



# Annual report 2013/14



HOME SAFEGUARD

From East Devon District Council

# Forward

This annual report shows how the service is valued by our customers, who are our most important people. The service is provided in peoples' own homes to ensure they can stay there for as long as possible and makes them feel safe, as someone can be called at the press of a button. Our staff give an excellent service which has been recognised by accreditation by an independent assessor, the Telecare Services Authority.

The Home Safeguard service also provides additional sensors to help people in difficulties - pill dispensers, a sensor that tells the person their home is not warm enough and other items. Just call and our staff will come and see you to discuss other options which might help you.

Last winter was very difficult for many people and this service helps with the emergencies like floods or fires in peoples' homes. They are our 'emergency service'.

I am very proud of the service and especially the people who answer the phones and visit our customers.

Jill Elson  
Cabinet Member for Sustainable Homes and Communities

## Background

'I have nothing but praise – the service was just wonderful'  
Mrs C, Exmouth (following a call made when she was very ill)

'Thank you for your quick response and such kindness. The call was dealt with very professionally indeed'  
Mrs B, Exmouth (following a fall)

Home Safeguard Alarm Services is run by East Devon District Council's Housing Service. It monitors the alarms within East Devon's sheltered housing as well as installing and monitoring dispersed alarms in other properties, both council and private, throughout East Devon.

We are accredited by the Telecare Services Association (TSA) which is the industry body for the provision of community alarm services.

As well as pendant alarms our Tunstall PNC6 equipment allows for the monitoring of a range of other telecare products (personal and environmental sensors in the home) including fall detectors, pill dispensers, smoke detectors, carbon monoxide detectors and a number of other sensors. So as well as our personal alarm, we are now pleased to be able to offer a range of other telecare products to some of our service users.

This report gives you information about our performance and achievements for the year September 2013 to August 2014 and sets out some new areas of work that we would like to achieve in the coming year.

## Our aims and values

'We have been very pleased with the service provided to my mother. It gave her a sense of security when she was alone. Having this system allowed her to stay in her own home, which was very important to her.'

Mr T, on behalf of his mother, a Home Safeguard service user

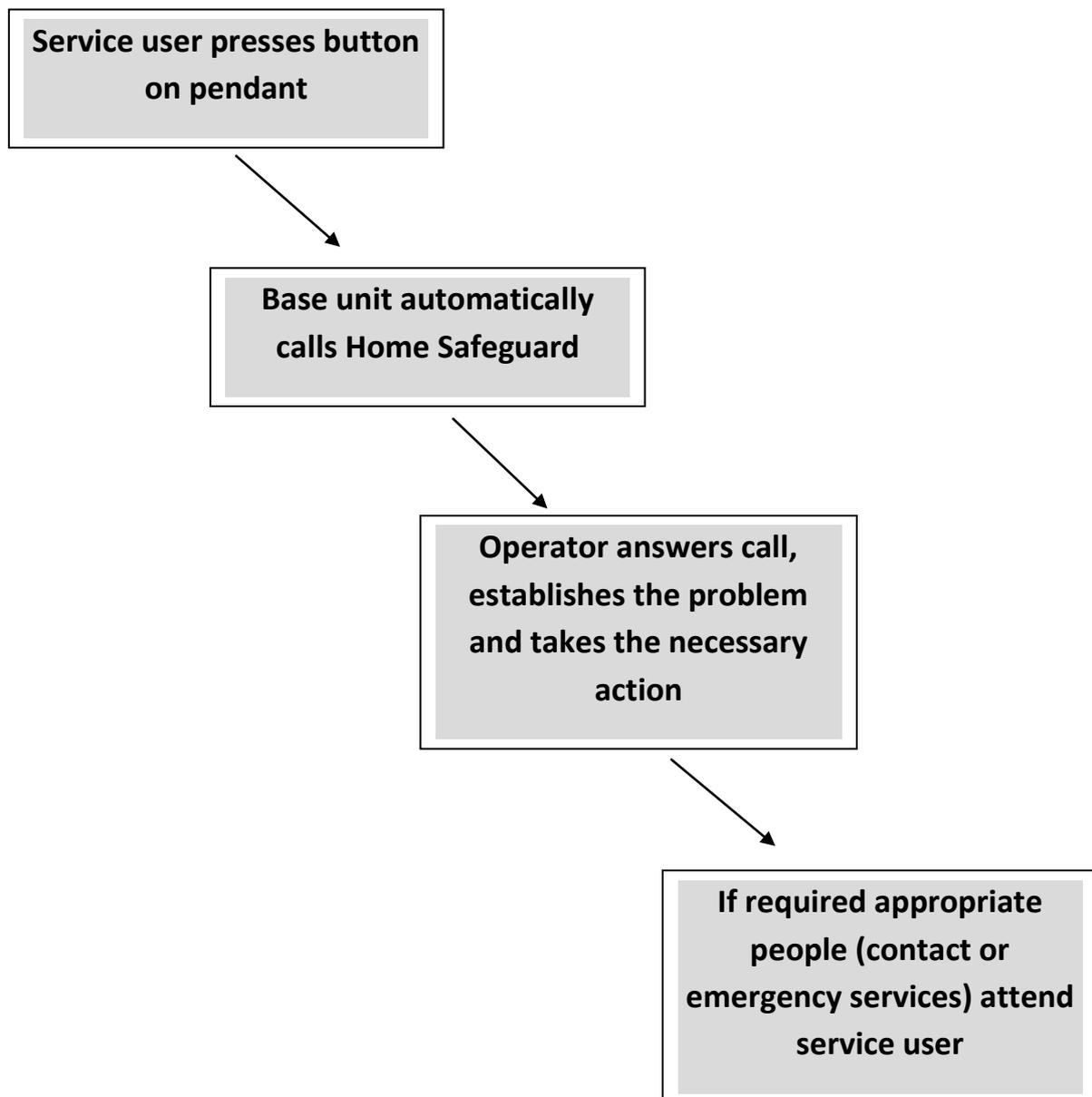
Our principle aim is to enable people who are elderly, disabled or with special needs to live as independently as possible and remain in their own homes if they so wish (EDDC Homes and Communities Plan 2012-2016).

