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TeleCare helping Newham residents stay independent, longer

Newham Whole System Demonstrator (WSD) is playing a crucial role in examining and evaluating alternative ways of managing long-term health conditions by helping people manage their own health, within their own homes, using TeleCare and TeleHealth technology.

TeleCare uses a combination of alarms, sensors and other equipment to help people live independently by monitoring activity changes over time and by raising a call for help in emergency situations, such as a fall, fire or flood.

Local TeleCare user and ex-nurse Jill Powell, 77, is registered blind and has a frail physique from Childhood polio. As a result, Jill is prone to falls. Although she has a carer who visits once a week to help with household chores, a concern for her is having a fall when no one is around.

Jill has had TeleCare equipment in her home since December 2008. She has a pendant that she can press in an emergency, a heat detector installed in the kitchen and a flood detector to warn of any water leaking. After a fall in the bath, she now also has a radio pull cord installed in her bathroom.

“I’ve got faith in it...Now I can have a bath on my own. I do feel safer”, she said.

“Because of my nursing experience... I was thrilled that these things were being developed to help protect vulnerable people and help them maintain their dignity so they feel capable of carrying on themselves. I never dreamed then that I would benefit from it myself!” said Jill.

Though TeleCare technology has been accessible in the Borough prior to the WSD Trial, never before in the UK has there been an evaluation in to what extent the combination of technology and social care can help people manage their own health while maintaining their independence. The Trial will also provide an evidence base for more clinically cost effective ways of managing long term conditions.

“When my sight deteriorated over the last six months I had TeleCare installed. A weight was lifted off my shoulders because it helped me to stay at home on my own and be by myself,” Jill added.

The overall aim of the WSD Trial is to not only help the Newham population live more independently for longer, but just as importantly to help reduce: emergency hospital admissions; accident and emergency attendances and the numbers admitted to care and nursing homes. Home monitoring systems for self-managed care are already proving beneficial for users and are also helping to relieve a lot of the pressures facing carers.

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To find out more about the WSD trial visit www.NewhamWSDTrial.org

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