



# EXECUTIVE MEMBER DECISION

**REPORT OF:** Executive Member for Adults Social Care & Health

**LEAD OFFICERS:** Strategic Director of Adults and Health

**DATE:** 20 December 2023

**PORTFOLIO/S AFFECTED:** Adults & Health

**WARD/S AFFECTED:** (All Wards);

**SUBJECT:** Telecare Service-Charging

## 1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to seek approval from the Executive Member for Adult Social Care and Health to a weekly charge to service users in receipt of Telecare Services.

## 2. RECOMMENDATION

**That the Executive Member Agrees to:**

The introduction of a flat rate charge of £1.70 for monitoring services for all current telecare service users who have monitored equipment with effect from Quarter 4 in the 2023/24 financial year.

## 3. Background

Telecare is an important means of assistance to support people to stay independent in their own home for longer, whilst providing improved choice and control for both individuals, families and carers.

Telecare has become a firmly integrated part of the support and care that is offered to people in Blackburn with Darwen, putting people more in control and supporting their independence.

The key social care and health benefits are:

- Encourages self-care: More self-reliance which leads to increased movement and independence.
- Keeping residents mobile: More physical activity; increased confidence will lead to movement which will strengthen core resilience.

- Early warning if a fall has taken place thereby reducing the amount of time individuals are at risk.
- Intelligence gathering enabling trends to be established.
- Service users do not need to be self-alerting; detector will be monitored, trip into system and pick up service if necessary, all keeping admissions to a minimum.
- Reduced unplanned admissions into hospital services.
- Referrals into falls service to receive evidence-based interventions as outlined in NICE Falls Pathway when properly integrated into the local economy.
- Medical prompts to help service users comply with medication regimes.
- Referrals into Integrated Neighbourhood Teams so they will get a holistic assessment and ability to access further service.

### **Current data**

#### **Telecare costs 2022/23**

Telecare equipment costs (Capital Spend)	£246,395.18
Telecare installation, repair and monitoring costs (Revenue Spend)	£74,499.07
<b>Total Cost</b>	<b>£320,894.25</b>

#### **Service provided in Blackburn with Darwen**

	<b>2019</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2021</b>	<b>2022</b>
<b>Number of service users</b>	2595	2858	3189	3562
<b>Monitored equipment</b>	2046	2319	2670	3020
<b>Non-monitored equipment</b>	549	539	519	542

### **4. KEY ISSUES & RISKS**

At present, Blackburn with Darwen Council provide telecare equipment, alarm monitoring to over 3000 people who meet the Care Act eligibility criteria. The way in which telecare is currently being delivered is not fully achieving the Council's objectives or ambition for the use of technology as existing services are reactive and alarm based. Whilst it is believed reasonable outcomes are being achieved for some service users, there is no systematic approach to measuring them.

There is evidence that service users have opted to accept the service in part because it is free and not always because it significantly addresses their care needs or serves a genuinely preventative

function. This has been reported in a range of feedback from staff and reaffirmed via assessment review within the ILS service. We have also considered the tangible data recorded on usage for service users within the Tunstall Response (our current Telecare Service Provider) service portal.

The impending upgrade of our national Telecoms infrastructure, the analogue switch off, is an opportunity to improve our technology enabled care offer and how it is delivered within Blackburn with Darwen. This infrastructure upgrade will offer the opportunity to embrace significant developments in unobtrusive environmental and behavioural sensors, trackable and wearable technology.

With digital tools and artificial intelligence, it will become easier to collaborate with family members, carers and our health colleagues. We will be able to bring our knowledge together, giving health and social care professionals, families and carers a more rounded picture of the person they are supporting.

The Telecare service is moving to a fully digital, preventative service, with an improved range of monitoring and alarm capabilities to meet a far greater range of needs. This does come at a significant capital cost. DFG BCF monies have been allocated for this purpose.

Each digital unit that replaces the analogue equipment contains a sim card which carries an annual cost of £45.00 per unit. This cost will be met from the Telecare revenue budget. Digitising the service cannot be undertaken without the need to introduce a weekly customer charge.

An exercise has also been completed to establish the charging policies for our near neighbours across the Lancashire footprint. Each Local Authority charges for Telecare, and has various levels of service, from basic monitoring, to proactive 'checking in' calls, to an enhanced package that includes a lifting service.

Legal advice received has confirmed that the Council can do this, including charging service users in receipt of commissioned care. The charge will be in addition to calculated Fairer Charging financial contributions.

