

Appendix 1– Key Information About Careline

The number and type of Careline connections

There are some 3883 users of ‘dispersed alarms’ and ‘community alarms’. This total comprises 1965 properties with the pull-cord community alarms and 1,918 people with dispersed alarms. The number of service users is increasing each year.

Type of equipment	Numbers	Commentary
Dispersed alarm	1918	This equipment is a stand-alone system that is connected to a phone socket and plug point.
Pull-cord system – sheltered housing	1283	This equipment is ‘hard-wired’ in the sheltered housing blocks. Half of the sheltered housing schemes have obsolete pull-cord systems that are prone to breakdown.
Pull-cord system – general needs community alarm flats	682	This equipment is ‘hard-wired’ in the community alarm flats. It is obsolete and prone to breakdown and expensive to repair. It is estimated that 70% of current community alarm flat occupants do not need a Careline service
Current Total	3883	
Projected Total	3405	After removal of unwanted, obsolete pull-cords.

- Dispersed alarms: This equipment is a stand-alone system that is connected to a phone socket and a plug point. Each current community alarm costs in the region of £100 and consists of a pendant that is worn around the neck or wrist that is linked to the base unit. Careline staff install the equipment and replace batteries as part of the service they provide to users. There is no other maintenance cost.
- Pull-cord system: This system is hard-wired in Council sheltered housing schemes and ‘community alarm’ flats. Approximately half the pull-cord alarm systems in sheltered housing schemes were upgraded three years ago to dispersed alarms but the remainder are both old and virtually obsolete. This creates a risk of equipment breakdown and service failure.

Council tenants comprise 62% of Careline users, 26% of Careline users live in private accommodation and have been assessed by Adult Social Care as eligible for social care. Currently 2% of Careline users living in private accommodation are self-funders and have not been assessed with an eligible need for social care. 10% of Careline users ¹have additional assistive technology equipment. This includes chair and bed occupancy sensors, property exit sensors, flood, gas and extreme temperature sensors. This equipment is provided through a contract with an assistive technology provider, Red Alert.

¹ The current PNC 5 monitoring system does not provide a breakdown by tenure of people who have assistive technology.

Service Performance and Usage

The Service receives a high level of calls by industry standards. In the period April – August 2016, the number of calls received and made by the control centre ranged from 12,000 – 15,000 per month. In the same period, Careline staff made the following emergency and planned client visits per month:

EMERGENCY CALLOUTS

FY 2016/17	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug
Received / Actioned	84	76	113	112	166
Actioned in 10 min	79	74	112	109	164
% Actioned in 10min	94%	97%	99%	97%	99%
Follow Up*	19	11	20	7	25

**Emergency Callouts resulting in Follow up actions such as Doctors visit, Emergency Services, Falls clinic etc. Some callouts are triggered by faulty equipment, but the team needs to respond to check the situation.*

PLANNED VISITS

FY 2016/17	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug
Planned Visits	124	220	184	127	129

For the installation or removal of equipment, replacement of batteries or faulty equipment

The target for responding to calls is 20 seconds and Careline regularly exceeds the industry quality standard of 85% of calls answered within 20 seconds. Careline is accredited with the Customer Contact Association (CCA Global Standard version 6), and was recently assessed by BSI as part of the overall customer services inspection in June 2016 with no non-conformities.

Careline staff report that the number of calls received increased when the warden service within Sheltered Housing was changed from fixed wardens per block to peripatetic (floating) support. Analysis of calls (incoming and outgoing) from 22/09/2015 - 23/09/2016 is as follows:

- Council tenants including sheltered housing tenants - 54%
- Private occupiers - 1%
- Service users who have been assessed by Adult Social Care - 15%
- Service users with additional Assistive Technology equipment - 30%
- Total:100%

For the same period, emergency out of hours calls received by the call centre related to the following categories:

- ²Social services calls (Children's) – 70%
- ³Social services calls (Adults) – 14%
- Environmental services e.g. stray dogs etc. – 7.5%
- Highways – 7.5%
- Civil contingency – 1%

² Examples of calls received regarding children included: child absconded, child being taken away from mother at birth, an appropriate adult required by the police for a child in custody.

³ Examples of calls received regarding adults included: adult needing sectioning, emergency respite care, emergency call required

- Total: 100%

Plans for decommissioning hardwired alarms

Prior to the commencement of this decommissioning work, plans will be put in place to ensure that vulnerable tenants who need/want a personal alarm are able to transition seamlessly over to the dispersed alarm. This will require an action plan between Housing, Careline and Adult Social Care. It is suggested that there should be a designated lead in the Community Solutions Team who will be responsible for coordination with Housing and Careline. The following actions are proposed:

- Identification of tenants who are known to Careline (i.e. they have used their Careline in the last 3 months): these tenants should be interviewed by the Community Solutions Team (in person or by phone) to discuss their requirements, and the Community Solutions Team, Careline and Housing should put in place an action plan to ensure a seamless transition.
- Sending a letter to everyone else living in these flats and who is not known to Careline – offering an interview with the Community Solutions Team to assess their requirements for a dispersed alarm as a replacement for the hard-wired pull-cord.
- Regular liaison and updates with residents and local councillors to ensure that there is full understanding of the planned works.
- Any changes in occupancy need to be recorded so that any variation in tenants' requirements are understood during the life of the decommissioning contract.

