

Wealden and Eastbourne Lifeline

Annual Review 2008/09



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Wealden and
Eastbourne Lifeline



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Chairman's Report

2008/09 has been a year of progress for WEL with the transfer of Lewes Lifeline to the Company and the continued success of our countywide telecare partnership with East Sussex County Council.

We are in the process of bidding for Working with colleagues in health, social care, emergency services health and housing our aim has been to facilitate mainstream telecare provision across the county so that everyone who can benefit has access to the service. This is now taking shape with telecare and telehealth systems being provided to a further 1600 homes during the period under review involving the installation of 5000 separate devices. We continue to receive excellent feedback from service users and professionals referring into the service.

As I write it has become public knowledge that WEL has won the contract to provide telecare services for West Sussex County Council; fantastic news for everyone involved with the Company.

There are immense challenges facing the health and social care system arising from our ageing population and higher expectations. We can now aim to develop a mainstream, comprehensive and flexible pan-Sussex telecare service which will provide invaluable support to partner organisations charged with responding to these challenges and massive benefits to individual service users who value their safety, security and independence. This will require substantial investment and we are making good progress towards securing funds to underpin service development. However by reinvesting funds provided from the substantial rise in turnover during the year we have already been able to achieve key strategic improvements to our infrastructure including the implementation of a stand alone financial system, a facility which until now has been provided to us by Eastbourne Borough Council. This has been a demanding exercise and we are indebted to those, both consultants and staff, who have carried out this work.

My intention is to step down from the chair at the next AGM. It is five years this autumn since I commenced my participation with the fledgling WEL and I have seen the Company grow and become an important provider of services to many organisations and the elderly in the south east. The credit for this growth must go to the staff and in particular, the M.D., Mark Bannister for their unfailing good humour, hard work and support of the Board. I must also thank my co-directors for their advice and hard work in helping to establish WEL as a significant player in this specialist market. I wish WEL every success in the future.

Leonard A. Greene
Chairman

Managing Director's Report

During 2008/09 WEL experienced a marked increase in subscriber numbers, managed a significant increase in activity levels, delivered improved performance levels, completed several important service development projects and in our fourth year of trading achieved our best financial results to date.

This is a remarkable achievement and the team deserves to be congratulated for their efforts.

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.

Key achievements to highlight include:

- Upgrading our telecare operating system
- Implementing a customer relationship and stock management system
- Implementing a new finance and billing system
- Providing assistance to key partners in the retirement housing sector, enabling them to reshape their care and support services. WEL now makes on average 3,000 outgoing check calls per week and is providing an increased range of mobile response services
- Delivering a 40 patient telehealth trial
- Improved financial performance with turnover and pre tax profit increasing by 49% and 66% respectively

- Recruiting 5 team leaders to create capacity for growth and focus on the quality of customer service on a day to day basis
- Achieving TSA accreditation for all our services and for our new operating centre at Greencoat House.

Notwithstanding the excellent progress so far the Board believe that the Company now needs to make key decisions about future direction. The Board have reviewed the business strategy and have concluded that the best way to secure a sustainable business that benefits the community and the local economy is to focus on innovation, growth and competitiveness. This is in line with the original WEL prospectus developed in consultation with our stakeholders.

In order to undertake this next phase of development the Company needs to invest to produce market leading life enhancing services that are an attractive option for individuals, carers, professionals and organisations seeking solutions to their care and support requirements.

This will enable WEL to respond to the rising demand for services that promote independence and the increasing emphasis on consumer choice in health and social care embodied in the personalisation agenda.

During the coming months we will be actively seeking inward investment to enable us to achieve challenging new targets for growth and development.

Tony Greene, our Chairman since we started, is stepping down at the next AGM. I would like to take this opportunity to thank Tony for his determination and hard work in the WEL cause and for his unstinting support and encouragement.

Mark Bannister
Managing Director

Introduction to 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.

About WEL

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 20,000 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.

WEL presently employs 58 people in four main divisions – monitoring and response centre, telecare installation and maintenance, customer support and corporate services.

