

Mid Devon District Council

Telecare Policy

Policy Number: HSG v1.2

March 2017

DRAFT

Version Control Sheet

Title: Telecare Policy

Purpose: To implement a new Telecare Policy in accordance with good practice and relevant legislative requirements.

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Review Frequency: **Every 4 years or sooner if required and in accordance with good practice and changes in legislation**

Consultation This document was sent out for consultation to the following:

Cabinet Member

Staff

Tenants Together

Management Team

Homes PDG

Document History

This document obtained the following approvals.

Title	Date	Version Approved
Cabinet Member	22 February 2017	
Tenants Together		
Management Team	7 March 2017	
Homes PDG		
Cabinet		

1. Introduction

This policy statement outlines Mid Devon District Council's (MDDC), Housing Service's approach to providing a chargeable Lifeline alarm and other telecare services to clients who have need of such support.

In delivering the Telecare Service, we aim to:

- Promote the benefits of Telecare to older and more vulnerable people
- Enable older and more vulnerable people to remain in their own homes
- Keep clients safe and improve their quality of life
- Work with health professionals to find the most appropriate equipment for clients
- Offer new equipment to clients as new technological solutions are developed and are available
- Provide help to clients which will help them to retain their independence "round the clock", at the touch of a button
- Provide a high quality service which delivers value for money

2. Scope

This policy sets out how the Lifeline alarm service provides help at the touch of a button, 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. It explains how this service and other telecare options can help to support older and more vulnerable people to remain living independently in their own homes and provides an overview of other related services. This policy covers the following points and should be read in conjunction with the related documents as stated below:-

- Services available
- Eligibility and charges
- Non-payment of charges
- Purpose of the Lifeline alarm
- Installation of the Lifeline alarm
- Faults

3. Related Documents

- a. Tenancy Agreement
- b. Income Management Policy
- c. Service Standards
- d. Lifeline Alarm Service leaflet
- e. Complaints & Feedback Policy

4. Definitions

The following definitions apply to this policy:

- **Resident** includes MDDC tenants, freeholders, leaseholders and private tenants

- **Tenant** means anyone who holds a Council tenancy with Mid Devon District Council
- **Telecare** is the use of assistive technology to monitor the health and wellbeing of clients in their own homes. This technology is being continually developed and the range of equipment available is growing.
- **Lifeline** is the name which the Council uses to describe our community alarm service.
- **Control Centre** is the name used in relation to the service provided by Officers who monitor calls from the Council's Lifeline clients

5. Services available

5.1 The Council offers a Lifeline alarm service to clients. A typical Lifeline alarm unit will be supplied with a standard Lifeline pendant.

5.2 A Lifeline alarm unit enables a user to summon help once the unit button or pendant is pressed. This sends a signal down the telephone line to the control centre where the specialist equipment is able to automatically inform staff who is calling. Officers in the control centre will take appropriate action which may involve telephoning a friend or relative nearby with a request that they visit the client, or summoning the emergency services.

5.3 The Lifeline pendant may be worn around the neck or on the wrist and is water-proof for the shower or bath. It enables a user to summon help anywhere in the home and adjacent garden, up to 50 metres from the unit, should the individual fall or become unwell, and if they are unable to get to a telephone.

Other services are available and these include the provision of keysafes, and fall detectors.

5.4 We will undertake a review of the personal details of clients, their needs and the help required on an annual basis to ensure that our records are accurate and that they are aware of the full range of services on offer which may be of interest to them. This is important because other, newer equipment which may be of use or of interest to the client may have become available since the last time a review was undertaken.

6. Eligibility and charges

6.1 Lifeline alarm service:

6.1.1 If a client requests a Lifeline alarm system, they will need to have a telephone socket with an active landline near a three pin electrical socket.

6.1.2 The Council will charge for the rental of the Lifeline alarm and pendant and the service it provides, including a one off installation fee of the Lifeline unit.

6.1.3 The rental charge includes the rental of the alarm, the continual monitoring of the service and any repairs, or the replacement of the alarm except where this

is necessary as a result of tenant misuse or damage, when a charge may be made.

6.1.4 The Council reserves the right to vary charges by giving at least four weeks' written notice before any changes take effect. These charges may increase or decrease from time to time. Generally, the charges are reviewed at the same time as the annual rent increase and any changes are implemented at the beginning of a new financial year.

6.2 Prices relating to other related services will be set by Officers taking into account the cost of provision, and any relevant on-costs.

6.3 A schedule of charges will be publicised on our website.

7. Non-payment of charges

7.1 If a resident falls behind with payments for the Lifeline alarm service and does not make arrangements to clear the debt, the Council reserves the right to terminate the service received. If the Council takes such action, it will be the responsibility of the client to find an alternative provider.

