

Blackwood Overview:

Blackwood is a registered charity who provide high quality housing, care and support for disabled people of all ages. We have over 1700 homes across all 29 mainland local authorities in Scotland. We invest in innovation to develop engagement with people, to ensure a modern standard for accessible homes for people with disabilities, and to develop new technologies in care and support.

The Problem

Some Blackwood customers have access to our 24/7 responder service. This is a service allows customers to raise emergency alerts to our 24/7 team. We found that some customers struggle to use and converse with responder staff through current telecare services. For example if a customer has a fall and requires an immediate response they may not be able to move to physical make the call.

We also found that customers may use the alert service for non-emergencies. This can impact on the 24/7 service providing support to other customers who may require immediate help, and would use more staff time and resources. These situations can also have a financial, resource and staff cost to Blackwood and NHS/HSCP/Emergency services.

AIM:

We aimed to use test of change funding to:

- Purchase a telepresence robot
- 24/7 responder service test and provide feedback on the use of a telepresence robot for a customer alert scenario
- Reduce the time taken to resolve alarm/responder type calls
- Prevent unnecessary physical call outs and travel
- Reduce unnecessary/inappropriate use of NHS/emergency services
- Reshape the way resources are used

Outcomes

We achieved the following outcomes:

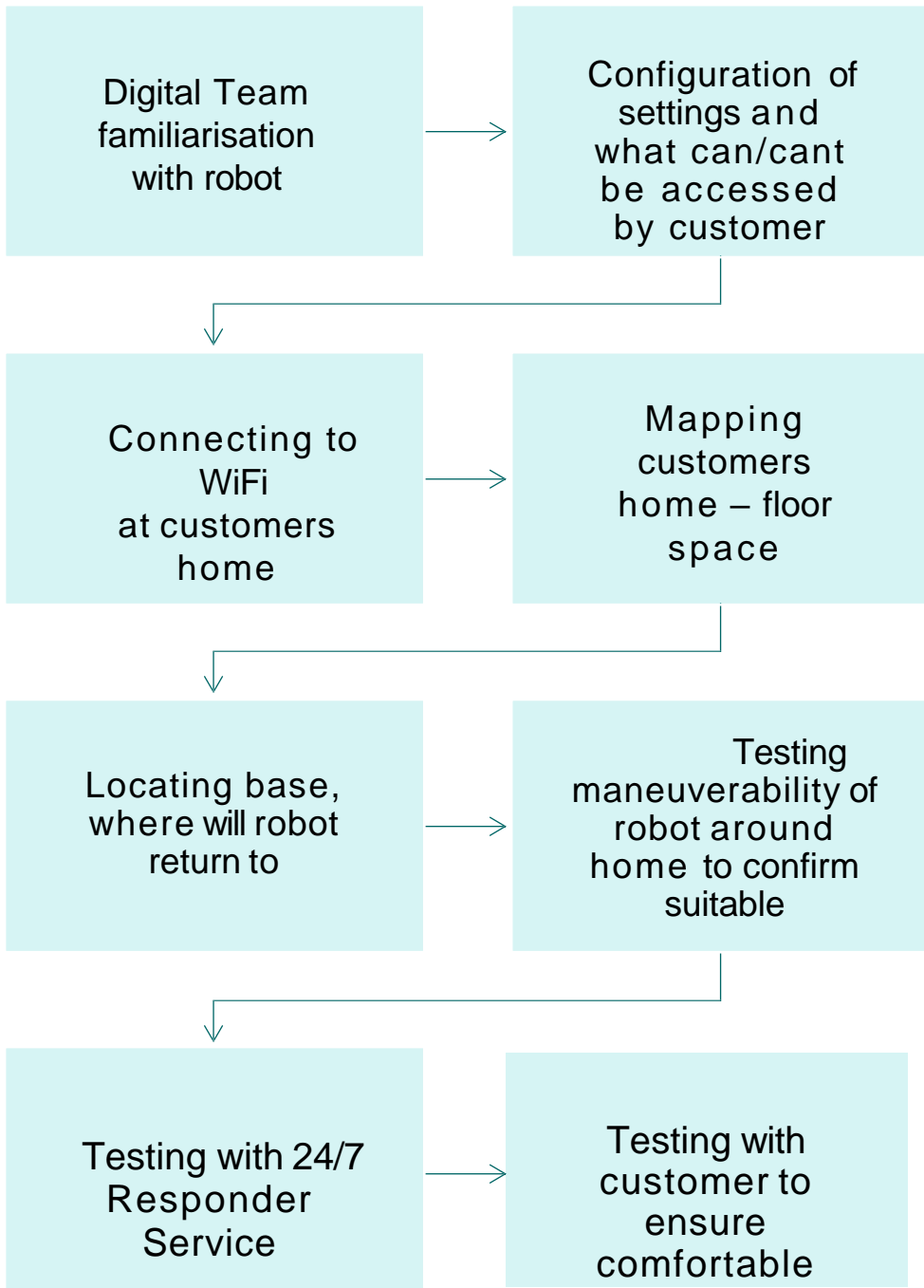
- Reduced travel as responders can triage situation remotely
- Environmental impact, reduced travel
- Better outcome for customers, more instant response
- Reduced calls to emergency services and ineffective use of resources
- Customer gets more instant service, resolution from staff familiar to them
- Customer was attended to instantly with our having to wait for responder to travel to her home
- Completely un reliant on customer actioning anything

Key Learning Points

We learned that the condition of the home was something very important in the use and trialling of the telepresence robot. We had not included this in the assessment process, and we learned it is important to assess the condition of the home and to discuss this with the customer about what was expected from them.

We observed a noticeable increase in confidence of the staff using the robot.

Technical set up and Process



Practicalities, Challenges & Engagement

Setting up Telepresence Robots

- When setting up the telepresence robots we had to do initial technical set up work, connect to local home WiFi, map the home environment, set the robot for use in the home and work with the 24/7 responder service to test and trial the robot.

Reluctance from staff and customers

- Clutter and some carpets were listed as problems by all interviewees as the robot would struggle to sense the home-base and manoeuvre round the home
- Some staff initially lacked confidence to use the robot.

Engagement (HSCP)

- We have engaged with the local HSCP who have been to site to see a demonstration of the robot being used in the service. They got to meet the customer, see the robot and hear positive feedback about the trial use.
- We engaged with further customers and identified more test users however there were practical issues with home environments that we have now identified and can assess and develop ways of working around these in future work and trials.

“ One customer has begun to use some additional functionality of the robot to support her daily living activities”

“The robot has a shelf on the back that she uses to carry and move stuff around her home, such as cups of coffee, plates of food, heavier objects like washing/laundry. She would have struggled to hold these items herself while propelling her wheelchair so the robot offers her a safer way to do this”