

## DESCRIPTION OF THE PRACTICE

### 1. Title of the practice

- *'SEVERI – VIRTUAL CARE AND TECHNOLOGY IN SERVICES FOR OLDER PEOPLE IN FINLAND'* -

### 2. Organisation responsible for the practice

City of Lahti, Finland

### 3. Contact person(s)

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### 4. Summary of the practice

SEVERI - telecare and technology in services for older people - is located in the City of Lahti, in Southern Finland. It is a joint programme between the services for older people, rehabilitation and welfare services.

It introduced virtual home care visits by practical nurses covering:

- guidance on medicine intake;
- nutrition advice and guidance on warming up food;
- guidance on taking blood sugar measurements and injecting insulin;
- online counselling: nurses will answer general questions about health and social care.

The nurse can set up an online video call with the older person and provide guidance on the issues listed above. The older person has a ten-inch tablet at home through which they can connect with the nurse and receive guidance and information. The nurse can put the older person in touch with their doctor when necessary. They can also use it to contact up to five friends simultaneously and relatives as well as other service users if they wish to.

The service enables the older service users to be better informed and in control of their health and care needs, taking into account their own interests and preferences. VideoVisit Ltd provides the technology. They are based in Finland and are a global frontrunner in the video-based customer care market. VideoVisit is especially focused on integrating online video communication into existing customer service processes, allowing service providers to offer services to their customers through online video communication.

### 5. National/regional/local context of the practice

The Act on Supporting the Functional Capacity of the Older Population and on Social and Health Services for Older Persons that came into force in 2013 provides the legal framework for this initiative. It intends to ensure that older people receive care according to their individual needs and on an equal basis nationwide through high-quality social welfare and health care services. The Act specifies the responsibilities of local authorities and guarantees better availability of necessary services for older people.

Another relevant policy document is the Quality recommendation for services for older people that was introduced by the Ministry for Social Affairs and Health in 2013. It aims to maintain quality of life throughout the ageing process and to improve services.

The main reasons for starting this initiative were the growing number of older people who live alone and the rising costs of care services they use. The purpose is to develop virtual care visits so that services can reach the growing number of older people.

The service can provide a sense of safety and belonging. Users are not as lonely at home when they can be in contact with the nurse and acquaintances through video calls.

Moreover, the municipality is saving costs by reducing the time nurses spend travelling to service users' homes.

#### 6. Staff involved

Nurses who take on the virtual care responsibility.

#### 7. Target group

Older people who are at home and need some support in their daily life from a health professional.

#### 8. Aims of the practice

One of the aims is to bring support services to the growing number of older people and to lower costs in an efficient way. Another focus of the project is to enable older people to live at home for longer.

The initiative improves services, improves contact with relatives, supports daily activities and rehabilitation of the older person, increases networking between older people, and prevents loneliness.

#### 9. Issues for social services

Service Integration/ Cooperation across Services		Service Planning		Contracting	
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Technology	x	Skills development (of the workforce)		Quality of services	
Prevention and rehabilitation	x	Participation of service users		Volunteering	
<b>ANALYSIS OF THE PRACTICE</b>					
<b>10. Status</b>					
Pilot project (ongoing)	x	Project (ongoing)		Implemented practice (restricted areas)	
Pilot project (terminated)		Project (terminated)		Widely spread practice/rolled out	

### 11. Scope of the practice

Describe the setting of the practice, considering the following criteria:

- *Micro-level practice:* a practice that involves individuals at the local level
- *Meso-level practice:* a practice that involves organisations or communities
- *Macro level practice:* a practice that involves large population groups

Micro level: Practice involves nurses in the City of Lathi and the older people using the service.

### 12. Leadership and management of the practice

Description of the leadership of the practice, considering the following criteria:

- *Collaborative management:* shared between large partnerships, often of central, regional and local representation
- *Organisational management:* by one organisation
- *Professional management:* managed by a single person
- *Shared management:* shared with no defined leadership

Organisational management: led by the health and social care department of the City of Lathi

Support from the leadership is very important. Supervisors (leaders) have to be enthusiastic and inspire employees about the new initiative.

It is the project manager's duty to guarantee that the project is proceeding and that virtual care is taken into practice. Unit leaders need to ensure that virtual care is implemented and that employees are seeing the benefits of virtual care and are adopting the new care concept.

