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<b>REPORT TO:</b>	<b>HOUSING AND COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE</b>	<b>AGENDA ITEM: 11</b>
<b>DATE OF MEETING:</b>	<b>JUNE 14<sup>TH</sup> 2007</b>	<b>CATEGORY: RECOMMENDED</b>
<b>REPORT FROM:</b>	<b>MARK ALFLAT – DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITY SERVICES</b>	<b>OPEN PARAGRAPH NO:</b>
<b>MEMBERS' CONTACT POINT:</b>	<b>KAREN TALBOT – HOUSING OPERATIONS MANAGER (X5797)</b>	<b>DOC:</b>
<b>SUBJECT:</b>	<b>LIFELINE PROVISION</b>	<b>REF:</b>
<b>WARD(S) AFFECTED:</b>	<b>ALL</b>	<b>TERMS OF REFERENCE: HCSO1, FMO8</b>

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## **1.0 Recommendations**

- 1.1 To recommend to Finance and Management Committee that:
- 1.2 We end the option of Lifeline sales and move to lease only
- 1.3 To increase charges made to private sector clients, for Lifeline services, in line with Supporting People charges.

## **2.0 Purpose of Report**

- 2.1 To advise Members of the scope of our existing Lifeline business. As the decision relating to charging is a financial one it needs to be taken by the Finance and Management Committee.
- 2.2 To advise of recent development and our engagement with the Telecare pilot.

## **3.0 Detail**

- 3.1 Members will be aware that within our sheltered housing accommodation, each resident has access to a communication unit directly linked to our Careline service. As well as our tenants receiving a needs assessment and support plan, and regular welfare visits from their Community Warden, Careline is there to provide a response to these alarms, 24 hours per day, 365 days per year.
- 3.2 Throughout 2007 Housing Services will see the completion of an upgrade to replace every communication unit within each of our 1,067 sheltered housing properties and a full upgrade of our social alarm response centre, Careline.
- 3.3 This upgrade will ensure that our service is capable of utilising emerging preventative technologies to enable more residents to remain in their own homes for longer if they so choose.

3.4 As well as service provision to our sheltered housing tenants, Careline also provides a Lifeline service to residents in the private sector. Basically, an occupant of any property has a dispersed alarm (Lifeline) that connects into their mains electricity supply and their existing phone line, and a pendant that fits around their neck giving them full access to Careline in the event of an emergency.

3.5 In such an event our operatives respond in the same way that they would for our sheltered housing residents, i.e calling relatives, emergency services or sending our on call warden dependant on the event.

3.6 Residents currently access this service within two options;

Option One: Purchase of Lifeline

Careline currently sells Lifelines to customers for £125.00, charging £12.44 for installation and then £1.48 per week for monitoring and response to alarm activation. This option provides an annual income to Housing Services of £76.92 per year, per customer.

Option Two: Lease of Lifeline

Customers pay the initial installation fee of £12.44 and then £4.44 per week for rental of the Lifeline, monitoring and response to alarm activation. This option provides an annual income of £230.88 per year, per customer, however the actual cost of the Lifeline needs to be deducted from this income value.

3.7 The vast majority (approximately 95% of our existing 523 Lifeline customers) of customers choose option one as it seems to represent value for money as the customer then owns the unit. However customers are disadvantaged if they need the Lifeline for only a short period of time as there are no mechanism in place to buy the units back. Historically many customers purchase for relatives whose condition has taken a turn for the worse. These periods in life can often be shortlived before admission to a care home or hospital. Some of these redundant units are donated back to Careline and are used as emergency loans. However some are discarded or sold on.

3.8 In cases where units are discarded or sold on, Careline loses control of the unit that has been programmed into our Careline system. This has resulted in units being passed on in programmed mode to people who do not meet our criteria and do not pay us for our service. Therefore Careline can receive alarm activations from units for which there are no client details held. For a Careline operative this can result in an untenable situation in which they have no address to send emergency services or a warden to. Far worse, the holder of the programmed unit may expect or need some form of emergency response that will not arrive.

3.9 Therefore it is recommended that the option to purchase, Option One, is removed from our service.

3.10 In addition an assessment of our charges has been conducted. It takes at most 1 1/2 hours to install a Lifeline unit in each property. Based on current pay scales and on costs this equates to £15.90 per installation. It is therefore recommended that installation costs be increased to this amount.

3.11 Annual operational costs for the Careline centre are;

Staff		£115,845
On costs for staff	Page 2 of 4	£ 34,754

Maintenance of social alarm system	£ 34,000
Telephone lines for operation	£ 21,500
IT infrastructure costs	£ 2,670
 Total annual costs	 £208,769

- 3.12 There are currently 1,067 sheltered housing tenants plus an additional 523 Lifeline customers. This equates to a cost of £2.53 per household per year to pay for the costs of the Careline service. This amount does not include the costs to provide warden response in the event of an emergency. In effect the income we receive from sheltered housing tenants is supporting private residents and therefore justifies a review of the current charging system.
- 3.13 In March 2007 monitoring and response charges were assessed by Derbyshire Supporting People as they began a year long pilot for the provision of Telecare services. As part of this pilot Careline are installing, monitoring and responding to referral clients made by Social Services and health practitioners. County's research of the costs to monitor and respond to alarm activations resulted in a recommendation for a weekly charge of £5.00 for each client. Therefore for provision of the Telecare pilot service Derbyshire Supporting People team pay Careline £5.00 per week, per client.
- 3.14 In response to County research it is recommended that the lease charge made to Lifeline customers for rental, monitoring and response is increased from £4.20 per week to £5.00 per week in line with the assessment of actual costs. Consistent charges in both public and private spheres will ensure that Careline does not operate a two tier system and that neither sector subsidises the other.
- 3.15 It is recommended that all new customers for Lifeline are charged at the new rate as detailed in points 4.10 - £15.90 for installation, and 4.13 - £5.00 per week for monitoring and response.
- 3.16 Consideration has been given to the number of existing clients who will remain on a lower charge. Existing customers under a lease agreement already pay £4.44. It is recommended that their charge be increased to £5.00, following approval of this report and after appropriate notice of an increase has been advised to each client.
- 3.17 Existing customers who purchased their Lifelines currently pay £1.48 per week for monitoring and response. It is recommended that their charge is increased to £2.00 to bring them more in line with the actual cost to provide the service. The numbers of 'purchased' customers will be reviewed again at the end of the next financial year and a further report brought to Committee with recommendations.

#### **4.0 Financial Implications**

- 4.1 A review of the costs associated with provision of the Lifeline service has been necessary to ensure that costs are no longer subsidised by the Housing Revenue Account but are covered by service users or Supporting People benefit for those clients means tested as eligible for financial assistance within the sheltered housing service.
- 4.2 Increased charges will ensure that the income generated by Careline meets the associated costs for provision

## **5.0 Conclusions**

- 5.1 The Sheltered Housing Service remains a valuable asset to Housing Services. The Careline centre particularly represents an under utilised resource. Fairer charges will enable Careline to actively market the Lifeline service, to increase business and therefore income.