



## Sunderland Care and Support

### RITA Star 2022

# A Joint Submission from the Sunderland Collaborative

#### Residential Re-enablement Services

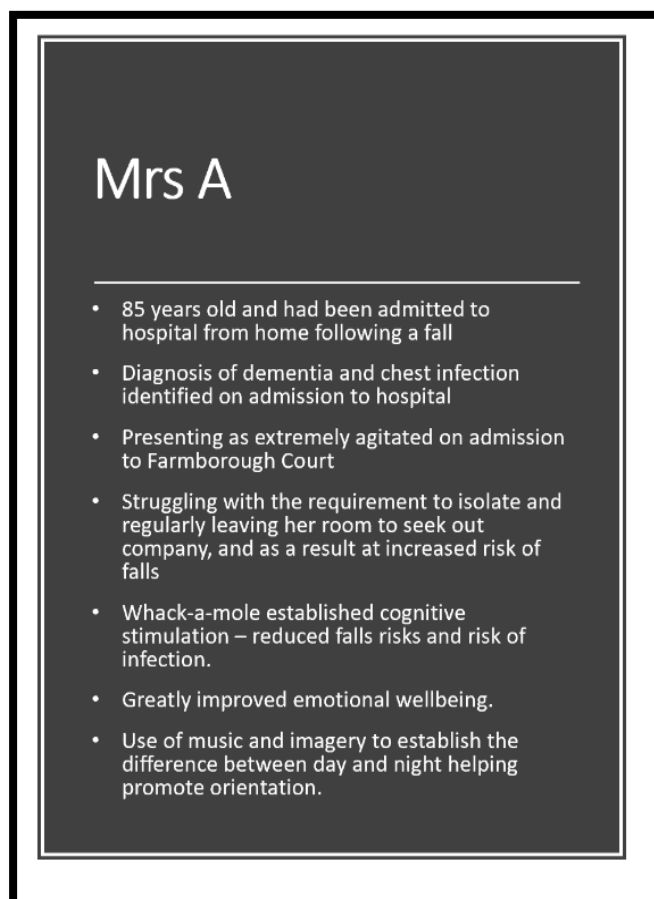
- Provides care and support for up to six people who have learning disabilities or autistic spectrum disorders
- Aims to support people to transition into their own homes following a period of assessment and rehabilitation
- All residents were able to engage with RITA
- Games, films and music facilitate the development of relationships in a non-threatening environment
- RITA introduced into the assessment pathway – promotes getting to know you
- Supported the transition from child to adult services

November 2022

*“The RITA system is a great piece of user-friendly technology which supports customers to enjoy a range of activities. The system and activities can be personalised to meet individual needs. We as a service recognise this and recommend the use of the technology to support customers well-being and part of a person’s daily care and support.”*

## RITA's History in Sunderland and the First Phase of the Project

In 2020, Sunderland Care and Support, a trading company of the local authority introduced RITA into 17 supported living environments for adults with learning disabilities and mental health conditions, two community resource centres for adults with learning disabilities and mental health conditions, two short break units for adults with physical or learning disabilities or mental health conditions, one assessment unit for adults with learning disabilities or mental health conditions and one intermediate care centre for older people with physical disabilities and dementia.



**Mrs A**

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- 85 years old and had been admitted to hospital from home following a fall
- Diagnosis of dementia and chest infection identified on admission to hospital
- Presenting as extremely agitated on admission to Farmborough Court
- Struggling with the requirement to isolate and regularly leaving her room to seek out company, and as a result at increased risk of falls
- Whack-a-mole established cognitive stimulation – reduced falls risks and risk of infection.
- Greatly improved emotional wellbeing.
- Use of music and imagery to establish the difference between day and night helping promote orientation.

This project delivered was supported by Sunderland City Council's Community Therapy Service, who sought to understand how RITA could be deployed into care plans in a range of different settings and client groups.

Within a short space of time, participants were reporting significant positive results including the supported management of customers spending time in isolation during the pandemic when isolation had become an enforced means of delivering bed based social care. The therapy team reported challenges to providing a rehabilitation experience for a customer residing purely in their own room, whilst care teams reported customers experiencing heightened anxiety arising from a sensation of isolation whilst unable to see family or friends. Staff also reported an increase in customers suffering with agitation, behaviours that can challenge and heightened falls risk.


Care Teams and therapists began reporting RITA as an outstanding and complimentary medium supporting rehabilitation and overall wellness, delivering a wide variety of activities that promote physical, social and emotional wellbeing that could be tailored to support individual need. Teams reported RITA bringing people together and supporting people living alone, delivering spontaneous support to the management of agitation and challenging behaviours, whilst also promotes independence, through planned learning and personal fulfilment.

