

COVID-19 Telecare Services

Providers' Briefing

24 March 2020

About this briefing

This document is to brief you about the current position with the county council's Telecare service, following the COVID-19 outbreak, and to outline some of the risks and opportunities in relation to the service and the wider health and care system, particularly in the context of the government's *COVID-19 hospital discharge service requirements*¹.

Background

Telecare uses technology, such as personal alarms and pendants, wristbands and wireless home sensors and detectors, to help people stay safe and maintain their independence at home. They are continuously monitored by a 24/7 response centre. When a personal alarm or sensor is activated, an operator will assess the situation and, if necessary, alert a nominated contact (e.g. a family member), the home response and falls lifting service, or emergency services if required.

The service is providing crucial support to over 13,000 vulnerable adults right across Lancashire and supporting the health and social care system's response to COVID-19. Many of these people will also be receiving other care and support, such as reablement, home care and supported living services.

¹ Available at: <https://www.england.nhs.uk/coronavirus/publication/covid-19-hospital-discharge-service-requirements/>

Current position

The Telecare service is currently under pressure due to a number of service provider staff self-isolating, especially a high proportion of Progress Housing's installation staff, and it will come under increasing pressure as the COVID-19 outbreak escalates, particularly as the service receives a high amount of referrals at over 500 every month.

We are working very closely with the service providers, Tunstall and Progress Housing, to implement service contingency and continuity plans and we are receiving daily sitreps and having twice weekly teleconferences.

In response to section 8.4 of the government's *COVID-19 hospital discharge service requirements* document, we are rapidly exploring opportunities with Tunstall and Progress Housing to maximise next day installation, if required, to enable safe hospital discharge (historically urgent installations for hospital discharge have typically taken two working days). This includes the possibility of introducing new technology that people can get quickly through simple activation or installation.

The biggest risks to service continuity are currently the potential disruption to equipment supply chains and, more significantly, persistent reduced workforce capacity due to staff self-isolating. A lack of installation capacity would naturally adversely impact on the speed of provision. Urgent installations for hospital discharge or avoidance are, and will continue to be, the number one priority. Actions are being taken to mitigate all risks, for example Progress Housing is redeploying staff working in non-essential roles in other parts of the organisation into the Telecare service.

End.