Meeting of:	**Cabinet**
Date of Meeting:	**Monday, 09 March 2020**
Relevant Scrutiny Committee:	Healthy Living and Social Care
Report Title:	Telecare Services Update
Purpose of Report:	To update Members regarding the service developments made over the past 12 months by the Vale of Glamorgan Telecare Service
Report Owner:	Cabinet Member – Social Care and Health
Responsible Officer:	Director of Social Services
Elected Member and Officer Consultation:	Head of Adult Services / Locality Manager; Operational Manager, Locality Services; Team Leader, Telecare; Operational Manager, Customer Services.
Policy Framework:	This is a matter for Executive decision

Executive Summary:

Telecare provides an element of Care and Support to enable people to live independently at home for as long as possible. It primarily provides significant reassurance to family carers by enabling timely access to emergency support when needed. These benefits are known to maintain and improve people's confidence and independence at home and thus reduce the ongoing need for statutory health and social care services. The research available concludes that any benefits are maximised when Telecare is introduced early as a preventative service.

The Council is committed to increasing the Telecare service to give more people the opportunity to benefit from the preventative interventions available. However, to keep up with customer expectations and maintain a high-quality service, the Telecare team will need to embrace new models of operation given emerging technologies.

The existing Telecare Service is based on analogue telecommunications systems which will no longer operate after the Digital Switch-over in 2025. The service is keen to take the opportunity of the switch-over to enhance the range of Telecare options available to people, both inside and outside of their home by utilising a wider range of digital equipment.

Recommendations

1. That the work and future developments of the Telecare service as detailed in the report is considered and endorsed by Cabinet.

2. That Cabinet notes the impact of changes to the funding arrangements for Telecare users.

Reasons for Recommendations

1. To appraise Members on the challenges, opportunities and strategic direction of the Vale of Glamorgan Council's Telecare service.

2. To ensure that Cabinet has awareness of the changes to these arrangements and how the impact of them is being managed for Telecare users.

1. Background

1.1 The Vale of Glamorgan Council's Telecare Service supports citizens of the Vale of Glamorgan to live independently in their homes through the provision of highly accessible Technology Enabled Care devices to alert carers/professionals in times of need. The Telecare Team is responsible for the installation and maintenance of the Telecare equipment; they work alongside the Customer Services 24/7 Monitoring Team at Contact One Vale.

1.2 TeleV – makes use of an analogue base unit connected through a home telephone landline to a personal pendant and environmental sensors which link to the 24/7 monitoring centre at Contact One Vale. The TeleV service was introduced alongside the existing Vale Community Alarm Service (VCAS) in 2008, which primarily consisted of hardwired schemes within council properties and a smaller number of dispersed units and pendants which customers rented on separate terms which have been maintained through VCAS. Since 2008, TeleV has been a rental with maintenance only service.

1.3 TeleV carries a flat rate charge for installation and maintenance. Installations currently cost citizens a one-off amount of £59.50; with a weekly charge of £5.25. This charge has been subsidised by the Supporting People Programme Grant by £1.24 per week to cover the monitoring of the alarm only since October 2018; if eligible this reduces the on-going charge to £4.01 per week. Anyone over the age of eighteen who is at risk of a slip, trip or fall is eligible for funding from the Supporting People Programme to cover the monitoring cost of an alarm. However, those under the age of sixty must be in receipt of certain welfare benefits or be able to provide medical evidence to confirm that they meet the criteria.

1.4 TeleV+ - makes use of a wider range of equipment to support people with more complex needs in their own homes and communities. This may be linked to the 24/7 monitoring centre or directly to carers. TeleV+ is a Care and Support service provided on the completion of a Social Services & Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014 assessment. Such equipment may include: fall detectors, bed or chair sensors,

epilepsy sensors (wearable for the day, bed-based for nights), GPS trackers, floor mats, flood 'preventers' (Magiplugs), nightlights, door sensors etc.

1.5 TeleV+ is considered Care and Support and so is funded through Social Services. A customer contribution to Care and Support is calculated through a Financial Assessment taking into account a person's financial circumstances and up to a Welsh Government set weekly cap (currently £90.00 per week). The maximum charge for the service is £8.77 per week, reduced to £7.53 if eligible for Supporting People funding. The service currently supports 1 child and 162 adults living with Care and Support needs.

1.6 The majority of the Council's Housing Stock has an alarm service currently supported through the Telecare service. This consists of 2 elements, monitoring (through Contact One Vale's 24/7 monitoring centre) and maintenance (provided through an external contract or by the Council's Telecare team). The Telecare service supports approximately 1400 tenants living in the Council's Housing stock. The charge for this service has historically been included as part of the tenant's rent in elderly designated properties as a condition of their tenancy, irrespective of the tenant's need for the service. The Housing department has received 37 complaints during 2019 from housing tenants that do not wish to pay an additional charge for their alarm stating that they do not need or want it, claiming that private tenants or owner occupiers do not have this requirement. In order to make access to the service equitable, the Housing Department has accepted this point for tenants in designated properties, apart from sheltered schemes and is now in the process of decommissioning Telecare from relevant Vale housing tenants. This will have a financial impact on the Telecare income of £4.01 per week per customer. This equates to less than £8k pa, based on the current number of people who no longer want to keep their Telecare.

