

HIGH PEAK BOROUGH COUNCIL

Community Select Committee

31 March 2021

TITLE:	Carelink Review - Update Report
EXECUTIVE COUNCILLOR	Cllr Fiona Sloman – Executive Councillor for Housing & Licensing
CONTACT OFFICERS:	Helen Core – Head of Housing Services
WARDS INVOLVED:	All

1. Reason for the Report

- 1.1 This report reviews how changes implemented in 2019 have impacted the way in which the Carelink Service is delivered, managed and charged for. The original 'Carelink Model' report presented in October 2018 called for such an update after 12 months, however this has been delayed due to the Covid 19 pandemic.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 It is recommended that the Community Select Committee notes the contents of this update report.

3. Executive Summary

- 3.1 A report was presented to Executive in October 2018 which set out some proposed changes to the Carelink service. This report provides an update on the changes that have been implemented to date and the further progress still to be undertaken.
- 3.2 Changes to staffing structures and working arrangements have now been implemented. CCTV is now monitored by Carelink staff and progress has been made against the operational risks identified as part of the external review by the Council's insurers.
- 3.3 Further progress is required on out of hours call arrangements, wider marketing of the service and an exercise to re-designate properties.
- 3.4 The financial position of the service has improved in recent years as a result of changes already made, with a surplus position reported in 2019/20.
- 3.5 During the Covid pandemic, the Carelink service has continued to maintain high levels of service, consistently meeting performance targets for emergency attendance and falls recovery.

3.6 The only area that has been negatively impacted is installation of new referrals, and this only because clients have been isolating or shielding and so unable to accommodate this. Staff have responded well to the challenges they have faced and revised methods of working practice have been implemented swiftly and effectively.

4. How this Report Links to Corporate Priorities

4.1 As part of the Corporate Plan aim 'Supporting our communities to create a healthier, safer, cleaner High Peak'

CLAIRE HAZELDENE
Acting Executive Director (Finance & Customer Services)

**Web Links and
Background Papers**

Carelink Model – Executive 11th October
2018

Contact details

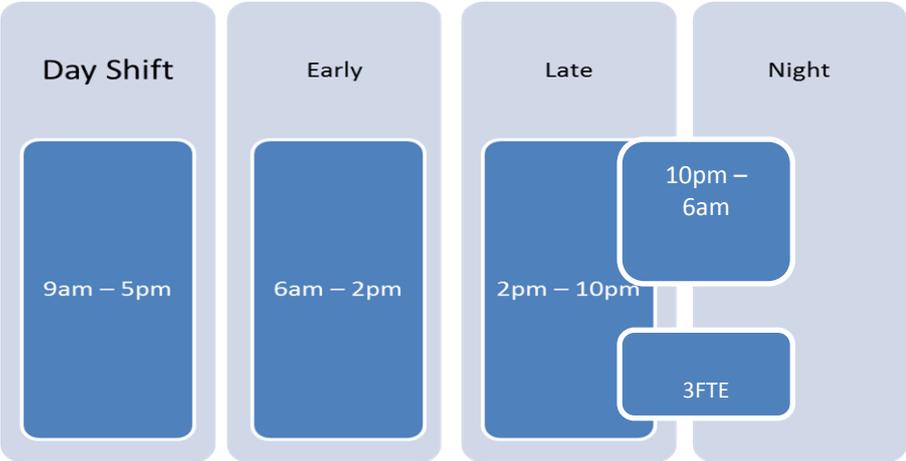
Helen Core
Head of Housing Services

5. Background and Detail

- 5.1 The Carelink service is a telecare monitoring and emergency response service available to High Peak residents. Service users can trigger an alarm and receive help from the ambulance service or a Carelink support staff in their home as needed. It operates 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. Most telecare services offer an alarm service only, where a call for assistance results in a call to next of kin, other relatives or an ambulance callout. Carelink also provides a response service which delivers on-call support in the resident’s home.
- 5.2 This report reviews the improvements to the service already made since the proposed changes set out in a report approved by Executive in October 2018, and sets out the next steps required to develop this further.
- 5.3 Over the last year and during periods of lockdown, Carelink have continued to respond to Emergency calls and falls and have retained high performance levels, exceeding targets for response for both emergencies and falls recovery. Staff absence due to illness/isolating has been lower than anticipated.
- 5.4 Routine visits were suspended to limit risk of exposure for both clients and staff however these have been replaced by fortnightly safe and well calls – an average of 700 per week calls have been made with support from Customer Services staff.

