

# Enhancing Housing Management in 2020

Housing Benefit / Universal Credit,  
Technology, and more!

July 2020



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# Welcome!



# Housing Proactive

an Alertacall service

# Seminar sessions

- ▶ **The impact of Universal Credit on sheltered accommodation & enhanced housing management**

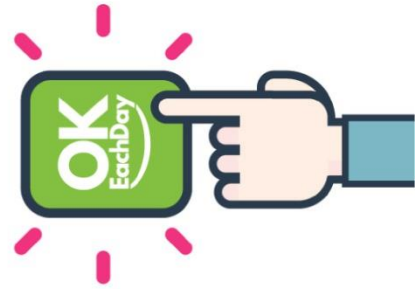
Danny Key, Consultant, Support Solutions

- ▶ **Overcoming the challenges of digital engagement**

Martin Cutbill, Director, Alertacall

- ▶ **The role of sensors in helping to comply with the Homes (Fitness for Human Habitation) Act**

Benjamin Lambert, Head of Client Relations, Alertacall





# The Impact of Universal Credit on Sheltered Accommodation & Enhanced Housing Management

Danny Key, Consultant  
Support Solutions

# What is 'Enhanced Housing Management'

- Ordinary housing management functions that take longer to carry out in supported or sheltered accommodation due to the nature of tenant group
- Ordinary housing management functions that are carried out more frequently and repetitively due to the nature of tenant group
- Additional housing management requirements required due to the nature of accommodation and/or tenant group that would not be required in general needs social/private rented housing
- Housing Proactive is a form of enhanced housing management



# Eligibility for Social Security benefits - Housing Benefit

- Enhanced Housing Management is eligible to be claimed under Housing Benefit as a service charge, or as part of rent.
- Housing Benefit (service charges)
  - Regulation 12(8) of HB Regulations 2006
  - Schedule 1, paragraph 1(g) – connected with the provision of adequate accommodation
- Case Law
  - Social Security Commissioners decision - CIS/1460/1995
  - Exempt accommodation Upper Tribunal cases that recognise enhanced housing management as an eligible cost to be met by Social Security
  - Recent First Tier Tribunal – specific to sheltered accommodation (Interesting!)

# Eligibility for Social Security benefits – Universal Credit

- Only applicable to claimants under state pension age (working age)
- Only applicable where the local authority has determined that the accommodation/tenancy does NOT meet the exempt accommodation qualifying criteria
- Universal Credit Service Charges
  - Defined in Schedule 1, paragraphs 7 & 8
  - Four Categories of eligible service charges:
    - Category A – Maintaining the General Standard of Accommodation
    - Category B – General upkeep of communal areas
    - Category C – Basic Communal Services
    - Category D – Accommodation specific charges

# Eligibility for Social Security benefits – Universal Credit

- Housing Proactive is eligible as a service charge for Universal Credit under Category C – Basic Communal Services
- Housing Proactive is also eligible as a service charge for Universal Credit under Category D – Accommodation Specific Charges
- N.B. A service charge that is generically named enhanced/intensive housing management within the breakdowns of charges will be determined as ineligible by the DWP –
  - Given that supported & sheltered accommodation would be exempt from Universal Credit and;
  - That there was a concern that intensive/enhanced housing management was abused by some supported housing providers following retrenchment of Supporting People funding
- Specific services can still be funded that are required as a result of requiring enhanced housing management – simply need to be referred to accordingly in line with Categories



# Universal Credit - Category C

- Category C – Basic Communal Services
  - Payments under Category C relate to the provision of basic services generally available to ALL persons living in the accommodation.
  - Housing Proactive is a basic service that is required in sheltered accommodation/older persons housing that replaces the needs for a warden/scheme manager being based at the accommodation. Housing Proactive must be provided to ALL persons living in this type of accommodation.
  - Regard must be had to the general Social Security principle established in case law



# Universal Credit - Category D

- Category D – Accommodation Specific Charges – Use of essential Items within the accommodation
  - The guidelines state that *Broad Descriptions* are used in this category
  - Housing Proactive is operated via a device, which is an appliance contained within the property and cannot be removed to deliver this housing management service. It is an essential item having regard to the nature of the accommodation, facilities provided and the tenant group
  - Regard must be had to the general Social Security principle established in case law

