

# Just Checking Case Studies



The activity monitoring system  
**that supports independence**



# Reablement

Reablement is learning or re-learning skills to maintain a level of independence and choice and minimise ongoing support. And yes, it can apply to people with dementia or deteriorating memory problems too.

Just Checking gives a clearer picture of a person's capabilities and actions when they are alone, and the effect of services and interventions.

People with memory problems generally function better in their own home, where the familiar environment provides cues and reminders about what to do. An understanding of a person's living patterns, and the effect of the reablement services will help staff judge more accurately what is needed and what is not, what is working and what is not. This objective view is particularly useful when a service user is unable to provide reliable information themselves.

Reablement teams are routinely using Just Checking when working with clients with short-term memory problems. Practitioners install the portable, reusable system themselves.

## Maud

With a history of hypertension, Maud was admitted to hospital following a fall. During rehabilitation in an intermediate care centre, concerns were raised about her memory, disorientation, risks of falls and inability to maintain food and drink intake. Nevertheless, Maud was keen to go home.

Herefordshire's reablement team installed Just Checking and a falls detector, and provided personal care and help with meals. Once home, Maud showed a stable daily routine. She was capable of utilising the toilet independently without falling; in fact she was going upstairs to the toilet rather than using a commode installed downstairs. As this was her usual routine, the reablement team worked to reduce risks on this pattern of behaviour rather than attempting to impose an alternative. The system also showed carers were calling too early, and times were changed.

Andrew Morris, Service Development Lead, Herefordshire  
"Contrary to expectation, people with dementia can be re-abled. For people with short-term memory problems it is even more important to maintain them in a familiar environment where, we can see, they function much better."



## Benefits...

- Targeting real risks
- Removal of non-working intervention

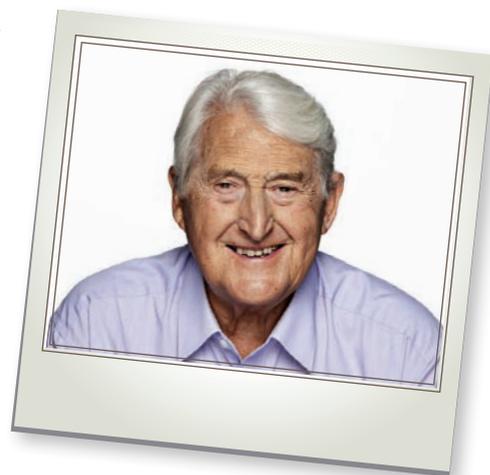
## Bob

When Bob's wife died it became clear how she had masked the extent of his confusion and short term memory problems. His supportive family thought it would be best if he moved to a care home.

An assessment with Just Checking showed Bob maintained a daily routine. The reablement team suggested supporting Bob in his familiar surroundings, with training in simple meal preparation, and the addition of some other telecare equipment to manage specific risks. 8 months later Bob remains in his own home with the support of his family, supplemented by care workers. Bob's care package is £200 a week less than the cost of residential care, and his family's perception of him being at risk has reduced from high to low.

*Julie Taylor, daughter*

"We thought a care home was the only option for Dad until the Cannock reablement team installed Just Checking and gave us access to the charts. Things were not as bad as we feared and with guidance at the right time of day, Dad is OK at home, which is where he wants to stay for as long as possible."



### Benefits...

- Maintained home independence
- Care plan savings

## Eileen

When Eileen Page started suffering hallucinations she was admitted to 24 hour respite care for assessment and medication management. Sadly, her husband passed away while she was in care, and with fears that Eileen would not cope on her own, she moved to residential care. But Eileen deteriorated, slowing down and relying heavily on staff.

Gateshead Elderly MHT suggested a trial at home and Eileen's family were keen to try. Getting Eileen home after 5 months involved the co-ordination of professionals, care staff and the family. Possible risks were that she might not manage at home, or that she might become distressed and leave the flat to look for others. Her daughters planned to be with her for much of the day, but they were nervous about what would happen at night. A door exit alert was installed as well as Just Checking.

