

Enhancing Housing Management

Utilising new digital technology and the funding options available

September 2020

SupportedHousing.Blog



New Thinking In Supported Housing



Welcome!

SupportedHousing.Blog

**Housing
Proactive**
an Alertacall service



New Thinking In
Supported Housing



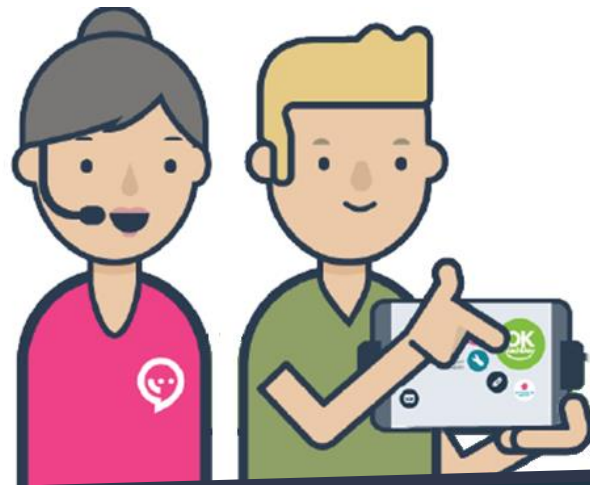
Seminar sessions

- ▶ **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**
Claire Palmer, Marketing Manager, Alertacall
- ▶ **Understanding Housing Benefit & Universal Credit eligibility for enhanced housing management systems**
Danny Key, Director, Support Solutions
- ▶ **Q&A Session**



Overcoming the challenges of digital engagement

Martin Cutbill
Director, Alertacall



www.alertacall.com

About Alertacall

- ▶ Founded in 2004
- ▶ Working with about 50 housing providers nationwide
- ▶ Providers of Housing Proactive which delivers enhanced housing management to higher needs groups
- ▶ Offices in Cumbria and Cheshire with teams all over the UK
- ▶ ISO 9001 & ISO 27001 accredited with an A1 Credit Rating
- ▶ Highly Commended for Innovation at National Business Awards