To help us deliver a high quality service that meets the needs of our service users, we aim to:

- treat all service users as individuals and keep them at the heart of all we do
- provide high quality, good value for money services
- ensure our services are accessible to all and enhance quality of life in the communities in which we work.

## How the service works

Service users wear a small personal alarm called a pendant, around their neck, on a wrist strap, or clipped to clothing. The pendant transmits to a small base unit connected to an ordinary telephone line which works alongside the existing telephone. When activated a call goes through automatically to our control centre where it is answered by a trained operator. The operator will immediately determine the reason for the customer calling and if necessary will act promptly to call the appropriate emergency service or any other help that may be required.



## Our control centre in Sidmouth

'The operator was so kind and calming. She called for an ambulance which was there within 15 minutes. I cannot thank you enough for the kind, quick service received. My life was saved due to this call and help provided from Home Safeguard.'

Mrs A, following a fall in which she hit her head

Our services are delivered from our control centre, located in Sidmouth. We have a dedicated team of eight permanent operators and a small team of well trained casual operators, working on a rota system, to ensure that someone is available to answer calls 24hrs a day, every day of the year.

We also have two private sector mobile support officers (PSMSOs) who go out into the community to demonstrate, install, and test our dispersed alarms.

The Home Safeguard team leader oversees the operators and PSMSOs, and the service is the overall responsibility of the Housing Support Services Manager. All staff are fully trained to carry out their roles and we pride ourselves in ensuring Home Safeguard is a great place to work.

All our staff live locally and the control centre is located in Sidmouth, so we know the area extremely well, which can be of enormous benefit when dealing with an emergency situation.

Our operators respond to each call as appropriate and, if necessary, call out the emergency services or other assistance. We record all our calls, so that in the unlikely event of any queries arising, we can double check exactly what was said and what action was taken.

## Our service users and what they say about us

'If it was not for the PSMSO's kind advice, I had no idea I was entitled to such benefits.' Miss J, Ottery St Mary

'Thank you for the prompt and efficient service. I felt vulnerable when I lost my pendant but you replaced it within 2 hours'. Miss G

While the majority of our service users are elderly, they are not the only people who can benefit from a personal alarm or other telecare products. We have some younger service users who may need the service because they are disabled or vulnerable in some way.