## Mrs B

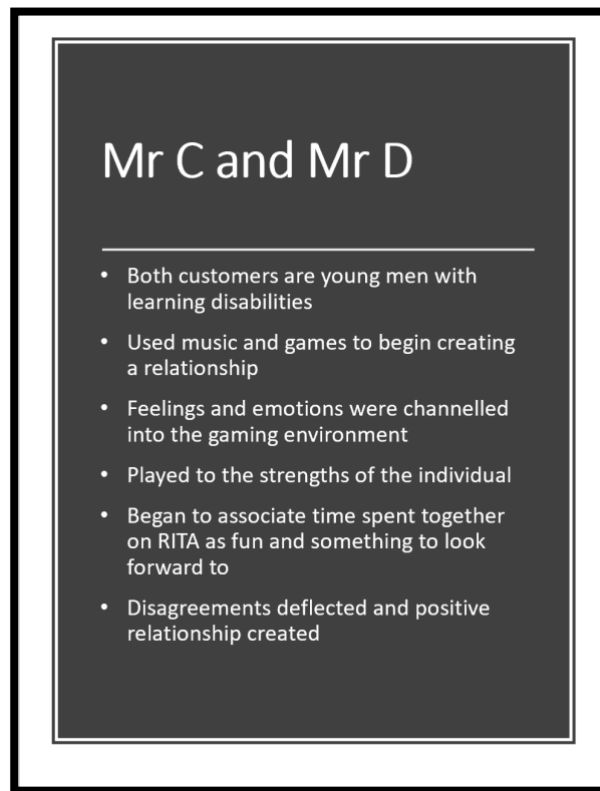
- 87 year old lady admitted to Farmborough Court following a four week hospital stay with complex co-morbidities
- Three days post admission – identified as end of life
- Family unable to provide care at home
- Use of musicals and reminiscence materials enabled the family to bond and engage with each other and also afforded the care team the opportunity to engage during final days of life
- Contributed significantly to high quality end of life care for Mrs B and her family

## Residential Re-enablement Services

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Following on from the success of RITA in Sunderland Care and Support, the City Council's Strategic Commissioning Team secured funding to develop a scheme to support care home providers in the city to engage with RITA, offering a package to participants of funding for RITA for three years, after which time, the provider must assume responsibility for any ongoing maintenance costs.

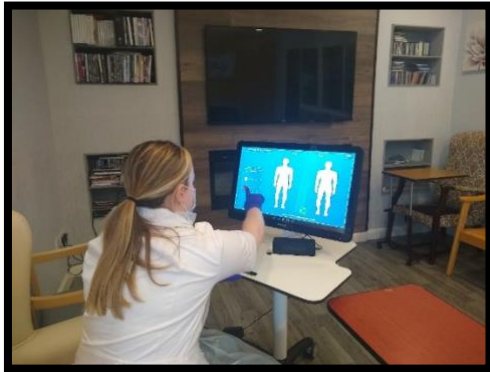


As a result of this project, the Sunderland collaborative came together and comprises of the following organisations.