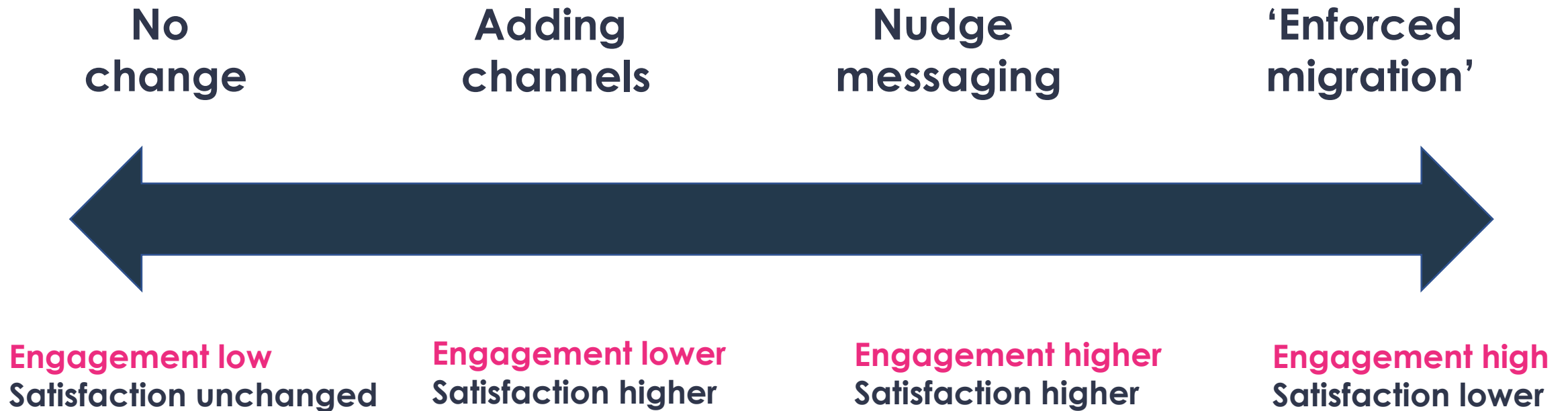
95%

of customers surveyed would recommend the service to a friend

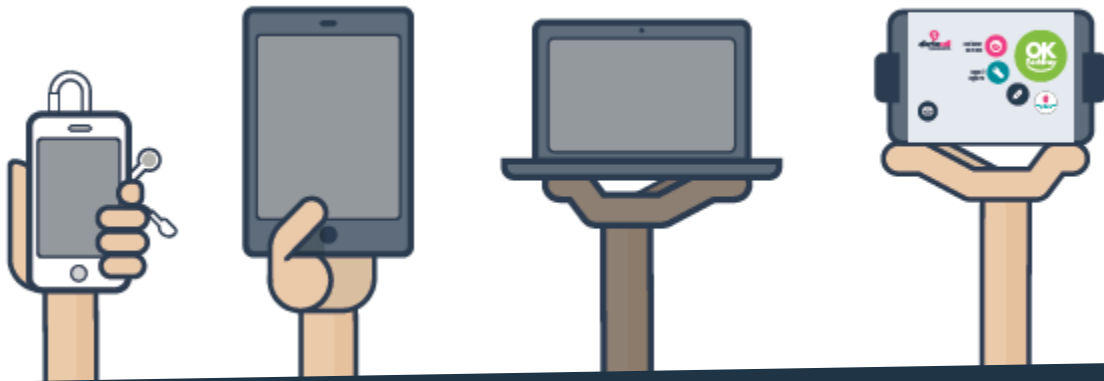
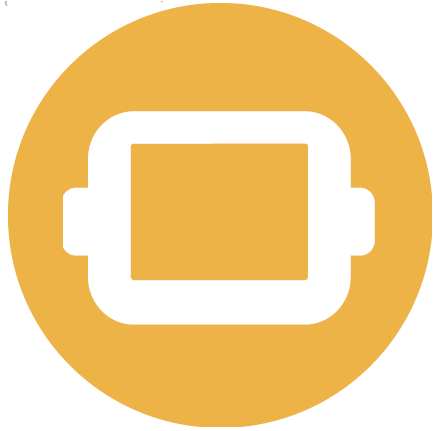
The 8 Challenges of Digital Engagement

-  **1. Device** - a digital device is provided as part of the service
-  **2. Connectivity** - no WiFi required as a network sim card is included
-  **3. Cost** - no capital cost for the touchscreens
-  **4. Downloading** - your portal can be pre-loaded
-  **5. Accessing** - app on homepage to stay 'top of mind'
-  **6. Prompting** - messages (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 service