We continue to grow and expand the service. We currently have around 4,400 connections covering:

- East Devon District Council's sheltered housing
- private individuals living throughout East Devon
- several Abbeyfield properties in East Devon
- the Teachers Association properties in Paignton and Christchurch
- some alarm services for North Devon Homes
- lone worker connections for East Devon and Teignbridge councils
- Gittisham Hill House, near Honiton

We are very pleased that the vast majority of our service users find the service useful and reassuring, giving them peace of mind and making them feel safer in their own homes. Service users also tell us that our staff are helpful and understanding.

### **From our service user satisfaction survey**

Each year we survey a sample of users of at least 5% of the total to check the quality of both installation and monitoring. The survey results for 2013/14, compared to 2012/13, are as follows:

	<b>Percentage of those who responded who are very or fairly satisfied with the service (TSA target = 90%)</b>	
	<b>2012/13</b>	<b>2013/14</b>
<b>Quality of services</b>	96	86
<b>Speed of response</b>	97	99
<b>Helpfulness of staff</b>	97	100
<b>Value for money</b>	87	82

We recognise the importance of customer comments, complaints and commendations and seek to learn from instances where complaints arise. This will sometimes lead to a change in processes. Good feedback to our staff is recognised through our internal magazine (Team Brief).

### **Service User involvement with Home Safeguard**

Wherever possible we want to involve our service users in shaping and developing the services we deliver. We receive feedback on the service from a number of areas including; talking to service users at the annual data check visit; responding to calls from our service users; responding to any complaints made.

Once a year we visit or contact by phone our service users to make sure that they are happy with our service and to check that the personal data we hold for them is up to date. This is known as an annual data check. This is a good opportunity for service users to give us feedback about the service and for us to discuss any new developments with them.

From time to time we organise forum meetings for service users. However, possibly due to the personal circumstances of many of our service users, we do not often get enough response to make it worthwhile holding such meetings. We invited service users to a focus group meeting in August 2013 looking at a possible new logo for Home Safeguard but only one service user was able to attend.

We are aware that we need to develop better ways of interacting with our service users to ensure their views are taken into account.

## **Safeguarding and abuse**

We take the matter of safeguarding extremely seriously and have trained all of our staff to recognise the signs of abuse. We work closely with the Devon Safeguarding Adults team to ensure the safety and security of all our service users. We recognise the importance of ensuring our service users are aware of this matter and issue an information leaflet to all new service users outlining the issue.

## Our Performance

'Thank you for your patience and kindness when my alarm equipment failed this morning. You passed it on and Chubb sorted it out so quickly.'

Miss S, Sidmouth

We are keen to deliver a high quality service that exceeds the industry standards set by the Telecare Services Authority. Our performance statistics show that this has again been the case for the year 2013/14.

**Monitoring:** During the year we responded to a total of 191,283 calls of which 97.5% were answered within 60 seconds, and 99.70% within 180 seconds. The targets set for Telecare Services Association accreditation are 97.5% and 99% respectively.

**Installations:** We connected approximately 41 new service users per month during 2013/2014. All of these were connected within our target times of 2 days for urgent and 5 days for non urgent or standard installations.

**Repairs:** During 2013/14 we have repaired approximately 27 units per month. All were repaired within our target times of 48 hours for critical and 96 hours for non-critical (from the time we are first contacted).

**Line Utilization:** During 2013/14 our line utilization was 6.63% against a target of less than 50% - this ensures that our service users do not call and find the lines engaged.

**Complaints:** We received no formal complaints about the service during the year. We did receive an informal complaint during the year that highlighted the need for customers to carry out test calls on a regular basis (we suggest monthly). The complaint arose when the customer pressed their pendant but received no response from the operators. When she eventually rang Home Safeguard to find out what the problem was it became clear that the phone had been changed by the customer but had not been correctly connected to the alarm base unit. We urge all customers to test equipment regularly and are happy to visit and help customers connect new phone equipment correctly.

