

# Teleassistance in Spain: adding value with a preventative approach

## The challenge

Tunstall supports more than 475,000 people across Spain with telecare and associated services, and its eight monitoring centres manage more than 17.7 million calls each year<sup>1</sup>. It provides people who are older and/or have long-term care needs with a range of support including telecare systems; monitoring; home care; prevention and wellbeing services.

How has Tunstall combined a preventative approach, public-private collaboration, technology and continuous improvement to create an international reference site for teleassistance delivery in Spain?

## What is teleassistance?

The Tunstall teleassistance service combines telecare monitoring and response, coordinates social care and third party services and delivers proactive outbound contact from monitoring centres. Teleassistance aims to provide continued contact and support to older and vulnerable people in the community, helping them to remain independent for as long as possible and delay or avoid the need for more complex interventions.

Tunstall supports over 165,000 people in Catalonia; 85,000 under Barcelona's municipal teleassistance service, and 80,000 under Barcelona's Local Teleassistance Service (SLT). The SLT has been delivered by Tunstall since 2005, in which time the service has increased from 3,800 service users. Commissioned by Barcelona Provincial Council in conjunction with the municipalities in the province, and currently 12% of people aged 65 years and over and 31% of people aged over 80 receive the SLT service.



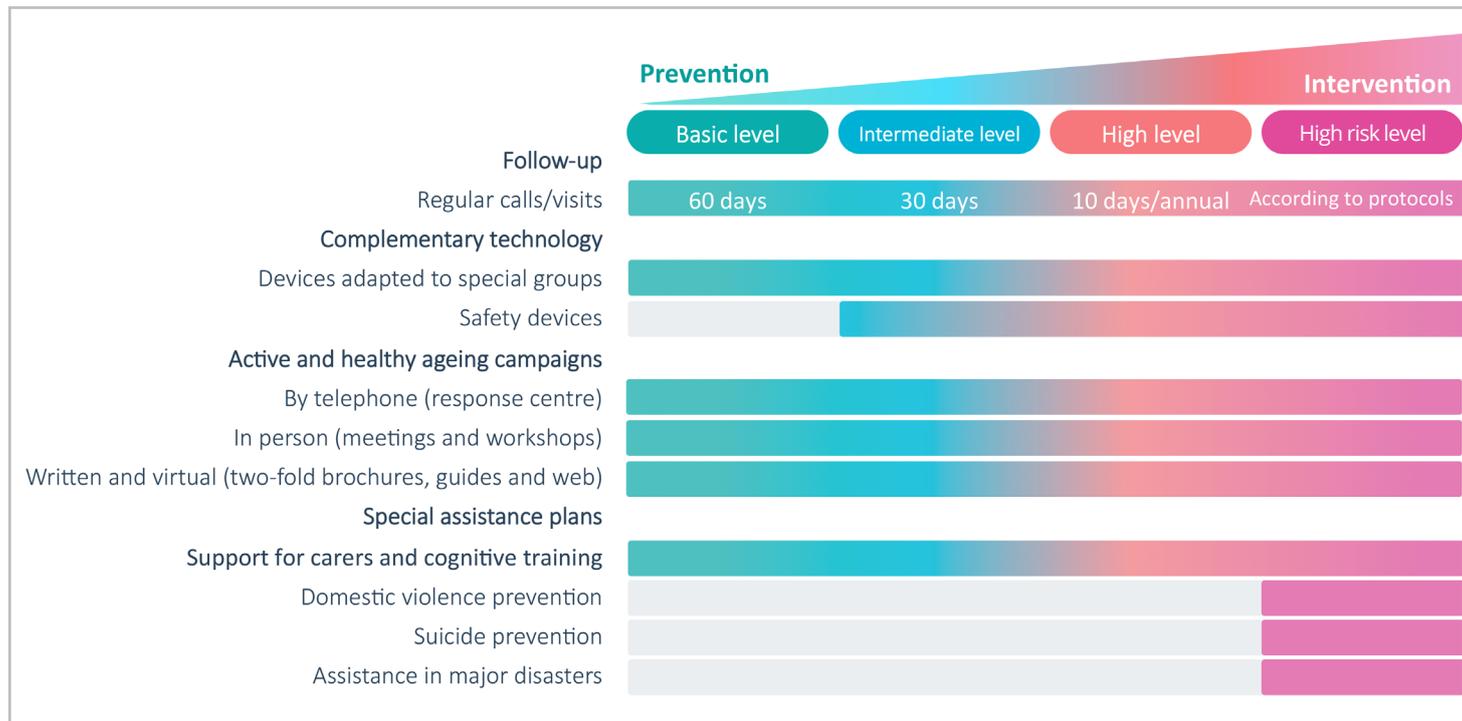
## Highlights

- 475,000 service users across Spain
- 17.7 million calls handled<sup>1</sup> across 8 centres
- Tiered service according to need
- Preventative approach with outbound calls and rapid response
- Co-ordinated across multiple stakeholders
- Reduced A&E visits and ambulance call outs
- Delayed admissions to residential care

<sup>1</sup> 2016 figures

# What is the Tunstall teleassistance model?

The model is based on a tiered system of needs-based intervention:



## Preventing as well as reacting

Including prevention in the delivery model has been a key contributor to the success of the teleassistance service. It has significantly reduced the number of emergency service escalations, improved the wellbeing of users and made effective use of public services.