# Technical Assistance

Should you have any queries or require any type of advice or assistance with regard to Housing Benefit or Universal Credit, please contact Support Solutions UK

**Danny Key, Consultant**  
[danny@supportsolutions.co.uk](mailto:danny@supportsolutions.co.uk)





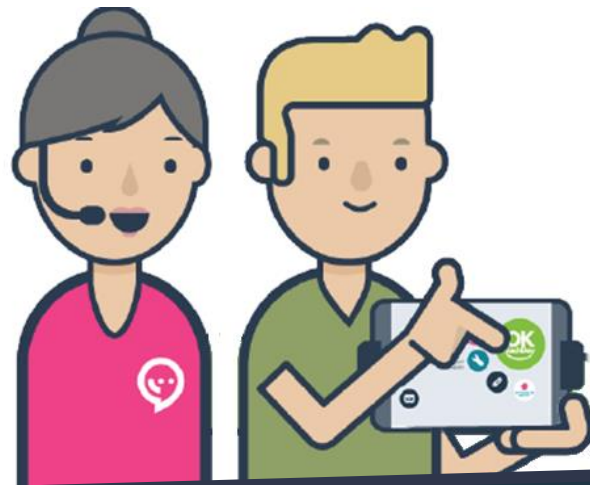
# Q&A

**Danny Key**  
**Consultant**

[danny@supportsolutions.co.uk](mailto:danny@supportsolutions.co.uk)

# Overcoming the challenges of digital engagement

**Martin Cutbill**  
Director, Alertacall



[www.alertacall.com](http://www.alertacall.com)

# The 8 Challenges of Digital Engagement

-  1. Ensuring residents have a suitable digital device
-  2. The lack of broadband or other internet access
-  3. The prohibitive cost of funding digital devices for residents
-  4. Not downloading/installing the application (or bookmarking the website)
-  5. Not accessing the application/website
-  6. Prompting is required to increase engagement
-  7. Digital engagement can risk increasing feelings of loneliness
-  8. The need for user friendly interfaces

# Approaches to digital engagement have a major impact on adoption levels – and resident satisfaction

No  
change

Adding  
channels

Nudge  
messaging

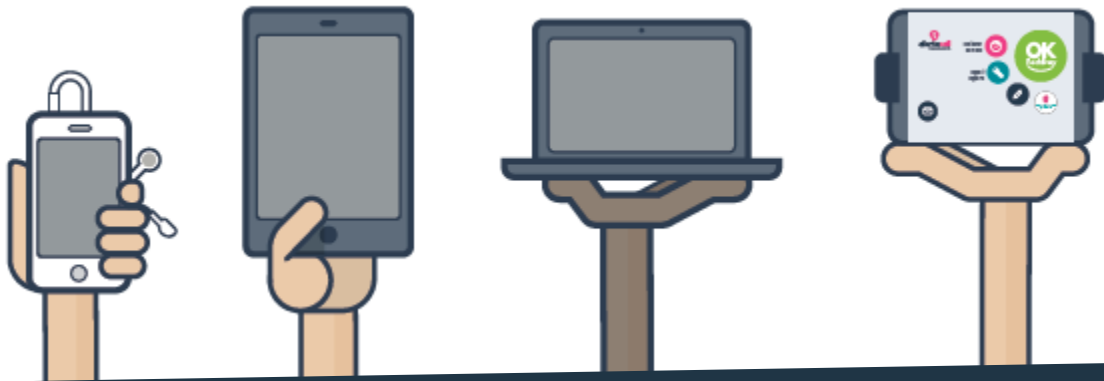
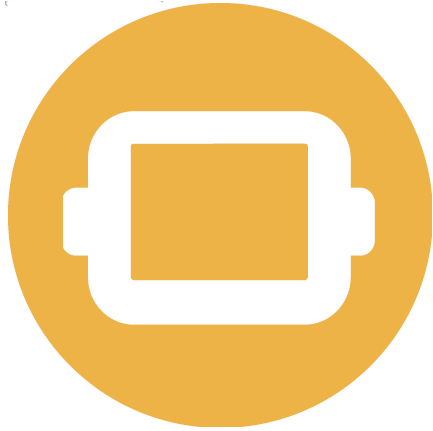
'Enforced  
migration'



