested that both men could be considered for this. As a manager, I was closely involved in taking this forward. This included a period of monitoring their overnight activity through 'Just Checking' and working with the TECS provider, SOL Connect, so I knew what would be expected, and in turn I was able to inform the support team and, essentially, both men.

Discussions and meetings took place with the MDT. It was agreed to try 'Just Checking' to see what movement there was during night-time hours. This confirmed that there was very little movement from either.

The next stage was to get the men used to, what we have named, the Green button, and to also having technology in the house. As manager it was my role to get the existing support team on board, as this was going to be a significant change for all involved.

I met with SOL, Social Work and Health to prepare and agree the Risk Assessments and to determine what equipment would be needed to keep everyone safe.

On speaking to the two men, a couple of their fears were:

- Someone coming to their door during night hours with no support staff being there
- Falling out with each other

On discussing with SOL, we were able to have these fears allayed with the proposed equipment in-situ.

The transition was going to have to be at the pace of both men and not rushed. As a team, we know the men really well and it was left to us to determine, with them, each step. Both men met the tech guys who were installing the equipment, who at this point started to make them feel at ease with the equipment.

It was agreed that each day the men would hit the Green button and speak to the call responder to get them used to all their faces. This was a success as they used this system to tell them about their day. This filled them with confidence, and they began to get used to this new approach.

After five weeks it went to alternate nights where their support worker would leave both men on their own in the house for a couple of hours. This was a mixture of no sleepovers in the house and free time the other nights and the blended approach worked extremely well. We were able to increase the length of time and frequency when the men were alone in their home. Again, this was done at their pace.

We then agreed that the first night without the worker being there overnight for the full night would happen. The first overnight was an anxious time, but, as a support team, we all wanted to make it work for them. The first night went really well and it was agreed we would do it again a couple of nights later. Slowly, we increased the nights each week and finally had two weeks where no sleepover staff were present, to gauge how it went before calling a halt to sleepovers.

Key Factors for Success: What worked

- Involving the two supported individuals from the start and throughout the planning, assessment and transition process
- Going at their pace
- Giving them time to get used to the equipment and to build up a relationship with the call responders
- Celebrating their successes
- Involving the support team from the start and throughout the transition; one of the workers has been with the men since their first day back in the community and another member of the team has been with them for 8 years, and they so wanted it to work for them
- Working with SOL openly and building up a positive working relationship, SOL have been instrumental in making this work alongside ourselves

What did not work

- There were no barriers to implementation. The planning, risk assessments and belief in both men and their support team and their suggestions regarding the timeframe, worked positively for the two men

TECS in operation

An example of how well the equipment and TEC is working for the men:

The support worker had just left on a Saturday evening when there was a knock on the door (this was one of their fears). One of the men answered the buzzer by saying he could not answer the door and at this point SOL kicked in. It was a plumber from the Council to fix their toilet. He was able to show SOL his ID and both men were asked if they felt safe letting him in. They were fine with this as SOL was linked in with them the whole time and the work was completed. This was a massive step forward for the two men.

Comments: Service Users feedback to the staff team

- “Today is the start of my new life”
- “It’s lovely being on my own”
- “It’s lovely having lovely people to talk to when I hit the green button”.
- “I feel my home is mine”
- “Thank you for believing in me”

Six months ago, both men were not getting on well together, and wanted separate houses and separate support. Today, they are friends and are getting on great.