

TELECARE RESPONSE SERVICES

1. SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report has been prepared in response to concerns raised by the Police at the Community Planning Partnership Management Committee. The Police concerns relate to current response arrangements for telecare clients, both in sheltered housing and in the wider community and the impact this is having on their service delivery. A report has been submitted by the Police which sets out their position on this matter and is annexed to this report.

2. RECOMMENDATION.

- 2.1 That the Strategic Health and Social Care Partnership note the need to address the gap in emergency response services for vulnerable clients across the authority area and undertake a review of the provision of response services within the context of the older person's strategy.

3. DETAILS

- 3.1 There are two main providers of Telecare response services operating in Argyll and Bute, Hanover Telecare and Bield Response 24 (BR24). Both provide initial telephone responses to alarm activations. Physical responses then require to be provided by a third party and in the majority of cases this is a named key holder.
- 3.2 **Hanover Telecare** is contracted by the Council to provide 24/7 telephone response to alarm activations for 1226 dispersed alarms across Argyll and Bute. Hanover also provide the response for Argyll Community Housing Association's 227 sheltered housing tenants and Cairn Housing Association's 35 sheltered housing tenants in Campbeltown.
- 3.3 On activation of the alarm, the response centre will normally communicate directly with the client and/or named key holders and thereafter the emergency services depending on the situation. The majority of clients have more than one key holder and in the majority of cases, it is the key holder who responds. During the period April 2007 to March 2008 there were 26,021 alarm activations of which 885 required further action and of those, 64 were dealt with by the Police.

- 3.4 A more detailed analysis of data from Hanover Telecare, over the six month period, January to June 2008 shows that in 64% of cases the Police were not the appropriate agency to deal with the issue and attendance by health or care professionals would have been more appropriate. There were a variety of reasons for the Police being called and these are broken down by area and reason in the table below. The Police are automatically called to the domestic alarm incidents and these units are installed in partnership with the Police and Victim Support.

Police calls by Hanover Telecare Jan –Jun 2008.

Reason	Bute	Cowal	Kintyre	Mid Argyll	Lomond	Lorn	Mull	Islay	Total
Domestic alarm	1	3		2		1			7
No response	2	2	4	1	5	2	1	1	18
Intruder		1	3	2					6
Fall	1		1		3				5
Disturbance					1				1
Wandering alarm	1					1			2
	5	6	8	5	9	4	1	1	39

- 3.5 The second alarm response provider operational in Argyll and Bute is **Bield Response 24** which provides the alarm response service for the 10 sheltered housing complexes owned and managed by Bield Housing Association. Bield have provided data for the period 1st April 2008 to 30th September 2008 and during that period there were 4,016 calls of which 15 were referred to the Police.
- 3.6 In order to improve the situation the telecare service has initiated discussions with the Red Cross to provide volunteer key holders for those clients who only have one key holder. Initially a pilot is planned to commence in Bute, Cowal and Helensburgh in January 2009. However this addition to the response service will not resolve all the issues and as telecare and progressive care are developed to support people to remain living independently for longer in their own homes the issues are likely to increase over time.
- 3.7 The issues raised by the Police serve to highlight the gap in service provision to vulnerable clients. The situation is compounded by the fact that there is no longer provision of GP out of hours services as historically this service was utilised by the response services as another option to deal with emergency situations.
- 3.8 Technology is available to quickly alert services to a situation which requires a response. Health, Housing and Social Care providers need to find a solution to the current gap in service provision which leaves vulnerable people at risk when key holders are not available to respond.
- 3.9 The single outcome agreement recognises that the large increase in the older population has implications for the range of services which

need to be delivered. The issues raised in this report provide a practical example of how services need to adapt to meet the needs of our communities. Nationally the government has set an outcome that 'we live longer, healthier lives' and within this context Argyll and Bute has set a local target to 'increase the level of older people with complex care needs receiving care at home.' Services require to be redesigned to meet the challenges intrinsic to the achievement of these targets and outcomes.

4. CONCLUSION.

- 4.1 The development of telecare is a key contributor to national priorities which focus on supporting vulnerable people to live in their own homes. Within the Argyll and Bute context Health, Housing and Social Care partners are presented with significant challenges to deliver effective responses to alarm activations and this requires to be considered as part of any service redesign. The current position is untenable as inappropriate use is being made of Police and Ambulance resources.

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ANNEX 1

POLICE REPORT REGARDING COMMUNITY ALARM SERVICES 'LB' SUB DIVISION.

INTRODUCTION

Strathclyde Police have recently raised concerns regarding the number of emergency alarm calls received within LB Sub Division (Argyll & Bute) from the following Housing Associations resulting in a review regarding the use of police resources:

Hanover (Scotland) Housing Association Ltd
95 MacDonald Road, Edinburgh. EH7 4NS

Bield Housing Association/Community Alarms
9 Hopetoun Street, Edinburgh, EH7 4QF

A review of the Police STORM system was carried out between 01/04/07 and 01/04/08 and a total of 131 calls were received from the aforementioned Housing Associations. Closer inspection of the incidents revealed that 98% (43/44) of the calls received from the Bield Housing Association related to issues of care for their clients where no staff member or carer was on duty at the material time.

It is not always possible for the Associations to determine why their client has activated their emergency alarm system as the client may not answer their telephone on call back or speak through the intercom provided. It is usually in situations such as these and out with office hours, when they will contact the Police for assistance to check on one of their residents.

49% (43/87) of the calls received from Hanover (Scotland) Housing Association also related to issues of care for their clients where no staff member or carer was on duty or available. Again they have the same issues as Bield whereby they are not always able to determine the reason for the activation of the alarm and contact the Police for assistance normally out with office hours.

The Police were justifiably called to 51% of incidents reported by Hanover. These were mainly Domestic abuse/violence alarms that had been allocated to provide valuable assistance in addressing domestic violence.

Examples of Incidents under review that the Police have been called to from both Housing associations and also from private housing where emergency alarms have been supplied, are as follows;

- Elderly residents falling out of bed and needing assistance.
- Resident falling within house and requesting police to attend after other services have refused to attend.
- Elderly residents who have used the emergency alarm and on arrival of the Police, it is established that they require an ambulance through injury or

illness.

- Elderly residents who have used the emergency alarm are deaf and unable to hear what is being said to them through the intercom facility provided by the Association or residents whose speech is difficult to understand due to their illness.
- Elderly residents who for whatever reason have become confused.
- Elderly resident who was stuck in her bath.

CURRENT POSTION

Where police officers have attended in the aforementioned situations, they are possibly not in a position to appropriately address the care needs of the individual.

Recent changes to warden cover regarding Sheltered Housing Complexes and the expansion of community alarm systems may also have an effect on the emergency alarm activation figures in the near future.

Police resources have also been requested to attend incidents at private dwellings regarding similar problems where key holders have been unavailable. Further enquiries have been carried out with other Local Authorities in the Strathclyde Police area, however similar problems were not encountered by other Police Divisions due to 'Out of Hours Services' etc being available.

The Police have certain duties in terms of the Police Scotland Act 1967 and Human Rights Legislation in relation to the prevention and detection of crime and protection of life and property. Following consultation with our Legal Services, the following advice was offered :

The police should attend –

'Where there is a reasonable basis for suspecting the commission of a crime or where there is a reasonable basis for suspecting some other emergency such as an immediate threat to life or property'.

CONCLUSION

This report is submitted to highlight Police concerns regarding emergency alarm activations in Argyll & Bute and to establish a more appropriate response.