Engagement lower  
Satisfaction unchanged

Engagement higher  
Satisfaction lower

# 1. Ensuring residents have a suitable digital device



# 2. The lack of broadband or other internet access



**POLL**

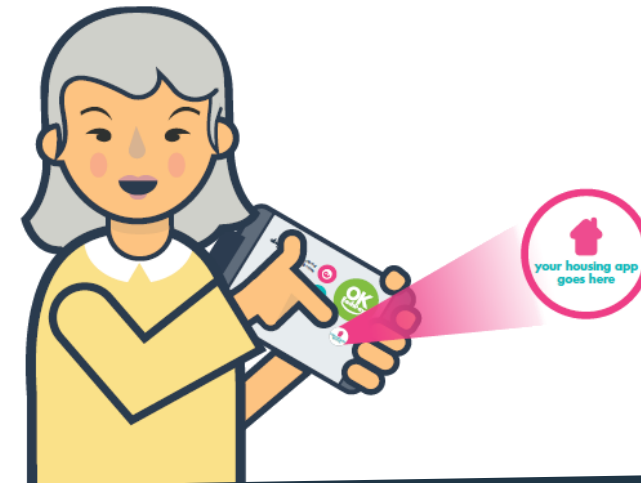




### 3. The prohibitive cost of funding a digital device



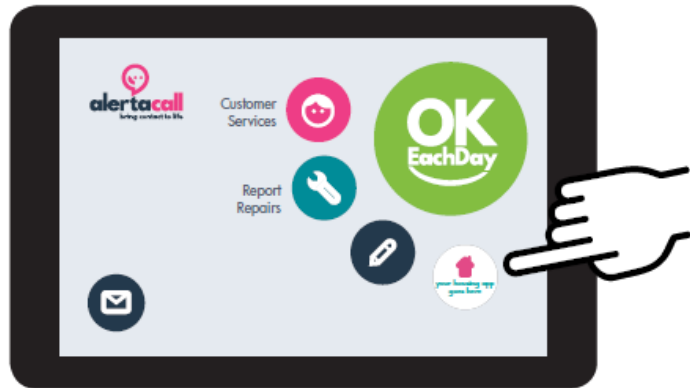
### 4. Not downloading/ installing the application



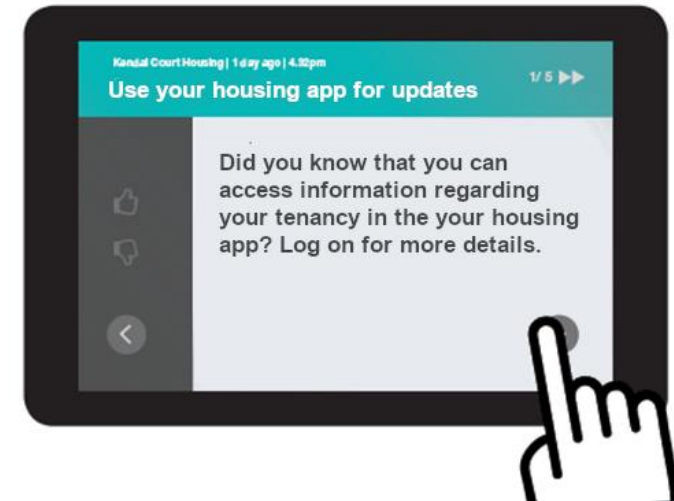
## 5. Not accessing the application/website



POLL



## 6. Prompting is required to increase engagement



## 7. Digital engagement can risk increasing feelings of loneliness



## 8. The need for user friendly interfaces



# How Housing Proactive overcomes the challenges of digital engagement



1. Device – a digital device is provided a part of the service



2. Connectivity – no WiFi required as an any network sim card included



3. Cost – no capital cost for the touchscreens



4. Downloading – your portal can be pre loaded



5. Accessing – app on homepage to say ‘top of mind’



6. Prompting – messaging (with links) to promote usage



7. Social isolation – call centre team for those wanting contact



8. User Friendly – 15 years experience in developing easy to use services

# Which of the 8 barriers to digital engagement concerns you the most?

-  1. Ensuring residents have a suitable digital device
-  2. The lack of broadband or other internet access
-  3. The prohibitive cost of funding digital devices for residents
-  4. Not downloading/installing the application (or bookmarking the website)
-  5. Not accessing the application/website
-  6. Prompting is required to increase engagement
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-  8. The need for user friendly interfaces