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



1. Ensuring residents have a suitable digital device



2. The lack of broadband or other internet access



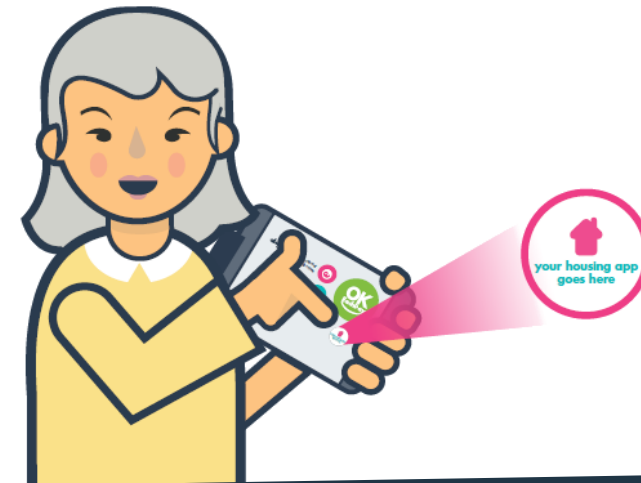
POLL



3. The prohibitive cost of funding a digital device



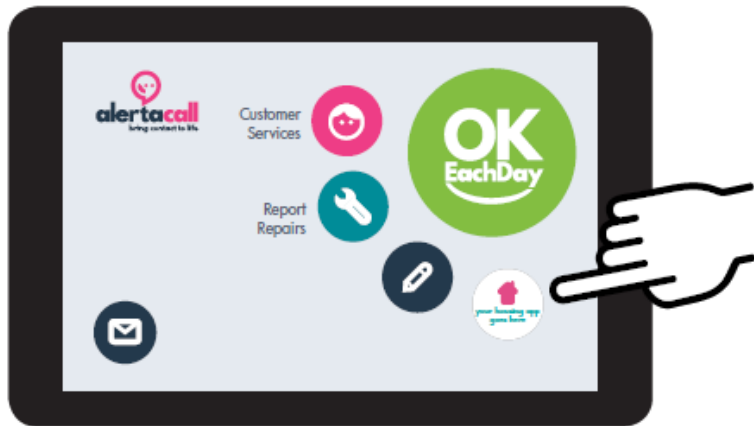
4. Not downloading / installing the app



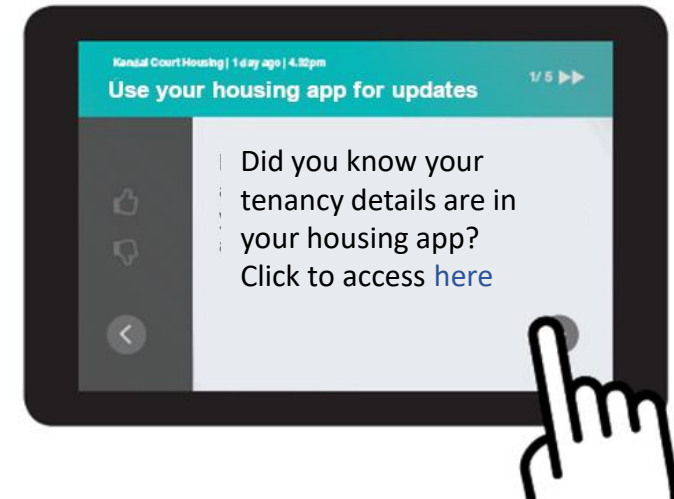
5. Not accessing the app /website



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 management needs to support the 'digital agenda'

- Increase self service management and be Digital Switchover ready
- Integrate digital engagement with human contact – reducing social isolation
- Specially trained contact centre teams in mental health issues, dementia, and suicide awareness
- Gain insights into the changing needs of residents and deliver greater efficiency for front line teams
- Fundable options mean zero costs to most or all existing residents and cost neutral for housing providers

“The installation of the system was very easy.

Kevin Brown,
Head of Housing,
Coastline



How Housing Proactive overcomes the challenges of digital engagement



1. **Device** - a digital device is provided as part of the service



2. **Connectivity** - no WiFi required as a network sim card is included



3. **Cost** - no capital cost for the touchscreens



4. **Downloading** - your portal can be pre-loaded



5. **Accessing** - app on homepage to stay 'top of mind'



6. **Prompting** - messages (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 service



Digital engagement: 8 challenges for social housing providers



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 app (or bookmarking the website)



5. Not accessing the app/website



6. Prompting is required to increase engagement



7. Digital engagement can risk increasing feelings of loneliness



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

Thank you for listening!