## Comparison of our performance against the TSA key performance indicators

	<b>Telecare Services Authority target</b>	<b>Our achievement</b>	<b>Status</b>
<b>Responding to calls</b>	97.5% answered within one minute	97.5%	Achieved
	99% answered within three minutes	99.7%	Exceeding requirements
<b>Installations</b>	90% of urgent installations within 2 days	100%	Exceeding requirements
	90% of non urgent installations within 5 days	100%	Exceeding requirements
<b>Repairs</b>	90% of critical faults completed within 48 hours	96.5%	Exceeding requirements
	90% of non critical faults completed within 96 hours	100%	Exceeding requirements
<b>Line utilisation</b>	Less than 50%	6.63%	Exceeding requirements

## Summary comparison with last year's performance figures

	<b>2012/13</b>	<b>2013/14</b>
Number of calls responded to (including automated lone worker alerts)	155,823	191,283
% answered within 60 seconds	97.64%	97.5%
Number of new service users per month	41	41
Number of repairs per month	32	27
Number of complaints received during the year (formal)	1	0
Line utilization	3.09%	6.63

## What it costs to run the service?

'Great value to anyone who is living alone'  
Comment from a service user in 2013

For 2013/14 the costs of our basic services were £3.70 per week (£4.44 including VAT); this included the installation and hire of the standard equipment and monitoring of calls.

We ensured that the rise in cost was kept to a minimum but at the same time was value for money. Within the local region our costs are extremely competitive.

It cost us approximately £613,510 to run the service for the year. Funding for the service comes from:

- East Devon District Council - for the operation of the Outs of Hours contract
- Supporting People - for the monitoring of the sheltered properties
- Private corporate contracts that we monitor
- East Devon service users who pay a charge towards the service.

Our funding from Devon County Council will be stopping from April 2015. We are looking at a number of possible ways to meet the shortfall that will be left when this funding stops but the Council is committed to keeping the service going and providing an excellent locally based service for residents of East Devon.

## Key achievements during 2013-14

We have taken on another new corporate customer Gittisham Hill House near Honiton where we provide alarms and monitoring for the residents of 32 bungalows.

We have successfully re-branded Home Safeguard with a new logo and new leaflets explaining what we can offer. As part of rebranding we launched a new advertising campaign through the Devon County Council 'CONNECT' Magazine which highlighted a real life case study of one of our customers in an attempt to show others that our service can make a real difference to their lives. This was extremely successful and several new customers were signed up as a direct result of this campaign.

We are pleased to now be able to offer customers a range of telecare to work alongside the basic alarm unit. Take up is continuing to increase.

We have increased the number of key safes we install which helps to ensure a rapid response in emergency situations. Having a key safe ensures that someone can reach you in an emergency situation without having to break in. If you do not already have one please consider asking us to install one for you. We provide and install key safes to our service users at discount prices.

Last year we carried out a very successful pilot to introduce the use of Pivotell pill dispenser. We trialled the dispenser with one customer, who recently moved into full time residential care. However the care home concerned was impressed with the dispenser and is now trialling another one for us.

We have made changes to our staffing structure to make sure that at times when we know call numbers can be high we have sufficient staff to answer your calls promptly and efficiently.

We have updated many of our standard forms to make sure that we capture all the important information that we need to keep you safe at home.

We continue to roll out the use of our lone worker monitoring service for all East Devon staff. We are about to provide the service to Leisure East Devon as well and also in the private sector where we currently have one customer.

The number of repairs per month has fallen due to the fact that at our annual visits we not only check that all personal data is up to date but we also check that the equipment is working properly and replace any batteries which are past their life expectancy date.

## **Future plans for the service**

As well as the continued delivery of an excellent service to our existing service users we have a number of key areas for further development this year which include:

- preparation for the possible relocation of the Council office's to another site in East Devon
- delivering our marketing strategy to ensure we continue to grow the business and meet the targets set
- continuing to market the lone worker service to the wider East Devon community
- upgrading of our sheltered housing alarm equipment
- reviewing our Home Safeguard equipment to ensure our monitoring centre infrastructure and the equipment we offer to customers continues to meet the highest standards
- working to ensure the financial future of Home Safeguard following the loss of funding from Devon County Council.

## Further information and contacting us

If you require any further information about the Home Safeguard Community Alarm Services or you would like to participate in one of our focus groups please contact us.

Write to: The Home Safeguard Team Leader  
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