Telecare, Personal Alarms & Lifelines Information Sheet

Telecare services uses simple technology to support your wellbeing and help you stay living independently at home. A personal alarm system (also known as a ‘lifeline’) is an example of telecare, which allows you to easily call for help if you’re unwell or have a fall. You press a button on a pendant or wristband to summon help from someone that can provide a response quickly.

Pressing the button activates a sensor which sends a wireless signal to a standalone base unit situated in your home. The base unit is plugged into the mains electricity supply and your phone socket. It connects to a response service through your landline phone connection.

The response services offered may include alarm alerts, voice calls, text message and location mapping. The response service may be provided by family, friends or neighbours living nearby that have a spare key (‘key holder’) so they can visit you if required, or it may be a call centre operator that can speak to you through the unit and contact the emergency services if required.

There are other types of telecare systems that use fixed sensors around the home to monitor activities and give a warning to a response service if there is a problem such as a fall, fire, unusual movement or gas leak. These can be tailored to suit an individual’s need and are particularly useful for people with memory or cognitive problems.

Telecare services may be provided by local authorities, private companies or other organisations. You could ask your local authority for a ‘needs assessment’ - you may qualify for some financial assistance towards the system if you are assessed as needing it as part of a care package. The local authority can also provide other aids/ equipment.

Further information

- The Disabled Living Foundation produces a useful factsheet ‘Personal alarm systems and telecare’ available online: www.dlf.org.uk/factsheets/telecare
- Which? also has a useful guide on Personal alarms: www.which.co.uk/elderly-care/housing-options/assistive-technology-for-older-people/
Questions to ask

- How much is the installation/ connection fee? Is there a self-connect option?
- How much is the weekly charge? Typically the prices range from £3.50-£5+ per week depending on the service. If you have a disability or long term health condition you are likely to be exempt from VAT charges on disability equipment.
- If you do not have a landline phone connection is the system able to work using mobile signals?
- Are there any additional features included e.g. falls detector? Consider the type of service you need to ensure you are not paying for features you don’t need.
- What is the maximum range for the base unit e.g will it reach the end of your garden?
- What kind of batteries does the pendant and base unit need and how long do they last? How will you know if they are running low?
- Is the device waterproof as you will likely want to use it in the kitchen and bathroom?
- Is the provider registered with the Telecare Services Association (TSA) (Tel: 01625 520320, www.tsa-voice.org.uk)? This organisation also provides information and advice on different telecare options.
- You could install a key safe if you do not have someone to act a ‘key holder’ or do not wish to give out your key. This is lockable box outside your property to store a key meaning other people can access your property in an emergency. Wiltshire Bobby Van Trust works in partnership with the police and offers free home security visits to older people and can fit key safes for a charge. www.wiltshirebobbyvan.org.uk Tel: 01380 861155.
- What happens to the base unit if there is a power cut (many have back up batteries) or fault with the telephone line (many base units can detect this and provide audible warning signals)?
- Any telecare system presented onto the market as an alarm system must comply with the set of British Standards (BS) EN50134.
- Does the personal alarm system offer suitable options for how you can wear it depending on your outfits and activities e.g. wristband, pendant, belt clip?
- Attendance Allowance is a non-means-tested disability benefit for people over 65 who have difficulty with things like moving around indoors, washing, dressing. Age UK Wiltshire may be able to help you apply -please contact us for further details on 01380 727767.
Providers of personal alarm systems

DISCLAIMER: Please note that this guide is for information purposes only and Age UK Wiltshire do not recommend or endorse any company or organisation listed. You should make enquiries with the company to discuss your requirements. Any lists are not exhaustive.

The information in this document was last updated April 2018.

AGE UK PERSONAL ALARMS
Tel: 0800 011 3846 (via PPP Taking care)
Website: www.ageuk.org.uk/products/mobility-and-independence-at-home/personal-alarms/
NB: Key holder required

ASTRALINE CALL SAFE
Tel: 0345 2170721
Website: www.callsafe.org
E-mail: astraline@jjhousing.co.uk
NB: Key holder required

ASTER CARE
Tel: 0333 400 8299
Website: www.aster.co.uk
E-mail: telecareinfo@aster.co.uk
NB: Care response service available if no key holder

MEDVIVO
Tel: 0800 644 200 / 01305 755800
Website: www.medivo.com/telecare
E-mail: info@medvivo.com
NB: Care response service available if no key holder
CENTRAPULSE
Tel: 0300 123 3232 / 0300 333 6511
Website: [www.centrapulse.org.uk](http://www.centrapulse.org.uk)
E-mail: [pulse@centragroup.org.uk](mailto:pulse@centragroup.org.uk)

NB: Care response service available if no key holder

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SELWOOD LIFELINE
Tel: 01225 715794
Website: [www.selwoodlifeline.co.uk](http://www.selwoodlifeline.co.uk)
E-mail: [info@selwoodhousing.com](mailto:info@selwoodhousing.com)

NB: most areas in Wiltshire & Swindon covered, and SP3, SP4 and SP8 postcodes in Salisbury.