7.2 Our Officers will raise issues relating to non-payment with clients at an early stage. They will be mindful of the clients health and other needs when discussing repayment options and, where necessary, action to recover any outstanding debts. Any recovery action being considered will be subject to tests relating to reasonableness and proportionality taking into account the nature of the client the Telecare Service is designed to help.

7.3 If tenants of the Council's Housing Service fall into arrears with payments relating to telecare, action can be taken in accordance with the terms and conditions of their tenancy agreement.

8. Purpose of the Services Available

8.1 A Lifeline alarm benefits individuals who feel vulnerable in their home. This may be due to age, disability, ill health or simply because they live alone and would like reassurance that help is available at a touch of a button.

8.2 Other benefits of a Lifeline alarm include:

- Peace of mind that the individual is safe in their home;
- Provides greater freedom to get on with day to day living;
- Reduces anxiety for family, friends and carers; and
- Lowers the risk of unplanned admission to hospital
- Reduces the potential need for moves into residential care

8.3 The Lifeline can be used at any time of the day or night. It enables people to live independently and provides a home safety and personal security system. When a resident presses the pendant or alarm button, a message is sent to the control centre where trained operators take the most appropriate action,

whether it is contacting the relevant emergency contact or services such as Police or Ambulance services.

- 8.4 Telecare can help people to manage risk if they are older or more vulnerable. For example, if someone is concerned about a bogus caller, they can summon help using the Lifeline. If they are concerned about falling, a fall detector can detect when someone has fallen and send an alert through to the operators in the control centre who will arrange a suitable response.
- 8.5 The rationale for offering the other related services is that there may be many small jobs around the house that older and more vulnerable people cannot undertake, for a variety of reasons.
- 8.6 Clients often want to know that the contractors that they are using to undertake repairs or other minor works are competent, and that they are trustworthy. The workmen employed by the Council are all able to carry out any necessary work to a reasonable standard and are all bound to deliver a good level of service. This can be reassuring for older or more vulnerable people.

9. Installation of the Lifeline alarm

- 9.1 Before an alarm can be installed, the resident will be required to supply a modern BT socket and a three pin electric socket close to the BT socket.
- 9.2 The resident will be required to provide the following information when the alarm is installed:-
- Details of least two emergency contacts who live close by e.g next of kin, a neighbour, family member or friend who are willing to be called in the event of an emergency
 - GP's name, address and contact details
 - If no emergency contacts details are given, the name, address and contact details of any carer/care agencies and/or social worker should be provided (if relevant)
 - Any relevant medical information (this can be relayed to emergency services).
- 9.3 When a resident does not have an emergency contact that lives close by, they will be required to have a key safe installed at their property. The Council can install a key safe for a charge.
- 9.4 In the event that a key safe is to be installed, this will need to be mounted to the door or wall and be resistant to hammering and sawing for security purposes. It must be able to hold the key and have a combination lock. The number to the key safe must be supplied to us to the Council to pass onto the control centre who will only give the code out to the emergency services. This will allow instant access to responding personnel in an emergency situation.

10. **Faults**

- 10.1 The Council will respond to any faults with the Lifeline alarm equipment. However if there is no dialling tone on the telephone, the resident may have a line fault and it will be their responsibility to report this to their telephone provider. The alarm will inform the resident that there is a telephone fault.
- 10.2 If there is an electrical power cut the lifeline alarm unit will work for up to 36 hours with the red light flashing, and some alarms may set off a beeping noise. If the electrical power cut is more than a hour the lifeline alarm unit will automatically call the control centre to inform them that there is no electricity.
- 10.3 If a fault to the equipment has arisen as a result of misuse by the client, then a charge may be applied. Cases of this nature will be assessed on an individual basis, taking into account the personal circumstances of the client.

11. **Service standards**

- 11.1 We are committed to the principles of openness and transparency and for this reason we will ensure that this policy is well-publicised. If there are any operational matters which impact upon our ability to operate this policy, we will ensure that information about this is given to tenants and other stakeholders.
- 11.2 Our Officers will be trained to understand the particular vulnerabilities of our client group and will therefore always have identification available if required.
- 11.3 We will publicise the full range of Telecare and other related services and offer the most suitable equipment to enable clients to remain living independently in their own homes.
- 11.4 We will replace defective equipment, as necessary, provided the damage was not caused by misuse.
- 11.5 Our Officers are trained to understand their responsibilities in accordance with data protection and will treat all personal information in accordance with the relevant legislation.

12. **Complaints**

- 12.1 Any complaints about the Telecare service, or other related services, will be dealt with in accordance with the Council's

13. **Equality and Diversity**

- 12.1 The Housing Service tailors its services to meet the diverse needs of individuals. We foster good relations with people when providing services to eliminate discrimination and to promote opportunity of equality.

13. Review

- 13.1 This Policy has been written in line with good practice and current relevant legislation. Unless there are any changes to such legislation beforehand, the next review of this Policy is due January 2021 and every four years thereafter.

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