

CareLink Plus Performance Report for the period April 2015 to March 2016

CareLink Plus operates a telecare alarm service, monitoring over 5500 connections. Approximately 3300 are at 2999 addresses of customers living independently in the community, with the remainder in sheltered or supported accommodation of some kind. We are a 24 hour service operating 7 days a week, every day of the year. The demand on our service increases year on year with customers' support needs increasing as a result of the reduction of other available services, and the increase in people with complex support needs remaining living in their own homes for longer.

CareLink Plus also operates a range of other services, principally outside of normal office hours, enabling other council departments and other service providers to offer a 24 hour, 7 days a week service to their customers. CareLink Plus carries out an assessment of resources and risk to ensure these additional services have no detrimental impact on the provision of the telecare alarm service.

CareLink Plus is audited annually by the Telecare Services Association (TSA), our industry regulator, to ensure we remain compliant with their code of practice. We have achieved TSA accreditation since 2003 and we were one of the first community alarm services to do so for both the call handling and community working elements of our service.

All our telephone lines and alarm call handling lines are recorded for training, monitoring and service development purposes. We continue to strive to provide the best service we can for our customers and for the people of Brighton & Hove.

Service development

We have updated our customer information pack to make this a more informative and user friendly document for our customers. This includes a one page guide with useful reminders about how the service works, how to look after the equipment, and what to do if there is a problem and the system is not working.

The CareLink Plus team has increased in size. Our monitoring centre is increasingly busy and we are taking more calls, which require more team members to answer them and ensure our customer service standards remain high.

Living Well with CareLink Plus

CareLink Plus has three new Care Managers working in the service offering a support program called Living Well. This allows us to work in a much more in depth way with those customers who need some bespoke support following discharge from hospital or residential care. It also enables us to work with customers to prevent deterioration in their health, independence, and social circumstances, aiming to prevent crisis situations, hospital admission, and enable customers to remain independent and maintain the lifestyle of their choice.

You can follow CareLink Plus on twitter. We have over 350 followers.

CareLink Plus is a 'Dementia Friendly' team as all team members have participated in Dementia Friends awareness training sessions.

Telecare alarm call monitoring and response co-ordination

Our aims

- To answer 97.5% of alarm calls received within 60 seconds of receiving the incoming call.
- To answer 99% of alarm calls received within 3 minutes of receiving the incoming call.
- To investigate any alarm calls not answered within 3 minutes, to ascertain the reason for the delay and that no detriment resulted from the delay.
- To ensure our customers are confident in using their CareLink Plus alarm system and can communicate effectively with our officers.
- To ensure our customers are satisfied with the way we responded to their calls when they use their CareLink Plus alarm.
- To ensure our customers are happy with the level of customer service they receive using their CareLink Plus alarm.

How do we measure?

All alarm calls are received via a digital system which records the time the call arrives at CareLink Plus, the time taken for each call to be answered and the time the call ends. When an officer answers and responds to a call they record the reason for the call and the action taken in response to the call. Every month a report is generated on the number of calls received, for what reasons, and how quickly they were answered. Customers who used their alarm equipment were sent a survey to comment on their experience of using the service. All calls are voice recorded.

How did we do?

Between April 2015 and March 2016 the CareLink Plus control centre received 158950 alarm calls. This shows a significant increase on the previous year of 17306 calls. This is a rise of 10.1%. On average we answer 3057 alarm calls a week which is 435 calls a day.

In the same period we also made and received 81280 telephone calls. On average this is 1555 a week or 222 every day, in the delivery of CareLink Plus services.

Why did our customers use their alarm?

- 21% of calls were made by customers testing the alarm equipment.
- 10.5% of calls were made by customers who had accidentally activated their alarm.
- 2.4% of calls were made when customers pressed their alarm button because they needed our help in an emergency situation, such as a fall or medical problem.
- 3.6% of calls were made when customers needed our help in less urgent circumstances, such as requiring a carer, community nurse, family member or friend to be contacted.
- 5.5% of calls were made when telecare sensors were activated.
- 57% of calls were for other reasons such as reassurance, equipment performance monitoring, exchanging information, and managing access and other issues in sheltered accommodation.

These figures are broadly similar to last year's call reason results.

How quickly did we respond?

- 97.8% - of alarm calls received were answered within 60 seconds. This annual average exceeds our target.
- 99.6% of calls received were answered within 3 minutes. This exceeds our target.
- 0.4% of calls were answered in over 3 minutes which is an increase on last year and a consequence of the significant increase in call volume. Everyday we review any calls that take longer than 3 minutes to answer to find out where the calls came from, the call reason, and why they took longer to answer. Our procedures for prioritising call answering

means the bulk of these will involve routine call traffic from sheltered housing schemes, and equipment function related issues. There were 582 calls answered in over 3 minutes in 2015/16.

- Of these 4 calls were made by customers who needed help in an emergency because they had fallen or had a medical problem. In each case the delay came about because the officers answering alarm calls were already dealing with other concurrent emergency alarm calls.

Were customers replying to our customer satisfaction survey questions after using their alarm happy with the service they received?