Operators at the monitoring centre answer incoming calls in an average time of less than 10 seconds, and approximately 60% of calls are outbound. Operators proactively call service users on a regular basis to check on their wellbeing, remind them of appointments, prompt them to take medication, confirm medication has been delivered or wish them a happy birthday. The frequency of contact is adjusted depending upon the needs of the individual. Operators will also contact service users who experience a crisis, such as a bereavement, to offer reassurance and assess their mood and health.

Special protocols and skilled staff are in place to support service users where there is risk of suicide or abuse, and in the event of major disasters.

Tunstall also provides a programme called Let's Talk (Hablemos de), where operators make calls to discuss public health issues relevant to users, such as tips for fire safety in the home, advice on how to prevent the spread of flu, ways of dealing with periods of warmer or colder weather air pollution,

or how to prevent allergies. Tunstall works with the council and other public services such as health, fire and rescue and the police to refine the advice they give as part of the programme, define protocols and agree prevention/training campaign delivery.

## Integrated response services

The Barcelona SLT service includes 29 mobile response units that cover the entire area of service, enabling a 24-hour response to possible emergencies or technical issues at users' homes. Mobile response units are classified in two types, depending on their activity: primary mobile response units and secondary mobile response units.

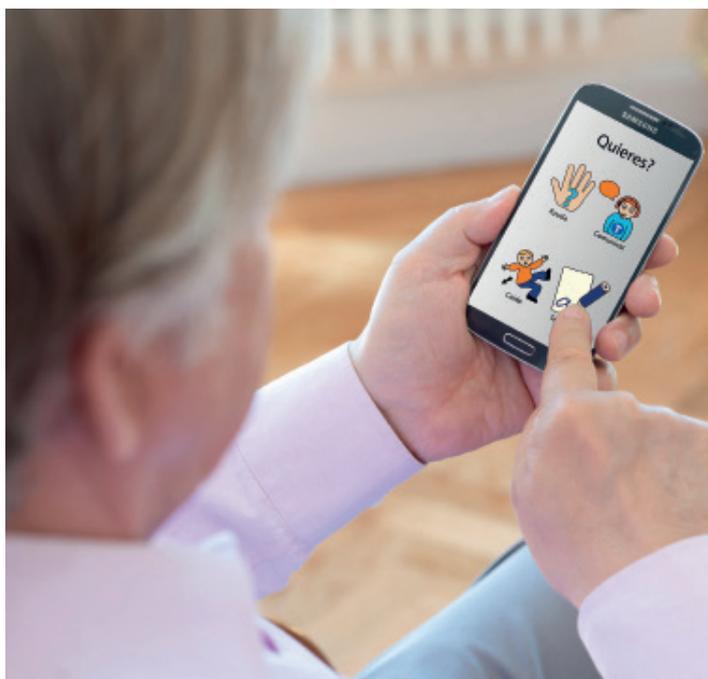
There are 16 primary mobile response units in Barcelona province (which includes 310 towns) which attend emergencies at home (e.g. a fall) and also provide a priority response in other cases (e.g. a disconnected home unit). The SLT also has 13 secondary mobile response units, which manage scheduled activity (e.g. checking sensors or collecting keys from users). This structure increases the effectiveness of the mobile response.