The charge will offset the revenue costs incurred by Adults for the monitoring service. The cost of the equipment and installation will not be chargeable.

The service will include the offer of free, time limited (no longer than 6 weeks) telecare after hospital discharge, as part of the reablement process. This early exposure to telecare will help increase user confidence in the equipment and the service, whilst encouraging continued uptake.

All future service users with eligible social care needs will pay a weekly £1.70 fee for a 24/7/365 monitored service.

The charge, if approved, will be implemented within Quarter 4 of the 23/24 Financial Year.

## **5. POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

**Care Act 2014**

**Equalities Act 2010**

## Fairer Charging-Disability Related Expenditure Policy

### 6. FINANCE IMPLICATIONS

The introduction of Telecare charges to generate additional income was agreed as part of the 2023/24 savings options for Adult Social Care, with potential income of £76,750 in year and rising to £153,500 from 2024/25. Following consultation on the implementation of Telecare charges the savings achievable this financial year, if charges are introduced in quarter 4, are nominal due to delays in implementation. The shortfall in income during 2023/24 has been managed within existing portfolio budget resources. Full year income recovery is anticipated for 2024/25 and beyond.

This is a nominal charge for the administration and monitoring of the equipment and will have no impact on the financial assessment under the Care Act.

The implementation and administration of this charge will be met from within existing resources.

### 7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

Telecare is not a service that the Council has a general statutory responsibility/duty to provide to meet an assessed eligible need under the Care Act (i.e. one arising from the Care and support eligibility criteria under the Care Act). It is a separate service from any commissioned care package provided to service users who have been assessed as having eligible Care Act needs. Telecare is not a means tested service, therefore, a flat rate fee may be charged to anyone using the service, without any financial assessment (i.e. the cost of the service is that cost and it must be paid irrespective of the prospective user's financial circumstances).

Service users may apply to have the weekly charge they pay for telecare taken into account as "disability related expenditure" ('DRE') when the council carry out a financial assessment to determine what client contribution they are liable to pay towards the cost of their care package. The assessment of whether telecare charges should be counted as DRE will depend in each case on what telecare is being received and on the actual circumstances of the individual service user (disability, age, need, what the telecare service is being used for, etc). Where a service user asks for telecare to be taken into account as DRE, the Council's financial assessor will make that decision (as with any other request for DRE to be taken into account in a financial assessment).

If the Council and the NHS agreed that telecare needed to be provided for a particular individual specifically as part of their agreed package of S117 aftercare services, that individual would be entitled to receive the service free of charge, in the same way as all other s.117 aftercare services are provided free of charge. If the telecare was not being provided as part of the service user's s.117 aftercare, then the Council could charge the person for provision of the telecare service even if they were receiving a package of s.117 aftercare services.

### 8. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

No additional resources required.

### 9. EQUALITY AND HEALTH IMPLICATIONS

**Please select one of the options below. Where appropriate please include the hyperlink to the EIA.**

Option 1  Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) not required – the EIA checklist has been completed.

Option 2 x In determining this matter the Executive Member needs to consider the EIA associated with this item in advance of making the decision. *(insert EIA link here)*

Option 3  In determining this matter the Executive Board Members need to consider the EIA associated with this item in advance of making the decision. *(insert EIA attachment)*

## 10. CONSULTATIONS

A consultation with current users has been completed. The data gathered is summarised as follows: 642 questionnaires returned. Several questions were asked, the documentation for this is included in additional documents. One significant question was answered as follows:

### **Are you in favour of the proposed £1.70 service charge?**

195 people strongly disagreed

95 people disagreed

132 people neither agreed nor disagreed

141 people agreed

52 people strongly agreed

## 11. STATEMENT OF COMPLIANCE

The recommendations are made further to advice from the Monitoring Officer and the Section 151 Officer has confirmed that they do not incur unlawful expenditure. They are also compliant with equality legislation and an equality analysis and impact assessment has been considered. The recommendations reflect the core principles of good governance set out in the Council's Code of Corporate Governance.

## 12. DECLARATION OF INTEREST

All Declarations of Interest of any Executive Member consulted and note of any dispensation granted by the Chief Executive will be recorded and published if applicable.

<b>VERSION:</b>	<b>1</b>
-----------------	----------

<b>CONTACT OFFICER:</b>	<b>Susan Kalvenas</b>
-------------------------	-----------------------

<b>DATE:</b>	08.12.2023
--------------	------------

<b>BACKGROUND PAPER:</b>	
--------------------------	--