- 90.5% said the time it took for us to answer their call was very quick or quick.
- 92% found it easy or very easy to communicate with the officer answering the call. Another 6% said it was quite easy, 4% found it difficult or very difficult.
- Of those who found communication difficult, in 40% of instances this was due to hearing or speech impairment.
- 97% said the action taken by the operator resolved their problem.
- 94% said the service was good value for money.
- 93.5% said the quality of the service they received was very high or high.
- 98% would recommend our service, and 58% have recommended us to another person.
- 97% felt safer at home
- 84% were more independent

These results exceed our targets.

New customers and home visits

Our Aims

- Following an emergency call, to attend 90% of customers within 45 minutes.
- Following an emergency call, to attend 100% of customers within 60 minutes.
- To rectify 90% of critical alarm equipment faults within 48 hours.
- To rectify 100% of critical alarm equipment faults within 96 hours.
- To rectify 90% of non critical alarm faults within 10 days.
- To rectify 100% of non critical alarm faults within 15 days or at the customer's convenience.
- To complete 90% of installations for new customers following an urgent referral within 2 working days or at the customer's convenience.
- To complete 100% of installations for new customers following an urgent referral within 5 working days or at the customer's convenience.
- To complete 90% of installations for new customers following all other referrals within 15 working days, or at the customer's convenience.
- To complete 100% of installations for new customers following all other referrals within 20 working days, or at the customer's convenience.
- To ensure new customers are satisfied with the service and care they have experienced whilst having the CareLink Plus alarm provided and telecare equipment installed.

How do we measure?

CareLink Plus officers keep a record of all the appointments they attend. When responding to emergency calls, the time they are alerted and their arrival time is recorded. We calculate the number of referrals we receive and how long it takes to install the service for new customers. We calculate totals for all the appointments we attend. We ask every new customer to complete a satisfaction survey to enable them to comment on their experience of accessing the service and becoming a CareLink Plus customer.

How did we do?

Between April 2015 and March 2016 CareLink Plus received 1146 referrals to provide alarm equipment to new customers which is approximately 100 less than the previous year. Officers carried out 801 installations to link new customers to the CareLink Plus alarm service which is a slight decrease on last year. The conversion rate improved on last year with 69.9% of referrals resulting in a new CareLink Plus customer.

On average 67 new customers were linked to the service each month compared to 68 each month in 2014/15. In total, officers carried out 3442 visits to customers' homes, which is approximately 66 per week. Officers attended 428 visits in response to customers' emergency alarm calls, which is an increase of 50 call outs compared to last year and reverses the trend over previous years of declining call out numbers.

Time taken to reach the customer following an emergency call where an officer is required to attend the customer's address

- In 36.4% of calls we reached the customer within 15 minutes.
- In 57.5% of calls we reached the customer within 30 minutes.
- In 94.3% of calls we reached the customer within 45 minutes.
- In 99.6% of calls we reached the customer within 60 minutes.

Our results for reaching the customer within 60 minutes are below target. Upon investigation the 0.4% of calls represents 1 individual call out, not responded to within 60 minutes. The monitoring centre was unable to make voice contact with the customer and unable to contact the customers' nominated keyholders, so a CareLink Plus Team Officer attended. The Officer was already attending another emergency call out. The customer had fallen and an ambulance was called to assist them up.

Alarm faults

- 100% of critical alarm faults were rectified within 48 hours.
- 100% of non critical alarm faults were rectified within 10 days or at the customers' convenience.

These results exceed our targets.

Time taken to link new customers following referral to CareLink Plus

Referral to installation statistics are calculated according to TSA guidelines, which stipulate, where targets are exceeded due to service user issues or choices, rather than lack of service provider resource, the target can be deemed to have been met.

- 90% of urgent referrals were linked to the CareLink Plus service within 2 working days achieving target in 11 months out of 12. In one month this fell below target to 79%.
- 100% of urgent referrals were linked to the CareLink Plus service within 5 working days or at the customers' convenience achieving target.
- 90% of all other referrals were linked to the CareLink Plus service within 15 working days, achieving target in 11 months out of 12. In one month this fell below target to 88%.
- 100% of all other referrals were linked to the CareLink Plus service within 20 working days or at the customers' convenience achieving target in 10 months out of 12. In two months this fell below target to 98%.

Of the new customers replying to our customer satisfaction survey

- 98.75 % found that upon their first contact with the service, staff were very helpful or helpful
- 99% found the officer who carried out their demonstration to be very helpful or helpful
- 99% felt able to ask questions during the demonstration appointment.

- 99.5% were very satisfied or quite satisfied with the time it took to get the service installed following referral.
- 96.75% said the quality of the service they received was very high or high.
- 90.25% thought the service was good value for money.

These results exceed our targets.