Within days of being home Eileen was filling her time in her own flat, cleaning up and moving things about; she had always been a proud housekeeper. She did not attempt to go out at night.

*Gateshead Elderly Mental Health Team*

"We could see, objectively, what Eileen was doing, so that relevant changes could be made to care or medications. We could also see that different family members had an effect on Eileen's sleep patterns, so the family soon worked out the best way to share looking after their mum. The best thing is Eileen is filling much of her own time and her sense of humour is back."



### Benefits...

- Back home after 5 months in care
- Better occupied in her own home

# Efficient assessment and care management

## Elsie

Elsie Bowler has dementia but is keen to continue living in her own flat. She can manage most daily tasks such as getting up and dressed, and using the kitchen.

She has two homecare visits a day, at breakfast and teatime. Her daughter, Elaine, calls in twice a week during her work lunch break. Elaine does the shopping, and organises cleaning and maintenance of her mother's home. Mrs Bowler is a very private person, and often asks care staff to leave as soon as they arrive.

The home carers reported that Mrs Bowler often refused to eat during their visits. The social worker was considering a further care visit at lunchtime. Elaine sometimes found her mother asleep in a chair and wondered if her mother was up in the night and had lost the sense of time.

Just Checking showed that Mrs Bowler has a consistent daily routine. She usually gets up at around 8am, and spends time in the kitchen. By the time the homecare team visits, Mrs Bowler has had breakfast. She visits the kitchen just after 12 noon, to make lunch. If the evening homecare visit is earlier than 5pm, Mrs Bowler does not wish to eat, but she goes in to the kitchen later. Regular visits to the bathroom indicate that she is eating and drinking.

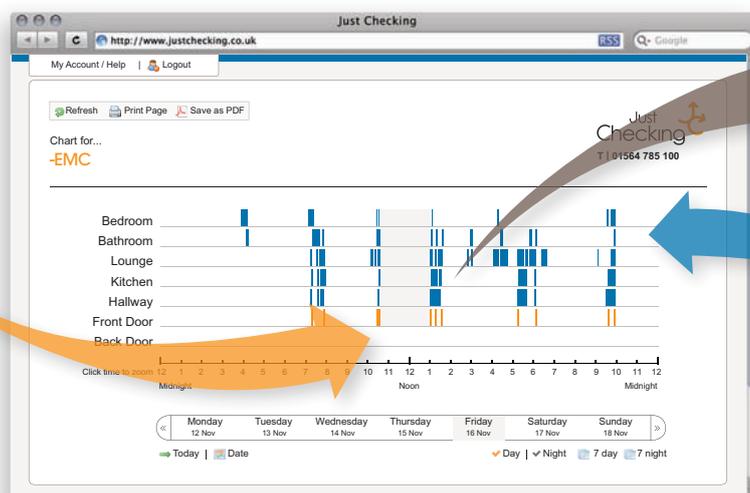
There are periods of quiet, but Mrs Bowler was generally more active than her family thought. She goes to bed at around 9pm. There are night visits to the bathroom, but she returns to bed. Mrs Bowler's routine was the same even when care visits were missed at a weekend.

Since the homecare calls had little effect on Mrs Bowler's meals it was decided to withdraw the teatime visit. Elaine wished to retain a daily visit, but to change the emphasis. She had noticed that her mother was not changing her clothes, so the morning visit was refocused to encourage Mrs Bowler to shower a couple of times a week and ensure her clothes were changed.



## Benefits...

- Concerns about eating and sleeping allayed
- Care plan re-targeted, cost savings £2600 pa
- Objective information on missed homecare calls



Front Door:  
Homecare  
visits...

Kitchen:  
Meal  
Preparation...

Bathroom:  
Regular  
visits...

## Michael

Mike Horley lives in a housing association bungalow. He receives support from the Community Mental Health Team (CMHT), housing association warden, and two visits a day from support staff.