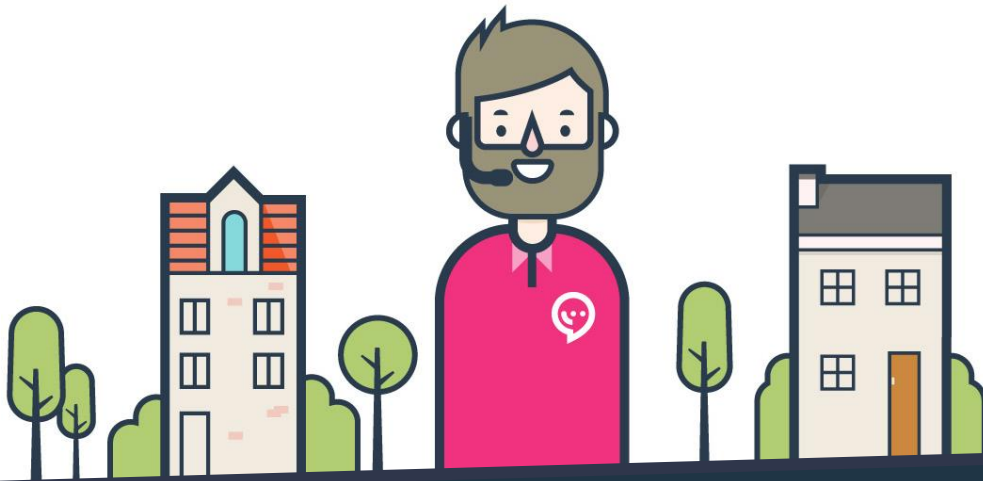
For any questions or follow up, please get in touch:

Martin Cutbill - Director
martin@alertacall.com



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

Claire Palmer
Marketing Manager, Alertacall



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alertacall
bring contact to life

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



*Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government, 2019

The need for change...

1 in 8

No. social housing properties affected by damp¹

2.5 million+

No. households experiencing fuel poverty²

3,200

No. annual deaths caused by fuel poverty³



Did you know...

Half a million social housing properties in England alone failed to meet the required decent homes standards⁴

¹ CIT, 2018

² ONS, Dept BEIS 2018

³ NEA/E3G, 2018

⁴ English Housing Survey, 2017

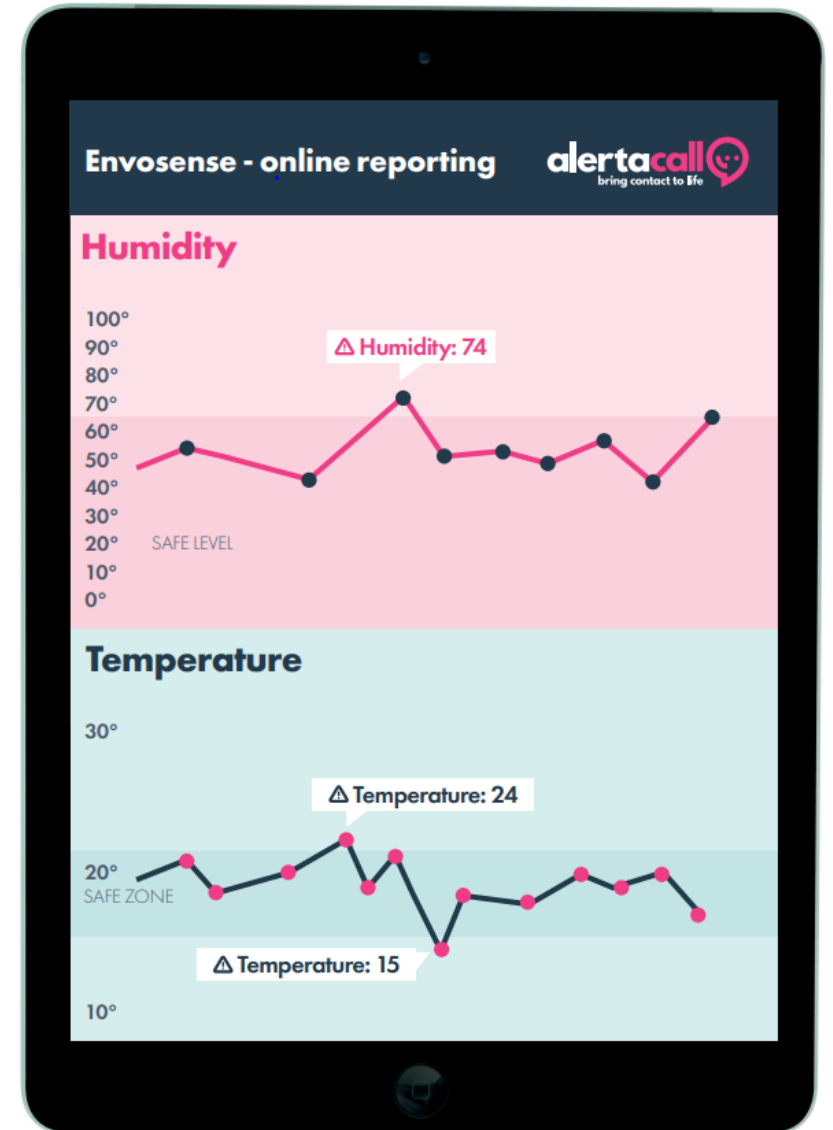
Introducing Envosense (environmental sensor)

