How Daily Contact with Older People can Unlock Powerful Preventative Actions, Reduce Loneliness and Save Money

Or, why doing the "right thing" is always the right thing!

James Batchelor
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Alertacall

www.alertacall.com

alertacall
bring contact to life

A bit about my experience…

- **60,000 phone calls** to older people who live on their own over a 5 year period to ask about their wellbeing.
- Visited approximately **1,000 older people** at their own homes, to talk to them about the challenges of living independently.
- Invented **several new ways** to support older people who live independently - based on simple but powerful principles.
- **Founded Alertacall in 2004 -** a now established and award winning organisation that improves the lives of **tens of thousands** of older people using daily contact.

Meet Eveline, Age 86

- Staunchly independent, and wanted to live in her own home for as long as possible.
- Was still driving her own car to do her shopping, until one eventful day.
- When offered a pendant alarm and other telecare devices she gave an "unexpected" response.

When I suggested a pendant alarm to Eveline - this is what she said…

"<u>Get stuffed</u> - I'm not possibly old enough for one of those things – I'm only 86!"

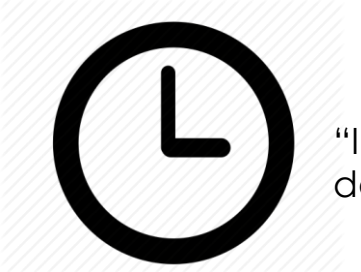
Challenges with pendant alarms

"I'm not ready for one of those"

Unconscious and unable to activate

"This brands me as a vulnerable person"

"I wonder if this even works, and who will come if it does?"



"I'll be OK until my daughter visits."

More challenges with pendant alarms

- 4 out of 5 people don't wear them some or all of the time. They're often in a drawer or out of reach.
- They don't tell us much about the changing needs of people.
- Do not encourage regular contact, and might even discourage it – "Only press this in an emergency!"

Yet this is *still* the "go to" product for older people in 2019. Really?

I started calling to make sure Eveline was OK each day and discovered…

- She often didn't wear her **hearing aids**.
- She was **unwell** more often than we realised.
- We could tell her about **activities and events**.
- We could remind her about **medication**.
- We could remind her about **appointments**.
- That daily contact could be a "**life saver**" because one day when she was unresponsive to our calls - I went round to check on her, and found her on the floor.

Importantly - Eveline told me that on some days she didn't like waiting round for me to call, so I needed to fix that - for it to work well for her...

Invented the “I am okay” button and spent years creating clever ways to improve daily contact.

Step 1
Customers can choose to engage with our OKEachDay Button once or twice a day, in their own time, and are gently prompted to do so.

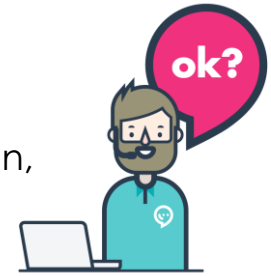
Step 2
When they do this any news or information relevant to them, e.g. about an appointment, is played to them or shown on screen.

Step 3
Otherwise they will get a call from a specially trained real human being, 365 days a year – who talks to them.

This process gives customers absolute control over levels of human contact 365 days a year. It also protects them, and keeps them informed.

Our OKEachDay Button is available on devices that suit lots of people.

Dementia friendly communication, suicide awareness and reflective listening training for our teams.

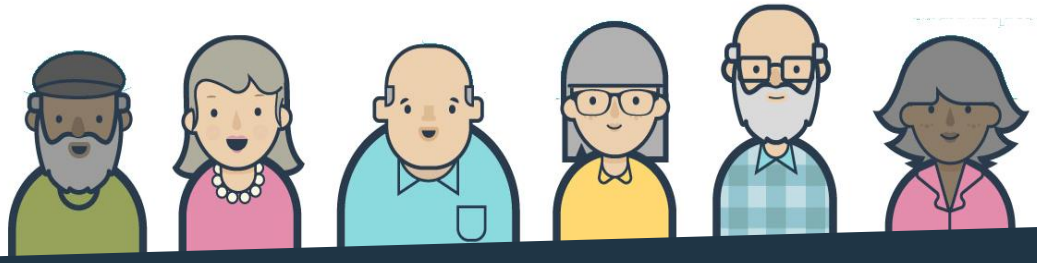


We regularly save lives by using our data to escalate to contacts.

Powerful technology that drives quality contact and provides preventative analytics.