The warden became concerned that Mike was not sleeping or eating properly and might be leaving the property during the night, putting himself at risk.

Just Checking demonstrated that Mike did not leave the bungalow at night, and was sleeping and visiting the kitchen appropriately. His daily time patterns had altered slightly, and as a result, his morning and evening visits were moved to a later time.



*Social Worker, North Yorkshire County Council*

**“Just Checking prevented additional visits and unnecessary equipment being implemented, resulting in better use of resources for both Mike, and for Adult and Community Services.”**

## Benefits...

- Care visit times altered
- No need for additional visits

## Isobel

Isobel Jennings displayed ‘challenging behaviour’ when the home care team first started calling to assist with morning washing and dressing. In fact, she hit out at a couple of members of staff, and they were reluctant to continue making the calls.

Just Checking revealed that Isobel usually retired to bed between 3am and 4am, so the 7.45am home care call was not appreciated!



*Andrew Sheehan, Telecare Development Manager,  
Birmingham City Council*

**“The problem was quickly resolved by rescheduling the call for late morning, which resulted in a much happier Mrs Jennings, and a much happier and productive homecare team too.”**

## Benefits...

- Discovered the cause of challenging behaviour
- Improved care team efficiency by altering visit times

**“Just Checking helps me to stay independent and active in my own home. I can get on with life, and my daughter knows if I need a little more help.”**

Jack, 82

Jack Walters, 82 was diagnosed with dementia 3 years ago. Physically fit, he goes out for a walk each day and is adamant he should stay in his own home. Just Checking was installed 9 months ago for assessment, and his daughter, Rachel, decided to keep the system in.

Rachel logs on each morning to see what sort of night her father has had before ringing him in the morning. She logs on again late afternoon, when she is home from work, to check he has returned from his walk. Rachel's husband logs on at work or via his mobile phone.

*Rachel, daughter*

“Peace of mind, that’s what this brings. I can see he is visiting the kitchen regularly, and that homecare has visited. If he has had a disturbed night it is usually a warning of a change in health, which we are then able to manage.”



# Supporting Hospital Discharge

## Margaret

Margaret Abrams was admitted to hospital for treatment for a urinary tract infection. She was so confused and disorientated in hospital that her son didn't think it was feasible for his mother to return home. An OT suggested a home trial, installing Just Checking primarily to see what was happening at night; there were concerns that Margaret would try and leave the house.

Margaret quickly re-orientated once back at home. After only a night or two she settled into a clear day and night time pattern, taking herself to bed around 10pm, with no attempts to leave the house after the evening home care visit.



Julie Penkett, OT, Leeds Partnership Trust

"Being able to see a patient's pattern of living at home during a phased discharge has changed staff views about who it is possible to discharge. There is no doubt that 'home' helps to re-orientate patients with memory problems."

## Benefits...

- Home from hospital despite doubts
- Re-established routines

## Rita

Rita Howard responded well to psychiatric hospital treatment for an acute depressive episode, but ward staff were concerned about her lack of functioning and recommended a residential placement.

Rita was adamant she wanted to go home. Staffordshire's Well-Being Older People's Team advocated a structured return home, challenging the need for residential care. The care package initially provided 4 homecare visits a day, plus the support of a mental health support worker and Rita's daughter, to help Rita reacquaint herself with home. From the outset, Rita quickly re-established a routine, sleeping through the night and preparing drinks and snacks in her kitchen.



Jim Ellam, Assistive Technology Lead,  
Staffordshire County Council

"The objective information led to Rita's care package being adjusted, moving resources from homecare to social opportunities. It also helped hospital staff to appreciate that Rita could be more independent away from a ward setting. More than a year later, Rita is still living independently."