- ▶ **Envosense monitors ambient temperature & humidity 24 hours 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

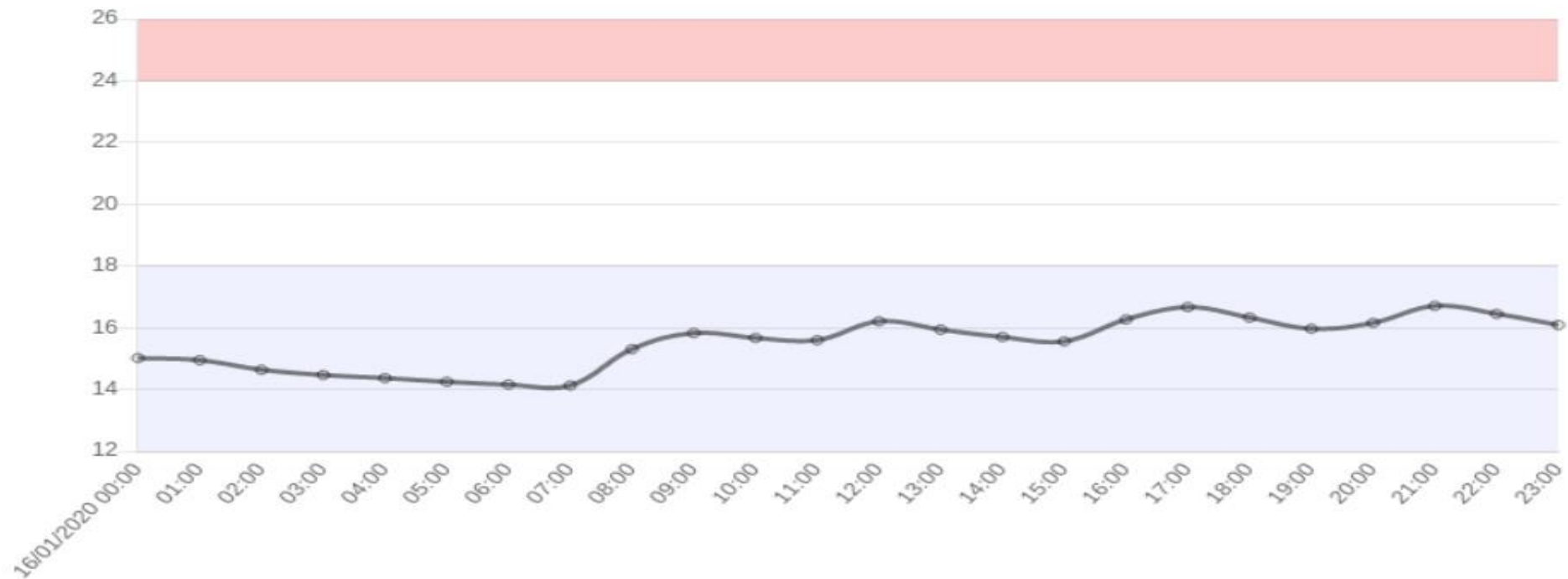
- ▶ Self-service portal for staff to monitor fluctuations or focus on specific properties
- ▶ Temperature checks
 - ▶ Excess cold
 - ▶ Excess heat
- ▶ Humidity checks
 - ▶ Precursor for damp > mould



Reporting

Bedroom temperature (°C)

