

WAVERLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL

COMMUNITY AND WELL BEING O&S COMMITTEE

19 FEBRUARY 2019

Title:

UPDATE REPORT ON CARELINE SERVICE

**Portfolio Holder: Cllr Jenny Else
Wards Affected: All**

Summary and purpose:

To provide an overview of the service that Careline provides and to provide an update on how the service is progressing.

How this report relates to the Council's Corporate Priorities:

This report relates to the Council's People, Place and Prosperity priorities as it informs as to a service provision that helps vulnerable people to live independently in their own homes, with the assistance of a personal alarm service, supplied by our in house Careline service.

Equality and Diversity Implications:

There are no Equality and diversity implications to this report.

Financial Implications:

There are no financial implications to this report.

Legal Implications:

There are no legal implications to this report.

1. Background

The Careline service is run by Waverley Borough Council to residents across the borough. A non-statutory service, it continues to be highly valued by its customers in helping them maintain their independence in their own homes through the use of the Careline personal alarm, and associated telecare equipment, which includes products such as linked smoked alarms, pill dispensers, falls detectors and bed sensors. Prices start from a little as £4.40 per week, based on a leased arrangement for the Careline personal alarm. A range of telecare products can also be purchased by the customer to ensure their needs are met. In addition to providing a service to customers in private housing, the Careline team also supports our 245 tenants living in our Senior Living services, other council tenants, and those customers who are eligible for funding by Surrey County Council for Careline/Telecare services.

The Careline service has a contract with Chichester District Council, to provide the monitoring centre for the alarm service. Based in Chichester, we have recently been

informed that this service has been taken over by AXA PPP. Reassurance has been given to us that our current contract will remain unchanged. Officers will be attending a workshop in February hosted by the existing, and new providers, to be given a further update.

The team comprises of 3(+1*) Careline Officers, a Team Leader, and a Services Manager (who also manages the Senior Living service). The total number of customers fluctuates around 1850, and has done so for many years. The nature of the service is such that although we attract new customers each month, we also lose a similar number as customers move on.

A snapshot of this is illustrated below:

| PI's | Oct 2018 | Nov 2018 | Dec 2018 |
|------------------------|----------|----------|-------------------|
| Total customer numbers | 1884 | 1890 | 1901 |
| Referred | 39 | 28 | 24 |
| Installed | 33 | 19 | 31(incls Nov ref) |
| Cancellations | 27 | 23 | 20 |

During this quarter (Oct 18 – Dec 18) the call monitoring centre received 5444 calls from our customers. Of these, 4023 were incoming calls from our customers, and 1421 were made by the monitoring centre in response to our customer's calls. The main reason for the calls to the monitoring centre were 1) Accidental by our customers (16%), 2) the Next of Kin being informed (10%) and 3) an ambulance being called (6%).

Significant work has been undertaken on the internal database that is used to record customer information, but concerns remain as to the accuracy of our total customer numbers. To address this, this database will cease operation and as from April 2019, this will be replaced by the team using the corporate finance database, Agresso.

The team cover the whole of Waverley Borough Council, and have their own patches for which they are responsible for. We are encouraging the team to evidence the work they undertake eg. around marketing, as part of their monthly performance indicators. As the evidence builds, this will help us to better understand effective marketing strategies and opportunities for growth.

Marketing – The team have been part of a project called 'Lets Get Steady' where they attend events to talk directly to promote the Careline service, offering demonstrations and advice. They continue to promote the service in partnership with other council teams eg. Community Meals service, day centres, and other community partners. We are also now involved in a project linked to the Disabled Facilities Grant which is looking to offer smart technology to customers that would benefit from this. We continue to work with Careline providers across Surrey's Districts & Borough's, sharing good practice.

Efficiencies – over the past year there have been ongoing improvements to our back office procedures. Work is ongoing to establish an effective and efficient stock control system. A more robust finance system will be rolled out for the financial year 19/20. We have made improvements to our online application form, providing a more efficient service for our customers, whilst still maintaining our phone enquiry line for those customers that prefer this.

New procedures have been developed regarding our commercial offering to customers, giving them the flexibility to choose the best support package to meet their needs.

Recruitment is currently underway, changing focus from an administrative role to an additional Careline Officer (*), to deliver an improved and responsive service to more customers.

Business development – The Team Leader is to take a lead on this, whilst coaching our officers to upskill in this area. As part of this, the team will endeavour to develop better partnership working with OT's/hospitals/GP's/community groups.

Conclusion

The service continues to perform well, generating a healthy surplus year on year. Whilst there are apparent opportunities for growth, the 5% target remains challenging to achieve, and this is also reflected in our historic data, and is mirrored by other providers of these services. However, our objective is to continue to grow the service, reaching more vulnerable residents across the borough, and the work that has been undertaken to streamline back office procedures, and changes in personnel, will improve our service delivery and enable the service to focus on the growth of our service more effectively.

Recommendation

It is recommended that the service continues to move forward on the progress it has made over the last year focussing on operating as efficiently as possible by embedding the changes to back office procedures and the implementation of the service using the Agresso database, excellent customer service, and business development.

Background Papers

There are no background papers (as defined by Section 100D(5) of the Local Government Act 1972) relating to this report.

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