As stated elsewhere in this report the current software operating the Careline and Community Alarm systems (PNC5) is obsolete and no longer supported by the provider, Tunstall Telecom. As a result of the obsolescence of PNC5, the maintenance agreement the council had with Tunstall no longer covers all failures, leading to additional repairs and servicing costs. Last year the council spent £165,000 on response and ad hoc repairs and maintenance with Tunstall. Upgrading to a new system will significantly reduce this level of cost as there will be no repair and maintenance costs in year one and a maintenance agreement will be in place thereafter at a much lower cost to the Council.

The migration to improved Careline services with the capability of delivering advanced telecare and telehealth services can only be delivered if the hardware and software at Harty Close is also updated. In addition, upgrading the whole service, including replacing the hard wired system with dispersed alarm units, will give the council the option to include procurement of specialist equipment for additional monitoring and support for service users currently provided through Red Alert. These include equipment and sensors that can detect movement, or the lack of it, flood sensors in bathrooms and kitchens and automated reminders for specific service users. The current provider, Tunstall Telecom for the PNC5 and associated hardware does not have a monopoly on dispersed alarm systems and community alarm software and equipment and as such, other providers will be invited to submit tenders for the service. Subject to further consideration, the tender may also include the supply of additional specialist equipment currently supplied by Red Alert.

The capital costs for upgrading the Harty Close monitoring centre, replacing the hard wired system in the sheltered housing stock and general needs units with Careline units and installing the appropriate heat and smoke detector systems is estimated to be £400k. This would be 'spend to save' expenditure reducing the ongoing costs of the service by approximately £65k per year. The detailed costs are at Appendix B.

The funding for the upgrade is being made available from a Housing Reserve.

Charges for the Careline service

Careline is a discretionary service and so, in line with the Council's charging policy, chargeable. However, the charge as it is currently formulated varies according to the tenure of the user. Thurrock Council tenants pay nothing for the service. People living in all other tenures pay either 93 pence per week (unchanged over many years), if they are assessed as eligible for social care, or otherwise £16.50 plus VAT per month (increased annually). At present there are 1014 people paying 93 pence per week for the service and 92 people paying £16.50 plus VAT per month. These charges were originally set by Housing. This discrepancy in charging does not appear to comply with the Care Act, potentially leaving the Council open to accusations of unfairness and/or discrimination by tenure in not addressed. The arrangement appears to be unique to Thurrock. It is recognised that the charging framework needs to be subject to rigorous review in the context of the Care Act sets which sets out principles that the approach to charging should:

- ensure that people are not charged more than it is reasonably practicable for them to pay
- be comprehensive, to reduce variation in the way people are assessed and charged
- be clear and transparent, so people know what they will be charged
- promote wellbeing, social inclusion, and support the vision of personalisation, independence, choice and control
- support carers to look after their own health and wellbeing and to care effectively and safely
- be person-focused, reflecting the variety of care and caring journeys and the variety of options available to meet their needs
- apply the charging rules equally so those with similar needs or services are treated the same and minimise anomalies between different care settings
- encourage and enable those who wish to stay in or take up employment, education or training or plan for the future costs of meeting their needs to do so
- be sustainable for local authorities in the long-term

At present, the cost of providing the Careline Service and associated technology/equipment (exclusive of the Out of Hours Service) is just over £600,000 per annum. This includes the costs of purchasing personal alarm

and sensory equipment that cannot be charged to users. At present, total income raised from charges is just over £58,000. This leaves a significant gap between the income received and the costs of the service. These costs are met by both the Housing Revenue Account and General Fund.

2.3.5 By way of comparison, a sample of charges from a range of providers is set out below. It should be noted that many services simply offer a monitoring service with referral to friends and family or emergency service. Thurrock Careline currently offers a monitoring and response service.

Examples of current charges by other providers:

- Age UK - £3.47 per week plus a set up charge of either £69 (for self-connection) or £129 if Age UK install.
- Chelmsford – First 3 months free, then £2.40 per week plus a set up charge of £40. If additional equipment is installed the weekly charge is £3.63.
- Colchester - 12 week free trial followed by: £4 per week call monitoring service only or £ 6 per week for the response service.
- Havering - £4.74 per week increasing to £6.89 with 2 additional sensors or £8.03 for up to 5 additional sensors.
- Basildon - £3.98 per week increasing to £4.48 for up to 5 pieces of additional equipment and £5.60 for more than 5 pieces of equipment.
- Careline South Essex Homes - £2.80 per month (for equipment rental and monitoring) or £1.65 per month where the Careline unit has been purchased by the user.

At present Council tenants wanting a personal alarm make direct contact with the Careline service whereupon basic details are collected about the individual and an alarm is installed. People living in private accommodation can call Careline direct to have a dispersed alarm installed but are currently charged £16.50 plus VAT. However, most people living in non-Council property and who need a personal alarm make contact with the Community Solutions Team (CST). CST undertake a comprehensive interview over the phone. The conversation establishes a broad picture of the person's abilities, aspirations, local connections and needs. Where a more in-depth assessment is needed, the fieldwork social work team will become involved. There are currently 1014 people living in non-Council housing who have been assessed and who pay 93 pence per week for the service.

There are health and wellbeing benefits of having the conversation between individuals wanting an alarm and the (CST) where a range of issues can be discussed. The Careline Review team proposes that this approach should be offered to all prospective Careline users regardless of tenure as CST may be able to make other suggestions that help to prevent, reduce or delay the need for more intensive services. Regularising the pathway to accessing the service will also correspond to the harmonisation of charges across tenures which the review recommends.