

EU project CommonWell launched to improve quality of life for older people and support independent living through integration of health and social care

November 2008 – As part of the EU initiative to promote better quality and more economically efficient solutions for the provision of health and social services, an innovative project with participants from five European countries has been launched, with Tunstall Healthcare Ltd leading the technical work. The CommonWell project aims to support independent living and improve the quality of life for older people and those with long-term conditions.

12 partners are cooperating in the project, supported financially by the European Commission and coordinated by European consultants Empirica, to deliver ICT-enabled health and social care services in four Member States. The integrated services are to support the effective management of chronic disease, and to address issues which affect independence, such as reduced agility, vision or hearing, in order to significantly improve the quality of life for older people and their families. The project members are Milton Keynes Council, Stichting Smart Homes, Ev. Johanneswerk und Johanneswerk im Stadtteil, Empresa Pública de Emergencias Sanitarias, Fundación Andaluza de Servicios Sociales, Tunstall Healthcare, InterSystems, Work Research Centre and Empirica Communication and Technology Research.

A total of 400 users across four locations in Europe will receive the newly integrated services for at least twelve months. The results of evaluating the pilot operation will be used to extend service provision and promote the wider uptake of this model of care across Europe.

Paul Timmers, head of the European Commission's 'ICT for Inclusion' Unit said: "This is an important project for the EU because it addresses the challenging issue of interworking between social services and health care. We support projects like CommonWell to get the results of innovative new technologies and services to consumers faster. We also want ICT to help improve the quality of life and perspectives of being able to live independently

and healthily in real-life situations. Projects like CommonWell fulfil all these criteria by making it possible to deliver cheaper and better healthcare with ICT. These kind of solutions are ever more important to help Europe face demographic and financial challenges.”

Empirica director Simon Robinson said: “CommonWell will be the first European project to show how today's internet-based communication can link care providers across social and health care organisations, provide continuity in care to people at home and improve the quality of care they receive, reducing unnecessary pressure on health services and prolonging the length of time older people can live independently.”

Steve Sadler, CTO at Tunstall Healthcare (UK) Ltd said: “The project is an excellent opportunity for Tunstall to cooperate with a wide range of stakeholders to improve health and social care outcomes, building on our experience as founder member of Continua Health Alliance. CommonWell will also improve the way primary and social care providers currently cooperate, helping to deliver a truly integrated model of care, with significant benefits to the people most in need.”

Milton Keynes and Eindhoven are the pilot locations that will initially address chronic disease management for older people suffering from Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (in Milton Keynes), and Chronic Heart Failure (in Eindhoven). The CommonWell services will improve communication between health and social care providers, helping to reduce anxiety and improve health outcomes for people with chronic conditions and those who need support when leaving hospital.

CommonWell

FASS and Johanneswerk are the sites focussing on improving services for independent living for older people. FASS currently operates the largest centre for social alarm in Europe with over 90,000 clients across Andalusia in Spain. Johanneswerk runs several hospitals, a social alarm service and provides domiciliary care. CommonWell promises to support integrated care delivery in both organisations.

The project is part funded by the EU Competitiveness and Innovation Framework Programme.

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Project participants



empirica is a research and consulting firm based in Bonn, Germany, with a focus on innovation and research on new applications of information and communication technologies (ICTs) and their social and economic impact. Current areas of work relevant to this project include ICT in health care provision (eHealth), ICT for all (eInclusion), and ICT for independent living. empirica has many years of experience providing quantitative and qualitative research to technology development for clients in the private and public sector. <http://www.empirica.com/>



Empresa Pública de Emergencias Sanitarias
CONSEJERÍA DE SALUD

The Public Company for Health Emergencies of Andalusia (EPES), was created in 1994 by the Council of Health of the Meeting of Andalusia and manages all health emergencies in Andalusia. EPES manages the "061" telephone number, a direct line that provides health assistance to emergencies in the region, with eight Coordination Centres in each province. It utilises the emergency land and aerial teams available in Andalusia. EPES also manages coordination of Accident and Emergency, the land transport network and health care coverage in major incidents.

<http://www.epes.es/>



Evangelisches Johanneswerk e.V.
Einrichtungen der Diakonie

Evangelisches Johanneswerk e.V., one of the largest providers of Protestant welfare services (Diakonie) in Europe, has its headquarters in Bielefeld, Germany. It employs approximately 6,000 people in over 70 facilities and institutions. The services are oriented towards older people, people with illnesses or disabilities, children and adolescents, and include community social work. Johanneswerk was founded in 1951. For more information on Johanneswerk visit www.johanneswerk.de.



Johanneswerk im Stadtteil gGmbH, a full subsidiary of Johanneswerk, offers the most modern accommodation, tailor-made for the needs of the occupants. Old and young people, ill and healthy people, people with and without disabilities live in a local community, and those in need of support are cared for safely by means of flexible assistance. For more information on Johanneswerk im Stadtteil visit www.jw-im-stadtteil.de.



Fundación Andaluza de Servicios Sociales
CONSEJERÍA PARA LA IGUALDAD Y BIENESTAR SOCIAL

The Fundación Andaluza de Servicios Sociales (FASS), on behalf of the Ministry for Equality and Welfare of the Regional Government of Andalusia, focuses on providing care responses to social needs. One of the main strategies of FASS is based on using new technologies as they apply to social services, collaborating with different companies and technological institutions in designing and developing several projects whose main objective is improving the Andalusian system of social services, such as the Junta Sixty-Five Card and the Andalusian Telecare Service.

<http://www.juntadeandalucia.es/fundaciondeserviciosociales/>



InterSystems Corporation is a global software product company with offices in 22 countries, providing innovative software to enable fast development, deployment, and integration of enterprise-class applications. InterSystems Ensemble® is a rapid integration platform that enriches applications with new functionality, and makes them connectable. InterSystems HealthShare™ is a platform that leverages existing healthcare applications to rapidly create regional or national electronic health records. For more information, visit <http://www.intersystems.com/>



Milton Keynes Council is a Unitary Authority in North Buckinghamshire with a population of 227,000. The Community Alarm Service provides community alarm and telecare services to 7,500 people. This consists of a home safety and personal security service that enables people to live independently at home. The Community Alarm Service has linked up with the Council's IT and e-Government service (including ConnectMK and DigitalMK) to make progress in its use of technology in supporting independent living. The Council also works closely in partnership with the local Primary Care Trust.

<http://www.mkweb.co.uk/community-alarm>

<http://www.mkweb.co.uk/sheltered-housing>



The National Knowledge Centre for Home Automation and Smart Living. In 1993 Smart Homes started their efforts to promote the development and use of home automation. The aim of Smart Homes is to improve the quality of life for everyone, young or old, with or without limitations. Smart Homes works towards the development of smart, understandable and accessible (mostly technological) solutions and services in the private home and everyday environment.

<http://www.smart-homes.nl>



Tunstall Healthcare Group is the market leading provider of telehealthcare solutions, with over 2.5 million users globally. Tunstall's solutions support older people and those with long-term needs, to live independently, by effectively managing their health and well-being. Tunstall provides technology, expertise and advice to millions of people enabling them to lead independent more fulfilling lives. For more information on how telehealthcare can improve quality of life, visit www.tunstallhealth.com



WRC is an independent research and consultancy organisation specialising in socio-economic and health services research. Core competencies include research and consultancy on policy and practice in the fields of supportive technologies for older people; health and social service innovation; supportive housing for older people and family carers. In the field of supportive technology and older people, WRC is a recognised centre of excellence on the international scene, with a long-established international reputation as a centre of expertise and policy guidance.

<http://www.wrc-research.ie>