By increasing contact with people, in a structured way that empowers them and gives them control, you can better understand their changing needs, make better decisions and improve their lives

James Batchelor



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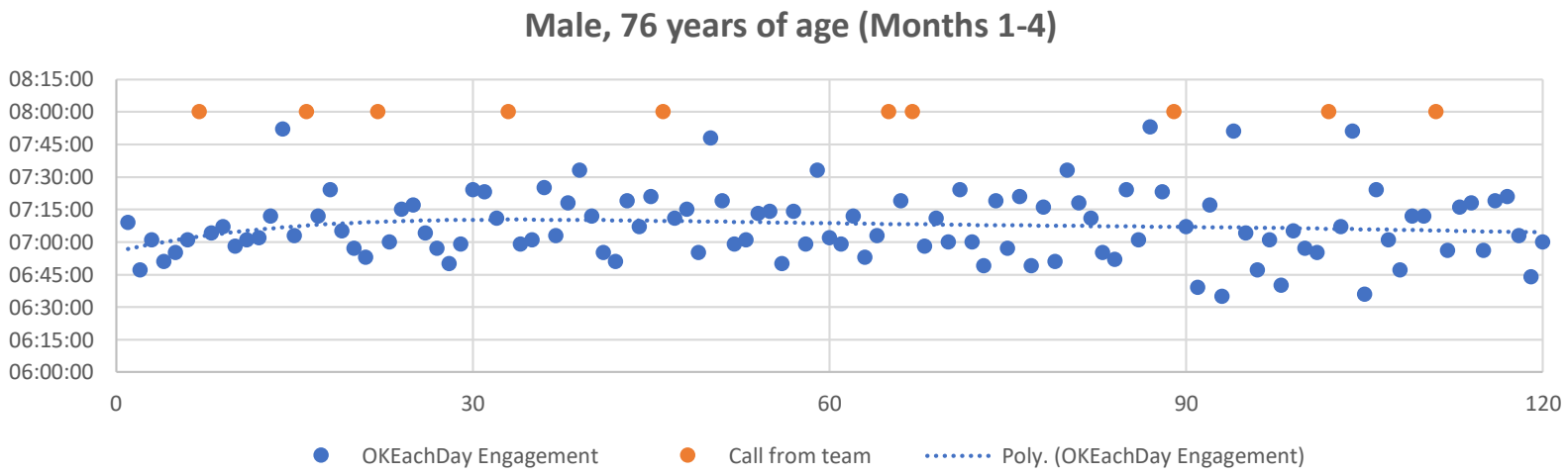
Changes in the way people communicate can indicate an imminent support requirement and we can see this in the data (1-4 months)



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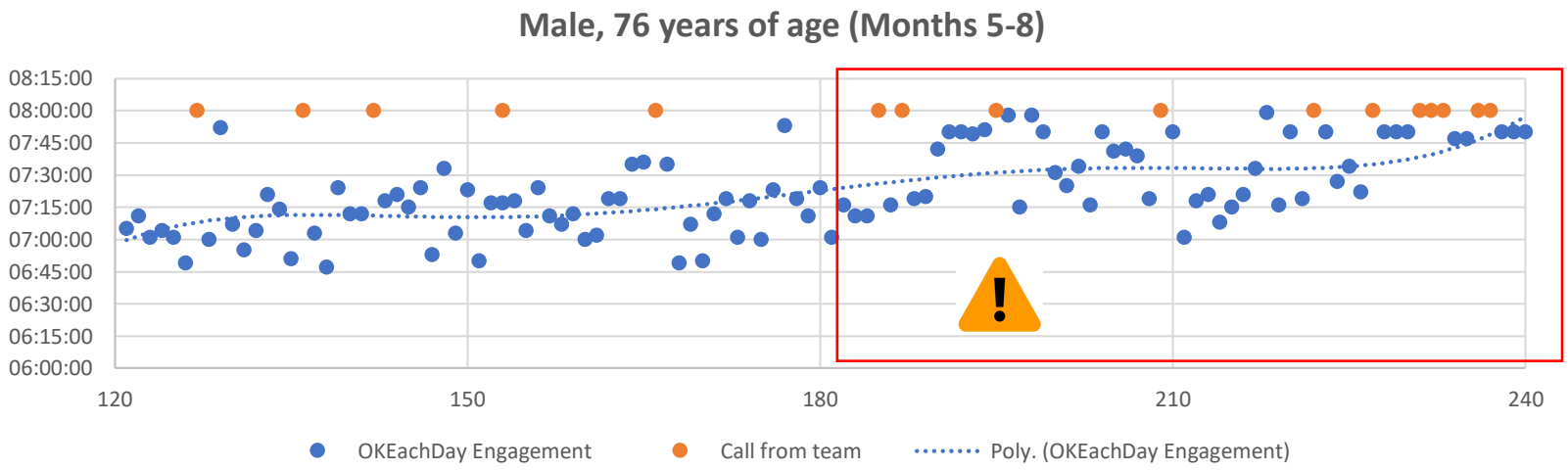
Changes in the way people communicate can indicate an imminent support requirement and we can see this in the data (5-8 months)