Philosophy of Care

WEL seeks to promote choice, dignity, independence, safety, health and well being by providing high quality person centred services that benefit the whole community. We believe that our objectives can best be achieved through a culture that supports continuous learning and improvement, equality and diversity, partnership working and listening to customers.

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.

Objectives

In process of reviewing our business strategy we have added a commitment to sustainability to our corporate objectives. This will help us to focus on our role in maintaining a sustainable service model that in turn supports the development of sustainable communities.

- To provide innovative high quality services tailored to the special requirements of each individual that promote safety, security, choice, dignity and independence, enabling people, particularly the elderly and vulnerable, to enjoy the best quality of life possible.
- To promote sustainable communities and minimise environmental impacts.
- To work with stakeholders - carers, customers, 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.
- To ensure that our services remain competitive and responsive to the changing requirements of our customers through continuous improvement and development.
- To grow our revenues and customer base and be recognised as a leading national provider of telecare and telehealth services by pursuing an active marketing strategy.
- To maintain a sustainable business based on sound finances.
- 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.
- To support the community by providing an effective and efficient out of hours telephone contact service for local authorities and housing providers.
- To provide support to local authorities in co-ordinating the response to major incidents.
- To be an employer of choice supporting the personal and professional development of our staff.
- To ensure that the company is effectively governed and managed in accordance with the regulatory framework and good practice.

Range of Services

Our approach is to provide packages of equipment and services designed to meet the special requirements of each customer that promotes their safety, security, independence and general well-being.

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 & Local Authorities.
- Telephone answering services

Throughout the evening, weekend, Bank Holidays and during the night, we assist residents of the Wealden, Eastbourne, Lewes 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.

Lifeline

The standard Lifeline device has provided invaluable support to thousands of people over many years. This proven system enables you to raise the alarm from anywhere in your home, simply by pressing a small lightweight push button trigger which you can wear as a pendant, on your wrist or clipped to a pocket.

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 with partners in the research and manufacturing sectors 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.

Telecare

Applying state of the art technology based around the established Lifeline system 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.

Our Customers

For many of our customers our service is the key to enabling them to continue to enjoy their independence and the comfort of their own home, safe in the knowledge that help can be called if problems arise. We also know that relatives and carers benefit from the extra reassurance we are able to provide.

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.

During the year we have embarked on extensive consultation with individual service users and corporate interests. As part of this process our team have visited retirement housing schemes to talk to residents about their experience of Lifeline and possible ways to improve and develop the service. We also welcomed several groups of service users at our operations centre in Eastbourne.

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:

- 89% of the individuals we serve are over retirement age, including 62 people over the age of 100!
- 90% are lone person households
- 91% suffer from a long term chronic condition
- 40% 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 approaching 3500 new subscribers to our lifeline and telecare services.

Customer Satisfaction

More than 99.5% report that they are satisfied or very satisfied with our service. Here of some of the responses we received:

"Thank you for always being there – I am indeed grateful knowing this."
M R Eastbourne

"I was so very grateful I was able to use my Lifeline in the early hours of Sunday morning. I am convinced it saved my life, especially as I live alone."
B C, Wannock

"Thank you for responding very quickly when my husband had a heart attacked we believe that Lifeline played a part in saving his life". B C, Eastbourne

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 we aim 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.



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.

Achieving TSA Part 2 and 3 TSA accreditation

WEL achieved accreditation to parts two (telecare installation and maintenance) and three (mobile response) in January 2009 and also achieved Part 1 (alarm receiving centre) accreditation for our new operations centre at Greencoat House.

Implementing reference sites for care monitoring solution

By working with potential system users we have identified a range of enhancements to the system which will be ready to go live to the system which will be completed towards the end of the year. We have agreed to implement a reference site in partnership with Eastbourne Homes.

Implementing Telehealth pilot

As proposed, WEL ran the telehealth pilot in partnership with East Sussex Downs and Weald PCT and East Sussex County Council. We provided the monitoring equipment, installed the monitors in the homes of selected patients, provided training and support to patients on the use of the system and provided a daily monitoring service.