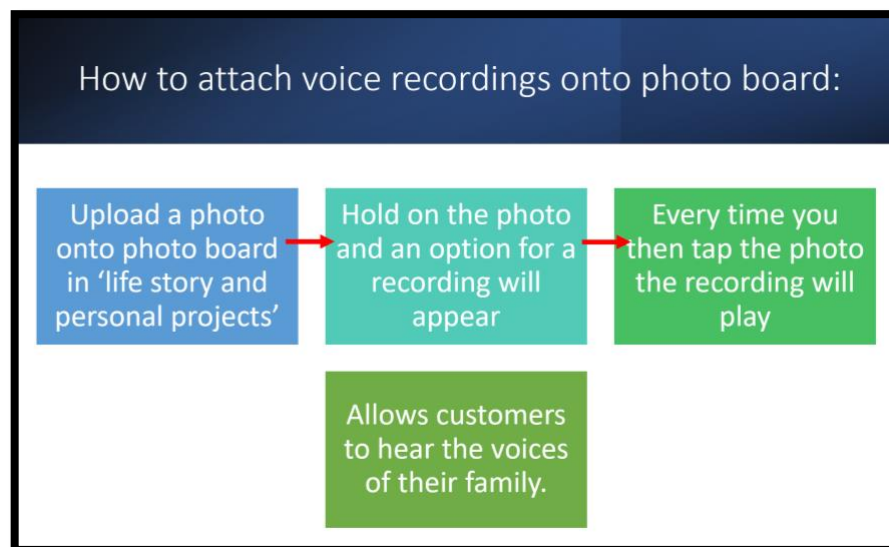
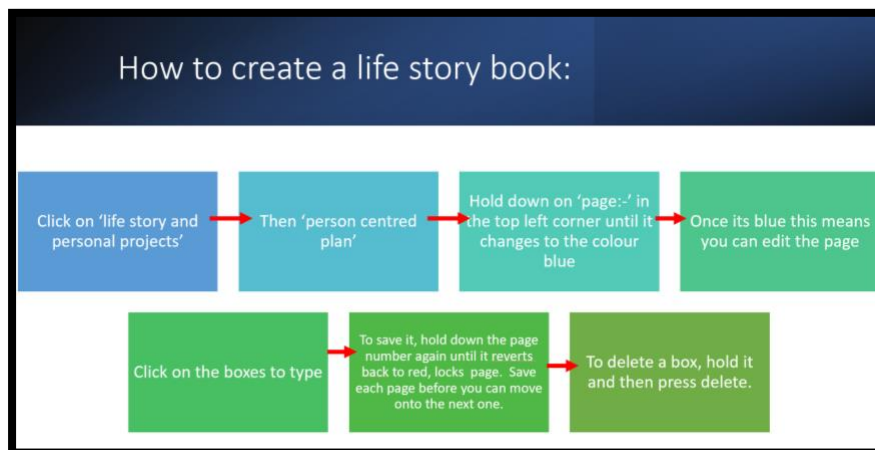
- Sunderland Care and Support, Technology Enabled Care Team
- Sunderland Care and Support, Farmborough Court
- Sunderland City Council Community Therapy Service
- Sunderland City Council, Strategic Commissioning Team
- Bede House, Prestwick Care Homes
- Maple Lodge, Four Seasons Health Care
- Primrose Care Home
- Regents View, Four Seasons Health Care
- St Marks Nursing Home
- Sycamore Care Centre, SLW Care
- Thornbury Care Centre, SLW Care
- Holly House Care Home
- Haddington Vale Extra Care Scheme, Gentoo Registered Housing Association
- Holly House, ESPA – Education and Services for People with Autism

## Delivering Phase two of the RITA Project in Sunderland

Learning from Phase One of the project had identified that early support from the Community Therapy Service facilitated confidence on behalf of care teams to get to know the product and understand some of its capability. Whilst RITA is easy to use, the team recognised that everybody has a different degree of digital confidence and that care teams are incredibly busy and might not always have the time to dedicate to learning something new.



The therapy team dedicated time to the development of an easy read resource to help care teams know their way around RITA at a glance. Maisie Marrison undergraduate Occupational Therapist, shown here at Primrose House, was instrumental in the roll out of RITA phase two. Maisie spent time visiting the care homes and learning the possibilities of RITA. The easy read guide that Maisie developed continues to be used. Here are a couple of pictures of what is in the guide:



RITA is now fully integrated into the services and the therapists are regularly prescribing RITA as part of customer and residents care and support plans as well as for their rehabilitation.



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**Rebecca Dawson, Senior Practitioner and Occupational Therapist. Sunderland Care Home Therapy Team.**

## What our collaborative members say about RITA

*My staff have taken to using RITA very well. They report that it is a really simple system to get used to, and the residents absolutely love it. The staff use it especially mid-afternoon when some of our residents can become more unsettled, and the effect this has is that the residents become engaged in RITA, responding positively to the activity which consequently helps them to feel more settled. This can be managed by one member of staff, whereas previously to have the same effect several members of staff would have been required.*

**Helen Featherstone, Operations Manager SLW LTD**

*RITA has benefited our residents by evoking memories that may have been long forgotten. To see the residents engage in 21st century technology is also a huge accomplishment. The interactive games have been enthralling for residents and improved hand eye co - ordination. This has also allowed staff to ensure residents are carrying out meaningful activities whilst they are otherwise engaged.*

**Kelly Gallimore Registered Manager, Primrose Care Home Hetton**

*Rita has given staff the opportunity to use its features to initiate communication with some of the non-verbal people we support. It is used to offer ideas of activities for example reminiscing, games and sing along.*



*Rita has also been useful to help the people we support to relax using its sensory programme which has now resulted in the design and planning of our own sensory room.*

**Michelle Elstob General Manager ESPA  
Education and Services for People with Autism**



The residents of Holly House in Washington benefited from RITA following a fortunate mistake. Due to an accidental addressing error, **Rachel Redman Registered Manager**, and her team were surprised to receive a RITA on the day that it arrived, however they quickly got RITA out of the box and by the time the mistake had been discovered, residents were already playing Bingo!