**POLL**

# Summary

- ▶ Increasing digital engagement offers huge benefits - when it works for all
- ▶ Digital inclusion goes well beyond simply having an app/portal:
  - Suitable devices
  - Connectivity/Accessibility
  - User friendliness
- ▶ Higher needs groups at risk of social isolation need an integrated solution which does not replace human contact
- ▶ Options, like Housing Proactive, exist today to fast track higher levels of engagement

# Q&A Session

# Alertacall Ideas Lab:

Successful strategies for improving digital engagement and resident communication during Covid-19

16 July 2020  
2.00-4.00pm



Chartered  
Institute of  
Housing

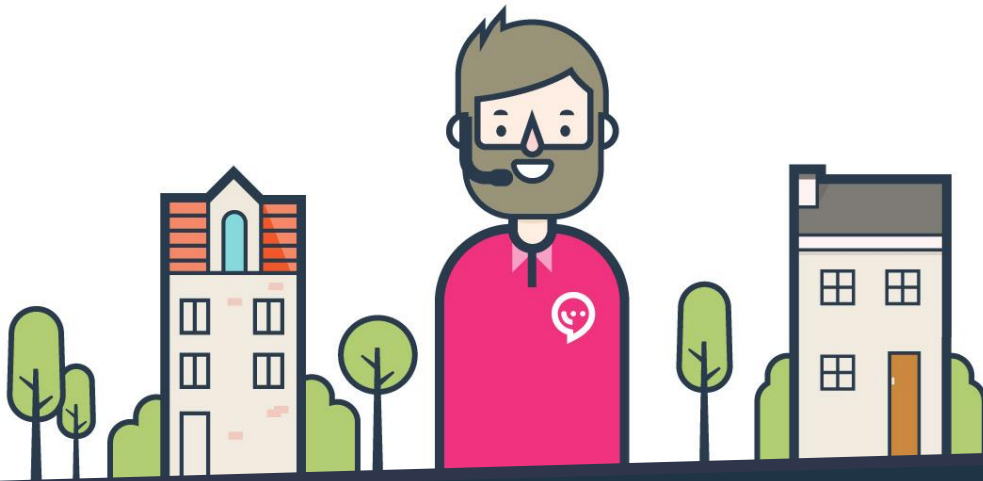


Online innovation



# The role of sensors in helping comply with the Homes (Fitness for Human Habitation) Act

**Benjamin Lambert**  
Head of Client Relations, Alertacall



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# The Homes (Fitness for Human Habitation) Act 2018

- ▶ **Legislation to ensure rented accommodation is “fit for human habitation”**
  - ▶ Safe, healthy & free from things that could cause harm
- ▶ **Guidance\* lists 29 potential problems that are the responsibility of the landlord – the top three are:**
  - ▶ Damp & mould growth
  - ▶ Excess Cold
  - ▶ Excess Heat



# The need for change...

**1 in 8**

No. social housing properties affected by damp<sup>1</sup>

**2.5 million+**

No. households experiencing fuel poverty<sup>2</sup>

**3,200**

No. annual deaths caused by fuel poverty<sup>3</sup>



## Did you know...

Half a million social housing properties in England alone failed to meet the required decent homes standards<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> CIT, 2018

