

# TELEHEALTH IN ENGLAND: A 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY RESPONSE TO AGEING

Jennifer Lynch, University of Birmingham

# Aims



- Introduction to telehealth
- Telehealth research in Sandwell
- The future of telehealth as a response to ageing

# What is telehealth?\*

- Definitions vary across contexts
- 'telecare', 'telehealth', 'telemedicine' used interchangeably although key differences
- Reflective of rapid development and multiple stakeholders

*'the use of information and communication technology to facilitate health and social care delivery to individuals in their own homes'*  
(Barlow, Bayer & Curry, 2006)

\*This is a key problem for policy, academia and industry!

# Telecare Vs. Telehealth

Telecare can be low and hi-tech, stand alone or connected to a hub



Telehealth monitors health remotely, e.g. vital signs for patients with LTC



# A new definition for telehealth...

‘the means by which technologies and related services concerned with people’s health and wellness are accessed by or provided at a distance’

(Fisk, 2013)



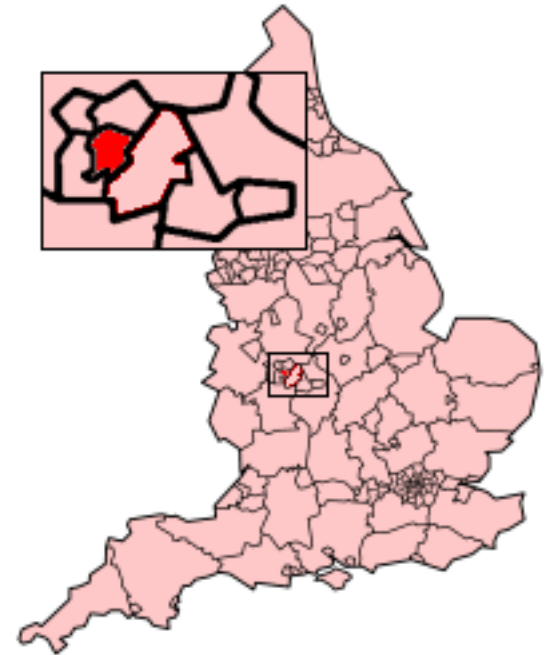
# Current research focus

---

- Lack of evidence – being addressed by Whole Systems Demonstrator and DALLAS programmes
- Barriers to implementation – early adopters Vs wider uptake
- De-personalisation of care – fear of service reduction; isolation of patients; ethical debate
- Self-management and empowerment – does telecare encourage this?

# Telecare & Telehealth in Sandwell

- ESRC CASE studentship funded
- Sandwell PCT and MBC
- MedilinkWM and Alvolution



# Questions raised by case study

---

- ▣ Commissioning
- ▣ Decision making
- ▣ Assessment
- ▣ Patient experience
- ▣ The role of stakeholders



# The aspirations & practice of telehealth

---

- What are the aspirations for telehealth?
- Are the aspirations realised in practice?
- What does it mean to live independently?
- Is telehealth empowering?
- What is the involvement of service users in decision-making processes?
- Whose needs does telehealth meet?

# Methodology & methods

- Qualitative research – single case study drawing on national and global context
- Approx. 22 narrative interviews with LA & NHS staff; service users & carers; industry reps; third sector
- Non-participant observation of multi-stakeholder meetings
- Observations of telecare assessment visits, equipment installation, and review visits.

# The future of telehealth

- Develop consumer market and hi-tech SMART homes
- Example: West Bromwich i-House by MedilinkWM



# The future of telehealth

- Extension of existing technology to increase wellbeing and community links:
  - ▣ Sandwell Virtual Visiting
  - ▣ Sandwell COPD pilot
  - ▣ NHS Walsall memory test app pilot
  - ▣ Mindings



# References

- Barlow, J., Bayer, S. & Curry, R. (2006) 'Implementing complex innovations in fluid multi-stakeholder environments: Experiences of telecare', *Technovation*, 26: 396-406.
- Gale, N. & Sultan, H. (2013) 'Telehealth as 'peace of mind': embodiment, emotions and the home as primary health space for people with chronic obstructive pulmonary disorder', *Health and Place*, 21: 140-147.
- [www.redembedded.com/systems](http://www.redembedded.com/systems) (Virtual Visiting)
- [www.mindings.com](http://www.mindings.com) (Social networking)
- [www.cantabmobile.com](http://www.cantabmobile.com) (Memory test app)