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CASE STUDY

FIFE COUNCIL PLACE
RESIDENT ENGAGEMENT
AT THE FOREFRONT OF
CONNECTED HOME PILOT
PROJECT



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With a portfolio of over 32,000 properties, Fife Council is exploring a solution to monitor housing quality for all residents, ensuring every customer has access to a safe, sustainable, and healthy place to live.

To reach these goals, Fife Council has commenced a 12-month pilot project as part of its Housing Plus Programme. Aico's HomeLINK Connected Home Solution will be installed within 90 properties, covering a range of building archetypes.

As Scotland's third largest Council, Fife has resident welfare at the forefront of its mission as a housing provider, with the development of a dedicated resident engagement programme as a key objective of the pilot project.

THE GOALS OF THE PILOT PROJECT

Fife Council will trial the HomeLINK Connected Home Solution to measure the benefits of gathering data on indoor environmental conditions in order to improve housing quality and gain a detailed understanding of how their housing stock is performing.

There will be a total of 360 connected devices installed across the pilot project. Each property will have the following home life safety products:

- One Ei1020 Environmental Sensor installed in the bathroom to measure temperature and humidity. The bathroom is considered as a high-risk area due to humidity surges caused by baths and showers.
- A Ei1025 Environmental Sensor installed in both the living room and the bedroom to measure temperature, humidity, and carbon dioxide (CO₂). Within the majority of properties, these are considered the principal habitable rooms and are therefore critical areas that require monitoring.
- One Ei1000G Gateway - the hub of the connected home solution, which extracts data from the environmental sensors that will then be presented on the HomeLINK Portal.

Fife Council will utilise three specific use cases throughout the pilot project:

1. Damp and mould risk

Measuring temperature and humidity levels in high-risk rooms, such as bathrooms, will enable the Council to identify any homes at risk of developing damp and mould with an indication of whether the conditions have been created by structural or environmental factors.

2. Indoor air quality

Collecting temperature, humidity, and CO2 levels will enable Fife Council to pinpoint homes that have insufficient ventilation, for example due to a poorly specified ventilation system or a resident disabling that system. The data can be utilised to put measures in place that will improve indoor air quality, therefore reducing other risks such as damp and mould.

3. Excess cold and heat loss

Through measuring temperature trends across different property types, Fife Council can pinpoint properties that may be under-performing in terms of energy efficiency.

The 90 homes that have been selected for the pilot consist of Sheltered and Mainstream Housing, some of which have previously reported issues in relation to the above. Once the environmental sensors and gateway are installed, they will be gathering data for the next ten years.



RESIDENT ENGAGEMENT: THE FIRST STEP TO A SUCCESSFUL PROJECT

Introducing connected devices into residents' homes for this purpose is a relatively new concept, and as such, needs to be understood by residents to gain genuine buy-in of the technologies and to ensure they experience the system's benefits.

Understanding that residents are key to the success of the pilot project, Jillian Rodgers, Business Change Manager of Fife Council, knew it was essential to involve residents in every step of the process.

All residents participating in the pilot were invited to attend a resident engagement day, in association with Aico, for the opportunity to gain an insight into the project, products and technology. Residents also used the session to raise any questions or concerns.



To increase accessibility, sessions at different times of the day were available, and a home visit was arranged by the Housing Plus team for any residents who could not attend.

All employees of Fife Council who are involved with the project were also in attendance, so they could gain further insights and engage with residents. For those who could not attend, a video call or in-person meeting was carried out to share information on the pilot project and technology.



"The Environmental Sensor Engagement Day was a huge success with tenants, Housing and Building staff attending to learn more about the project. Working together with our Regional Specification Managers, Ryan Conway and David Richmond, Aico provided the knowledge during the course of the day to answer all enquiries. Delighted with the engagement throughout the day ensuring the sessions benefited all who attended.

Housing Plus Group



INTRODUCING THE ENVIRONMENTAL SENSORS

Residents were introduced to the environmental sensors that would be installed in their home and were provided with information on how they work and the type of data they collect. Further details were given regarding how actionable insights can be used to create healthier homes.

- Damp and mould (are there structural or environmental factors contributing to this risk)
-
- Excess cold and heat (energy efficiency or fuel poverty indicators)
-
- Allergy risk (are there conditions suitable for dust mites)
-
- Indoor air quality (is there adequate ventilation in the property)

For additional peace of mind, Aico's Regional Specification Managers explained the installation process to ensure residents there would be minimal disruption to their lives and home.

Both models of the environmental sensor have a 10-year lithium cell battery that does not need to be changed throughout the life of the alarm, as well as wireless interconnection with Gateway.



“The resident engagement day was a great success with a good turnout. The residents were engaged and learned the benefits of having environmental sensors in the property. Educating and working closely with the residents will be vital to the success of the pilot

Ryan Conway
Regional Specification Manager



EXPLORING THE HOMELINK APP FOR RESIDENTS

To engage with residents throughout the process, the participants were also given a live demonstration of the HomeLINK App.

The app provides residents with their home's data, empowering them to take control of the health of their home before landlord intervention is necessary. Residents will receive notifications with helpful tips and advice on how to remedy potential issues, why it is important to act, and what could happen if changes were not made.

In addition, throughout the project customer surveys will be carried out by Housing Plus, working closely with residents to ensure the project is delivered seamlessly, while assessing benefits for residents and Fife Council.

The findings from the pilot project and validation of the use cases will be explored in future case studies.

To learn more about Aico's Connected Home Solution, please visit:
www.aico.co.uk/homelink

