



# LIFELINE POLICY

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## **1.0 Scope**

This policy applies to all customers who have entered into a service contract with the Council for the provision of the domestic Lifeline telecare service (“the service”) within their own homes.

Lifeline is a two-way speech community alarm system which enables help to be summoned for customers in an emergency. The service offers a 24-hour-a-day remote monitoring and alarm service for the home which links directly to an external monitoring centre.

This policy does not cover the telecare service provided to the Council’s Independent Living tenants.

## **2.0 Purpose**

The purpose of this policy is to provide an overview of the Lifeline telecare services offered by Broxtowe Borough Council. These services are designed to increase, maintain and improve the independence of customers to remain living within their own home.

## **3.0 Aims and Objectives**

The aim of this policy is to set out the options available to customers accessing the service, as well as providing a clear mechanism to review the annual Lifeline charge.

The objective of this policy is to provide guidance to managers following a request from a customer to enter into a Lifeline Customer Service agreement with the Council. This policy also seeks to outline the services available and the charging and income collection processes.

## **4.0 Regulatory Code and Legal Framework**

This policy is set within the context of relevant legislation such as:

- The Equality Act 2010
- The Care Act 2014
- The Mental Capacity Act 2005
- Data Protection Act 2018
- Reliefs from VAT for disabled and older people (VAT Notice 701/7)

## **5.0 Policy**

## 5.1 Eligibility for the Service

All residents living within Broxtowe Borough are eligible to apply to receive the Lifeline service. The customers who would most benefit from this service are residents who are vulnerable through age and/or disability and may need assistance to summon help in an emergency situation.

The service may only be offered to residents living outside of the borough in limited circumstances and at the discretion of the Head of Housing or Income and Housing Manager. Such circumstances include:

- Whether the customer is living outside of the Borough only temporarily
- The proximity between the nominated emergency responders and the resident living outside the borough
- The capacity of the monitoring service provider to provide the service
- Alternative monitoring services available to the prospective customer
- The efficacy of providing the service outside of the borough

## 5.2 Lifeline Charges

The charges for the Lifeline telecare services will be reviewed annually. It is proposed to increase Lifeline charges by CPI (Consumer Price Index) plus 1% each year using the CPI at September of the previous year. Any change to the annual charges will be approved by the Council's Cabinet.

VAT will be charged at the standard rate. However, customers who meet the criteria set out in "Reliefs from VAT for disabled and older people (VAT Notice 701/7)" may be exempt from paying VAT. Exemptions include if the customer has a disability and will be using the Lifeline for their own personal use. Information will be provided to prospective customers about this benefit.

## 5.3 Payment Options for the Service

The Council will review the charge annually with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> April each year. At least 14 days' written notice of any variation will be given to the customer. Customers are able to pay for the service by either of the following methods:

- By selecting one of the payment methods printed on the reverse of the invoice and paying the annual amount in full, in advance, or
- By Direct Debit, setting up a schedule to make ten monthly payments to cover the term of the invoice. (The first payment will be adjusted so that all subsequent payments are for equal amounts).

If a customer terminates their contract within the billing period, a pro-rata refund for any advance payment will be made to the customer, or nominated representative, from the contract end date, unless that amount is less than £5.

The Council reserves the right to levy any collection charges and any other related costs which may be incurred through the collection of arrears relating to this service, or for the non-return of, or damage to equipment provided under this service.

The monitoring and collection of the Lifeline charges will be undertaken by the Quality and Control team. Any arrears will be managed by the Income Collection team within Housing. The Income Collection team will follow a standard recovery process, which focuses on personal contact and providing support to the customer. The Council may terminate the service if the customer falls two months in arrears and any subsequent repayment agreement is not maintained by the customer. If possible, permission will be obtained from the customer to inform their next of kin that the service is being terminated.

## **5.4 Provision of Lifeline Equipment**

The basic equipment provided to the customer is the Lifeline telecare monitoring unit and an alarm pendant for the customer to wear. The monitoring unit is connected to the Monitoring Centre via a domestic telephone line for which the customer is responsible for the cost of providing and maintaining.

The Council may offer customers the option to have additional equipment, according to their needs. This equipment may include, but is not limited to the following:

- Additional or a replacement pendant
- Carbon monoxide detector
- Key safe
- Falls detector
- Bed Occupancy detector
- Pillow Alert

The Council may also provide additional welfare visits and maintenance calls, for which an additional charge will be made and is set out in the charging schedule.

The cost of the additional or replacement equipment will be charged on an on-going basis, or as a one-off cost, according to the Council's charging schedule.

Prior to the commencement of the service agreement, the customer will be assessed in order to determine which telecare service is most appropriate for their needs. This may change as the customer's needs vary and additional services can be added by the customer as required, subject to payment as set out in the charging schedule.

The Lifeline Co-ordinator will install the Lifeline unit and demonstrate to the customer how the monitoring unit and pendant work.

## **5.5 Lifeline Customer Service agreements**

The customer will sign a Lifeline Customer Service agreement when the equipment is installed, this sets out the Council and customer responsibilities. Customers agree to:

- Pay the annual charge
- Provide the monitoring service with nominated responder details and keep this information updated
- Allow the Council's officers access to inspect or test the equipment
- Test the Lifeline unit and pendant at least once per month by pressing the red button
- Report any loss or damage to the Lifeline unit and any faults or malfunction
- Use the equipment in accordance with the instructions provided
- Provide details of their telephone service provider

## **5.6 Benchmarking**

The Council aims to provide value for money to customers whilst acknowledging that similar services are provided in a commercial environment by both local authorities in the area who operate on a cross-border basis, and private companies who operate on a regional or national basis

Regular benchmarking will take place to ensure that the service remains commercially competitive and affordable to customers.

## **6.0 Monitoring and Performance**

The industry standard Key Performance Indicators set by the Telecare Services Association (TSA) will be used:

- % of calls answered within 60 seconds - 97.5%
- % of calls answered within 3 minutes – 99%
- Number of complaints (this is 2% of caller reporting a fault per individual contract) - <2% per month

KPIs are monitored through monthly contract meetings with Tunstall.

## **7.0 Related Policies, Procedures and Guidelines**

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following Council documents:

- Lifelines procedure
- Safeguarding Adults Policy
- Customers with additional support needs policy
- Equality and Diversity Policy

## **8.0 Review of the Policy**

This policy will be reviewed every three years. It is not expected that there will be changes to regulation or legislation which will have an impact on the need to review this policy sooner.

### 8.0 Document History and Approval

Date	Version	Approval by
12/04/2019	1.0	Housing Committee
21/06/2022	2.0	Cabinet