The Service Level Agreement requires that responders must reach addresses in Barcelona province within 40 minutes in case of emergency. Each vehicle is equipped with medical

equipment and manned by specialist trained social care technicians offering swift support; for example first aid, helping users after a fall and supporting people who feel depressed. The social workers also conduct annual follow-up visits to users, to assess their status and, if necessary, amend their service accordingly.

## Advanced technologies to support users

The teleassistance service can provide more advanced telecare such as falls, smoke, gas and carbon monoxide detectors and sensors which monitor activity/inactivity. Today there are more than 5,500 of these sensors in operation. Tunstall has also developed CareChat, enabling the service to be accessed by people with communication difficulties, through the use of smartphones and a decision tree with predefined pictograms and text.



CareChat - supporting people with communication difficulties with pictograms and text

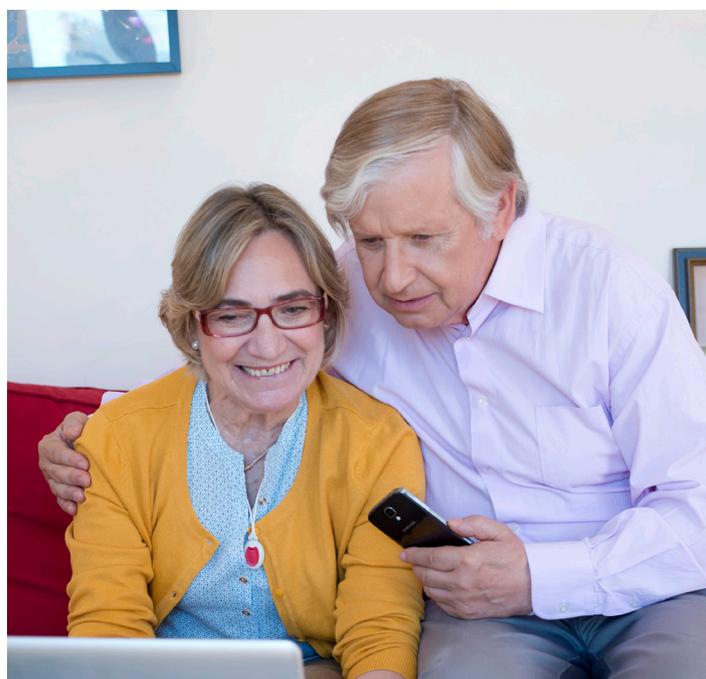
## Inter-municipal network

When Tunstall began to deliver the SLT in 2005, it worked with Barcelona Provincial Council and the 310 municipalities in the province to design a unique public service model to support older people and those with long-term health and care needs. By delivering a public teleassistance service under a single contract, public resources are used efficiently, there is greater consistency across the region and innovation is enabled and encouraged. Delivering the service in this way also enables increased co-operation with emergency services, successfully

managing crises in the home such as falls, and local situations such as floods, fires and extreme temperatures in a co-ordinated way.

## Professional and vocational training

Tunstall strives for excellence, and the dedication, professionalism and experience of the 260 people working each day to deliver the SLT is an essential part of success of the model. Approximately 35% of staff work in the monitoring centre, and around half are home care personnel, such as mobile response officers, social workers, and technicians/installers. Over half of Tunstall's employees have a university qualification in a relevant field, such as social care.



