



**Case Studies**

# Supporting People with Dementia in Staffordshire

**Staffordshire**  
County Council

  
North Staffordshire

  
South Staffordshire  
Primary Care Trust

# Case Studies

## Supporting People with Dementia in Staffordshire

### Staffordshire County Council is currently implementing its “Changing Lives” programme

which aims to support people to live an ordinary life, in an ordinary house, in an ordinary street, with the support they require. Assistive technology is an integral part of Staffordshire’s vision for adult social care which promotes independence, inclusion and well-being for older and disabled residents. Key objectives are that the citizens of Staffordshire have control over their own lives; live safe, healthy and fulfilled lives; have an active role in a stronger prosperous community and can access the support they need to be as independent as they choose.

As part of the programme, Staffordshire, which serves a population of 800,000, explores ways of helping people remain living in their own homes. The county was an early adopter of assistive technology and amongst the first to experiment with passive sensors to monitor and evaluate lifestyles as part of the assessment process. In 2006, the Older Peoples’ Team in Cannock Chase starting using Just Checking as an assessment tool for people with dementia, and during 2006/7 Staffordshire rolled it out to its social care teams.

Staffordshire uses the activity monitoring system to identify each person’s abilities and areas of need; to check that the level of support is right; and to see how the service user is acting when care staff are not at the house. It gives the team (and the family) the confidence to adjust care to manage risks and to support the person in their own home. It allows staff to “fine tune” services to meet the needs of each person. The use of objective information can challenge preconceptions about a person’s ability to cope as the case studies demonstrate.

In 2008, following major organisation change, Staffordshire equipped its Access, Enablement and Wellbeing teams, and Social Care and Health teams with Just Checking kits.

From the outset, Just Checking provided on-site training and telephone support. As teams grow confident in using the equipment, colleagues have been able to cascade the training to one another and the system is now used widely across the county, driven by the ease of use and the information it provides to assessors. To date, more than 150 assessments have been carried out.

## Costs and Benefits

The weekly cost of using a Just Checking kit is approximately the same as an hour of domiciliary care – around £14. A kit is used with each person for 3-4 weeks giving an average assessment cost of £40–60. There are no installation costs as they are fitted by the teams themselves, and because the kits are portable and need only an electricity supply, they can be fitted in virtually any property with no preparation.

In August 2008 The Department of Health Care Services Efficiency team visited Staffordshire to discuss the use of activity monitoring. This led to a sample of 20 assessments being evaluated to explore the outcomes and the budget implications.

Common to all cases was the request for a care home placement. Following an assessment with Just Checking, only 5 people entered care, 4 of whom entered care up to 6 months after the assessment. The remaining 15 cases were supported at home within the Community Care budget giving the individuals the chance to remain in their own homes. The perceived level of risks at the outset were confirmed or reduced through the assessment, in several cases providing reassurance to families that their relative was able to cope better in their own familiar environment. Care services were tailored and reviewed through use of the activity monitoring information. This led to savings of up to £3,000 per year in some cases, whilst in others it confirmed the care was required and was achieving the desired outcome.

## Partnership

Just Checking has captured people’s imagination because it is a simple to explain and understand. Staffordshire County Council is proud of its partnership working and as part of the promotion of assistive technology around the county, Just Checking has become established as a powerful and insightful assessment tool. Working closely with partner agencies the use of Just Checking has been supported by Cannock Chase District Council and South Staffordshire PCT and in 2008 a pilot with Cannock Chase DC Housing team led to each of the 5 sheltered housing schemes being equipped with their own kits. In summer 2008, the Community Mental Health Teams in Cannock and Stafford were also provided with kits.

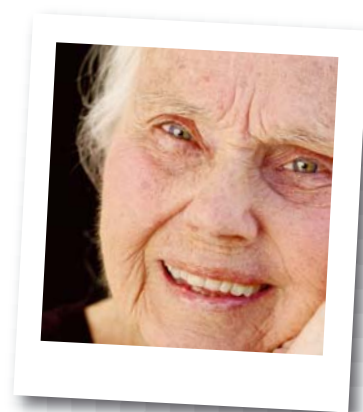
Adoption of this technology is reaching earlier into areas where preventative approaches can reduce concerns and anxieties, averting crisis and carer breakdown and helping to support people with dementia, living longer in their own homes.

## Case Studies

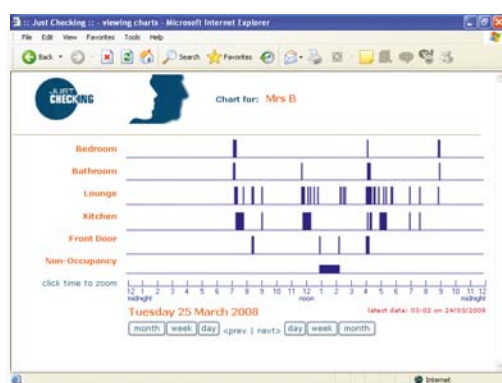
**Barbara** a service user with dementia was reportedly going out at night. Just Checking gave a comprehensive 'picture' of Barbara's patterns of activity in the house during the day and night, and the assessors, together with Barbara's family, who could also look at the charts, were able to plan and organise the level of support she needed. Her family were keen to support Barbara in her own community for as long as possible and she was able to remain at home for several months before her advancing dementia led to her requiring a care home placement. The information from Just Checking allowed her family to support this move at the point they could see the risks started to outweigh the benefits of community living.