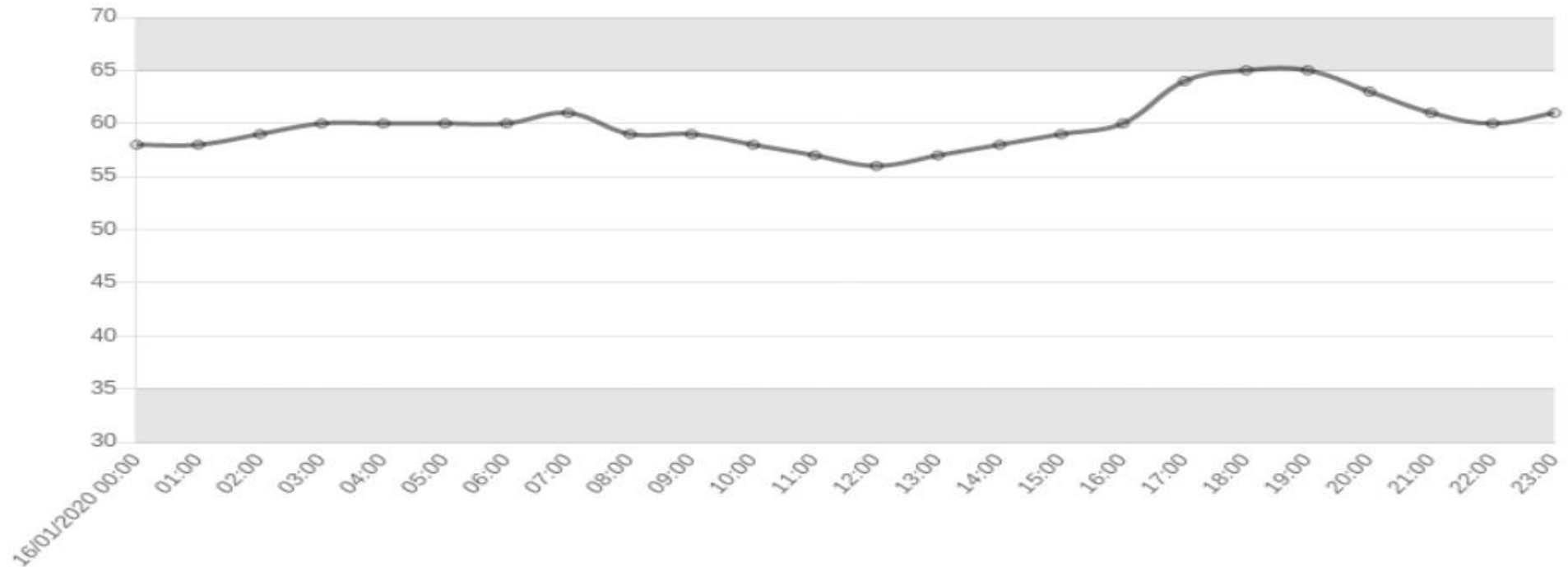
Data from 16/01/2020



Reporting

Bedroom relative humidity (%)

Data from 16/01/2020



Benefits to housing providers

- ▶ Reduce compliance risk with the Homes Act 2018
- ▶ Reduce repairs & maintenance costs, and workload for your own staff
- ▶ Independent assessment of damp claims
- ▶ Identify potential fuel poverty & fuel arrears, or possible health issues
- ▶ Improve resident satisfaction levels
- ▶ Service eligible for HB funding

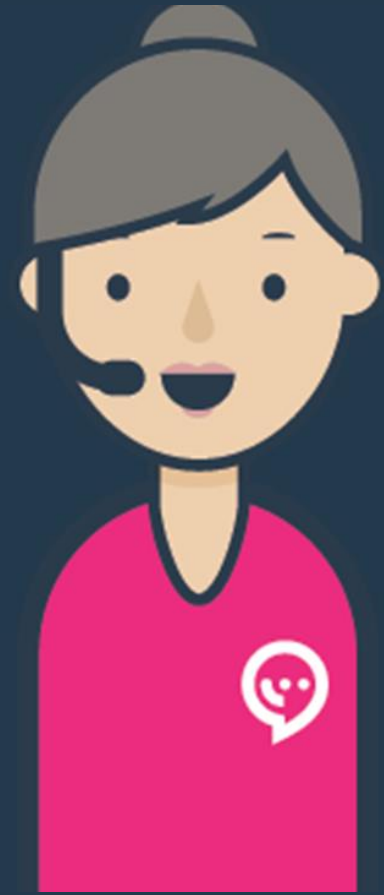


Thank you for listening!



