Vincent's Story

As the UK shifts to digital landlines, a new partnership is making sure that Vincent's telecare remains reliable, opening the door to digital care that offers him so much more.

Thankfully, Vincent hasn't had to use his telecare alarm since, but it gives him peace of mind.

High blood pressure, COPD and limited mobility mean that he relies on carers who come four times a day, but Vincent wants reassurance for the hours in between.

During this time, he indulges his passion for jazz, particularly the back catalogue of Tony Bennett and Frank Sinatra.

Looking over to his smart speaker, Vincent smiles and comments:

> "I prefer listening to music non-stop, but Alexa doesn't always play the tunes I like!"

When he's not enjoying big band swing, Vincent keeps in touch with family via his tablet, video-calling his daughter who lives in Hawaii. He also uses his phone to organise any support he needs, from home repairs to GP appointments.

Vincent's personal alarm, landline and broadband connections are his lifelines and that's why an independent living officer from Carecall, and a field engineer from Virgin Media O2 came to see him recently.

It was in 2023 that Vincent, 85, first used his personal alarm.

"I was trying to get into bed from my wheelchair," Vincent explains. "There's this transfer board I use, but it slipped, and so did I."

Vincent found himself on the floor and couldn't move. A diabetic, he had his left leg amputated several years ago and has no sensation in his right.

> "My leg was out, I couldn't shift it, so I pressed the button on my bracelet, and Carecall came quickly and got me off the floor and back into bed. They even made me a cup of tea!"
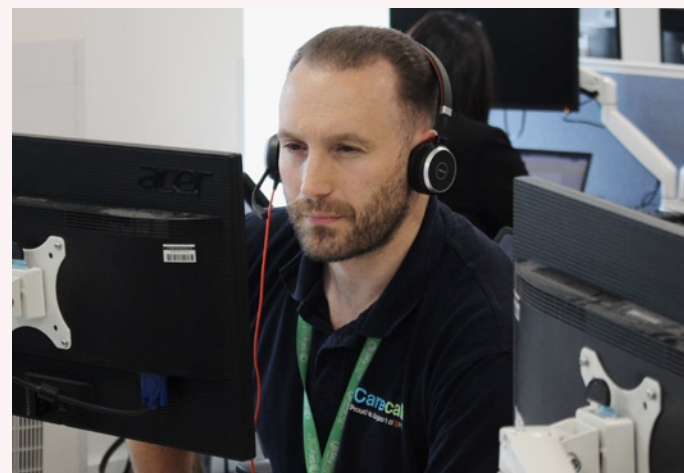
This joint visit is part of a new partnership between Carecall, Virgin Media O2 and TSA, the national industry and advisory body for telecare.

All three partners are providing enhanced support to individuals like Vincent as UK landlines are migrated from old analogue networks to digital voice services.

For the majority of customers, this migration is quick and easy, simply requiring them to change how their home phone plugs into the network.

But for people who are older, disabled or use telecare, there is additional support available, as Rebecca Butterworth, independent living officer at Carecall explains.

"Once a customer's landline has been upgraded, we want to be absolutely sure their telecare works the same way over the digital network."

That's why Rebecca and her colleagues have been working with Lauren Bower and other Virgin Media O2 engineers across Stockport. Rebecca explains:

"It's about giving customers a sense of safety and reassurance. Lauren upgrades their landline, and I upgrade their telecare. If we come across any problems, we work together, and we never leave a customer's home until everything is fully tested."

Now that Vincent's landline and telecare have been upgraded and he feels safe, he and his support team are looking at enhancing his care, helping him live the life he wants.

"More is possible if your telecare is digital," comments Alyson Scurfield, chief executive of TSA.

"Virgin Media O2 have put the digital infrastructure in place and now it's up to TEC services and care providers to harness opportunities for proactive, preventative care."

"For example, we're seeing artificial intelligence being linked to sensors to detect changes in someone's routine and predict when they might need extra support. With digital telecare there is so much potential for modernising care and we need councils and care providers to make the most of this so we can shift from hospital to community, from treatment to prevention."

Vincent feels this potential, too. "I know my telecare works, I know it's safe," he reflects. "But I also know it can do more. It's not only me alone who'll benefit from this new system."

Find out more about this programme in Stockport and how you can get involved.

Visit: www.tsa-voice.org.uk/campaigns/digital-shift/stockport-trial/ or email: Charlotte.Findlay@tsa-voice.org.uk

Produced in association with: