

gadgets case studies

Florence and GPS



Florence is in her early fifties and has a degenerative condition and unstable diabetes. This means she has frequent falls caused by mini-blackouts. She has no warning when these black-outs will occur. She had to retire from work early but is physically active, enjoying taking her dog out for frequent walks. Her main concern was becoming unwell either at home or during a walk and not being able to raise an alarm. She has a family member who lives close by and can respond if Florence becomes unwell, but only if she is alerted.

Florence's social worker called the Gadgets team because she wondered whether a falls detector could be used. The Gadgets team recommended two devices to support Florence that address her concerns.



The first was a wrist worn falls detector which can detect if Florence has a fall when at home. This is connected to Solihull Community Housing's Telecare service which can contact Florence's family member to respond, or provide a response service if her family member is not available. The falls detector has an alarm button that can be used if help is required and can even be worn in the shower.

A GPS device was provided to help her family member track her whereabouts if she becomes concerned about her. This uses global positioning technology to provide a location – this is similar to the technology used in a 'sat-nav' and in many mobile phones. This small, compact device offers a 24 hour a day service that can track Florence's location whenever necessary. This particular device is fitted with a falls detector which makes it ideal for Florence. If she falls due to a blackout then the device can automatically raise an alert, which in her case can be responded to by her sister. Furthermore it has a two way audio connection allowing the responder to speak to Florence (if she is able to do so).

Florence has a key safe fitted outside her house. This means that her family member and the Telecare service can gain entry in an emergency should Florence be unconscious.

Together, the falls detector and GPS device mean that Florence is able to go about her ordinary life (and do the things she wants to do) safe in the knowledge that when she has a blackout help can be summoned. Primarily this help comes from her family member but the telecare service offers a backup if this is required. These gadgets address her safety at home, and when she is away from home so that she can continue to live independently.