6. Current position

6.1 The shift pattern for the service is shown below:



6.2 There are 79 shifts per week to operate the service and there is a total of 632 hours to be covered each week. Each shift is a maximum of 8 hours. Staff are contracted between 16 and 32 hours per week. The below illustrates current staffing levels:-

Operating hours per week	632 hours (19.75 FTE)
Hours filled by staff	521 hours (16.28FTE)
Vacant hours per week*	111 hours (3.47 FTE)

*vacant hours currently covered by overtime

- 6.3 All staff are now based at Ecclesfold, travelling to/from work independantly and using liveried vehicles whilst on shift. This has worked incredibly well; the service is no longer bound by home address when recruiting (previously when staff were on standby at home, locality had to be a big factor in recruitment). Morale has significantly improved within the team and turnover of staff has reduced with just one leaver since the new model began.
- 6.4 CCTV across both Authorities is now managed internally from Ecclesfold and is monitored 24/7.
- 6.5 The current structure is shown in **ANNEX A**.
- 6.6 The current service level agreement (within the contract with Derbyshire County Council) means that clients should be visited within 45 minutes of raising a call. The current model enables this to be achieved.
- 6.7 A breakdown of visits and calls is included at **ANNEX B** (clearly the current year has been effected by Covid 19) The customer base fluctuates regularly but is usually around the 1,800 mark.
- 6.8 As part of the Carelink review process, Zurich were engaged to look at the operating processes, risks and policies of the service going forward, and their recommendations have been incorporated into service risk assessments and operational risk register. This is summarised in the table below:-

Risk at May 2019	Progression to Mitigate risk
Carelink service open to negligence claims (provision of inappropriate advice)	Appropriate training is in place and the move to the new Tunstall system gives greater control over information. The move to fixed shift patterns has reduced the likelihood of human error arising from standby rather than waking shifts.
Risk of being unable to deliver service at cost neutral level or better	The service is now generating a surplus (see section 4)
Risk of significant reduction in Supporting People funding with additional support required.	This hasn't been as impactful as originally feared and the service continues to generate a surplus
Risk of being unable to recruit and retain sufficient staff	Ease and quality of new appointments has significantly increased due to more attractive working patterns
Lone Working	Robust processes are in place to protect staff – working shift changes have improved this
Risk of a breach of personal data by Carelink	Appropriate training is in place and the move to the new Tunstall system gives greater control over information. The move to fixed shift patterns has reduced the likelihood of human error arising from standby rather than waking shifts.

Safeguarding – Clients	Appropriate training is in place and the move to the new Tunstall system gives greater control over information. The move to fixed shift patterns has reduced the likelihood of human error arising from standby rather than waking shifts.
Safeguarding – Employees	Appropriate training is in place and the move to the new Tunstall system gives greater control over information. The move to fixed shift patterns has reduced the likelihood of human error arising from standby rather than waking shifts.

Opportunity Risks at May 2019	Progression to Mitigate risk
Capitalising on the new operating model to grow the client base	Proactive marketing hasn't taken place as it was felt that to do so during the pandemic may attract reputational criticism. This is to be reviewed after the Tunstall migration project has completed.
Capitalising on the new operating model to expand the range of services offered	Proactive marketing hasn't taken place as it was felt that to do so during the pandemic may attract reputational criticism. This is to be reviewed after the Tunstall migration project has completed.

7. Progress still to be made

Out of Hours Calls

- 7.1 Due to technical difficulties with the proposed technology providers, the Council has been unable to bring the out of hours calls service in-house (as was originally planned) as yet. This is being progressed, although current circumstances have inevitably stalled this, the service is moving toward a go live date of June 2021.
- 7.2 The financial benefits of this are an annual saving of c. £34k per annum with additional potential savings for other out of hours provision in future. It is also anticipated that this will reduce physical attendance to calls as the calls will be triaged by a response officer who will have knowledge of the client, the property and area.