Additional Telecare equipment installed

CareLink Plus makes available a wide range of telecare sensors to the residents of Brighton and Hove, in addition to the standard unit and alarm button. These sensors enable people to live as independently as possible in the lowest intensity care-setting that meets their needs and wishes. The sensors currently in common use include:

- Bed and chair occupancy sensors
- Temperature sensors that detect high and low temperature in the dwelling
- Epileptic seizure sensors – wrist worn or placed under the mattress on the bed
- Flood detectors
- Falls detectors that detect sudden changes in air pressure
- Movement sensors
- Smoke detectors
- Reminder alerts, typically to remind the customer to take medication
- Property exit sensors
- Easy press alarm triggers
- Pressure mats
- Pull cords
- Wall mounted alarm buttons
- GPS locator devices
- Carbon monoxide detectors
- Welfare check calls

Our Aims

- To provide a wide range of telecare sensors enabling independent living.
- To enable our customers to continue to carry out activities they enjoy whilst helping to ensure their safety and wellbeing.
- To actively promote telecare to carers as a preventative and support measure.
- To monitor the use of telecare sensors to ensure excellent quality service, value for money and effectiveness.
- To identify where needs are not being met and to provide suitable bespoke solutions for these gaps.
- To quantify and demonstrate the savings telecare can achieve in comparison to other forms of care provided, and realise these savings for Brighton & Hove City Council, through the Living Well project and the entirety of service delivery.
- To generate informed evidence for future service development and delivery.
- To carry out comprehensive awareness training for Adult Social Care and Health professionals, in addition to a host of other service and support providers, to enable appropriate and informed referrals for telecare for new and existing CareLink Plus customers.
- To increase the number of customers using telecare equipment.

How do we measure?

We keep a record of all telecare sensors installed. We collate this information and it is recorded on our call monitoring system which enables us to identify what equipment a customer has

installed in their home, and which piece of equipment triggered an alarm each time a call is answered. We record what percentage of referrals includes referral for telecare equipment.

How did we do?

Between April 2015 and March 2016 CareLink Plus installed 684 Telecare sensors in households across Brighton & Hove. This is an increase on of 18% on the previous year.

Team members working on Telecare development have continued to trial new equipment as it becomes available on the market with our Senior Technician specialising in this work.

Promotion, training and awareness building has seen the CareLink Plus service take part in events across the city to increase both public and professional understanding of telecare equipment and how it can support customers, carers and family members.

Training sessions have been carried out with a range of health and social care professionals to ensure referral for telecare is considered as an integral part of care provision to support service users at home. A Telecare Awareness course facilitated by CareLink Plus staff is now part of the Council's learning and development program, available to employees upon application.

Living Well Care Managers spend time at the hospital identifying patients whose discharge can be supported by Carelink Plus services. They also review the service delivery to existing customers where a change in the pattern of use of the service is identified, or where customers tell us about needs or problems where they would like some additional assistance.

56% of referrals for CareLink Plus received between April 2014 and March 2015 included telecare equipment. This is an increase of 10% on the previous year.

Complaints

CareLink Plus received 18 complaints regarding the service we provided to our customers between April 2015 and March 2016. This is more than the previous year which saw a particularly low number of complaints.

We made contact with all complainants within five days. Four complaints were resolved the same day. Three complaints were resolved the day after they were received. Three complaints was resolved in two days, and a further five complaints were resolved in between three days and a week. Three complaints took longer to resolve as they involved providing transcripts and/or sound files of the calls concerned. Two were resolved in two weeks and one within two months.

CareLink Plus will continue to record and monitor complaints and aims to make contact with any complainant within five working days, in compliance with the TSA Code of Practice. Operating procedures are always reviewed following a complaint.

Compliments

CareLink Plus received 50 compliments regarding the service we provide to our customers between April 2015 and March 2016. These were shared with the team and individual team members were specifically commended where they have provided excellent customer service.

CareLink Plus would like to thank all those customers who contacted us to tell us their experience of our service.

CareLink Plus will continue to record compliments received and respond personally to compliments and comments and suggestions where appropriate.

Future plans

- To meet or exceed our annual performance indicator targets in the next year and continue to achieve TSA compliance and accreditation.
- To continue to develop the Telecare solutions we can offer our customers and lead the field in making innovative solutions available to meet assessed needs.
- To ensure everyone in the City who would benefit from our services knows who we are and how to contact us.
- To provide services in line with Brighton & Hove City Council's equalities policies.
- To continue to provide excellent customer service to ensure our customers continue to be satisfied with the service they receive.
- To listen and respond to what our customers have to say and seek their opinions about what we do.
- To ensure our customers and everyone else we meet in the provision of our service is free from abuse and neglect, and where necessary is assisted with reporting any such matters in order that they receive appropriate help and support.
- To review the way we deliver services and the how the team functions in order to achieve the best service delivery we can with the resources we have available to us.
- To continue to work more closely with our partners in health, particularly to support service users being discharged from hospital, and to prevent hospital admissions where intervention and support via telecare has the potential to achieve this.
- To support carers in their caring role.
- To set up an SMS texting facility directly linked into our alarm platform so customers' texts are displayed on the call handlers' screens in the monitoring centre.
- To continue to Tweet our latest news.

If you are a CareLink Plus customer and would like to comment on your experience of our service, good or bad, you can call us, email or write to us. You can request a survey to comment on your experience of using your alarm.

We will continue to survey new customers and existing customers as they use their alarm. All customers receive our annual newsletter.

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*All survey results referred to in this report take into account only customers who responded to the question upon which results have been calculated. .