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Stirling Council to deploy portfolio wide connected home technology

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A rollout of specialist home technology, currently largest of its kind in the UK, is being deployed in Stirling Council's housing portfolio, which will boost resident health, safety, and wellbeing.

- Pioneering: UK first scalable and secure technology rollout improves health, safety and wellbeing of council tenants
- Large scale: 50,000 smart devices across Stirling Council Housing portfolio will revolutionise tenants understanding of their home environment via easy-to-use app and assist them to make actionable insights and changes
- Rapid adoption: Aico and HomeLINK are installing 150,000 IoT devices now, but due to hit 1 million by end of 2024 across the wider social housing sector

Aico is the European Market Leader in Home Life Safety, committed to innovative technology solutions with a suite of HomeLINK IoT (Internet of Things) devices protecting people and property. Following Stirling Council's IoT working trial with Aico, a wider rollout which includes environmental sensors to collect information around tenants' homes will be implemented. Collected data will include temperature, humidity and carbon dioxide (CO2) gas levels, along with smoke detection sensors and will dramatically improve the health, safety and wellbeing of residents. Tenants will be able to take actionable measures from insights via a mobile app.

This is the first full rollout of a multi technology and sensors connected home solution across an entire housing portfolio and currently the largest UK social housing sector rollout, with 50,000 IoT devices being installed over the next 8-10 years in homes managed by Stirling Council Housing Service.

Environmental sensors around the properties will alert the council in real-time and provide early warning of

damp, mould, ventilation and any other potential issues, while helping the tenant to understand energy consumption levels with heating their home. In a time of fuel poverty, connected devices more often seen in private dwellings are emerging as a powerful tool ensuring social homes are healthy to live in and used in an energy efficient manner. Homes will also benefit from a significant fire safety upgrade and be equipped with connected smoke, heat and carbon monoxide (CO) alarms.

Having the ability to identify the least thermally efficient homes means that Stirling Council as a landlord can take intelligence led decisions to target capital investment programmes at those properties. The Fuel Poverty Act (Scotland), also seeks to protect residents of all households but particularly those in rural, highland and island communities from facing fuel poverty. Stirling council have around 20% of its housing portfolio in rural areas.

Stirling Council is just one local authority that is working to implement environmental sensors into social housing properties across the UK. Residents gain access to information on their home's condition and handy advice on the measures they can take to improve the quality of their home via a dedicated App for Residents.

The long term and methodical rollout intended follows a successful pilot project and sees Stirling Council at the forefront to providing tenants with a comprehensive view of the internal air quality environment in their homes. The initial pilot was part of a Scottish Government funded programme called CivTech, which aimed to drive innovation in collaborative and cost-effective technology across the public sector.

Aico and HomeLINK state that across the UK more than 150,000 IoT devices are connected in tenants' homes and in use by social landlords. Based on current demand this number is expected to hit 1 million devices by the end of 2024 bringing about a paradigm shift in landlords' efforts to comply both with regulations but also in offering tenants a better understanding of their home's environment.

Several private sector landlords are already using connected IoT devices to pre-empt issues. By connecting all of its housing stock, Stirling Council will continue to make intelligence led and data based decisions when maintenance teams now conduct regular safety checks, planning staff can identify trends and improvements, plan budgets and make property investment decisions. It will also trigger preventative maintenance measures by alerting staff to early causes of deterioration in a property's environment.

Residents using the free app gain a view of the safety and health of their indoor environment. The app also provides advice and guidance on how to improve living conditions, and live a healthier and safer life whilst reducing carbon footprint and saving money on energy bills.

Tenant Robert Cairney said: "I was initially sceptical about what the sensors and technology being put into my home would bring in terms of financial or health benefits. However, by recording moisture in the air, I can be alerted to the risk of damp and mould. Rather than having to keep an eye out for these things myself, my landlord also better knows when it is time to come and do repairs or maintenance work on the property.

"This new IoT technology for homes like mine is fantastic because it helps me to feel safer, live in a healthier environment, and reduce costs. I'm more aware of how my home is behaving, and alerted to ways I can save money by using this free cutting edge connected home kit. For example, wasting money trying to heat a home that has gaps in the doors and windows letting heat out, or an inefficient boiler and

room heaters that need bleeding. Everyone is concerned about the rising costs of energy but, thanks to these improvements, it's not a question of eat or heat for me now."

A spokesperson for Stirling Council mentioned that staff who were involved with trials stated;

- "This technology helps us manage our housing stock through reliable data driven intelligence, take prioritised investment decisions and improve customer satisfaction."
- "When considering our sustainability goals, the data generated will help us identify the least energy-efficient homes and take action. It will also provide insight into the performance of properties that have been recently retrofitted to ensure they remain healthy environments to live in."
- "Living conditions can have a dramatic impact on our health. By providing insight via the app, there is potential to dramatically improve the health and wellbeing to everyday living conditions."
- "We've seen some interesting insights on these trial properties with several high risk indications of condensation caused damp and mould; this has really got us thinking how we help the resident manage their environment better, and discern if it is actually something inherent with the building performance."
- "Since the CivTech trial programme we have been working closely with our residents and HomeLINK to design and develop this technology and service so solutions to the many challenges associated to tenant's wellbeing, property disrepair and carbon reduction can be holistically improved".