The leadership of the social and health care department in Lahti are now experienced in using virtual care and is willing to disseminate the practice to the whole county of Päijät-Häme.

### 13. Engaging stakeholders in the practice

*Description of the engagement of stakeholders, considering the following criteria:*

- *Individual practice:* individuals have sought practice change
- *Network approach:* one or more organisations develop a network
- *Collaborative approach:* large collaboration with relevant stakeholders

The City of Lahti has provided the premises for the unit and appointed the project leader.

Severi virtual care and technology unit is part of the home care service of the city of Lahti and provides the service throughout the city. The virtual care service is available not only to current users of home care services but to all older people who could benefit. A project manager leads the project, but the virtual care and technology unit also has its own leader.

### 14. Involvement of service users and their families

*Description of the involvement of service users, considering the following criteria:*

- *Team involvement:* service users and carers were part of the practice team
- *Consultative:* a consultative body of users was set up for an ongoing dialogue and feedback
- *Involvement in care:* person-centred approaches to care/support

Service users are involved in designing the service.

Some tools enable older people to take more control of their situation themselves, including a GPS tracking watch intended for service users with dementia. This can help to locate the service user, providing an additional safety measure.

### 15. Costs and resources needed for implementation

*Description of how the practice is financed, considering the following criteria:*

- *Within existing resources:* staff time and other resources are provided 'in-house.'
- *Staffing costs:* costs for staff investment
- *Joint/Pooled budgets:* two or more agencies pool budgets to fund services
- *Funded project:* external investment

The virtual care service is currently free of charge for the service user.

Resources needed:

- Planning of the initiative.
- Two practical nurses are now working in the unit for virtual care and technology who do the virtual home visits, training, installations and orders of the equipment.
- Training the service users.
- Marketing of the service.

## 16. Evaluation approaches

Description of the evaluation method of the practice, considering the following criteria:

- *Multi-method*: use of both a qualitative and a quantitative approach
- *Single method*: a qualitative or quantitative approach
- *Audit*: looks at data sources such as existing medical records and/or other routinely collected service data.
- *Informal*: refers to in-house service evaluation using locally designed tools and/or collecting opportunistic feedback
- *No evaluation*
- *An evaluation is planned*

Single method: Online feedback surveys for the service users and their relatives are used to evaluate the project. A quantitative analysis of the surveys is a key part of the evaluation.

## 17. Measurable effects of the practice and what it has achieved for...

Service users	n. a.
Formal caregivers	n. a.
Informal carers	n. a.
Organisations	n. a.
Other	n. a.

## 18. Anticipated or 'aspirational' effects of the practice and what it has achieved for...

This category can include outcomes which are not documented, quantified or properly evaluated. They can include such elements as improved knowledge, quality, workforce, etc.

Service users	Social support and safety in the community
Formal care givers	Safety and supervision of older people
Informal carers	n. a.
Organisations	Reduced running costs for the home care service
Other	n. a.

## 19. How the practice has changed the way the service is provided (lessons learned)

What worked well:

- Equipment and online connections are working well.
- Promoting the use of technology as a resource in care for older people.

What did not work well:

- Engaging employees is difficult and requires a lot of resources.

## 20. Sustainability of the practice

*Description of whether the practice is sustainable, considering the following criteria:*

- *Potential for sustainability:* practice was newly started or is ongoing/not yet mainstreamed. How could the practice be sustained (in terms of resources)?
- *Organic sustainability:* service users have been empowered to take the practice forward •  
*Established:* the project has been operational for several years

Virtual care will be one of the established services in Lahti's social and health care sector. It would be easily transferable to other health and social care systems.

## 21. Transferability of the practice

*Description of whether the practice has been transferred, considering the following criteria:*

- *Transferred:* transfer to other regions, countries, service user groups, etc.
- *Potential for transferability:* there is interest from the outside; elements of the practice have been taken up and used elsewhere; material for transferability (for ex. training material) has been developed

It is commonly used in the City of Helsinki, where they place over 15,000 virtual home care calls per month for up to 600 service users. With virtual home care, the City of Helsinki was able to save close to EUR 3 million with 300 service users in 2015.

## 22. Further information

The virtual home care platform provider for both Lahti and Helsinki is VideoVisit Ltd, <https://www.videovisitlive.com>.