



Careline Service Policy



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Summary

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Related Policies, Strategies, Guideline Documents	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Charging Policy▪ Financial Hardship Policy▪ Equality and Diversity policy▪ Complaints policy▪ Careline procedure▪ Careline terms and conditions▪ Careline – information for service users▪ Adult Care Moving residents into a Care home placement▪ Corporate Debt policy and process
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1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 This Policy sets out how the community alarm service also known as the Careline Service in Rochdale is delivered, including the provision of equipment and service, installation and removal, alarm call response, maintenance and charging.
- 1.2 It provides clarity and transparency as to how the Council will deliver the Careline Service, along with the draft associated Careline working document procedure, which further details how the policy will be implemented.

2. Introduction

- 2.1 The Careline Service is a community alarm service and is a discretionary, fully chargeable and non-subsidised service offered by Rochdale Borough Council, delivered within the Home Improvement Agency (HIA), which is part of the Adult Care Service.
- 2.2 Community alarm services are part of a range of equipment services known as telecare and is the foundation for much of the assistive technology (AT) provision within the Borough. A range of AT devices can be connected to the Careline unit, such as falls detectors, movement monitors, door monitors and bed occupancy sensors.
- 2.3 There is evidence that the use of Careline with additional technology helps many people to retain their independence. It improves safety at home, it reduces the number of events that can lead to hospital and care home admissions and provides reassurance to the people themselves and to their family/friends.
- 2.4 We offer two levels of service:
 - The 'basic' **Careline** service, where the response centre operator would contact family and friends to respond to any alerts or requests for help and
 - The **Careline Plus** option, where the response centre operator would arrange for a mobile responder to visit in response to an alert or request for assistance.

3. Aims and objectives of the service

- 3.1 To improve the lives of elderly, vulnerable and disabled people by supporting them to remain independent and feel safe in their own home with the use of the Careline Service.
- 3.2 To reduce the need for domiciliary and residential care by enabling elderly, vulnerable and disabled people to live more independently in their own homes.
- 3.3 Helping people with long term conditions to live independently at home by supporting them to manage their own health and care
- 3.4 To support person centred approaches and a strengths based model of care and support
- 3.5 To provide advice, information and support regarding the Careline Service to meet individual needs.
- 3.6 To treat individuals fairly, regardless of age, sex, gender, disability and sexual orientation, or any other protected characteristic within the Equality and Diversity Policy and to protect their rights under Data Protection and Human Rights legislation.

4. Eligibility to apply for the Careline Service and peripheral linked equipment

- 4.1 All Careline applicants must live within the boundary of the Rochdale Borough, at an address registered for Council Tax purposes payable to Rochdale Council and complete a Careline application form at Appendix 1.
- 4.2 The Careline service is not available for anyone wanting to use it as an option for a 999 emergency response only, without the nominated or mobile response option.
- 4.3 Applicants who would like any linked peripheral devices such as smoke detector, property exit sensors etc, will need an assessment by a worker at initial point of contact in Adult Care, or an assessment worker within a locality team. A referral would need to be sent to the Home Improvement Agency detailing the equipment needed and any specific instructions of how it is to be installed e.g. timings on occupancy sensors.