## Additional campaigns and programmes

Tunstall also provides the following services:

- **Health** – campaign to promote healthy lifestyles, programme focused on people with long-term conditions
- **Safety** – campaigns to prevent falls, improve safety at home, improve safety away from home
- **Inclusion** – campaign to reduce social isolation
- **Carers** – campaign to support carers

## Outcomes

Teleassistance provides preventative, proactive support to more independent service users. Vulnerable or at risk service users receive increased levels of support according to their need. Care services are prioritised and co-ordinated to ensure resources are used effectively and focused on the areas where they will deliver the best outcomes. The service has significantly delayed unwanted moves into residential care, and reduced emergency calls from end users and their families which has correspondingly reduced ambulance call outs and A&E attendances. The Fundación Salud y Envejecimiento UAB, FSiE-UAB (Health and Ageing Foundation of the Autonomous University of Barcelona) is a non-profit entity that works as a research and knowledge-transfer centre specialised in health sciences, ageing and health and social care. It undertook a study of the impact of the telecare service, based on the data generated by a phone survey that took place between November 2015 and February 2016 calling two distinct groups:

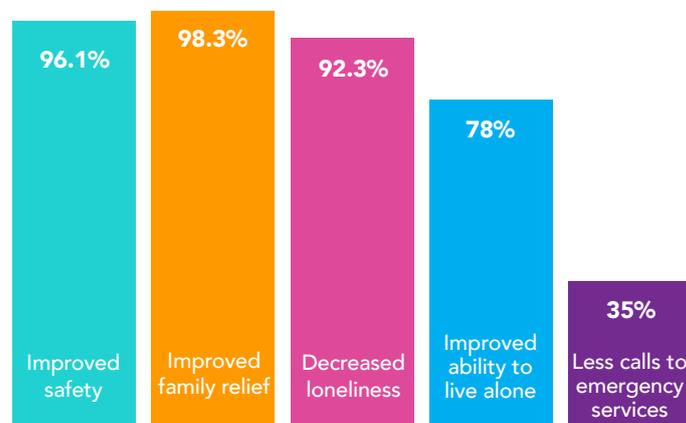
- Intervention group: 500 elderly people who have used the telecare service for 6 months.
- Control group: 700 elderly people who are on a waiting list to have the service installed.

Both groups share similar characteristics with regards to their socio-demographic background, health, a need for

personal support and help with daily basic tasks and a need for social support. Both the intervention group and the control group have been asked about their situation at the time the survey took place and their situation 6 months prior to it. 67% of the users selected to take part in the survey accepted to do so and the impact assessment was carried out in accordance with the difference in differences method.

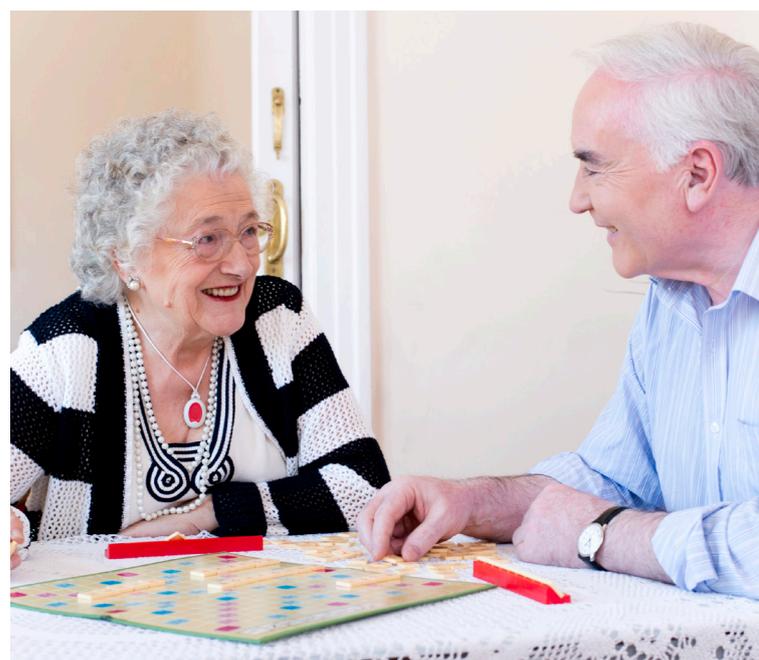
Results are shown in the table below:

Impact of telecare services based on explicit evaluation



“ I am very happy with the service. Whenever I have a problem they're always there to help and there's always someone here very quickly if you fall. I had left things on the stove before and there could have been a fire, so I was given a heat detector. I haven't burned anything since, but I know that if I do the service will keep me safe at home.

**Aurora, 81, telecare service user**



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