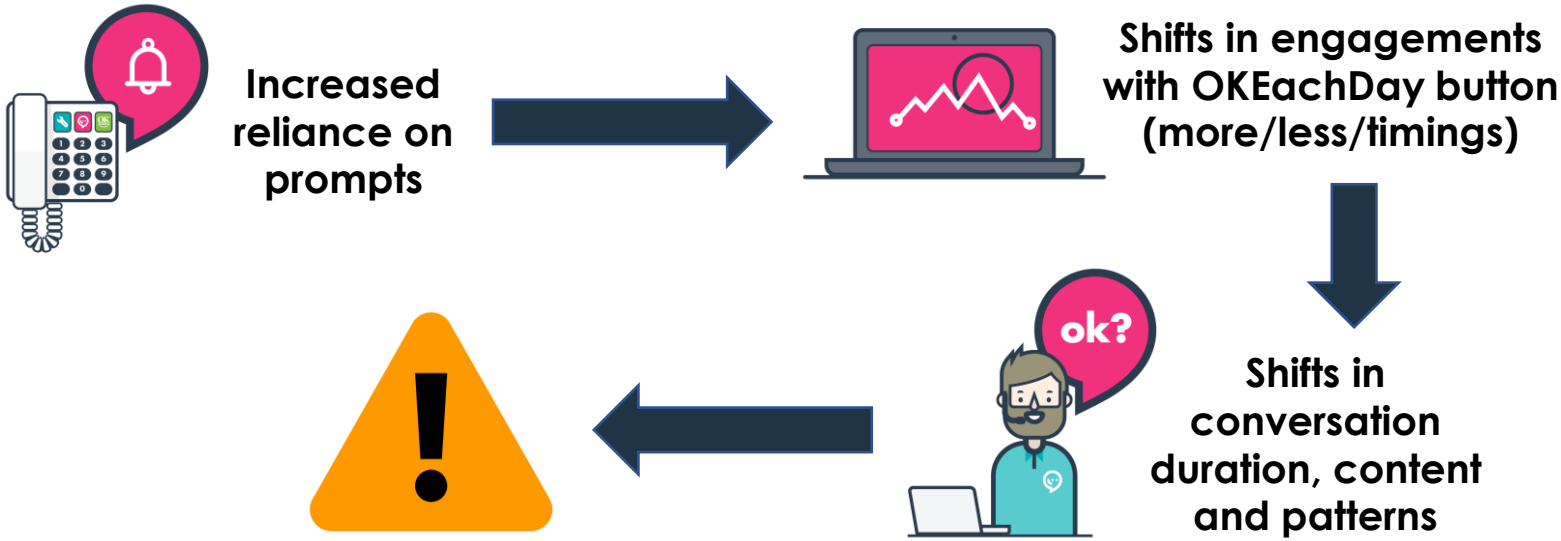


So what kinds of events create detectable shifts in patterns of contact?

