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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 using TeleCare 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 Ruby Forde-Alexander, 74, had a stroke at home in December 2008. This affected the right side of her brain, which in turn affected her mobility, resulting in her needing additional carer support around the home. The hospital was willing to discharge Ruby into her own care six weeks after her stroke because she had been placed on the TeleCare trial.

Ruby now has a variety of different TeleCare alarms and sensors fitted in her home, such as: sensors to remind her to turn off the water and the lights if they are left on; a flood detector in the kitchen and bathroom; heat detector in the kitchen; radio pull cord in the bathroom; a medication dispenser, a carbon monoxide detector and an alarm pendant she wears around her wrist.”

“TeleCare has made such a difference to me”, she said. “I used to leave the water and lights on and the windows open, sometimes I would even leave the cooker on. My food used to burn because I would forget about it. But now before I go to bed it reminds me to turn all of these things off.”

On one occasion when Ruby first had TeleCare installed, she forgot to take her medicine and the medication dispenser alarm was triggered.

“I forgot to take my medicine because my sister was visiting from America, and the medicine dispenser started beeping. I was thinking to myself ‘What is going on?’ and then I heard my phone ringing and I knew it was the TeleCare team. They asked me if I’d taken my tablets and advised me to take them right away.”

The overall aim of the WSD is not only to 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.

<More>

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

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