



**WEALDEN AND EASTBOURNE LIFELINE
ANNUAL REVIEW 2007/08**

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Contents

1. Chairman's Report
2. Report of Managing Director
3. Introduction to WEL
4. Customer Focus
5. Improvement and Development

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

WEL has continued to expand its services throughout the year as a result of the implementation of the Building Telecare programme throughout East Sussex, increased subscriber numbers and the introduction of new services to support the community. In order to facilitate growth and development we moved to larger premises at Greencoat House, 32 St.Leonards Road, Eastbourne. Careful planning, enthusiasm and commitment from our excellent staff team, and support and assistance from partner organisations enabled us to transfer operations with minimum disruption to services.

We have continued to reinvest income in improving the range and quality of services we offer. Notably we have initiated a telehealth pilot trial with the assistance and direction of the Primary Care Trust; the six month pilot comes to an end in the Autumn of 08 and we are encouraged by the results to date.

With our turnover increasing to nearly £1.4m in the year and the expectation of a further 1000 customers joining us from Lewes we are looking forward to a successful 2008/09. Despite the difficult economic conditions I am confident that we can succeed and I would like to thank my co-directors and all the staff for their efforts in the past year.

Leonard A. Greene
Chairman

REPORT OF MANAGING DIRECTOR

2007/08 was another period of rapid change for everyone at WEL. Once again the team has performed outstandingly well non stop for 365 days 24 hours a day, rising to significant challenges such as the transfer of operations to new premises and the rapid growth in telecare referrals.

Our first priority is always the safety, security, dignity and independence of our customers and we take great satisfaction from the delivery of a consistent and improving service. I thank everyone in the Company for their continued dedication to these principles and would also like to take this opportunity to recognise the invaluable contribution of colleagues in partner organisations to the progress we have been able to make during the year, highlights of which include:

- Opening a new operating centre that provides better working conditions for staff, improved training facilities and capacity for future growth and development
- During the 12 month period under review 1200 new weekly subscribers joined service, an increase of 33% on the previous year.
- Providing assistance to key partners in the retirement housing sector, enabling them to reshape their care and support services. WEL now makes on average 3000 outgoing check calls per week and is providing an increased range of mobile response services.
- Delivering a countywide telecare service, installing 2000 telecare devices in the process
- Winning a contract to provide monitoring services for a telecare project aimed at supporting people with dementia in the London Borough of Barking and Dagenham.
- Reaching agreement with Lewes District Council for the transfer the Lewes Lifeline service to WEL. Over 1000 Lewes Lifeline subscribers will now benefit from the increased range of telecare options that WEL is able to offer.
- Initiating a telehealth pilot for Eastbourne during the later part of 2008, WEL's first foray into this exciting new sector
- Developing innovative Carers Alert Card schemes in partnership with ESCC and the MS Society.
- Improved financial performance with turnover and pre tax profit increasing by 11% and 186% respectively

2008/09 promises to be even more challenging as we will be implementing a number of demanding and complex projects including:

- The transfer of Lewes Lifeline customers to WEL; during April, May and June we will be visiting everyone of them to introduce them to our service, review their support requirements and test and programme their equipment.
- Implementing the telehealth pilot for 50 heart failure and COPD patients. This will involve installing the Cardiocom home telehealth monitors and providing training to patients to enable them to use them to carry out a daily health check involving measuring weight, blood oxygen levels and blood pressure. Readings will be transmitted daily to our monitoring centre where our telehealth nurse will review the results for each patient and take appropriate action.
- Continuing to respond to the rising demand for telecare sensors. WEL is introducing a specialist IT application to assist in the management of the installation and maintenance process. The system is called TOM (Telecare Office Manager)
- Implementing an independent finance system – up to now WEL has used the EBC finance system but the need for a stand alone system to support the growth of the business has become increasingly apparent.
- Introducing a layer of team leaders throughout the service with a focus on improving performance and providing additional support to staff.