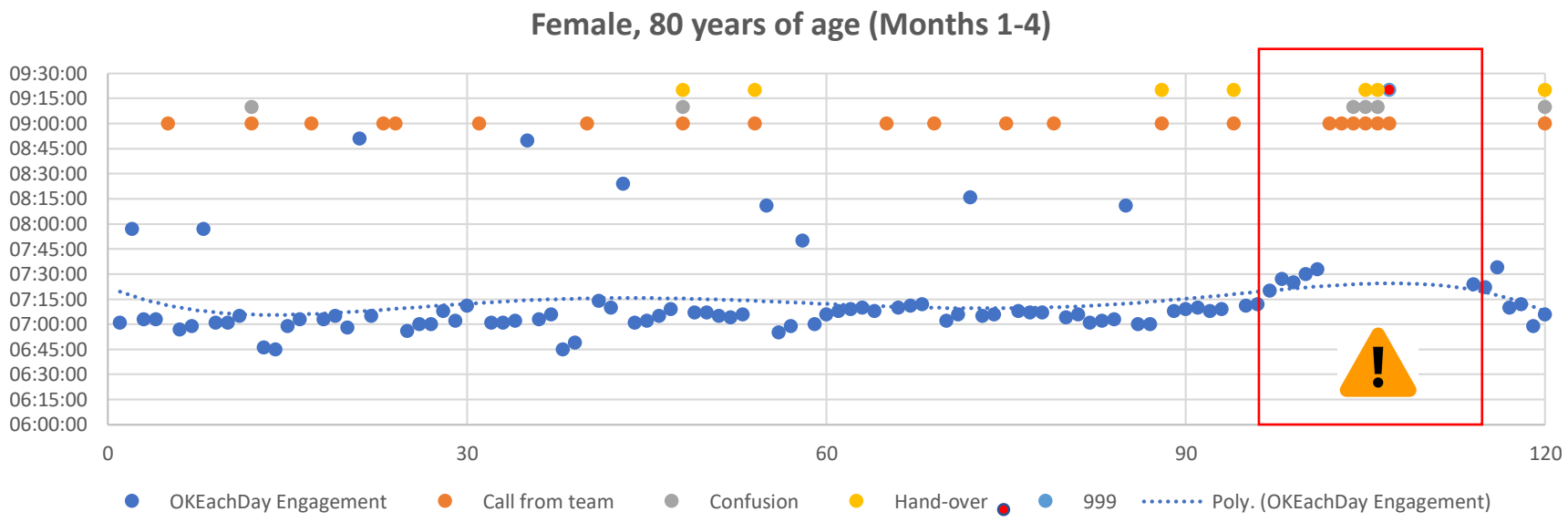
- Cognitive decline
- Urinary tract infections
- Influenza, coughs, colds
- Gastroenteritis
- Other infections
- Mental health crisis
- Bereavement
- Poor medication compliance
- **And two other biggies…**

The Queen or Wimbledon on TV

What kinds of shifts can we look for?



Example Data: Urinary Tract Infection



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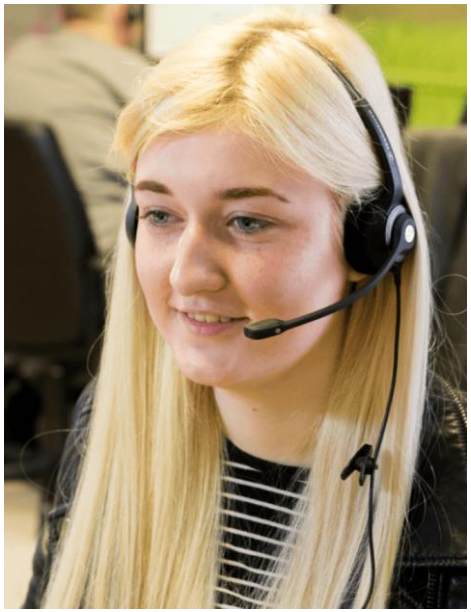
What's clever about this approach, is that <u>human contact</u> has a tendency to increase at those times it is needed the most...



...when someone is unwell, or when they have new needs.

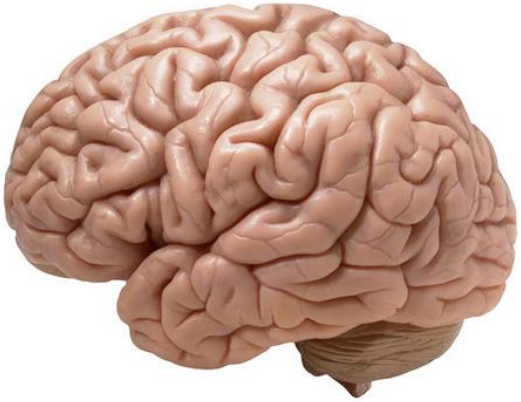
Why is a human that listens so important?

- Health issues can be noted (coughs, wheezing, other complaints) and flagged for referral if persistent over time.

- Negative patterns of speech emerging that may indicate depression, or suicidal thinking can be noted for action.

- Once a relationship is formed with a customer, they may open up about abuse or other difficulties they are experiencing.