Growing the Customer Base

- 7.3 The revised operating model offers 5 levels of service with the charges for each based on the cost of delivery (see table below). These costs are consistent with charges levied by other providers.

Service Offer	Revised Weekly Cost (updated April 2020)	Previous Weekly Cost (prior to April 2020)
Installation fee (one off fee for dispersed alarms)	30.00	30.00
Alarm/pendant, Monitoring only service, 4 visits per year, falls recovery	4.90*	4.30
Alarm/pendant, Monitoring & response service, 4 visits per year, falls recovery	8.50*	7.59
Alarm/pendant, Monitoring & response service, 12 visits per year, falls recovery	12.80	n/a – new service
Alarm/pendant, Monitoring & response service, 26 visits per year, falls recovery	19.30	n/a – new service
Alarm/pendant, Monitoring & response service, 52 visits per year, falls recovery, daily safe and well call	31.50	n/a – new service

**Prices are due to increase by 10 pence per week from 6th April 2021*

- 7.4 In addition, the following services are available on an ad-hoc/opt in basis:-
- Daily telephone call - £5.00
 - Carelink Plus (light housework/simple meal prep) £10.25 for 15 minutes & £14.40 for 30 minutes
 - Cleaning within home (sheltered only) £12.25 an hour
 - Cover when family/friends are on holiday (pre-arranged) £10.25 for 15 minutes & £14.40 for 30 minutes
 - Emergency Cover when family/friends are sick (short notice) £13.00 for 15 minutes and £16.40 for 30 minutes

- 7.5 These service offers have been in place since April 2020, however the current circumstances mean it has not been possible to advertise or market these as intended to further increase income streams. This is now being progressed in collaboration with the Council's communications team.

DCC Funding

- 7.6 The Council currently receive £55,000 per quarter from DCC for provision of the Independent Living Service by Carelink. Each quarter a funding matrix is completed identifying the spend related to this provision and signed off by DCC. The scheme began on 1 November 2019 and is for a period of 2 years ending therefore on 31st October 2021. This has since been extended to March 2022
- 7.7 Anyone who previously received 'supporting people' funding continues under this scheme until they move or decide they no longer want the service. Council tenants who previously received Supporting people are continuing to receive the funding posted direct to their rent accounts from the £55,000 per quarter.
- 7.8 DCC also support the cost of monitoring and alarm costs at £2.07 per week. Those who are eligible receive this and it is also uploaded to their rent accounts directly. This is also under review by DCC but unlikely to cease.

Designated Properties

- 7.9 There are currently 1,046 properties designated as receiving the Carelink service. These are a mixture of schemes (where the alarms are linked for a number of properties) and stand-alone dwellings.
- 7.10 This can cause issues if tenants accept a property and then do not want the service; especially as historically clients have been allowed to “opt out” Currently 373 properties do not have any charge on the property. A review of these properties will take place on an area by area basis and it is proposed to align those properties that are de-designated with new clients gained by increased marketing to protect the gross income generated by the service.