## Benefits...

- Challenged move from psychiatric hospital to residential care
- Changed hospital staff view

# Postponing Residential Care

## Lisa

Lisa's family was concerned that she was frequently leaving her house during the day and night. With an acquired brain injury, 60 year old Lisa has 4 care visits a day to assist with meals, personal care and medication, but carers occasionally find she is out when they call. Lisa enjoys walking, and is a frequent customer at the local garage shop 200 yards from her house.

Believing her to be unsafe at night Lisa's family thinks she should be in 24 hour care, but Lisa has an advance directive that she wishes to stay in her own home.

Just Checking confirmed that Lisa is very busy when she is at home, and that she goes out on numerous occasions (8-15) every day. Her trips normally last 15-20 minutes, which fits in with walks to locations she is known to like to visit. She doesn't go out at night.



*Elaine Long, Social Worker, Warrington Borough Council*

"Just Checking system proved invaluable in the care management of this complex case. We were able to resolve issues around carer timekeeping, and provide objective data to counter unsubstantiated concerns from Lisa's family. Ultimately we can support Lisa, cost effectively, at home."

## Benefits...

- Avoided unnecessary 24hr care
- Improved cost efficiency of care visits

## Winnie

Winnie Shum lives in her own flat in a sheltered housing scheme. Other residents were complaining that Winnie was out at night ringing their doorbells. The day warden brought this to the attention of social services, suggesting Winnie should move to residential care. Winnie's family were not convinced she went out at night.

Just Checking showed that Winnie was indeed staying in her flat at night. It was another resident who was ringing the doorbells. Winnie was still in her own flat 7 months later.



*Barbara Archer, Planning Lead Assistive Technology, Leicester City Council*

"If Winnie had moved into residential care at that point the cost to date would be £15,000, for a level of care she does not yet need."

## Benefits...

- Objective information challenged unsubstantiated accusation
- Independence maintained

**“Some evenings I like watching TV with the others, and sometimes I like listening to music in my own room. I usually go to bed around 10pm, and I sort myself.”**

Jonathan, 26

Jonathan shares a supported living house with 2 other young adults. With staff on hand 24 hours a day, it is a reassuring but costly service. Just Checking helped to establish, objectively, the night time activity of service users and the level of demand on night staff.

It turns out there was scope for re-shaping the service, managing risk with a different and more cost effective combination of staff and telecare.

## **Carol**

Carol is an older adult with learning disabilities, who has lived independently for 18 years in a house with two other women. One of her housemates subsequently moved to a higher level of care, and recently her remaining housemate died. The learning disability service had to decide whether to move Carol, or whether she can manage alone. Carol is keen to stay in her home and her local community where she is happy and secure.

Just Checking showed Carol has a very consistent daily pattern, going to bed late, and getting up late too. Each afternoon she walks to the local shops, where she is well known, to buy her groceries, and each evening she prepares herself a meal. Carol is coping well.





# What is Just Checking?

Just Checking is a simple web-based activity monitoring system. Small wireless sensors in the home generate a chart of activity which is accessed via a secure website. Health and social care professionals, and family members can see when a person:

- got up and went to bed, and whether they had a disturbed night
- visited the kitchen to prepare meals and drinks
- left the house and for how long
- and generally, their daily patterns and how they are responding to care services

Observing how a person is using the space in their home throughout the 24 hour period is surprisingly powerful information. An understanding of day and night time patterns allows care to be targeted to best effect, and to gauge the response to services.

Activity monitoring gives people a new way to communicate their capabilities. People who are unable to say much about their daily living activities may run the risk of decisions being made on subjective information from families or concerned neighbours. Activity monitoring provides objective information, which shows what a person is able to do for themselves, and in effect, gives them a voice in decision making.



## Just Checking Ltd.

The Mill, Brome Hall Lane, Lapworth,  
Solihull, Warwickshire B94 5RB

T | 01564 785100

E | [info@justchecking.co.uk](mailto:info@justchecking.co.uk)

[www.justchecking.co.uk](http://www.justchecking.co.uk)

 Government  
Procurement  
Service *supplier*