1.7 The number of TeleV and TeleV+ customers has increased slowly over the last five years, with the number of VCAS customers reducing due to properties being re-designated from elderly persons accommodation to general needs properties for younger people. The number of VCAS (dispersed) customers will continue to reduce as people no longer require the service or their equipment breaks; the service aims to support all VCAS customers to a TeleV (or TeleV+) service by April 2020.

	New TeleV	New TeleV+	Active Users TeleV	Active Users TeleV+	VCAS (dispersed)	VCAS (Housing)
2013-14	189	61	570	111	315	1149
2014-15	240	69	634	135	207	1383
2015-16	251	79	730	132	161	1411
2016-17	272	91	815	150	130	1394
2017-18	249	81	862	154	91	1419
2018-19	259	50	926	146	66	1406
Apr- Oct 2019	154	41	975	163	55	1389

2. Key Issues for Consideration

Supporting People Grant

2.1 The Welsh Government Supporting People Programme has supported the Vale of Glamorgan Community Alarm service (VCAS) since 2003 and under the grant guidance at the time could fund monitoring, management and maintenance of the hard wired alarm system.

2.2 Cabinet was advised at its meeting of the 30th July 2018 that following a Welsh Government review of Supporting People Services that older person's services and alarm services should be based on need and not tenure. The grant conditions also required the grant to be used only for the monitoring of alarm services and not for the management and maintenance of the system.

2.3 Welsh Government consented however to allow the Council to extend its 'in house' emergency alarm service for council tenants until October 2018 due to the complexity of the issues surrounding hard wired alarms. At the same time Cabinet agreed to the introduction of new contracts to provide the monitoring service in the Vale and introduced new eligibility criteria to evidence that the Supporting People funding was only used to pay for the monitoring to clients who needed the emergency alarm service because of their vulnerability in accordance with the Supporting People Guidance.

2.4 From October 2018 this was extended to include all Telecare users acknowledging that Telecare complements housing related support by helping people to live independently at home. From April 2019, the Supporting People Programme Grant was combined with two other Welsh Government grants and was renamed the Housing Support Grant (HSG). Existing eligible alarm and TeleV customers are subsidised by £1.24; per week for monitoring costs; while new customers receive the same £1.24, only if certain criteria are met, [i.e. a person is at risk of slips, trips or falls].

2.5 The changes in funding of Telecare as a result of the changes to HSG will be kept under review to ensure the service continues to operate within budget and generates income for future service developments.

2.6 Council housing tenants have been required as part of their tenancy agreement to pay the charge for Telecare without any assessment or decision of their need for Telecare. Further to the decision not to charge people who have complained, it is proposed that all current and new tenants to Council housing, apart from those in sheltered housing schemes are given the opportunity to withdraw from the service and have their Telecare devices decommissioned. This will mean that any subsequent tenant to the property will only have access to Telecare through either TeleV or TeleV+.

Growth of the Service

2.7 There has been a slow and steady increase in the number of TeleV and TeleV+ customers over the last five years. Assuming the benefits of Telecare, there is a clear motivation to the department for increasing the number of people using the service. The team will continue to promote the service through all available

avenues, including primary and secondary Health and Social Care, 3rd sector brokers, Contact One Vale and through the Council's social media.

2.8 The Team is working with the Communication Team to develop the Telecare presence on the Council's website, which includes an online application form and an enhanced presentation of the service.

2.9 The Team has made ongoing presentations to social care teams, primary and secondary healthcare services and a range of local community groups to raise the profile of the service and seek feedback from customers.

2.10 The Team considered the offer of a postal service for the customer to self-install the Telecare equipment at a reduced cost but after consultation with social workers it was not pursued as social workers felt this would not be appropriate for many of our service users. It was felt that the installation was an excellent opportunity for the Telecare staff to initiate a positive relationship with the person and their family which was critical to break down any barrier to using the equipment and allowed for the Telecare staff to highlight other preventative opportunities that benefit the person.

Mobile Response Service

2.11 Telecare customers and social workers report that the lack of a mobile response to provide home visits to people who have fallen or had incontinence issues presents a barrier to growing the Telecare service and places additional demand on home care, residential and ambulance services. Individuals who have the service often have lengthy waits for the ambulance service to arrive, which can hinder their later recovery. Adult services currently provide a night time sitting service to a small number of citizens. It is proposed that the provision of a mobile response service may reduce the need for such night sits, offer an alternative to residential care, promote people's dignity through urgent personal care and provide better outcomes to individuals who have fallen.