The Directors consider that the year ahead represents a key stage in the Company's development. It is likely that Key strategic objectives will be achieved ahead of schedule:

- By the end of the year we expect turnover and customers to be up by 100% and 50% respectively compared to where we started in 2005.
- Major contracts and new business have been secured (e.g. NHS PASA NFA, takeover of Lewes Lifeline and the East Sussex telecare contract)
- New monitoring centre with capacity to serve increasing customer numbers.
- Market leading capacity and competency in telecare and telehealth monitoring and installation
- National brand profile through NHS PASA NFA

- Strong partnerships with manufacturing interests and others in the service sector

As a result the Company is well placed to compete in a growth sector generating substantial returns from business development in the wider South East region and further a field. Important decisions will need to be made about future direction and the organisation is undertaking a fundamental review which will address overall purpose and strategic ambitions for growth and development. It is intended that the outcome will help stakeholders to agree on strategic direction, quantify future funding requirements and decide on the right business model to take the organisation forward.

Mark Bannister
Managing Director

INTRODUCTION TO WEL

About WEL

Wealden and Eastbourne Lifeline (WEL) is a not for profit company limited by guarantee established by Wealden District Council and Eastbourne Borough Council in February 2005 to facilitate the merger and externalisation of the Lifeline services previously operated by the respective Councils.

With 40 years combined experience of providing round the clock reassurance to vulnerable people and the people that care for them, we are now a leading provider of telecare based support services.

From our monitoring and response centre we take care of over 18,000 vulnerable people who are linked to the centre through their sheltered housing emergency call systems or individual lifeline telephones which can be installed in any home with a telephone line.

Mission Statement

To provide responsive, high quality services that provide good value for money and meet the needs of the communities and individuals we serve, especially elderly and vulnerable people, helping them to live and work in a safe and secure environment

Values

- Putting customers first
- Achieving continuous improvement through listening and learning
- Promoting equality and diversity
- Working in Partnership
- Working to benefit the community

Objectives

1. To provide innovative high quality services tailored to the special requirements of each individual that promote safety, security, choice and independence and enable people, particularly the elderly and vulnerable, to enjoy the best quality of life possible.
2. To achieve sustainable growth and strong finances
3. To be recognised as a leading national provider of telecare and telehealth services

4. To work together with stakeholders - customers and suppliers, housing and care providers, local government, the NHS, emergency services, voluntary organisations and the private sector - to develop services and improve standards of care and support
5. To ensure that our services are competitive and responsive to the changing requirements of our customers by achieving continuous improvement and development
6. To promote our services and expand our customer base by pursuing an active marketing strategy
7. To improve community safety by providing services that aim to reduce crime and fear of crime, reduce accidents in the home and provide support for lone workers
8. To support the community by providing an effective and efficient out of hours telephone contact service for local authorities and housing providers
9. To provide support to local authorities in co-ordinating the response to major incidents
10. To be an employer of choice supporting the personal and professional development of our staff
11. To ensure that the company is effectively governed and managed in accordance with the regulatory framework and good practice

SERVICES

Range of Services

Our principal activities are:

- 24 hour telecare and telehealth monitoring and response service co-ordinated through WEL's contact centre, located in Eastbourne.
- Supply, installation and maintenance of community alarms and advanced telecare devices such as smoke detectors, fall detectors, flood detectors and medical alerts.

WEL also provides other valued community services including:

- Visiting and check calls for sheltered housing residents
- Outreach and floating support
- Lone worker protection

- Out-of-hours contact centre for housing providers and Local Authorities.
- Telephone answering services

Throughout the evening, weekend, Bank Holidays and during the night, we assist residents of the Wealden, Eastbourne and Rother Districts to resolve a wide range of issues ranging from homelessness to noise nuisance. We also process reports of problems on the highways on behalf of East Sussex County Council Highways Department.

Telecare

Applying state of the art technology we are now able to provide our customers with enhanced safety and security through our comprehensive range of telecare devices.

We offer a choice of different options all supported by our high quality 24 hour response service:

- Home safety sensors which warn the user and centre about smoke, hypothermia risks, high temperatures, fire, water and gas leaks and carbon monoxide levels
- Systems that can remind people to take medication
- Monitors that detect movement or inactivity enabling us to detect possible health and welfare issues or respond to intruder alerts
- Sophisticated sensors and equipment that can be used to monitor lifestyle and enable people to control their environment

Telehealth

Telehealth is the remote monitoring of vital signs so that people with chronic health conditions like congestive heart failure, asthma, diabetes and chronic obstructive airways disease. We are working in partnership with Cardiocom a leading US provider of telehealth equipment and services to develop a market leading telehealth solution for the UK market. Telehealth enables people to be discharged early from hospital, prevents hospital admissions and cuts down on visits to hospitals and health centres. It also provides regular and timely information about the patient's condition

CUSTOMERS

Customer Focus

The Company has a diverse customer base and a range of contracts with different corporate and individual interests. The main categories of customers are:

- Individual subscribers
- Corporate clients under block contracts (mainly housing providers and local authorities) for monitoring and response, out of hours telephone services and lone worker protection.

