

The information outlined below has been drawn from Redcar and Cleveland Borough Council's website, the Homecall website, an article in the Northern Echo and an interview with Sue Renvoize, (RCBC Adult Social Care) on 21st October 2010.

HomeCall and Telecare in Redcar and Cleveland

Coast & Country Housing, in partnership with Redcar & Cleveland Borough Council, provide the Telecare service which enables elderly, frail and vulnerable residents in the borough to live safely and independently in their own homes.

Customers of the service can access Coast & Country Housing's 24/7 Contact Centre, which provides Telecare customers with immediate advice and assistance in relation to their safety, security and well-being.

Currently installed in over 5,000 homes in Redcar and Cleveland, Homecall systems have existed for many years to support people to live independently. Telecare is the next generation of community alarm systems and as a service can help to support carers in their daily lives by providing support, peace of mind and promoting independence and dignity.

Telecare, which is linked to the existing HomeCall service, involves connecting a Lifeline alarm unit to a landline telephone socket in the home, providing a direct link into the 24-hour customer contact centre. A selection of 'intelligent' telecare sensors can also be fitted around the home, in places identified in a formal assessment, to monitor an individual's health, safety and security.

If a telecare sensor is activated a message is automatically sent to the customer contact centre, where a trained customer advisor will deal with the situation as required. This could involve contacting a family member, carer, warden or the emergency services.

How much are customers charged for telecare?

A key feature of the telecare package offered by Redcar and Cleveland is that at present there is no charge for service users who are assessed as being in need of the service.

In developing a charging policy Redcar and Cleveland Borough Council considered the benefits to health and social care providers of the use of telecare. No charge was made for the provision of telecare during the pilot period (April 2007) and following the second year of the Preventative Technology Grant the service has been funded through existing budgets/savings in commissioned care. People are eligible for funded Telecare services if they meet the risk bands of critical or substantial (and taking the preventative approach of FACS) or if they can be expected to do so in the next 6 to 12 months if they were not provided with a service.

People who do not meet the client issue and FACS criteria and do not get a direct service may still receive information and advice on other sources of help in order to make their own decisions.

Redcar and Cleveland Borough Council are not planning to introduce a charge for telecare. This is due to the fact that based on analysis undertaken of its current service users there would only be a small number of service users who would be eligible to pay.

As of August 2010 there were 435 live installations of telecare in Redcar and Cleveland.

How much are customers charged for Homecall?

There are three different levels of Homecall service (excluding telecare)

Homecall monitor – direct access to Homecall’s customer contact centre 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Homecall monitor is suitable for people who have a strong network of support through family/friends with the ability to respond to all emergency situations.

Homecall response – not only provides direct access to Homecall’s customer contact centre 24 hours a day, 7 days a week but also a home visit from one of the Homecall team in the event of an emergency.

Homecall plus – is a regular visiting service tailored to the particular needs of individual customers.

People can self refer for the Homecall service and if they meet the Supporting People criteria they will receive the service for free. If they don’t meet the criteria there is a charge of £4.20 a week for the service. If the individual opts to receive a service but then moves onto telecare, as their needs have increased, they are no longer charged the £4.20 per week. There were 436 new installations for the Homecall service in 2009/10.

How has Homecall and Telecare been promoted in Redcar and Cleveland?

Representatives from Tunstall and a representative from Coast and Country promote the services amongst staff and professionals. Leaflets are generally used to promote the benefits and awareness has been raised with the Older Person’s Partnership / Carers Partnership and other target audiences.

Coast and County Housing install all of the equipment and monitor it. They’ve recently re-branded under the Homecall label and lots of leaflets have been distributed.

A specific piece of work has also been undertaken to target professionals working with people with cognitive impairment and dementia.

How has the service been funded over the last three years?

There has been no increase in the budget for telecare for the last three years. The budget for telecare is mainstream funded and has been set at £149,000 per annum for the last three years.

Has any funding been secured from the PCT to deliver telecare?

Redcar and Cleveland Borough Council has not secured any funding for telecare from the PCT. A bid was submitted 2/3 years ago for capital expenditure but no funding was received. A bid has since been submitted to enable an additional member of staff to be employed with a view to looking at a wider range of telecare equipment but to date no funding has been secured.

How is telecare helping to support people with dementia?

HomeCall has launched an innovative new service with Redcar & Cleveland Council to support those who live with dementia. The new scheme will give alarmed safety devices to those who suffer from memory loss and who have been referred by dementia specialists at the council, allowing them to live independent lives.

Using GPS software similar to that used in car sat-nav systems, HomeCall's 24-hour customer contact centre will be able to locate people after an alarm is triggered using satellite positioning on a computer screen. The expert staff based in Redcar will either call the alarm holder and guide them back to safety, or liaise with a family member to co-ordinate finding and safely returning the individual. The device can be activated in a number of ways, by the customer as well as a family member or carer who can raise the alarm if they become concerned about their whereabouts. It can also be triggered automatically if the person goes too far away from their home.