

Cutting the costs remotely

Ascom Wireless Solution's **Mark Leppard** explains why telehealth and telecare are becoming much more important.



The Department of Health has stated that there are around "15 million people in England with at least one long-term condition" and these numbers are expected to increase. With patients suffering chronic and long-term illnesses such as diabetes and heart failure coupled with an ageing population living longer and fuller lives, there has been a need to explore new ways to provide cost effective healthcare. Telehealth could provide the answer.

Telehealth is a term used to describe the delivery of health services at a distance and specifically over various telecommunication networks. It allows for the remote monitoring of a patient's health; the information is transmitted to a clinician who can monitor the patient without having them leave the comfort of their own home.

By equipping homes with devices, responsibility is handed over to the patient, substantially reducing the number of hospital admissions for patients with long-term conditions. This creates a more proactive rather than reactive approach and avoids unnecessary costs as-

sociated with inpatient hospital treatment. Telehealth monitors provide instructions, reminders and alarms of what the patient needs to do on a daily basis with regards to their health care. They can be linked to equipment such as blood pressure monitors from which data is obtained, stored and sent through a phone line or broadband directly to a clinician. Thus saving on time and resources linked with checkups at their local GP, a focus within the NHS.

The implementation of telehealth in the UK is part of a bigger picture including telecare; a combination of alarms, sensors and equipment, which help people to live independently. This is aimed at more vulnerable people who need help to live on their own.

Ascom Wireless Solutions understand the impact telehealth and telecare will have on the NHS in delivering a high quality service within restraint budgets.

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