

How Canary Care can help with COVID-19

Canary Care is passive activity monitoring system which aims to support elderly and vulnerable people to live independently at home. Discreet sensors placed around the home monitor movement, door activity, temperature/light levels and visitors, providing insight into so-called “activities of daily living” e.g. eating/drinking, toileting, sleeping etc. This information is made available to formal and informal carers via web and mobile apps. Rules can be configured to trigger alerts if something out of the ordinary occurs.

Canary Care has been deployed by over 100 local authorities as well as NHS trusts, care and housing providers and individual families. The typical short-term use for Canary Care is adult social care assessment, where the data is used to evidence a care decision or right-size an existing care package. The system is used long-term by families, providing them with the reassurance and peace of mind they need to support loved ones to live independently.

The Canary Care system has a wide variety of use cases, some of which are particularly relevant during the current COVID-19 pandemic.

Hospital Discharge:

Discharges from hospital need to happen as swiftly and as safely as possible in order to free up valuable capacity for COVID-19 positive patients. Our Health and Social Care services are facing unprecedented demands and staff resourcing issues. As such, it is possible that discharge teams are taking risks they would normally be avoiding when selecting who should go home. Social workers on the ward are under extreme pressure to come up with care packages that are suitable and safe for their patients. Canary Care is often included in these packages since it provides a way to remotely monitor the reablement process and a passive emergency alert facility.

Canary Care delivers insights into how people are managing in their own homes. Are they active, going about their daily routine and becoming more independent as they recover from their hospital stay? Or are they developing symptoms and patterns of behaviour which might lead carers and family members to worry that something is wrong? Canary Care can provide objective evidence e.g. is the person too sedentary, are they using the kitchen and bathroom as expected, are they sleeping okay etc?

If there is a risk of falls or purposeful wandering, rules can be configured which will send email/SMS alerts to a “calling circle” which may include family or care practitioners in the community, social care alarm receiving centres and so on.

The patient’s family can be given access to the information and alerts, meaning they can take on some of the responsibility of checking on their loved ones, to monitor whether they’re coping with their daily routine.

Experience tells us that Canary Care works best for hospital discharge when used for the combination of remote reablement in the home as well as emergency alerting. The alerting

element can be used on its own, but without some monitoring of the patient's progress, the likely result is just a quicker readmission.

Admission Avoidance:

Canary Care can help to spot the behaviours and activities which are indicative of deteriorating health conditions, and which have the potential to lead to unplanned care events. By deploying Canary Care with 'frequent flyers', early detection of these indicators can help to avoid/reduce hospital admissions and allows the service provider to focus resources on the people who need it most, during times of staff shortages.

For example, the house may be too cold (or too hot), activity levels could be increasing (due to anxiety) or decreasing (due to depression), the service user might not be taking their meds as expected, or going to the bathroom more than usual. If spotted early, a UTI can be treated with anti-biotics in order to avoid hospital admission during this crucial time. Something as simple as an untreated UTI could result in Sepsis which will take another Intensive Care bed.

Canary Care access can be given to the family who will know their loved one's routine well, allowing them to investigate any changes whilst minimising contact with community health care professionals.

Minimising unnecessary contact:

We are seeing significantly increased interest in Canary Care from customers seeking to protect their service provision from unprecedented staff absences and look after the vulnerable, whilst maintaining social distancing. Equally, now, more than ever, it is important for families to be able to see that their loved ones are coping and managing their COVID-19 isolation period safely.

The Canary Care remote monitoring system allows formal and informal carers to reduce unnecessary care visits, minimising contact with vulnerable people, thus protecting their safety and that of carers. This reduction in visits will also enable over-stretched teams to direct their attention to those who cannot cope without visits and extra care.