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

Claire Palmer - Marketing Manager
clairepalmer@alertacall.com





Understanding Housing Benefit & Universal Credit eligibility for enhanced housing management systems

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
- Digital technology used by housing providers such as 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

- Digital form of housing management such as Housing Proactive is eligible as a service charge for Universal Credit under Category C – Basic Communal Services
- Digital form of housing management such as 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.
 - The provision of enhanced housing management 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. The enhanced housing management. 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
 - A Digital form of housing management such as Housing Proactive is operated via a device (tablet), 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 the definition of enhanced housing management, Housing Benefit or Universal Credit, please contact Support Solutions UK

Danny Key, Consultant
danny@supportsolutions.co.uk





Danny Key
Director

danny@supportsolutions.co.uk

Q&A

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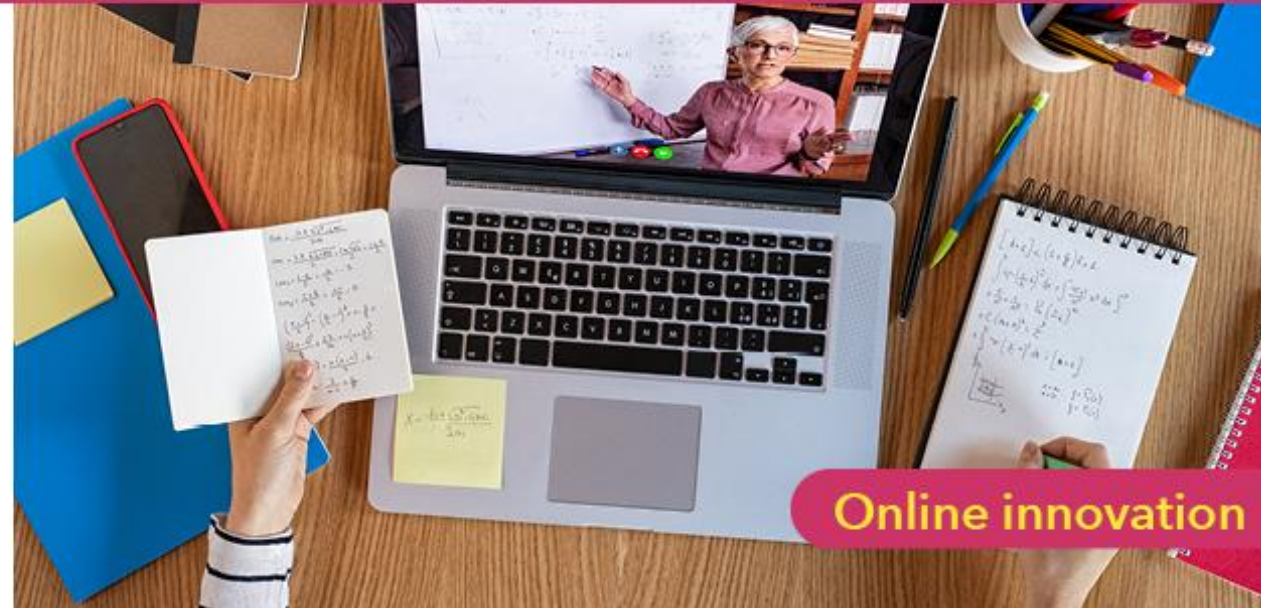
Ideas Lab:

From customer portals to digital switchover - how does your digital agenda compare with others?

30 September 2020
2.00-4.00pm



Chartered
Institute of
Housing



Online innovation

Thank you for joining us!

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

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- ▶ **Martin Cutbill - Director**
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