Friends of the Elderly acoustic monitoring at night

IMPLEMENTED 2019–2021 · CHARITIES AND NONPROFITS · UNITED KINGDOM · BAND C · CLAIMED ONLY
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A care charity linked AI acoustic monitors in residents' rooms to electronic care plans, so night staff respond to alerts instead of making routine room checks. After a two-year pilot it rolled the system out to all its care homes, by its account.

ABOUT THIS SYNOPSIS

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Facts and figures are as reported by the sources listed below, which may be incomplete, self-reported or out of date. Check the original source before relying on any figure.

The impact band, proof marker and SEAM view are MarLuc's opinion. The organisation is not a MarLuc client and has not reviewed or endorsed this synopsis. Names and trademarks belong to their owners.

NOTICE WORDING LAST UPDATED 16 NOVEMBER 2026

AT A GLANCE

AI used: Machine learning in wireless acoustic monitors that learn each resident's sound profile and raise alerts, linked to electronic care planning.

Implemented: 2019–2021. Grade: band C, Process change, Claimed only.

Headline result, as reported: Fewer falls and hospital admissions in the pilot homes and a rollout to all care homes, by the charity's account

1 · The case

The facts, as reported by the 5 sources listed at the end. Where a source is silent, the field says "Not reported".

Organisation

Friends of the Elderly. Charity running care homes and services for older people in England. 451 staff by headcount in 2024-25, per its annual report. Canvas block: 4. Operations and process. Also 5. People and skills, 6. Data and technology.

Business challenge

The challenge. Routine night-time checks meant going into residents' rooms and disturbing their sleep. The charity wanted a new way of working at night in which care staff safely respond to alerts instead, by its account.

Who implemented it

Ally Labs (Software vendor): Supplied the wireless acoustic monitors and their AI.
KareInn (Software vendor): Supplied the care planning software the alerts feed.
In-house (In-house): The charity's care teams adopted the new night-time way of working.
Funded by a grant from NHS Digital's Social Care Digital Pathfinders Programme.

Technology (SEAM pillar E)

SEAM types: T8 Predictive / ML models. Deployment: Not reported. Vendors and products: Ally Labs, KareInn, Ally wireless acoustic monitoring, KareInn care planning software, Sleep Handover Tool.

Where it was built in: Acoustic devices in residents' rooms send alerts to staff mobile devices, and the data is pushed to the charity's digital care planning system to pass insights from night to day shifts.

What changed

Before: scheduled physical checks at night. After: night staff respond to alerts and focus on residents with higher needs, and the system was rolled out to all the charity's care homes, by its account. Pilot results, by the charity's account: 55% fewer night-time falls, 20% fewer hospital admissions and 75% fewer unnecessary night checks in three homes; its annual report gives independently audited findings of 62% fewer falls and 43% fewer admissions. [1] [2] [3] [4] [5]

What it cost

NHS Digital Social Care Digital Pathfinders grant: £295,000 per the charity's 2020 release and 2021 blog; £340,000 per its 2020-21 annual report. Running cost after the grant: Not reported.

What it saved

Not reported in money. The annual report gives 87 falls prevented and 13 fewer hospital admissions in the audited findings. Ally said up to 40% of staff time was freed, per The Care Home Environment. [1] [2] [3] [4] [5]

Governance and control

Devices were installed with residents' explicit consent, and alerts go to care staff who decide how to respond, by the charity's account. The chief executive says NHS Digital independently audited the project; the audit report was not found. Accountable owner and data protection arrangements: Not reported.

S2 · Accountable owner · Claimed
The chief executive reported on the project and its rollout; a named project owner is not reported. [1] [2]

A1 · Safe use · Claimed
Devices were installed in residents' rooms with their explicit consent, by the chief executive's account. [2]

A2 · Human in the loop · Claimed
The devices alert the care team, who decide how to respond, by the charity's account. [1] [2]

A3 · Monitoring and assurance · Claimed
The charity says NHS Digital independently audited the project and reports audited findings; the audit report was not found. [2] [3]

A4 · Vendor AI · Not reported
The charity worked with two commercial suppliers, Ally Labs and KareInn; contract terms and checks on the suppliers' AI are not reported. [3]

A5 · Agent controls · Not reported
No agents described.

A6 · Standards and regulation · Not reported
Funded under NHS Digital's Social Care Digital Pathfinders Programme; no regulator finding on the system is reported. [3]

What worked, what did not, what is unproven

WORKED

– Fewer falls and hospital admissions in the pilot homes, by the charity's account.

– Fewer unnecessary night checks that disturbed residents' sleep, by the chief executive's account.

– Cough monitoring helped identify the charity's first Covid-19 positive resident in April 2020, by its annual report.