Remember: Human brains ARE Super-Computers capable of astonishing ‘pattern recognition’



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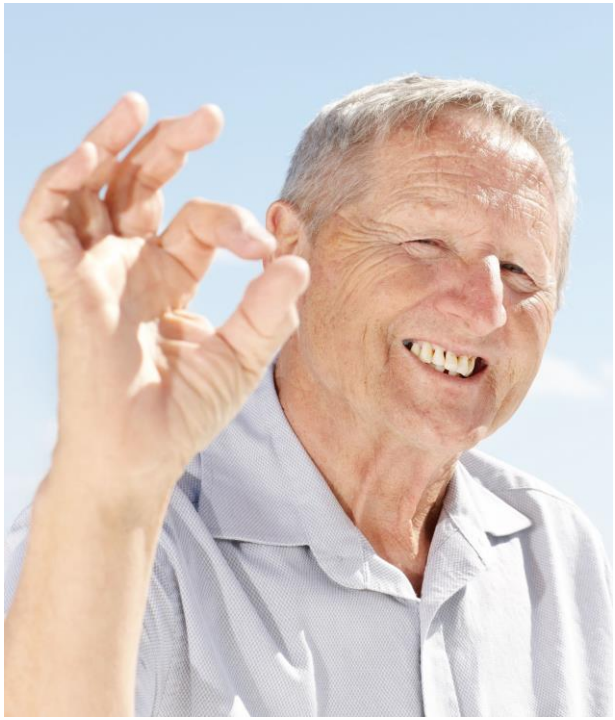
“One synapse, by itself, is more like a microprocessor - with both memory-storage and information-processing elements - than a mere on/off switch. In fact, one synapse may contain on the order of 1,000 molecular-scale switches. A single human brain has more switches than all the computers and routers and Internet connections on Earth”. Stephen Smith Professor of molecular and cellular physiology

Super computer photo originally posted to Flickr
as Blue Gene / PFrom Argonne National Laboratory.
Brain photo originally posted to Flickr by _DJ_

Daily contact improves well-being



- Customers who previously identified as lonely feel less lonely

  (*small sample study shows in region of 40% improvement, larger study being undertaken)

- 98% of customers would recommend our method of
- daily contact to other people

- 24% of customers say it makes them feel materially safer

Other benefits of daily contact

- It's a platform for social prescribing; The perfect opportunity to give people news and information about activities that may improve their health or well-being, for example local activities on that day or week.

- Can be used effectively to prompt people to take medication, attend appointments or wait in for important visitors, streamlining other work.

- The visibility and data that daily contact gives on the emergent needs of people could help with the hospital discharge process, and could prevent re-admissions.

So where are all the other services that combine tech & people for daily contact?

If it seems like it's such a good idea!?

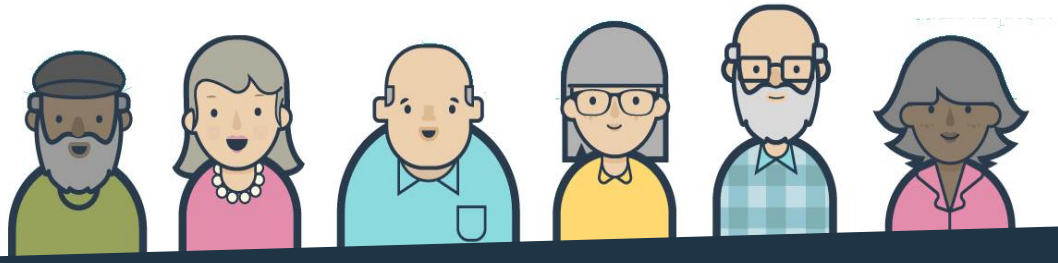
So where are all the other services that combine tech & people for daily contact?

The old fashioned "reactive" assistive tech people see it as a cost

Tech tends to drive products that minimise human cost

"Who needs humans anyway?"

However, daily contact can be inexpensive and create many benefits for you and the people you serve – especially if you use the right technologies to power your service.



How <u>you</u> can bring contact to life

- ✓ Consider rolling out daily contact as a first layer of service for older people, before "alarm services". Create your own or deploy an out-of-the-box service like ours.

- ✓ See daily contact as a facilitator for social prescribing, as a life-saver, as a tool to improve medication and appointment compliance - and as means to reduce loneliness.

- ✓ Develop ways to better use the data that you're already collecting about service users, e.g. in your CRM systems because you might already be able to see that someone's needs are changing if you deployed the right analysis.

The Silver Line

helpline for older people

0800 4 70 80 90

- ✓ **Tell older people in your communities about The Silver Line**
- ✓ **Founded in 2013 by Dame Esther Rantzen**
- ✓ **24 x 7 freephone friendship and advice line for older people**
- ✓ **Already taken more than 2 million calls**
- ✓ **Support it by donating and fundraising – it's a great charity!**
- ✓ **Talk to James Batchelor for more information**

thanks for listening

If questions come to you later…
please do get in touch.

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