8. Current Financial Position

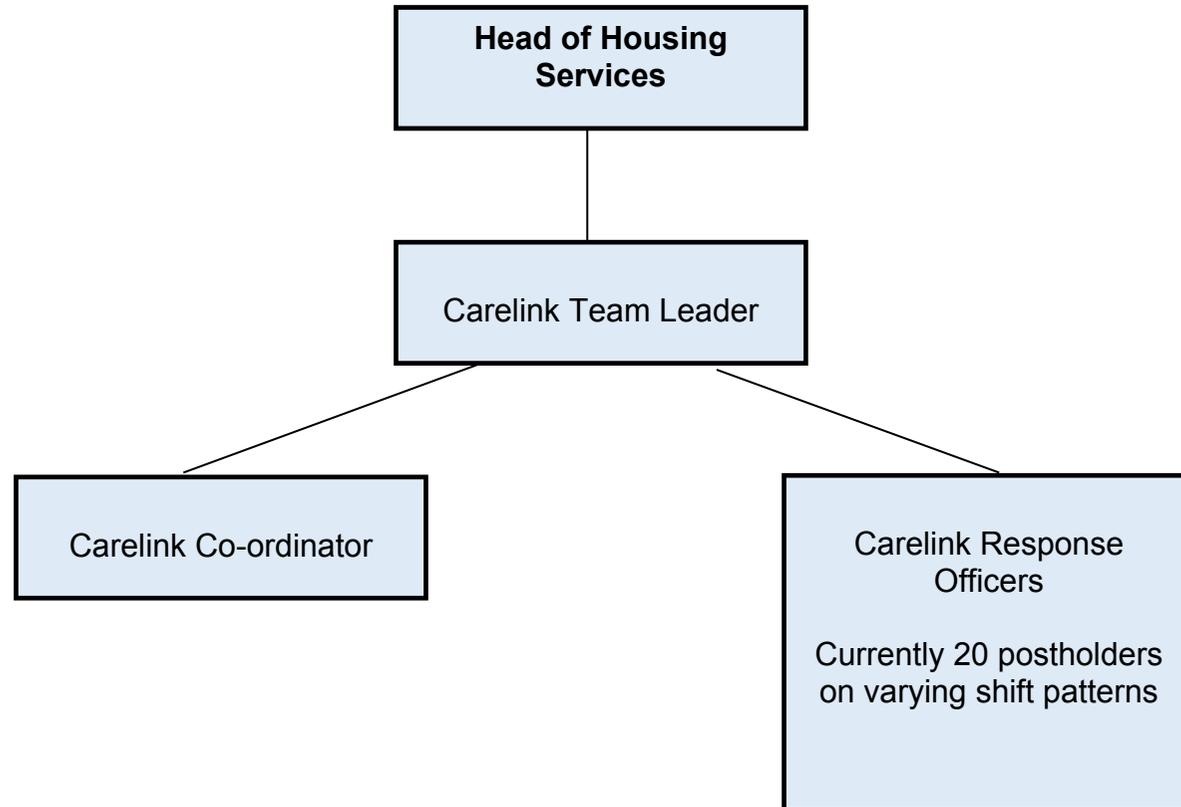
- 8.1 The service financial position has improved from making a £66,826 loss in 2016-17 to a £33,096 surplus for 2019/20, even though it has not been possible as yet to fully realise all the possible opportunities as outlined above.
- 8.2 Please see **ANNEX C** for a full breakdown of this. A summary is provided below:

	2016-17 (£)	2017-18 (£)	2018-19 (£)	2019-20 (£)
STAFF RELATED COSTS	390,257	381,325	334,699	395,759
EQUIPMENT MAINTENANCE & ALARM LINES	59,974	46,835	67,677	63,891
OUT OF HOURS SERVICE	41,641	32,975	33,250	33,449
OTHER DIRECT COSTS	49,820	54,732	35,520	51,557
INDIRECT SUPPORT CHARGES	111,358	65,449	76,884	72,653
INCOME	(586,225)	(526,829)	(562,516)	(650,404)
	66,826	54,487	(14,487)	(33,096)

9. Impact of Covid

- 9.1 During the Covid pandemic, the Carelink services has continued to maintain high levels of service, consistently meeting performance targets for emergency attendance and falls recovery. The only area that has been negatively impacted is installation of new referrals, and this only because clients have been isolating or shielding and so unable to accommodate this.
- 9.2 During periods of lockdown, proactive calls have been made to Carelink clients – an average of 700 weekly – to ensure clients were safe and had the necessities to maintain their personal wellbeing. These calls were made by both Carelink and wider staff members and attracted very positive feedback.
- 9.3 Staff attendance levels throughout the pandemic have remained high and just 3 positive cases have been reported within the staff team. Staff have responded well to the challenges they have faced and revised methods of working practice have been implemented swiftly and effectively.