5. Service requirements

- 5.1 The service user must be willing and able to pay for the service by Direct Debit.
- 5.2 Careline requires an active telephone line and an electrical socket within close proximity to each other (see 6.3 below for situations where there is no landline).
- 5.3 An installation can only take place if both the telephone and electrical socket appear safe and in full working order. As the installers are not telephone engineers, or electricians, they can only make a visual judgement as to the safety of the telephone and electrical socket and installation of the equipment does not imply that either are in good condition.
- 5.4 Applicants wishing to purchase the basic Careline Service must have at least one, ideally two nominated responders (usually close friends, relatives or neighbours), who are able (and have agreed) and willing to travel to their home within 30 minutes, as necessary, anytime of the day and night, 365 days of the year, to respond to their requests for help and support. It is the applicant's responsibility to notify any changes to the nominated responders details to the HIA.
- 5.5 Applicants who do not have suitable nominated responders as described at 5.4 would need to have the Careline Plus option.
- 5.6 Applicants who purchase the Careline Plus option will need to have a secure key safe attached to the exterior of their property, in a suitable and accessible place for the mobile responder to be able to access a key to the property. Key safe codes will not be provided to anyone other than Eldercare (to enable the mobile responder to access when attending), unless a key safe declaration/authorisation form is signed by the service user. The service user takes full responsibility for any access to their property, if they choose to share the code with family, friends, carers or others. They are also responsible if the key is removed from the key safe and is not there when Eldercare responders attend in an emergency, which may result in forced entry.
- 5.7 If the Careline plus service is purchased for a family member who does not have mental capacity or is unable to sign the key safe declaration form, the declaration form can be signed by the power of attorney or if the applicant gives verbal permission for a family member to sign on their behalf.
- 5.8 Applicants who have shared access to their property and wish to access the Careline plus service, will need the agreement of their landlord, or managing agent and possibly other residents if a key safe is to be placed outside the building which allows access to a shared entrance. The HIA cannot fit a key safe if permission is refused and are not responsible for challenging these decisions.

6. Installation of equipment

- 6.1 The Careline equipment (Careline unit and one linked pendant) is installed by a fully trained member of the Home Improvement Agency team (out of normal office hours, emergency installations will be undertaken by a mobile responder, working with our contracted provider – Eldercare).
- 6.2 As the Careline equipment is installed to cover emergency situations, all other telephony equipment in the home of the service user are installed behind the Careline unit, so that no other devices can take priority on the telephone line ahead of the Careline unit e.g. the Careline unit will always be connected directly into the main line telephone socket, not into another device which is already plugged into the main line socket (with the exception of an internet filter). This ensures that the Careline unit always has priority over any other device.
- 6.3 In properties where there is more than one telephone (usually telephone extensions in separate rooms), a safe socket will need to be installed to ensure that the Careline unit always has priority over any of the lines. The Safe Socket is used to ensure that alarm calls are raised even though the telephone line is in use. It allows the Careline unit to seize the phone line from other connected devices on the same line (i.e. extension phone, computer, fax machine, satellite receiver etc). There is no additional charge for the safe socket.
- 6.4 In situations where a service user doesn't have a landline, it may be possible to install a different unit, which has an integrated SIM card within it. This will enable it to search for the strongest signal from various providers, and connect to the strongest mobile phone network to enable a call to be made to the monitoring centre. There is an additional charge for this type of service, see Section 11.
- 6.5 In situations where the telephone socket or electrical plug socket are inaccessible due to furniture which is difficult to move, it is the responsibility of the service user to arrange for the area to be accessible prior to installation.
- 6.6 In some cases, there can be issues with the Careline installation, due to the way in which broadband has been set up. The Careline installers are not able to resolve all broadband issues and may have to refer the service user back to their broadband provider before the Careline service can be set up.
- 6.7 The Home Improvement Agency would recommend all Careline Plus applicants to have a keysafe installed by the Council, which is police approved. Applicants choosing to use their own keysafe can do so, but at their own risk, as a non-police approved keysafe is less safe and could lead to the keysafe being broken into and an unauthorised person gaining access to the property.
- 6.8 Where the Careline Plus applicant has installed their own keysafe, they must share the keysafe code with the Home Improvement Agency for the Mobile Responder and ensure that they have a spare key inside the safe at all times. They must also inform the HIA of any changes they make to the keysafe code.
- 6.9 If the Careline unit and peripheral equipment are disconnected and/or moved by the service user or their representative and reconnected incorrectly, they may not function effectively and RBC cannot be responsible for any failures of the service in these circumstances.