2.12 Adult Services currently support 7 people with night time domiciliary care at a cost of £68,000 and 23 people with night-time Direct Payments at a cost to the department of £345,246. While, a mobile response service would not completely negate the need for night-time care, it would significantly reduce it and offer an increased number of people and family's reassurance that care is available at night.

2.13 The Telecare team are keen to pilot a Mobile Response Service, the Operational Manager and Head of Service are looking at opportunities for grant funding. Should funding become available, it is intended that the service would be available to all TeleV+ customers and offered to TeleV customers at an additional charge, once any grant funding had ceased.

2.14 The Mobile Response service would be accessed through the Telecare equipment for people experiencing a fall or an incontinence emergency. From 1st April 2019 to 30th November 2019 the service received over 300 alerts requiring an emergency ambulance response. It is anticipated that a mobile response service would reduce the need for an ambulance for Telecare customers.

2.15   The Telecare Team aims to trial a Mobile Response Service during 2020 to avoid over reliance on commissioned care and support at night-time.

Digital Switch Over

2.16   Analogue telephone lines are due to be replaced with digital lines by 2025, meaning that all the current (2500) users supported by Telecare will need to have their devices replaced by digital devices. Although it is already true that many people are choosing to use their mobile phones instead of having a landline, the team is working with the Technology Enabled Care Services Association, a representative body, toward alternative Telecare provision post the digital switch-over to ensure a seamless handover for all existing customers. This will involve several phases.

- Upgrade of the Telecare computer monitoring platform: The service currently operates Telecare from a Tunstall database which enables the operators to identify the user and highlights an emergency plan for the operator to put in place. The current platform maintenance contract is due to expire at the end of March 2020 and is not fit for the digital switch-over. The team will procure a new digital platform during 2020 that will enable a wider range of in-house and mobile (SIM based) devices that are able to track the wellbeing and location of users at all times; it is envisaged that this will be a hosted solution, in line with the Council's digital strategy.

- Trial of Mobile Equipment: Although the current platform is able to support a wide range of alarms and peripheral devices such as movement and fall sensors, epilepsy and diabetes sensors, these are restricted to the person's home. A new computer monitoring system will enable improved communication with mobile sensors and alarms. The team is currently trialling a range of mobile equipment throughout the Vale of Glamorgan to identify 'black spots' where the mobile signal does not reach to ensure only suitable equipment is suggested for customers.

- GPS Tracker Systems: The increasing reliability and wear-ability of GPS trackers is enabling people who might be at risk of becoming lost in the community, greater freedom to access the community and offers families and professionals reassurance that they will always know the whereabouts of the person where it is in the person's best interest. An improved computer monitoring system will enable a greater range of mobile devices to cover more specialist needs and a greater reach throughout the Vale.

- Enhanced Health Monitoring at Home: There is an increasing confidence in the reliability of health monitoring devices that enable practitioners and families to monitor individuals at home and provide improved information on people's activities, health and nutrition/hydration. An improved digital platform will allow the team to trial a greater range of monitoring systems to support people to live at home for longer.

3. How do proposals evidence the Five Ways of Working and contribute to our Well-being Objectives?

Long Term

3.1 The Council's commitment to developing the Telecare Service represents a focus on the long-term wellbeing of individuals using the service and the sustainability of social care by reducing or delaying demand on care and support services.

Integration

3.2 The Telecare Service supports an Active and Healthy Vale by providing safeguards and early warnings to enable people to live independently. The service operates from the Contact Centre which provides not only social care but access to a range of community health services.

Involvement

3.3 Telecare allows people to take more control over their lives by providing information so people are more informed to make care and support decisions.

Collaboration

3.4 The Telecare service is a collaboration between social services, the Council's contact centre and the UHB through the provision of TeleV+.

Prevention

3.5 Telecare is known to support people to live independently and give confidence to carers so they can take a break. This helps to maintain people's caring relationships which in turn has a positive impact on the wellbeing of the carer and the person being cared for.

4. Resources and Legal Considerations

Financial

4.1 The Telecare Service continues to perform within budget and develop a reserve fund for future equipment maintenance and costs. Any service developments to improve the service and increase the number of Telecare users must remain within budget.

4.2 The additional costs associated with the digital switch-over will be met within the Telecare revenue budget and the Telecare reserve fund.

Employment

4.3 There are no employment implications as a direct result of this report.

Legal (Including Equalities)

4.4 There are no legal implications as a direct result of this report.

5. Background Papers

Report to Healthy Living and Social Care Scrutiny Committee – 17th January 2020 (referred to Homes and Safe Communities Scrutiny Committee – 12th February 2020).

Report to Healthy Living and Social Care Scrutiny Committee – 5th February 2019.

Report to Healthy Living and Social Care Scrutiny Committee – 4th December 2017.