<sup>2</sup> ONS, Dept BEIS 2018

<sup>3</sup> NEA/E3G, 2018

<sup>4</sup> English Housing Survey, 2017

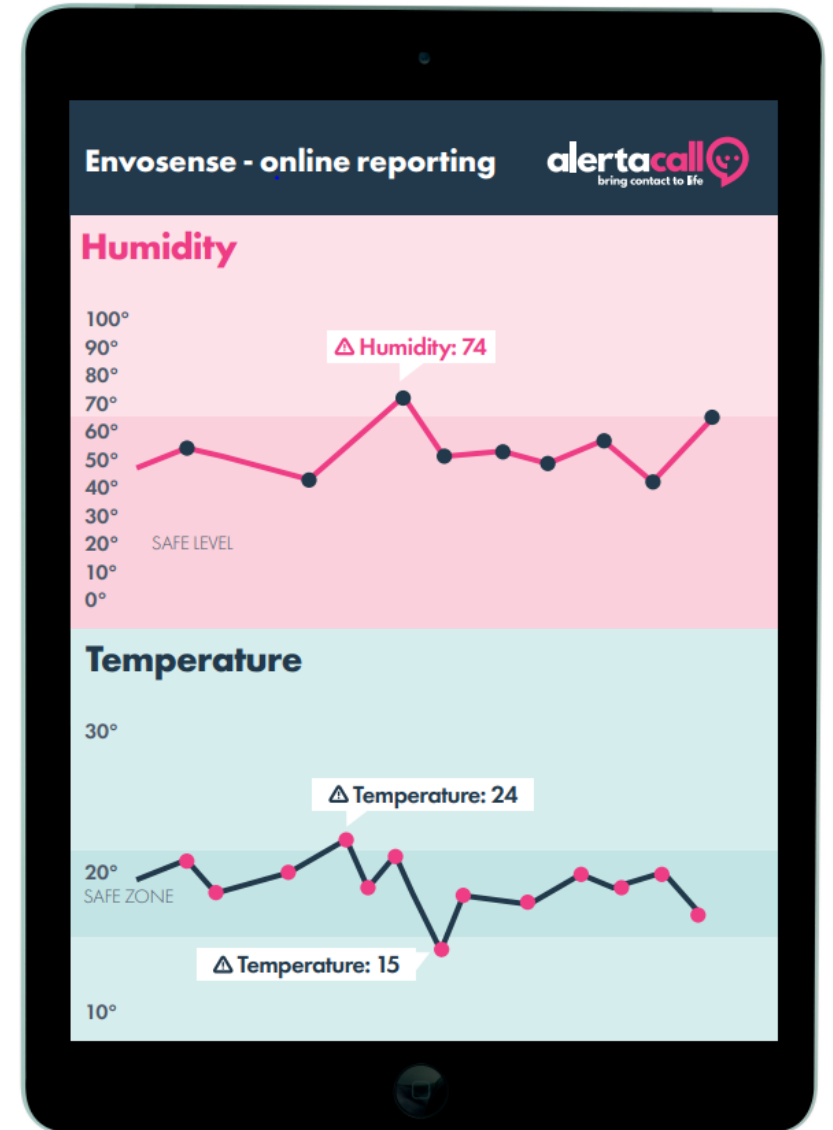
# Introducing Envosense (environmental sensor)

- ▶ Envosense monitors ambient temperature & humidity 24 hrs a day
- ▶ Small discreet device with 5+ years battery life
- ▶ No hard wiring or base station required
  - ▶ Just stick it to a wall!
- ▶ Readings recorded hourly & updated 4 times a day
- ▶ Reporting portal for housing officers
  - ▶ Optional intervention team to investigate abnormal readings



# Reporting

- ▶ Self-service portal for staff to monitor fluctuations or focus on specific properties
- ▶ Temperature checks
  - ▶ Excess cold
  - ▶ Excess heat
- ▶ Humidity checks
  - ▶ Precursor for damp > mould
- ▶ Can be integrated into Housing Proactive\* housing management system



\*Alertacall's housing management service that provide digitally enhanced daily contact [www.alertacall.com/services/housing](http://www.alertacall.com/services/housing)

# Benefits to housing providers

- ▶ Reduce repairs & maintenance costs, and workload for your own staff
- ▶ Independent assessment of damp claims
- ▶ Reduce compliance risk with the Homes Act 2018
- ▶ Proactively manage properties for higher needs residents
- ▶ Identify potential fuel poverty & fuel arrears, or possible health issues
- ▶ Service eligible for HB funding



# Q&A Session

# POLL RESULTS



# Thank you for joining us!



For any questions or follow up, please get in touch:

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