**Mavis** lives in sheltered housing and is supported by her 2 daughters who live several miles away. They shared in the Just Checking assessment of their mother and were delighted by the way it helped them understand the changing pattern of their mother's day. Following the assessment period they have used carers' direct payments to fund a Just Checking kit so they can monitor their mother's activities through their home PC's, reducing their anxiety and helping them to decide when best to visit. The cost of Mavis's support plan is almost £100 a week lower than the equivalent care home placement and her daughters feel reassured about how she is managing.



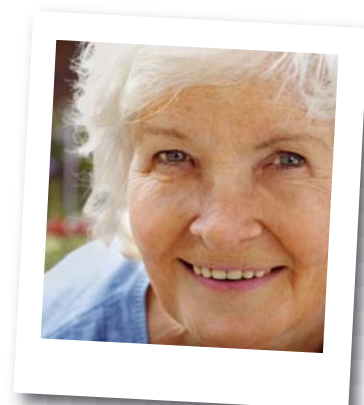
**Bob** lived with his wife but after her death it became clear how she had masked the extent of his confusion. His supportive family considered moving him into care but on seeing the outcome of a Just Checking assessment, decided he could be better supported by them in his own home in familiar surroundings, with the addition of some telecare equipment. His family's support was supplemented with care workers and 8 months later Bob remains in his own home. Bob's care package is £200 per week less than equivalent care home costs and his family's perception of him being at risk have reduced from high to low.



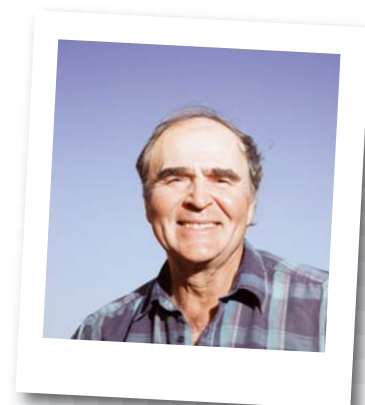
Activity monitoring provides a 24 hour picture of how well a person is operating in their own home.

# Case Studies

**Rita** lived in her own home but her GP became concerned about her ability to cope and requested assessment for residential care. Following a sudden deterioration, Rita was admitted to hospital, but was very disorientated on the ward and from this evidence, hospital based staff assessed her as requiring long term care. Rita was keen to return home and through the use of Just Checking during trial periods at home it was evident she functioned far better in a home environment. Her consultant supported a community discharge and her daughter was very keen for a return home. A place in a sheltered housing scheme was found. Rita moved into her new home with an enabling care package in September 2007 and to date she is still at home. In this case the care costs at home are the same as in a care home setting but Rita is exercising her choice to live in the community.

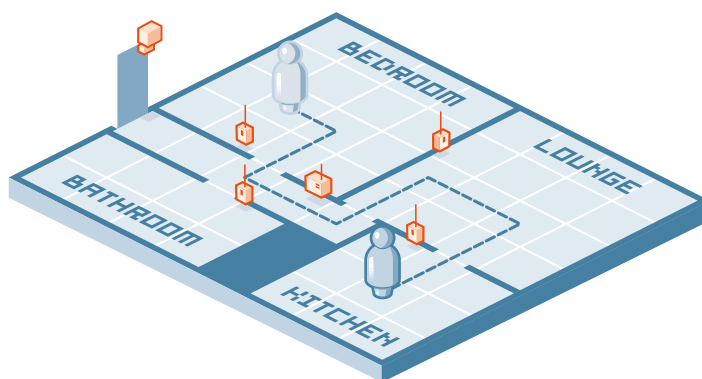


**Fred** had always wanted to live in his own house but his increasing disability encouraged him to move into sheltered housing where he had no steps and stairs to contend with. Sadly he developed dementia and in May 2007 his neighbours started to accuse him of walking the corridors at night and disturbing them. His scheme manager requested an assessment. Just Checking indicated that although his patterns of day and night were sometimes haphazard he did not leave his flat. The scheme manager was able to reassure the other tenants, and to date Fred remains in his own flat with regular contact from his family, friends and old neighbours and small support package costing £200 per week less than the equivalent care home cost.



## How it works

Small wireless sensors are triggered as a person moves around their home. Data from the sensors are uploaded via an integral mobile phone to a web-server. Care professionals and family members log on to view the daily chart.



## Contacts:

**Jim Ellam**, Acting District Manager & Assistive Technology Lead, Staffordshire Joint Commissioning Unit. Tel: 01785 277007, [jim.ellam@staffordshire.gov.uk](mailto:jim.ellam@staffordshire.gov.uk)

**Just Checking Ltd**, Appledore Lodge, Blind Lane, Tanworth-in-Arden, Warks, B94 5HT  
Tel: 01564 741822, [info@justchecking.co.uk](mailto:info@justchecking.co.uk) [www.justchecking.co.uk](http://www.justchecking.co.uk)

**Staffordshire**  
County Council

