

The information outlined below has been drawn from Darlington Borough Council's website and an interview with Jill Walton, Lifeline Services Manager on 20<sup>th</sup> October 2010.

### **The Lifeline Service and Telecare in Darlington**

Many people chose to live alone, but they often worry about accidents or the need for help in the home. Darlington Lifeline gives people the freedom to live independently in the knowledge that help is at hand at a press of a button 365 days a year, 24 hours a day, if needed.

#### What is the Lifeline Service?

The Lifeline Service consists of a Lifeline unit (which is a small box) plus a personal pendant and pull cord. The personal pendant can be carried with the individual around the house and garden, and by pressing the pendant or pulling the cord, this makes a call to the Darlington Lifeline control centre.

#### What is the cost of the Lifeline Service?

The charge for the Lifeline service is currently £4.64 per week but individuals may be entitled to extra help with the cost of this service, either by undertaking a financial assessment or through Supporting People Benefit.

#### How can Telecare equipment help?

The difference between the Lifeline service and Telecare, is that Telecare equipment is triggered automatically. Individuals do not have to press anything - the equipment automatically detects a problem and makes the call to the control room. The control room operators then ensure an appropriate response is made by family, friends, carers, emergency services or the team's mobile response officers.

Examples of telecare equipment include fall detectors, bed sensors, movement detectors, bogus caller buttons and temperature sensors. To have telecare equipment a Lifeline unit must be fitted so that the telecare equipment is linked to the Town Hall control room.

#### What is the cost of Telecare?

The cost of Telecare is £1.50 per sensor (effective from 1 November 2009) and this is in addition to the £4.64 per week Lifeline charge, which is needed to run any Telecare equipment. These charges do not apply to Extra Care Schemes or sheltered accommodation.

#### How many people are benefiting from the Lifeline Service and Telecare equipment in Darlington?

#### Sheltered Accommodation

There are 860 properties within Darlington that are deemed to be sheltered accommodation, including covered schemes (with a number of properties

under one roof) and good neighbour sites consisting of a cluster of properties with a communal area for residents.

In 2010/11 these clients pay a weekly charge of £10.82 per week for which they receive: -

- The Lifeline service
- A daily intercom call Monday to Friday
- A regular weekly visit
- Social activities are also facilitated

If a client is eligible for Supporting People Grant (following a Housing Benefit / Council Tax eligibility criteria assessment), then the charge is reduced.

- £4.11 of the charge is eligible for Supporting People relief
- £6.71 of the charge is eligible for Housing Benefit relief

At present 80% of clients in receipt of this service are eligible for a reduction in the weekly charge. In terms of the equipment all are hard wired into the properties and clients are given a pendant if they need one. A pull cord is available and smoke detectors are also installed.

#### Council properties

In addition to the 860 sheltered accommodation properties there are approximately 680 Council properties consisting of ground floor accommodation, with hard-wired systems installed. All of these properties are linked into warden call and pendants are issued to clients if required and 80% also have mains smoke/fire detection.

There is a charge of £4.64 per week for the service and £1.64 of that charge is eligible for Housing Benefit relief, with the remaining £3.00 eligible for Supporting People relief.

#### Lifeline clients

In Darlington there are a further 800 Lifeline clients, who are in receipt of a Lifeline unit plus a personal pendant and pull cord. Of those clients 220 qualify for Supporting People relief of £3.00 weekly. The remaining subscribe to the service at a charge of £4.64 per week.

#### Telecare clients

In respect of telecare there are currently 65 clients in receipt of telecare equipment and the cost of telecare sensors is £1.50 per sensor in addition to the £4.64 for the standard Lifeline Package. If an individual is in receipt of three telecare sensors, for example, the total cost would be £9.14 per week. Clients are eligible for help with the cost of these services, either by undertaking a financial assessment or through Supporting People Benefit.

#### How is the service funded?

Overall the telecare and Lifeline services provided in Darlington are cost neutral and the scheme manager / % of management costs are covered by the £10.82 per week sheltered accommodation income. The centre and mobile response are covered by the £4,64 Lifeline + Telecare income + a % of the scheme manager charge to provide an out of hours service.

It was advised that the Lifeline service had previously sat within the housing directorate at Darlington Borough Council but that a restructure has recently taken place and the service is now within the reablement structure under the Assistant Director for Housing and Adult Services.

With regard to future funding provision it's anticipated that some of the funding from the Social Care Reform Grant will be allocated for the delivery of telecare in 2011/12, although this remains uncertain at present.

What level of investment has Darlington PCT contributed?

In terms of investment from the PCT Darlington Borough Council was successful in securing £23,000 from NHS Darlington in 2009/10 to help deliver telecare services and efforts to secure future funding are continuing.

It was explained that Darlington Borough Council had been very frugal with the money received from the Preventative Technology Grant and still had some funds to carry forward this year. The telecare funding invested by Darlington Borough Council and Darlington PCT has been used to fund half a Team Leader post, as well as the telecare equipment. The staffing costs and installation of equipment is picked up from the standard Lifeline Service.