



A guide to

Community Alarms and Telecare

Aberdeenshire
COUNCIL



Introduction

Community alarms and telecare cover a range of devices and services that use modern technology to keep you safe in your own home and help you to maintain your independence.

They add to the support and assistance you may already be getting from family and friends, and from other professional routes such as the care at home service.

This booklet explains what community alarms and telecare systems are, how they help, how to go about finding out more about them and how to apply.



What is community alarm?

The community alarm scheme allows you to call for help in an emergency at any time, day or night.

The community alarm connects to and uses your own telephone to contact a trained operator in a regional control centre. You wear a pendant with a button which, when pressed by you, sends a signal through the telephone to the control centre. This alerts operators who are on duty 24 hours a day. They will speak to you directly without you needing to lift your phone to ask you what kind of help you need. If, however, they cannot contact you, they will arrange for someone to check what you need. They can also contact the emergency services on your behalf if required.

You are asked to nominate up to three contacts from your family, friends or neighbours who are happy to be contacted in an emergency to come round and help you, or enable other services to gain access to your home to assist.

If you do not know anyone who would be able to do this, alternative arrangements can be made. The person assessing your needs will discuss this with you.

A telephone line is required and you will need to ensure that all costs are covered to ensure that it remains live.

A 13 amp electrical socket needs to be near your telephone.

What is telecare?

Telecare provides a range of additional systems that can alert you when something needs your attention or alert others to assist you when you need it. Telecare is designed to support and maintain a person's independence at home. The equipment is unobtrusive and is installed in your home by trained technicians with minimal disturbance. It can be installed or taken out as required.

Examples of telecare alert systems:

- Fall detector
- Smoke/fire detector
- Flood detector
- Gas detector
- Bed occupancy detector (which can raise an alert if you get up from bed and do not manage back within an agreed time)
- Door contacts which can raise an alert when the door is opened
- Pressure mats (which detect movement or lack of movement)



These are 'passive' systems where you do not need to actively do anything for them to be effective in summoning assistance.



What type of equipment would help me to do things for myself?

Examples of systems that support independence:

- Door opening system
- Curtain/blinds closing system (can be on a remote dawn/dusk basis or via a control)
- Remote telephone call answering
- Aids to help you use a personal computer

These are active systems where you are in control of operating them.

These are just some examples of telecare services available. There are many others which might meet your needs. These will be discussed with you when you apply and participate in an assessment of your needs.

How can telecare help me?

Telecare:

- Offers a safer home environment
- Enables you to stay in your own home with greater control over your lifestyle
- Provides reassurance and access to immediate support and help when needed
- Can support you when you come home from hospital



Who is entitled to community alarm and telecare services?

You may be eligible if you need care and support to live independently at home, whatever your age, and if you have increasing frailty, dementia, a long-term health condition, a physical disability, sensory impairment, mental health problems, or problems with substance misuse.

In particular, if you need to be able to summon help quickly in an emergency, you may receive these services.

Like other community care services, community alarm and telecare is provided to those in need following assessment by a member of staff.

Services are provided to those people in the greatest need first. Council staff use **eligibility criteria** to judge your priority for services. These criteria are explained in the leaflets **Eligibility for Community Care** and **Children's Services in Aberdeenshire**, and are also available on the council's website.

How do I apply?

If you think you, or a relative, neighbour or friend, may benefit from, and be eligible for, a community alarm or telecare service, you can apply by making a referral to us. You can do this by calling the number at the end of this booklet, or by visiting your local social work office. You can also e-mail us at the address listed on the Aberdeenshire Council website.

Alternatively, you can ask health care staff, including your GP, at your local GP practice to make a referral on your behalf.



After we receive your referral, one of our staff – either a home care supervisor, care manager, social worker, or occupational therapist – will arrange to visit you to **assess** your needs. They will discuss your needs with you and your family, the range of appropriate equipment available, and will agree with you what will be best for your individual circumstances.

The service will be regularly reviewed to make sure you are happy with the service, and that it continues to meet your needs.

Will I have to pay?

Aberdeenshire Council operates a charging policy for all community care services which are based on a person's ability to pay. Depending on your income and ability to pay, you may be required to make a contribution to the cost of your community alarm and telecare service.

Details, including how your income is taken into account, are available in the booklet **Contributing Towards the Cost of Your Care**, and on the council's website.


More information on care at home is also available in the booklet **Care at Home**.

If you would like more information or to make a referral please phone

0845 6081 206

or contact your local social work office or health centre.

Photographs of smoke detector and chair sensor courtesy of telecare equipment manufacturers 'Tunstall'.



If you would like this information in large print, braille, audio tape or a language other than English please contact Housing and Social Work on 0845 608 1206 or social.work@aberdeenshire.gov.uk.