For the organisations we provide services to, our main priority is to deliver a high quality service that meets the needs of their residents and staff. We are committed to working in close partnership to enable client organisations to improve and develop their services.

The Best Help and Support for You

Understanding and responding to the personal requirements of our customers is central to our philosophy of care. Everyone is given a choice of options and we take time with each individual to ensure that their package of equipment and services is suited to their specific requirements.

Some key facts about our customers:

- 75% of the individuals we serve are over retirement age, including 64 people over the age of 100!!
- 90% are lone person households
- 70% suffer from a long term chronic condition
- 25% are affected by a sensory impairment
- Our customers tell us that they want high quality home centred services tailored to their individual requirements, enabling them to remain independent and enjoy the best quality of life possible.

New Customers

During the 12 months under review we have welcomed more than 1200 new subscribers to our telecare services.

Customer Satisfaction

More than 98.5% report that they are satisfied or very satisfied with our service. Here are some of the responses we received:

*"I want to thank you for the efficient way my call from my pendant was dealt with recently. I had a falland was a little distance from the phone so pressed my pendant. The response came from your team quickly and you called for the ambulance that also came quickly. I am most grateful for the way my predicament was dealt with and I hope you will continue to stress that **people must wear their pendant.**"*

D H - Mayfield

"This is to say thank you for the help and kindness shown to me through the year. I am truly grateful."

DW – Hampden Park

"I am writing to express my gratitude for my Lifeline. Being 96 and with the unfortunate habit of fainting and falling over I am very glad to have this means of summoning help."

ES – Rye

"...I cannot speak highly enough of the care and immediate answer my calls for your help given for my friend..."

BM – Polegate

"I would like to thank you for the excellent service you have provided for my mum – I will certainly recommend you to others."

BH – Tunbridge Wells

Equality and Diversity

A copy of WEL's policy is available on request. This makes it clear that as an employer and a service provider it aims to avoid discrimination against anyone on the grounds of race, gender, religion, disability or sexual orientation. Many of the new products we have introduced through the NHS PASA National Framework Agreement, such as the SRS Possum Environmental Controls Systems are specifically designed to assist people with special communication requirements to be able to benefit from our services. Our new operating centre affords wheelchair access to the all floors, a key requirement during our search for new premises.

IMPROVING AND DEVELOPING

Summary of Progress from Service Development Plan

WEL maintains a detailed Marketing and Development Plan which is updated continuously and reviewed by the Board on a quarterly basis. In last year's report we set out a number of key priorities, progress against which is reported below.

1. Securing more suitable premises had been outstanding from the previous year

Identifying and selecting new premises, then planning and implementing the move to Greencoat House was a major achievement for everyone involved with WEL. The move has proved to be a great success, providing us with much needed capacity to accommodate growth and development, better working conditions, improved training facilities and a much better shop window for the Company.

2. Increase staffing levels

During the year we strengthened our 24 hour contact centre team but also needed to recruit more installers to keep up with the increasing referral rate. Night cover is now provided by a minimum of two persons with additional support from standby officers. Staff cover for all periods of the day has been increased and at the end of the period of review WEL employed more than 50 people; a significant increase over the year.

