Case Study: Macmillian Cancer Support

Going beyond Lone working. Working safe, Working smart…

The Customer
Macmillian Cancer Support is a charity that aims to reach and improve the lives of everyone affected by cancer across the UK and to inspire millions of others to do the same. Their valued volunteers play a vital role in helping them to reach this goal, to ensure that no one faces cancer alone.

The Challenge
Macmillan wouldn’t be able to achieve what they do without the support of thousands of volunteers. Volunteers help in a variety of ways, but roles in services are growing rapidly. Their volunteers provide a much valued service to people affected by cancer, providing practical and emotional support in local communities. The volunteers’ role can often include periods of lone working including spending significant time in the homes of people affected by cancer, interacting with relatives, and providing a befriending service.

Initially, a small scale local buddy system was used to track volunteer lone workers during the pilot of the new schemes but this was difficult to keep track of and was not suitable for the growing volunteer base. Macmillan needed a central and consistent way of ensuring the safety of their lone working volunteers no matter when or where they were visiting people affected by cancer.

Chris Badman from Macmillan explains,

“Our aim is to grow our volunteer base from around 70 volunteers supporting people in their own homes to 2000 by 2016. Buddy schemes aren’t as reliable as we’d like and we needed something more robust in place to cover our Duty of Care as an organisation and to allow our paid staff to do their main job without worrying about the well-being of volunteers in the community.”

The Solution
Macmillan was quite specific in what they were looking for in a provider and Guardian24 ticked all the boxes. The solution needed to be easy to use for volunteers of all ages and different technical abilities. It also needed to be a cost effective solution. They needed the ability to start off with a small project with a view to then roll it out across the organisation with training.
Macmillan opted to protect their volunteers who work alone with Guardian24’s lone worker solution via the volunteers’ personal or basic mobile phones. The solution allows the lone working member of staff or volunteer to log into the system prior to each home/location visit giving details of the address, who they are going to meet and the expected duration. If their activity overruns Guardian24 will automatically call the worker to verify their safety. If the worker cannot be reached Guardian24’s Alarm Receiving Centre will be notified informing them of the overrun activity. At this stage an agreed protocol will be followed to verify the user’s safety and location.

Should the lone worker (staff or volunteer) feel that their safety has been compromised they also have access to a dedicated panic button on their phones which will raise a panic alert, even if they have not logged a lone worker activity.

Macmillan uses Guardian24’s Alarm Receiving Centre (ARC) as the most cost effective and efficient option to fully manage the lone worker process. With the volume of lone working volunteers increasing, paid staff are free from constantly checking where volunteers are, secure in the knowledge that if there is a problem they will be notified. This saves time, energy and money.

The Benefits
Guardian24 provides reassurance for Macmillan that its staff and volunteers have a high level of personal safety when working in the community. The system enhances the confidence of the volunteers as they feel safe knowing that Macmillan value their personal safety and it is taken care off.

Chris continues,

“Guardian24 have been responsive and flexible to our needs in setting up and supporting the lone working system for our volunteers. All of the staff at G24 and at the ARC have been professional and reassuring as we have implemented the service. We continue to remain happy with the service provided to protect the valued volunteers of Macmillan Cancer Support.”