7. Alarm call monitoring service

- 7.1 Rochdale Council has in place a contract with Eldercare to provide an alarm call monitoring service, which operates 24 hours per day, 365 days a year, which is regulated by the Telecare Services Association.
- 7.2 The target for calls to be answered by the monitoring centre is 100% within 180 seconds, 95.5% within 60 seconds and 80% within 30 seconds.

- 7.3 In situations where the call or alert is triaged for an emergency response from Fire/Police/Ambulance, Rochdale Council and the monitoring centre have no control over the speed of response, or any eventuality resulting from the speed of response.
- 7.4 For Careline customers living in Rochdale Boroughwide Housing (RBH) Independent Living Schemes (ILS) all alerts will go through to the monitoring centre commissioned within the scheme by RBH. This is currently provided by Tunstall and if they determine that a mobile responder is required, they will contact a dedicated number at Eldercare to arrange for the mobile responder to be dispatched. RBH ILS tenants will pay the Careline charges directly to Rochdale Council and any costs associated with their monitoring by Tunstall will be paid by them to RBH.

8. Mobile response service (Careline Plus)

- 8.1 Rochdale Council has a contract in place with Eldercare to provide a mobile response service to operate 24 hours per day, 365 days a year.
- 8.2 The monitoring centre will triage all calls to determine whether a mobile response is required.
- 8.3 The target for the mobile responder is 100% within 45 minutes, 90% within 20-30 minutes and 70% in under 20 minutes. This is the standard we would like to achieve, but on rare occasions it may take longer than 45 minutes, as sometimes, all mobile responders are supporting other customers and can't leave them. The control centre operator will keep service users informed and if appropriate, may ask if a family, friend or neighbour is able to respond more quickly in the interim.
- 8.4 The service user has a responsibility to ensure that a key is in the key safe at all times and the Council will have no responsibility to repair damage to doors due to mobile responders not having access to a key to enter the property and having to call the emergency services to gain access to respond to an alert through the monitoring centre.

9. Moving and handling

- 9.1 A moving and handling risk assessment (Appendix 2) is in place for the delivery of the mobile response service. The risk assessment and policy are owned by the provider, currently Eldercare, however, it is accepted and supported by Rochdale Council as part of our contracting arrangements.
- 9.2 Mobile responders will not attempt to lift a service user from the floor if they fail the moving and handling risk assessment. The moving and handling risk assessment is carried out every time a mobile responder is called to a service user who has fallen. If a service user has been lifted previously and passed the risk assessment, it does not automatically mean that they will pass it again on another occasion. In situations where a service user is unable to be lifted by the Mobile responder as they have not met the criteria in the risk assessment, the control centre will usually request an ambulance to attend.
- 9.3 The moving and handling risk assessment document and process will be reviewed annually and taken to the Technology Enabled Care Board for approval.
- 9.4 Any requested changes to the moving and handling risk assessment by Eldercare will be reviewed by the Moving and Handling Advisor/OT Advanced Practitioner in Adult Care and taken to the Technology Enabled Care Board for approval.

10. Service standards

- 10.1 Requests for the Careline service to be installed will be responded to within 5 working days, unless it is part of an urgent package of care upon discharge from hospital, in which case, an installation will usually take place within 24-48 hours.
- 10.2 In cases where a referral has been made and the service user or nominated contact are unable to be contacted after trying to speak to them on two separate occasions over two separate days, the referral will be closed and the appropriate letter sent as per the procedure.
- 10.3 In cases where we contact a service user following a referral and they are uncertain as to whether they want to proceed with the service, we will close the referral down and advise them to contact us again if they decide at a later date they wish to purchase the service.
- 10.4 The key performance indicators detailed in 7.2 and 8.3 are monitored on a monthly basis, in line with the contract and reported to the Technology Enabled Care Board.
- 10.5 Customer satisfaction levels are monitored as detailed in Section 16, reported to the Technology Enabled Care Board and appropriate action is taken to improve the service as necessary.
- 10.6 Rochdale Council are members of the Telecare Services Association (TSA) who are the representative body for technology enabled care (TEC) services, working on behalf of and advising organisations including telecare and telehealth providers, housing associations, care providers, emergency services, academia, charities, government bodies and health and social care commissioners. This membership supports best practice and ensures our Careline service is delivered and develops in line with industry standards.
- 10.7 Eldercare who are the contracted providers of monitoring and response are an accredited member of the TSA, which is an ongoing requirement of the contract Rochdale Council have with them.

