

Leading with trust, the future of delegation in care homes

Real stories from care management teams

Using RealWear technology to support delegated healthcare activities



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Background

Provide Community is a Community Interest Company (CIC) that also runs domiciliary care services in the North of England. The team identified a need for hands-free camera technology to support clinicians and care staff in delivering delegated healthcare activities remotely.

After researching options, they selected the American RealWear headset, originally designed for industrial environments such as oil rigs and manufacturing. It integrates with Microsoft Teams, making it simple for clinicians to connect remotely without introducing complex systems and allows:



- hands-free operation which is voice activated for frontline staff
- real-time video feed (no recording, ensuring GDPR compliance and dignity)
- ability to zoom in/out and capture photos for clinical review
- integration with Microsoft Teams, reducing complexity and leveraging familiar platforms.

Funding for this project was secured through an NHS England digitisation bid, allowing the purchase of 35 headsets at a cost of £2,000 – £2,500 each. Looking ahead, Provide Community is exploring subscription and rental models with RealWear to ensure long-term affordability and scalability.



Developing the pilot project

The pilot began in Heybridge Care Home and expanded to four additional Essex homes (five in total). Initially planned as a six-week project, it was extended for three more months until the end of September 2025.

The technology was first applied in podiatry, supporting newly qualified staff to receive supervision from experienced podiatrists remotely. This approach supported skills development and confidence building without requiring senior clinicians to travel.

The idea for broader use came from clinicians, focusing on non-complex skin and wound care. The region's rural geography meant District Nurses (DNs) often spent 30+ minutes traveling to care homes. By using RealWear, DN's could redirect time to complex cases while care assistants received real-time guidance. Rather than introducing unfamiliar staff, this model enabled care to be provided by known and trusted care workers to the person drawing on care and support, promoting dignity and personalised support.

How it was set up and communicated

Posters were prominently displayed in care homes to inform staff, families, and people drawing on care and support about the project, highlighting the importance of consent and providing reassurance.

Families have shown strong support for the initiative, recognising its potential benefits. Consent is carefully obtained each time the headset is used, and the experience of a person declining participation highlights the critical role of clear communication and respect for individual choice. The headset itself operates much like a smartphone but offers a hands-free design, which helps reduce barriers for care staff and makes the technology more accessible in a care setting.

How this impacted care outcomes

The team is tracking both quantitative and qualitative data:

- green initiative: reduction in mileage for DNs
- faster response times: targeting interventions within four hours (equivalent to emergency call-out)
- reduced prescribing delays: aiming for same-day prescribing
- surveys: gathering feedback from staff and families.

Key benefits so far:

- reduced waiting times for DN visits
- real-time support for care assistants, improving confidence and skills
- better experience for the people drawing on care and support, supported by familiar staff rather than unfamiliar clinicians.

Future possibilities

- expanded clinical use: considering catheter care (limited to troubleshooting, e.g., tubing blockages) while respecting dignity and privacy
- current devices are effective but bulky, consideration are being made to use smaller more intuitive smart glasses
- end-of-life care: discussions with hospice teams to reduce delays in authorising pain relief
- transcription features: potential use of dictation for intervention write-ups and record-keeping.

Update

Following the pilot, the initiative will not be continuing due to limited usage and engagement. While the project has been paused, the organisation remains committed to exploring innovative solutions in care settings. A closure report capturing lessons learned is being prepared to inform future opportunities.

Additional information:

[RealWear | Hands-free AR Industrial Smart Glasses](#)

[Provide Health - Wearable Video Devices on Vimeo](#)

[Care Homes - RealWear on Vimeo](#)

