



## Increasing Health & Safety in the Home

### FACTS

**Customer:** Northern Ireland Regional Environmental Health Groups and the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (RoSPA)

**Challenge:** Allow the Regional Environmental Health Groups to gather health and safety information from the home; provide a simple and efficient way to upload the data automatically to the back office RoSPA database for analysis and reporting.

**Solution:** inphoActive's solution provided digital pens and redesigned inspection forms. The data captured was integrated with RoSPA's back office database. The upload of data collected from the digital pen was an automatic process.

**Benefits:** Data collection is much more efficient and a seamless integration path to the RoSPA system has significantly reduced the amount of time and effort spent re-keying data. Better analysis and reporting have also been created.

*"The digital pen and forms system has dramatically improved the way we collect information in the home. We can now update our back office system quickly and efficiently in the knowledge that we're working on current and accurate data."*

**Eric Agnew, Southern Group Environmental Health**

### No Administrative Support

Home Safety Officers in Northern Ireland visit homes and perform safety checks. The results of their surveys used to be recorded with ordinary pen and paper. There was variation in the type of information being collected in different areas and there was no collection mechanism to harness the data. RoSPA, the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents had developed a database but this required manual input. With limited funding for home safety check schemes, there was no resource available for administrative support to utilise the database. As a result, reporting on the effectiveness of the schemes involved assessing hard copies of forms which was difficult to do quickly and accurately.

### More Efficient Data Collection

The overall aim of the digital pen project was to see if digital pen and forms technology could help create a more effective and efficient data collection process. Providing faster and more accurate management information for the Regional Environmental Health Groups and for RoSPA would enable them to respond more quickly.

The specific objectives were to:

- Agree a common approach to collection of home safety data across NI
- Enable the officers to collect home safety information using digital pens and specially designed digital forms
- Transfer the data collected by the digital pens into a back office database
- Automatically update the database every time an officer docked the pen upon their return to the office.
- Enable managers to interrogate the database to provide statistical reports as evidence of the effectiveness of home safety checks.



### Benefits Achieved To Date

The benefits identified to date include:-

- A more consistent approach to the collection of home safety data throughout NI.
- Greater efficiency in data collection.
- Less form filling errors
- Transcription errors reduced.
- Greater efficiency using an automatic upload process with no rekeying.
- Reduced officer admin time compared to manual data input. The saving is 50% - 66%.

It was estimated to take 25 - 30 minutes per form to manually input data, depending on the amount of free text, compared with around 10 - 15 minutes per form checking uploaded data. This is a conservative estimate of time saving as officers have indicated that it will take less time to validate data as they become more confident and familiar with the new digital pen process.

Ultimately any improvements secured through proactive home safety work will have major savings for the health service.

A recent study by H Whan showed that one type of recorded home accident— falls in the elderly resulting in hip fractures, currently costs the N.I. Health Service £2.5 million per year. Any intervention which minimises the risks of falls to the elderly contributes to a reduction in these costs.

Home Safety Check Schemes provide the opportunity to do this, and the use of the digital pen builds the evidence of the intervention, and with less administration time.

This in turn allows home safety officers to carry out more checks on the ground. Based on the estimates above, an additional four checks per week per person could be made using the saved administration time.

### Future Plans

Better management information and reporting will be developed using more accurate and up to date data collected in the field. The reports are currently being specified and will be used within the next few months.

The next stage of the project will use digital pen technology to collect additional information which is still being gathered by hand. This includes information on children under the age of 5.

The longer term objective is to make digital pen and forms available to all home safety officers working for partner organisations and not just those employed through the Environmental Health Departments.

### inphoActive Profile

inphoActive specialises in the development and delivery of digital pen and paper solutions. Projects completed to date include:

- Healthcare Patient Records
- Farm Inspections
- Works Orders
- Health & Safety Inspections
- Client Registration
- Client Contact Management

### Customer Profile

Environmental Health Committees—these are part of Local Councils which provide funding and which receive environmental health services in return. The Joint Committees are responsible for ensuring that district council environmental health services are fit for purpose and for advising our local councils on the preparation of their environmental health plans.

RoSPA — RoSPA's mission is to save lives and reduce injuries. RoSPA is a registered charity established more than 90 years ago that aims to campaign for change, influence opinion, contribute to debate, educate and inform - for the good of all. By providing information, advice, resources and training, RoSPA is actively involved in the promotion of safety and the prevention of accidents in all areas of life - at work, in the home, on the roads, in schools, at leisure and on (or near) water.

For further details on digital pen and paper technology please email inphoActive at [info@inphoactive.com](mailto:info@inphoactive.com).