Continuing countywide telecare implementation

The rate of referrals for telecare continued to grow during the year as colleagues in other organisations began to fully appreciate the benefits of the wide range of equipment now available to meet the requirements of a diverse range of client groups. During the 12 month period we installed more than 5,000 items of telecare equipment under our contract with East Sussex County Council.

Implementing new financial system

WEL took in house all of the finance and billing functions. WEL installed its own finance and contract management system using Access Dimensions and Big Bay contract management. Bringing these functions in house has enabled much tighter financial management and the provision of much improved management information.

Introducing team leader structure

Five team leaders were appointed during the year representing a considerable investment in workforce development and quality assurance.

Implementing telecare management system

We installed Telecare Office Manager (TOM) an IT application that helps us to manage the installation and maintenance of telecare devices.

Implementing transfer of Lewes Lifeline customers to WEL

WEL successfully transferred over 1200 new customers from Lewes Lifeline. During this process the implementation team from WEL visited every new customer over a six week period. Each customer's personal details were checked for accuracy and a full evaluation of the equipment installed was carried out along with testing.

During this process all of Lewes District Council's sheltered housing schemes were reprogrammed to WEL's Alarm Receiving Centre and scheme managers visited the WEL Operations Centre to meet the our team.

Future Priorities

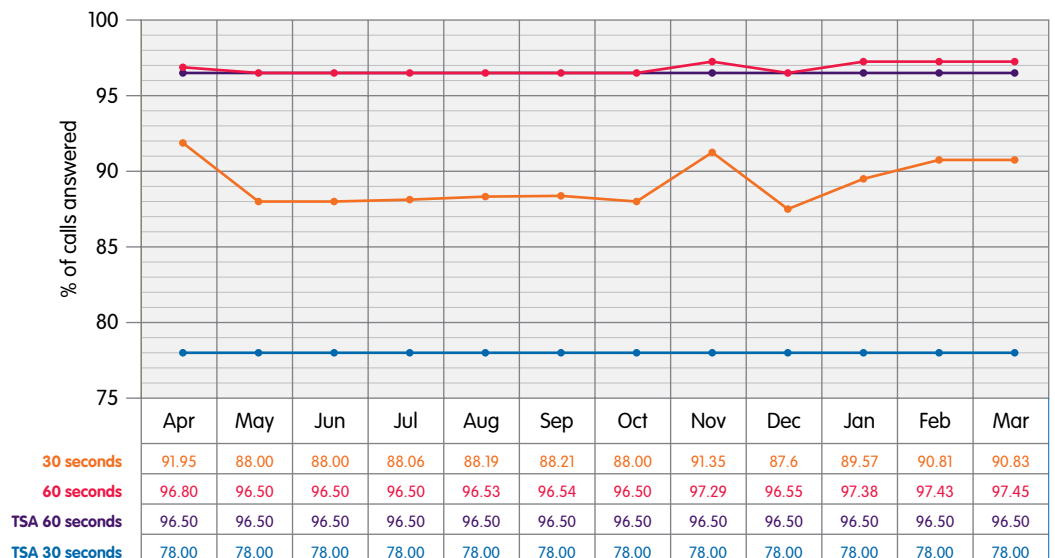
Key Priorities from 2009/10 Service Plan

- 1 Secure funding to support growth and development
- 2 Qualify to use Two Ticks Disability Symbol
- 3 Expand the telecare service outside East Sussex
- 4 Secure accreditation to ISO 14001 and achieve membership of the Environmental Improvement Club
- 5 Secure accreditation to Parts 1,2,3 of revised TSA Code of Practice
- 6 Achieve audited accreditation to the European Telecare Standard

Key Performance Indicators

- Between April 2008 and March 2009 WEL responded to 240,000 telecare alerts compared to 164,000 alerts during the previous period.
- We also responded to 5,500 other calls for assistance ranging from housing repairs and highway problems to noise nuisance and lost dogs compared to 4,800 the previous year.
- We attended to 100% of life critical faults to Lifeline equipment within 24 hours.
- We responded to 100% of mobile response call outs within 45 minutes.

WEL Life Critical Call Response Times 2008/09



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