3. Deliver Falls Response Service

WEL delivered the Falls Response service without any gaps every day during the year assisting more than 700 mainly elderly

people without adverse incident. In the process the team were able to prevent unnecessary hospital admissions by safely lifting people with a specialist lifting cushion and providing invaluable aftercare

4. Implement a Countywide Telecare Service

At the end of March 2007 hardly any telecare devices had been installed in East Sussex using the £900,000 preventative technology grant allocated to the county under the Government's Building Telecare programme. WEL had been selected to provide the service and responded by working closely with the County Council's project manager to establish a specialist assessment team and raise awareness about the potential benefits of telecare among health and social care professionals and the wider community. For two or three months we saw a steady increase followed by an avalanche of referrals in October and November from all over the County the outcome of the energy and enthusiasm of the team that had been travelling from venue to venue promoting telecare and gradually overcoming barriers to acceptance. Our team of highly skilled telecare engineers responded with a ceaseless commitment but to keep up we had to recruit new people and gear up the resources for co-ordinating a much higher level of activity than anticipated. We thought that the referrals might quickly peak and slow down again but this didn't happen as clinicians and social workers seeing the positive outcomes for their clients continued to refer others to the service. At the start of the year 50 telecare devices had been installed under the programme whilst at the end of the year this had risen to 2000.

5. Develop Telehealth Services

Towards the end of the previous trading year we had become convinced that telehealth systems could deliver significant benefits to the community. We engaged Cardiocom as a supply partner and added a number of their telehealth devices to our NHS PASA National Framework Agreement contract. Then working closely in partnership with the Primary Care Trust and Social Services we developed proposals for a 50 patient pilot and in during February 2008 we received delivery of the monitors from Cardiocom. Later in the year we engaged another telehealth supply partner, Telemedcare, whose products offer a different range of flexibilities.

6. Develop Care Monitoring Solution

This was included in our original business plan. The principle involves providing a system that allow commissioners, providers, carers and the cared for, to monitor delivery of domiciliary care and support services. During the year we entered in to partnership with Over C a company developing ground breaking solution deploying Near Field Communication and Tag Event Technology. Significant progress was made in product and software development during the year and developing reference sites is a key priority for 2008/09

7. Achieve TSA Part 2 and 3 TSA accreditation

TSA changed their auditors during the year and this slowed down our progress. Although we had a successful annual inspection with the new auditor for our Part One (alarm receiving centre) accreditation the timescales for Part Two (installation and maintenance) and Three (in person response) conflicted with the move to Greencoat House. Next year we will seek convergence between our Part One re-inspection and our application for Part Two and Part Three code compliance.

Other Highlights

- 1200 new weekly subscribers joined service during the 12 month period under review, an increase of 33% on the previous year.
- Providing assistance to key partners in the retirement housing sector, enabling them to reshape their care and support services. WEL now makes on average 3000 outgoing check calls per week and is providing an increased range of mobile response services.
- Winning a contract with the London Borough of Barking and Dagenham to provide monitoring services for a telecare project aimed at supporting people with dementia.
- Adding to the range of products and services available to our customers through the NHS PASA National Framework Agreement, all of which have been evaluated by PASA and the NHS Centre for Evidence Based Purchasing in a rigorous EU compliant tender review process conducted throughout January, February and March.
- Reaching agreement with Lewes District Council for the transfer the Lewes Lifeline service to WEL. Over 1000 Lewes Lifeline subscribers will now benefit from the increased range of telecare options that WEL is able to offer.

- Developing innovative Carers Alert Card schemes in partnership with ESCC and the MS Society.
- At the end of the period under review connections to the centre were up 10% on the year. The growing customer base and higher rate of calls from residents connected to the centre led to inbound call volumes rising by 30% during the year.
- The contact centre responded to 164,000 telecare alerts between April 2007 and March 2008 and 4700 out of hours enquiries ranging from noise nuisance and lost dogs to highway problems and housing repairs

Key Priorities from 2008/09 Service Plan

1. Achieving TSA Part 2 and 3 TSA accreditation
2. Implementing reference sites for care monitoring solution
3. Implementing Telehealth pilot
4. Continuing countywide telecare implementation
5. Implementing new financial system
6. Introducing team leader structure
7. Implementing telecare management system
8. Implementing transfer of Lewes Lifeline customers to WEL

Key Performance Indicators

- Between April 2007 and March 2008 WEL responded to 164,000 telecare alerts compared to 150,000 alerts during the previous period.
- We received other 4700 calls for assistance ranging from housing repairs and highway problems to noise nuisance and lost dogs compared to 6000 the previous year
- 100% of life critical faults to Lifeline equipment attended to within 24 hours
- 100% of mobile response call outs within 45 minutes

WEL Life Critical Call Response Times 2007/08