Annex A – Current Structure



Annex B - Carelink Annual Totals April 2016 – 28th Feb 2021

	Apr 20 - Feb 21*	Apr 19 - Mar 20	Apr 18 - Mar 19	Apr 17 - Mar 18	Apr 16 - Mar 17
Routine Visits	5	3,377	4,089	4,175	4,334
Emergency Calls	4,580	4,415	4,081	4,346	3,427
Demos	1	221	191	224	234
Carelink +	1,574	584	342	769	1,381
Installs	271	255	217	209	236
New Tenant Intro	35	61	75	47	65
Sheltered Cover	6	108	20	160	201
Maintenance	501	408	379	418	540
Tenancy Support	1,028	388	616	614	478
Removals	163	188	199	181	194
Keysafe Installs	0	34	20	28	N/A
Falls	909	777	835	734	691
Total visits Inc. adhoc	10,186	15,476	15,384	12,845	18,531

**reductions related to COVID-19*

Annex C – Financial Performance

	<u>1617 Actuals</u>	<u>1718 Actuals</u>	<u>1819 Actuals</u>	<u>1920 Actuals</u>
	<u>£</u>	<u>£</u>	<u>£</u>	<u>£</u>
Staff	389,145.33	369,462.99	321,943.29	395,759.44
Agency Staff	500.00	11,112.87	-	-
Staff Adverts	-	360.00	-	-
Redundancies	-	-	12,597.96	-
CarLoancosts	611.88	389.37	157.54	-
STAFF RELATED COSTS	390,257.21	381,325.23	334,698.79	395,759.44
Equipment Maint	32,189.91	22,352.33	38,499.71	35,871.41
Telephone - Alarm Lines	27,783.76	24,482.62	29,177.11	28,019.65
EQUIPMENT MAINTENANCE/ALARM LINES	59,973.67	46,834.95	67,676.82	63,891.06
OUT OF HOURS - WEL Contract	41,641.10	32,974.83	33,249.85	33,448.66
Electricity	3,683.33	3,374.80	3,638.83	3,904.42
Petrol/Derv/Oil	9,527.74	9,072.65	8,591.70	8,769.04
Repairs	58.24	600.81	1,000.00	22.71
Trans Insce	2,075.00	-	2,800.00	1,840.00
Transport/Expenses	1,557.54	1,505.38	1,038.38	982.72
Contract Hire	20,916.00	20,916.00	17,690.00	15,827.00
Veh' Rprs/Maint	400.63	33.26	-	-
Licences	10.00	40.00	50.00	-
Pur Equip/Furn	176.65	1,523.87	108.06	2,236.00
Materials	-	-	40.58	50.30
Prot Clothing	357.23	126.28	-	84.50
Other Printing	180.00	429.68	-	227.87
Hrdware-Misc	-	-	-	1,343.96
Telephones - Mobiles	-	-	-	2,310.26
Vehicle Trckg	712.80	-	-	-
Subscriptions	9,330.00	9,372.00	930.00	960.00
Covid19 costs	-	-	-	280.00
Prov for Bad Dt	835.09	7,737.07	368.03	3,740.35
Carelink Mobile Cloud Working	-	-	-	8,977.50
OTHER DIRECT COSTS	49,820.25	54,731.80	35,519.52	51,556.63
INDIRECT SUPPORT CHARGES	111,358.00	65,449.00	76,884.00	72,653.00
Other Income	0.00	0.00	(174.57)	(50.24)
Rech Work	0.00	(33.51)	0.00	0.00
Key Safe	(440.86)	(1,725.12)	(718.80)	(1,149.66)
Carelink	(296,108.19)	(233,474.38)	(300,396.80)	(300,003.61)
Carelink Plus	(17,468.57)	(10,579.22)	(5,370.63)	(7,056.62)
Carelink Plus-Housing Associ	(23,962.16)	(11,487.22)	(10,765.26)	(9,403.70)
Telecare	(5,259.10)	(4,231.37)	(6,014.49)	(5,447.79)
Falls Recovery Income	(36,665.89)	(38,414.94)	(31,437.93)	(35,139.79)
Out of Hours service	0.00	(33,139.08)	(31,886.40)	(31,886.40)
CCTV Monitoring	0.00	0.00	0.00	(48,700.00)
ComAlrms-Mobile	(206,319.80)	(193,743.81)	(175,750.72)	(119,899.89)
Independant Living Service				(91,666.67)
INCOME	(586,224.57)	(526,828.65)	(562,515.60)	(650,404.37)
Deficit (Surplus)	66,825.66	54,487.16	(14,486.62)	(33,095.58)