

Appendix A.

Derbyshire County Council Careline/Telecare Consultation

Derbyshire County Council currently funds the South Derbyshire District Council's (SDDC) Careline Community Alarms Services that provide 24 hours-a- day seven days-a- week alarms monitoring provision for individuals across South Derbyshire along with other similar services elsewhere in the County. Community alarms systems incorporate a pendant or wristband worn by an individual which connects to a telephone line through a base unit. If required, clients can summon assistance by triggering an alert and once the client is connected to an operator at a monitoring centre they can assess how to support the client's needs at that time.

Additional items of equipment can be added to the basic community alarm system, as part of the Derbyshire Adult Care telecare offer, for example:

- Motion sensors can reduce the likelihood of accidents and falls occurring by automatically switching on a light when the individual gets out of bed
- Sensors placed in a clients bed can alert staff if the person is having an epileptic fit
- Gas and water sensors can be used to alert if a client has not turned off the tap or cooker
- Sensors can be placed on a front door to alert a carer if a client has left home without anyone knowing.

Some telecare equipment requires connection to a community alarm base unit so that specific sensors or equipment can provide information through to a monitoring centre, and for this there is an associated monitoring charge. However, there are other pieces of telecare equipment such as a pager system which can allow an individual to request support from a nearby carer or relative. Increasingly, technological developments are bringing to market pieces of telecare equipment that do not require connection to a monitoring system, such as an app which utilises mobile phone technology

Derbyshire County Council is consulting service users and providers on the future delivery and funding of this service between now and 25 January 2019.

DCC has already agreed to extend the existing contract for a further two years until 2021, although, has suggested that it may introduce changes to the eligibility criteria in the summer of 2019.

South Derbyshire District Council Response.

General comments.

The Council is concerned that the proposal to change the eligibility criteria for Community Alarms and Telecare Services may disadvantage current and future service users who may be vulnerable but not meet the threshold required by the Care Act.

This is a particular concern for service users in more rural areas for whom Careline provides a sense of safety, security, confidence independence and well-being.

As currently funded, service users are already on a low income it is unlikely that they will be able or willing to fund this service from their own resources, potentially leaving them vulnerable and isolated in the event of a crisis such as a trip or fall in their own home.

The Council is also concerned that this service provides a proactive and preventative service for users which meets the aims of the Health and Well-Being and Place Alliance Partnerships in South Derbyshire. These partnerships are focussed on preventing unnecessary interventions by Ambulance and Health Services including unnecessary hospital and care admissions. Removing funding from users may compromise some of these aims.

The teams who deliver these services in South Derbyshire have highlighted that there are still significant issues in partner agencies understanding the nature of the current service. This includes exploring its potential to meet the wider health and social care aims and reduce the duplication of effort across health, housing, social care and the voluntary sector.

There are also concerns that this proposal will create a confusing 'twin-track' approach to services in South Derbyshire. Some service users will find that their 'floating support' service is still being funded and yet their telecare /Careline service is not. Many customers view the two services as being one and in practice the two are largely interdependent.

The Council does, however, accept that there may be a number of current service users in receipt of funding whose needs do not merit the provision of this service as it has only been offered in the past based on the nature of the property rather than any assessed health or other needs.

A review of the eligibility criteria for this service is necessary although the Council would question whether the Care Act criteria are appropriate for this purpose and for achieving the partnership and preventative aims of Health and Social Care Services.

Response to Specific Proposals.

Proposal 1.

Proposal

Service eligibility to access Derbyshire County Council funded community alarm and telecare services is changed to solely focus on providing equipment and monitoring to Care Act (2014) eligible clients who have an eligible health or social care need.

Response

The Council is concerned that this may remove funding from around 75% of current users.

These users are already on low incomes and may not be able to fund the service themselves. For many users in rural areas the Careline Service provides a sense of safety security and comfort which contributes to their sense of wellbeing.

The Council accepts that there are some service users in receipt of funded services who may not have a clear need for this service, as it has not previously been offered based on an assessed need. .

The consultation documents do not make reference to the importance of the Careline Service in facilitating the Falls Recovery Service which has been successful in making significant savings for ambulance and health services.

The Council will need further information on how new eligibility assessments are to be carried out and by whom.

Proposal 2

Proposal

Individuals who currently access the service as they are in receipt of Housing Benefit or Pension Credit (Guarantee Credit only) will no longer receive a subsidised service and if required be assessed to see if they have an eligible need as defined by the Care Act (2014).

Response

The Council will need further information on how new assessments are to be carried out and by whom.

Proposal 3

Proposal

Individuals, irrespective of eligibility, would be provided (where need is identified) with a community alarms base unit and telecare equipment free of charge, via the statutory requirement to provide minor aids and equipment. Once the equipment is identified as being no longer required it will be removed by the provider.

Response

The Council will require confirmation of who will purchase and own this equipment and be responsible for its maintenance. It is not clear from the consultation documents how the 'need' for this provision would be identified and assessed.

Proposal4

Proposal

The ongoing monitoring and maintenance costs associated with telecare and community alarms for Derbyshire Care Act (2014) eligible clients will be assessed under the appropriate charging regulations and the individual's personal budget will reflect this.

Response

The Council will need further information as to how these assessments are to be carried out and how this will be resourced. There are already concerns as to how other agencies that provides funding and financial benefits advise service users of the nature of the Careline Service and that personal budgets could be used to fund this. It would be helpful if further information could be provided as to how this will be communicated to agencies that manage 'personal budgets'.

Proposal5

Proposal

Self-funding clients, who are not eligible to receive financial support under the Care Act (2014) guidance, would have to pay monitoring and maintenance costs at full cost.

Response

This proposal suggests that a further assessment of a service user's financial position will be required. The Council will need further information as to how this will be carried out and by whom. It is not clear from the consultation documents as to how users with an 'identified need' will pay for this service if they are not eligible for support.

Proposal6

Proposal

Should a self-funding client become eligible for financial support under the Care Act 2014 following a period of time and a subsequent financial assessment, they will be able to access a personal budget to allow them to access telecare and community alarms provision.

Response

The Council will require further information as to how this eligibility will be assessed and by whom and which 'personal budget' this refers to.

Proposal7

Proposal

That community alarms and telecare is provided free (to include provision of equipment and monitoring charge) as part of a six week reablement offer. Non-Care Act eligible clients who choose to retain the service after the end of the reablement period would be required to pay to receive the service. Or, if following full assessment, they are identified as Care Act eligible they would continue to receive the service a Personal Budget or Direct Payment as per the proposals outlined above.

Response

The Council will need more information as to which 'personal budget' this refers to and with regard to how these assessments will be carried out and by whom

Proposal 8

Proposal

If a self-funding client becomes eligible for financial support under the Care Act 2014 they could use their personal budget to pay for on-going monitoring and maintenance.

Council Response

The Council will need more information as to which 'personal budget' this refers to.

Proposal 9

Proposal

Telecare and community alarm equipment and monitoring would be provided free for people – whether eligible under the Care Act or not – for a period of six weeks to enable them to return home from hospital. If they were subsequently assessed as needing the equipment it would be under the terms listed above.

Response

The Council will need further information as to how these assessments are carried out and by whom. If after the initial six-week period a 'non eligible' user still has a need for the equipment how will this be funded?