11. Service charges

- 11.1 Careline is a chargeable service, without exception and the Adult Care charging policy states that all Careline service users must usually pay by Direct Debit.
- 11.2 The charges for the service are:

Careline basic service (family and friends respond)	£3.10 per week
Careline Plus service (includes mobile response)	£5.10 per week
Careline GSM service (mobile sim unit)	£1.50 per week in addition to either Careline basic or Careline plus

The Careline service can be provided in situations where more than one person in the same household needs the service, but only one charge will be made.

- 11.3 If the Direct Debit form hasn't been fully completed, providing all details necessary for the direct debit to be set up, the Careline installation will only proceed on the basis that a direct debit form is received within 14 days. Cash payments will be set up in cases where a direct debit form hasn't been provided at installation so that charges are not accruing during the first 14 days.
- 11.4 In cases where the Direct Debit is subsequently cancelled or the Direct Debit fails, the service user will be contacted and given 14 days in which to reinstate the Direct Debit, or the Careline service will be terminated. Any arrears must be cleared before the DD can be reinstated and the service restarted.
- 11.5 Charges for the Careline service can be increased at any time during the financial year, with approval from Cabinet and by giving the service user at least 28 days notice in writing of the

increase. For increases made at any other time than April, separate invoices would be issued for the increase, as the DD can't be changed once it has been set up for the year.

- 11.6 Charges can be paid monthly (2 weeks in arrears) or quarterly or annually in advance
- 11.7 Charges will not be suspended, due to the service user being away from the property for any period of time, the service would need to be cancelled if no longer required.
- 11.8 The charges are usually subject to VAT. Service users who believe they meet the criteria for receiving the service without VAT will need to complete the VAT exemption form during the installation in line with the 'Reliefs from VAT for disabled and older people (VAT Notice 701/7)'
- 11.9 Careline charges can be claimed as disability related expenditure (DRE) as part of a financial assessment for RBC care and support charges, which may reduce the charges for other Adult Care Services, but Careline charges will always be payable.
- 11.10 All equipment is provided on a loan basis, with the expectation that upon cancellation of the service, all equipment is returned in the same condition (subject to general wear and tear) and working order as it was initially installed. Failure to return equipment may result in a charge of £100, if the equipment is less than 5 years old and suitable to be recycled.
- 11.11 At initial installation, a Careline unit along with one pendant will be provided. Lost pendants will be replaced once, but any subsequent request for a new pendant will incur a charge of £30.
- 11.12 Service users are responsible for any costs from their telephone service or broadband provider incurred as a result of the Careline service equipment being used to call for assistance. Service users are advised to check their package with their provider to ensure that they are aware of any potential costs of calls or alerts from the equipment.

12. Debt recovery/service termination

- 12.1 If a service user misses a payment, the usual corporate debt process will apply, which may differ, depending on whether the service user pays on a monthly, quarterly or annual basis.
- 12.2 If no payment has been received following the reminders and court warning notice issues as part of the corporate debt process, the Careline team will try to make contact with the service user to determine whether they intend to bring their payments up to date and retain the service. If the service user wishes to retain the service, they will need to bring their payments up to date with the debt recovery team and re-instate their direct debit as soon as possible.
- 12.3 If no contact can be made, or the service user refuses to bring their payments up to date, the following will apply:
 - For service with no known care and support needs, the service will be terminated within 14 days
 - For service users known to Adult Care, with previous or current care and support needs, or identified risks and vulnerabilities, a referral will be made to the appropriate locality team to assess whether the service user has capacity to choose not to pay for the service, taking into consideration their assessment and care plan and any risks in not continuing to have the Careline service. The decision to terminate the Careline service will be signed off by a Locality Team Manager, or delegated member of the Locality Team.
- 12.4 All cases where the service is cancelled due to non-payment or ongoing debt issues will be reported on the dashboard report to the Technology Enabled Care Board.

