

TELECARE POLICY

Cabinet Member Cllr Ray Stanley
Responsible Officer Claire Fry, Housing Services Manager

Reason for Report: To explain the rationale for a new policy for the Housing Service relating to the lifeline alarm service they offer and to seek the adoption of this.

RECOMMENDATION(S): That Cabinet recommends the adoption of the Housing Service Community Alarm Policy.

Relationship to Corporate Plan: The Council must run the Housing Service efficiently and effectively in accordance with legislative requirements and the provisions of the regulatory framework. The Council must also consider the impact of an aging population and help people retain their independence and remain in their own home.

Financial Implications: Income from the lifeline alarm service is accounted for within the Housing Revenue Account and supports housing expenditure.

Legal Implications: Having a clearly defined policy ensures consistency of approach.

Risk Assessment: Failure to provide housing management staff with the appropriate policies could result in a less consistent and effective service.

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 The Council is committed to improving the Housing Service and generating additional income. The implementation of a new Community Alarm Policy will provide guidance on the lifeline alarm service available to residents of Mid Devon.
- 1.2 Tenants Together approved the draft Community Alarm Policy at their meeting on 2 March 2017.
- 1.4 Cabinet is asked to consider the new policy and to agree the adoption of it.

2.0 Overview of policy

- 2.1 The policy provides a framework which sets out the Council's approach to providing a lifeline alarm service for residents of Mid Devon to encourage them to remain and live independently in the home.
- 2.2 As at 23 February 2017, 1198 residents are signed up to the alarm service which generates an income of £221,051.20.

- 2.3 The policy explains the lifeline alarm service available to residents. The Council offers a typical lifeline alarm unit which is supplied with a standard lifeline pendant. The lifeline alarm provides help at the touch of a button, 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.
- 2.3 To meet the criteria for take up of the lifeline alarm service, the resident must live in Mid Devon. They must supply a modern BT socket and a three pin electric socket close to the BT socket to enable installation of the lifeline alarm unit. They must also provide additional information such as emergency contact details, relevant medical information which can be relayed to the emergency services.
- 2.4 The policy explains that the Council will charge the resident for the rental of the lifeline alarm and pendant and the service it provides including a one off installation fee of the lifeline unit. The rental charge includes the rental of the alarm, 365 days a year monitoring service and any repairs or the replacement of the alarm.
- 2.5 To ensure that the Council has a regular income stream, if a resident falls behind with payments for the alarm service or do not make arrangements to clear the debts, the Council reserves the right to terminate the service received. If the Council takes such action, it will be the responsibility of the resident to find an alternative provider.
- 2.6 Tenants of the Council's Housing Service who fall behind with payments will be dealt with in accordance with the terms and conditions of their tenancy agreement.
- 2.7 It is recognised that residents may opt for a lifeline alarm service due to a number of reasons. This maybe because of age, disability, ill health or simply because the resident lives alone and would like reassurance that help is available at a touch of a button.
- 2.8 The policy acknowledges that there are other benefits of a lifeline alarm, such as, peace of mind that the resident is safe in their home, provides greater freedom to get on with day to day living, reduces anxiety for family, friends and carers and can lower the risk of unplanned admission to hospital.
- 2.9 The Council is committed to the principles of openness and transparency and for this reason, the policy includes a clause relating to this. If, for any reason, there are any operational matters which impact upon the Council's ability to operate this policy, they will ensure that information about this is given to residents and other stakeholders.

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Circulation of the Report: Councillor Ray Stanley, Management Team

List of Background Papers: A copy of such papers to be made available for public inspection and included on Website