

February 2023

CASE STUDY

MID DEVON HOUSING:
IMPROVING FIRE SAFETY
IN COMMUNAL AREAS



WITH NEAR TO 100 BLOCKS OF FLATS WITHIN THEIR HOUSING PORTFOLIO, MID DEVON HOUSING IS INCREASING RESIDENT SAFETY BY DEPLOYING CONNECTED ALARM SYSTEMS WITHIN ALL COMMUNAL AREAS, UTILISING AICO'S CONNECTED HOME SOLUTION.

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A white smoke detector is mounted on a ceiling in a hallway. The detector is circular with a central lens and a small green light. The background shows a hallway with a wooden door and a white wall.

FINDING A COST-EFFECTIVE SOLUTION TO SMART ASSET MANAGEMENT

Communal areas, such as hallways and stairwells, often form part of the planned escape route for residents in the event of fire, and are equally as important to protect with life saving devices.

Mid Devon Housing is responsible for all communal areas within its housing portfolio, ranging from hallways and staircases to bin and storage rooms. A solution was required to improve fire safety in these areas, in line with the increased protection offered by the LD2 fire alarm systems installed within each flat.

An additional aim was to improve asset management with the ability to increase response times in regard to replacement and maintenance, removing the need for manual checks or reliance on residents to report an issue.

With the majority of blocks within Mid Devon Housing's portfolio consisting of just four flats, there was a concern that installing a monitored fire alarm system within each building would require a significant investment. A cost-effective solution was, therefore, necessary for the housing provider to deliver their fire safety objectives for communal areas, as well as generating savings where possible.

Aico's Gateway delivers all these requirements, and more.

USING CONNECTED DEVICES TO IMPROVE RESIDENT SAFETY

Mid Devon Housing has a long-standing partnership with Aico, with 100% of their 3,000 properties protected by Aico fire and carbon monoxide alarms. Each dwelling has an LD2 alarm system installed, as recommended within BS 5839-6 - a higher level of protection than what is required by law within social housing properties in England.

Aico's 3000 Series, combined with the Ei3000MRF module, uses SmartLINK wireless interconnection and data extraction technology via the Gateway.

Through connecting alarms to the Gateway it is possible to achieve remote whole-system data monitoring; information is extracted from the alarm heads and reported on the HomeLINK Portal to enable full visibility of an alarm system's integrity, including but not limited to:

- Fire alarm activations
- CO alarm activations
- Alarm removal from base plate
- Test button activations
- Alarm age
- Alarm replacement dates



Remote data monitoring of alarms in communal spaces will ensure each area continues to be protected by a fully-functioning alarm system, increasing safety and compliance. As well as providing an opportunity for smarter asset management, with the capability to forecast alarm replacement and plan proactive maintenance.

Therefore, scaling the technology with the addition of the Gateway enables a smooth transition to creating connected, safer indoor spaces, while generating a range of benefits for both Mid Devon Housing and their residents alike.



“Since meeting Mike and beginning to work with Mid Devon Housing six years ago, we have developed a very strong working relationship. I feel highly tuned to Mid Devon’s requirements - the values I share with Mike around home life safety are closely aligned and it gives me great pleasure to see the constant improvements they deliver for their valued residents.”

Steve Bulley, Regional Specification Manager, South West - Aico

Alongside support from Aico, Mid Devon Housing also work closely with the local Fire and Rescue Service to ensure all of their properties meet or exceed the latest safety standards.

THE BENEFITS OF REMOTE MONITORING

The installation of Aico’s Gateway within communal areas has brought some early benefits to Mid Devon Housing, enhancing building safety for residents as well as improving operational efficiencies.

1 Improved safety

By utilising the Gateway and HomeLINK Portal, the housing provider can increase the probability of being promptly alerted to a fire or carbon monoxide related emergency. For connected alarms, contacts receive details for the address, the alarm that has activated and its location, enabling the safest and most efficient response to the activation.

In addition to installing the Gateway, Mid Devon Housing has taken a wider approach to the improvement of communal areas. Further preventative measures, such as the control of potential fire hazards and maintenance of building safety systems and facilities, contribute to reducing the risk of fire or carbon monoxide poisoning.

2 Cost-savings

The Gateway has generated cost-savings for Mid Devon Housing, in line with the requirements of the project. Previously, the property maintenance team would complete weekly inspections to check for any tampering or damage to the alarm heads.

By replacing manual checks of the system's integrity with remote monitoring via the HomeLINK Portal, the housing provider has estimated cost-savings of over £20,000 per annum, which can be reinvested elsewhere to make continual improvements for residents.

CORRECT INSTALLATION FIRST TIME, EVERY TIME

Mid Devon Housing's team of engineers has successfully completed Aico's FIA CPD accredited Expert Installer training – the course provides installers with the knowledge on how to correctly install domestic fire and carbon monoxide alarm systems in line with the recommendations outlined in BS 5839-6.

The correct installation not only ensures that the alarm system provides the best possible protection, but also generates time and cost-savings by reducing return visits to a property to resolve any potential issues after installation.





“The service we receive from Aico is second to none and by far the best in the industry. Going above and beyond for our residents in terms of life safety is of paramount importance to us, just enough can never be enough. Steve works closely alongside me and our whole organisation with regards to this and he has a vast knowledge which can be drawn on. Thank you from me and the team and all of our residents.”

Mike Lowman, Operations Manager, Building Services - Mid Devon Housing

A STRATEGY FOR RESIDENT ENGAGEMENT

Resident safety is Mid Devon Housing’s top priority, and as a landlord, take the opportunity to regularly engage with tenants surrounding the importance of fire safety.

All residents are educated on how to test their alarms and why monthly alarm testing is vital to ensuring their alarms remain in full working order.

As alarm testing in communal areas remains under the housing provider’s responsibilities, the HomeLINK Portal can be utilised to verify alarm testing frequency, ensuring it is completed regularly by property caretakers.

To find out more about how Aico’s Connected Home Solution can improve fire safety and asset management, please visit:

www.aico.co.uk/homelink/fire-co/