- 12.5 If Rochdale Council terminate the service, a letter will be sent out to advise that it is terminated and to try to make the arrangements for the return of the equipment. If equipment isn't returned within 14 days, a charge of £100 will be made to cover the cost of the unrecovered equipment, if the equipment is less than 5 years old and suitable to be recycled.

13. Equipment testing

- 13.1 All service users are encouraged to make a test call every month.
- 13.2 Careline service users are reviewed on a monthly basis and in cases where there hasn't been any test calls, or any other calls or alerts made, during the previous 3 months, one of the Home Improvement Agency Team will contact the service user by telephone to advise them to make a test call.
- 13.3 It remains the responsibility of the service user to make a test call on a regular basis and report any faults to the Home Improvement Agency Team.

14. Repair and maintenance

- 14.1 All equipment installed as part of the Careline service remains the property of Rochdale Borough Council and is on loan to the service user.
- 14.2 All equipment will be maintained by Rochdale Borough Council and repaired or replaced as necessary at no charge to the service user, unless wilful damage is indicated, or in the case of a lost pendant, which is chargeable as detailed at 11.11.
- 14.3 If there is a fault on the telephone line, the Careline equipment is unlikely to work and Rochdale Council cannot be responsible for resolving any issues with faulty telephone lines. This will be the responsibility of the service user to make contact with their telephone service provider.
- 14.4 All faults with Careline equipment should be reported to Rochdale Council and wherever possible, will be responded to within 5 working days where the fault is affecting the emergency operation of the alarm. Other faults not directly affecting the emergency operation of the alarm and the ability to call for help will be responded to within 10 working days.
- 14.5 No refund will be given for the time taken to repair or replace the equipment.
- 14.6 If equipment has a low battery the Home Improvement Agency will be notified by the monitoring centre (Eldercare) and will respond to all low battery alerts within 7 working days, to determine the issue and replace the battery, or equipment as necessary.

15. Annual review

- 15.1 All Careline service users will be contacted on an annual basis, as part of our reviewing process.
- 15.2 The review will cover payments/arrears, equipment testing, satisfaction and whether the service is fully meeting their needs.
- 15.3 The annual review will be documented on Flare (Careline IT management system) and ALLIS (Adult Care case management system) and any necessary action taken.

16. Customer satisfaction

- 16.1 Qualitative questions are asked as part of the annual review as detailed in Section 15, to determine overall levels of satisfaction with the service and quarterly reports produced for the Technology Enabled Care Board.
- 16.2 A telephone call will be made to all new service users within 6 weeks of joining the service, to ascertain their satisfaction with the initial referral process, installation and acclimatisation.
- 16.3 A telephone call will be made to a random sample of service users who have been recorded by Eldercare as having had a mobile response call out during the previous week, to determine their satisfaction with the monitoring centre triage and mobile response.