Whole home Bingo has been a daily feature ever since, and something residents really enjoy coming together to do.

*Rachel said 'The RITA system has had a really positive impact on my residents, it has not only impacted positively on their well-being but also their physical health. The RITA System gets used daily at Holly House and the opportunities are endless.*

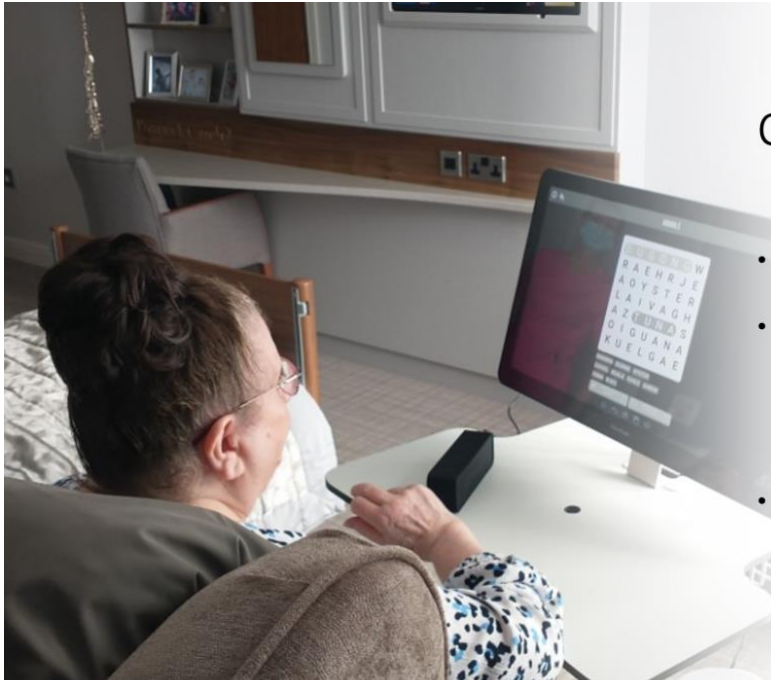
*I am so grateful that we got given the chance to be involved with the RITA System even if it was by mistake.'*

## Some Case Studies that outline RITA's positive impact

### Case study- Doris

- 101 years old and the oldest resident in her care home.
- Entered care from living in her own home during the pandemic following the death of her husband.
- Struggled with the separation from her family during the pandemic and began demonstrating some anxiety
- Doris was referred to the therapy team
- When she was at home, Doris would attend church twice a week and shared her sadness with her care team that she could no longer engage in the fellowship of the church service. Church had also played a significant role in her married life.
- Doris used RITA to engage with playlists of hymns and footage of church services
- Doris also used RITA to connect with her family
- These two activities became a structured part of Doris' care plan and led to feelings of fulfilment, inclusion, spiritual wellbeing
- Doris also described associating some of the hymns available via RITA with her husband and this opportunity to reminisce often results in tears of happiness
- Doris describes feeling much less anxious





## Case study- Betty

- Betty experiences significant pain on a morning
- She has been enjoying using RITA to do word searches after breakfast and this refocusing of her attention has assisted her in positively managing her pain until it subsides
- Betty also loves the karaoke feature which has led to cognitive stimulation, increased feelings of joy and laughter

## Irene and Nelly

- Both customers have cognitive impairments and enjoy engagement with the activities coordinator during the day but reported feelings less positive after 3pm when the activities coordinator leaves for the day
- Both customers were introduced to RITA and this became a feature of their care plan post 3pm
- The care team noted an immediate reduction in their levels of agitation with meal times and evening routines becoming much easier





## RITA project phase three: What we want to do next....

In the next phase of our project, we will be

- Providing Phase two participants additional RITA units and some CAT devices
- Identifying a new cohort of care homes to engage with RITA for the first time, following the successful award of funding from our ICB
- Considering the potential to use the Wellbeing Sensor in conjunction with RITA to support the management of falls in care homes

We are seeing first-hand the positive impact of RITA. We have seen a reduction in falls for some of our customers, improved mental wellbeing, reduction of agitation, improved orientation to daily routine as well as to improve nutritional and hydration intake and better sleep patterns.

We are now meeting regularly with other health care professionals in as well as out of the local area to share best practice as well as learning and support in relation to RITA.

We are also keen to develop a RITA landing page with My Improvement Network. This will be an online resource page highlighting the locations of RITA in the area, to share good news stories as well as to link up with other areas in the country.

### To conclude...

Our therapy team and care home providers working collaboratively has been the key for us achieving such positive impacts for our residents.

We have and continue to learn from each other and from our experiences, sharing good practice and case examples as well as making strong working relationships.