DID NOT

– Not reported

UNPROVEN

– Whether results held after rollout to all homes; the charity's later annual reports do not report on the system.

– The independent audit itself, which the charity cites but which was not found.

– Cost of running the system after the grant ended.

Timeline

2019 Ally acoustic monitoring devices installed to improve night-time care [4]

May 2020 Monitoring extended to daytime during Covid-19; Ally adds automatic cough detection [4]

Jul 2020 Charity announces the NHS Digital Pathfinders grant and integration with KareInn care planning, six months into the project [1]

Mar 2021 Second and final project year ends; annual report gives audited findings and says the system is being embedded in all care homes [3]

Aug 2021 Chief executive says the system has been rolled out to all care homes [2]

2 · Grade and SEAM assessment

MarLuc's opinion, made on the evidence above. How cases are graded: marluc.co.uk/case-studies/how-we-rate

Level of change and impact

Claimed: Not applicable. Grade: C, Process change. Proof: Claimed only. Level of change: Process change.

Process change (Level 2, band C). Night-time care was redesigned around alerts and rolled out to all homes, by the charity's account.

A process change: night-time care was redesigned around alerts instead of scheduled checks and rolled out to all homes, by the charity's account. The results are the charity's own and the audit it cites was not available.

The SEAM view and lessons learnt

The reported result came from a change to the night routine: staff respond to alerts instead of making fixed room checks, with alert data feeding the care plan and the day shift. The AI's part, classifying sounds against each resident's profile, cannot be separated from that new routine, the care planning link or Covid-era conditions in the comparison period. A leadership team should ask how false alerts and missed events are measured, and what the system costs once grant funding ends.

1. Redesign the shift routine around the alerts, as well as installing the technology.
2. Get each resident's consent before monitoring their room.
3. Publish the evaluation behind headline results and keep measuring after rollout.

Evidence

Score 1 of 4. Self-reported: the charity's release, blog and annual report; the annual report cites an independent audit that was not found.

Evaluation method. Before and after comparison: pilot homes against the previous nine months, by the chief executive's account; the annual report cites independently audited findings.

Sources disagree. The chief executive's blog and KareInn's chief executive give 55% fewer night-time falls and 20% fewer hospital admissions; the 2020-21 annual report gives independently audited figures of 62% fewer falls and 43% fewer admissions. The grant is £295,000 in the 2020 release and 2021 blog and £340,000 in the annual report.

Status. In use at last report: the 2020-21 annual report says acoustic monitoring was being embedded into all care homes, and in August 2021 the chief executive said it had been rolled out to all of them. Later use and results: Not reported.

3 · Original sources

Read these in full. To challenge a fact or a grade, use the contact form at marluc.co.uk or the link on https://marluc.co.uk/case-studies/friends-of-the-elderly-acoustic-monitoring

[1] Friends of the Elderly: Improving rapid assistance and quality of sleep for our residents (July 2020)
https://fote.org.uk/news/2020/07/14/improving-rapid-assistance-and-quality-of-sleep-for-our-residents/

[2] Friends of the Elderly: How new technology is helping us improve care in our homes (chief executive's blog, August 2021)
https://fote.org.uk/blog/2021/08/27/how-new-technology-is-helping-us-improve-care-in-our-homes

[3] Charity Commission register: Friends of the Elderly annual report and financial statements, year ended 31 March 2021
https://register-of-charities.charitycommission.gov.uk/en/charity-search?p_p_id=uk_gov_ccew_onereg_charitydetails_web_portlet_CharityDetailsPortlet&p_p_lifecycle=2&p_p_state=maximized&p_p_mode=view&p_p_resource_id=%2Faccounts-resource&p_p_cacheability=cacheLevelPage&_uk_gov_ccew_onereg_charitydetails_web_portlet_CharityDetailsPortlet_objectiveId=A11524494&_uk_gov_ccew_onereg_charitydetails_web_portlet_CharityDetailsPortlet_priv_r_p_mvcRenderCommandName=%2Faccounts-and-annual-returns&_uk_gov_ccew_onereg_charitydetails_web_portlet_CharityDetailsPortlet_priv_r_p_organisationNumber=226064

[4] The Care Home Environment: Friends of the Elderly wireless acoustics tech proves sound investment (May 2020)
https://thecarehomeenvironment.com/story/32835/friends-of-the-elderly-wireless-acoustics-tech-proves-sound-investment

[5] Friends of the Elderly: annual report and financial statements, year ended 31 March 2025
https://fote.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2026/01/FotE-FS-2025-for-charity-comm-public.pdf

Friends of the Elderly website: https://fote.org.uk

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