17. Ending the service

- 17.1 When the service user decides they no longer require the service, they must contact the Home Improvement Agency to arrange for the service to be cancelled and for the equipment to be collected.
- 17.2 The service will be cancelled on the same day the request is received, but failure to return the equipment or facilitate its collection will result in a charge of £100 to cover the cost of the unrecovered equipment, if the equipment is less than 5 years old and suitable to be recycled. Cancellation will result in an account reconciliation where any arrears or refunds are calculated.
- 17.3 The service will only be cancelled from the date the Home Improvement Agency are contacted, it cannot be backdated, unless there is written evidence that Adult Care were advised or aware on a previous date and failed to cancel the service. In situations where the service user has died, the service will be cancelled on the date of their death.
- 17.5 When a service users goes into residential placement or a long period of respite arranged by Adult Care, it is still the responsibility of the service user or their representative to notify us that they wish to cancel the service. However, it is good practice for the worker arranging the placement to notify the Careline service, which is documented as part of the procedure.
- 17.6 The service can be terminated by RBC if it is misused, or the mobile responders feel threatened in any way by unacceptable or inappropriate behaviours when responding to alerts. Eldercare can refuse to continue to provide a service to an individual where they are concerned about the safety of their staff and feel there are inappropriate or unacceptable circumstances. There is no exhaustive list of situations where the service would be withdrawn, which would always be as a last resort, but some examples are violence or threatened violence towards staff, aggressive or intimidating behaviour from the service user, family members or other people in the property, drug and alcohol abuse which is deemed unacceptable for the mobile responders to deal with.
- 17.7 In situations where the service user has died, the Executors of their estate will be responsible for any outstanding payments following reconciliation of the account.

18. Data Protection Act 2018 and General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR)

- 18.1 As part of the Careline service, we need to collect certain information to assist with the processing of applications and ongoing delivery of the service. This is covered under the Data Protection Act 2018 and General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR).

18.2 A Privacy notice applies to this area of work and the information we will collect is as follows:

- Name of applicant
- Address of applicant
- Relationship information
- Contact details including land line, mobile phone and email details of applicant and any person nominated as a point of contact
- Date of birth
- Housing status – owner-occupier/ owner/ private rented/ social rented
- Name and contact details for landlord and/or landlords agent (if living in a shared property or block of flats)
- Medical information relevant to call triage
- Bank account details
- Ethnicity
- Other information as specified on the application form

18.3 As part of the Careline Service, information will need to be shared with other organisations, wherever applicable as follows:

- Adult Social Care
- Children's Services
- Heywood Middleton and Rochdale (HMR) NHS
- RBC Legal Services
- RBC Revenue Services including Council Tax
- HMRC
- Registered Social Housing Providers
- Eldercare
- Rochdale Boroughwide Housing
- Local Government Ombudsman
- Care and support providers
- North West Ambulance Service
- Greater Manchester Police
- Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Service
- Private landlords

Only limited information will be shared with other providers, which are essential for the purposes of delivering the service.

18.4 Key safe codes will be shared with Eldercare to allow the Mobile Responders to enable them to gain access to the property in response to alerts received. If the Careline Plus applicant would like anyone else to have the code, such as the STARs service, Home Care Agency or Next of Kin they must sign a keysafe declaration form clearly listing the people/organisation who they wish to have the code. The Home Improvement Agency will only share the code with the people listed in the signed keysafe declaration form.

19. Complaints

19.1 All complaints about any element of the Careline Service should be referred to Rochdale Council and will initially be dealt with informally, in line with the Adult Care Complaints policy. Whilst the complaint

may be about a part of the service delivered by one of our contracted providers, Rochdale Council will co-ordinate the investigation and response.

19.2 Following an informal investigation, if the complainant remains dissatisfied, they can make a formal complaint, which will be dealt with under the Adult Care Complaints policy. Further details of how to complain and the process can be found on the Rochdale Council website using the following link <http://www.rochdale.gov.uk/council-and-democracy/contact-us/complaints-and-compliments/Pages/complaints-procedure.aspx>

19.3 If, following the outcome of the complaint, the complainant remains dissatisfied, they can contact the Local Government Ombudsman (LGO). The LGO would expect the applicant to have used the Council complaints process in the first instance, before they will investigate further. Details of the LGO can be found in the above link.

20. Appendices

Appendix 1	Application form - Careline & Careline plus	 Careline application form.do
	Application form - GSM Careline	 Careline application form - G
	Application form – ILS Responder Service	 Careline application form - IL
Appendix 2	Moving and Handling Risk Assessment	 Eldercare Moving Handling Risk Asses

