COVID-19 TELECARE UPDATE

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This COVID-19 Telecare Update is produced by the Scottish Government TEC Programme, TEC in Housing and Digital Telecare for Scottish Local Government in response to the COVID-19 outbreak. The update aims to provide information on any issues that Telecare Services are currently facing and includes links to useful resources, publications and websites, and updates on national work to support Telecare Service continuity. If you have any questions relating to any of the content within this update or need further support, please get in touch.

We are also using Microsoft Teams as a collaboration space to share resources, information and advice, ask questions and discuss topics of interest relating to COVID-19. If you would like to join please register now.

We have recently launched Telecare Drop-In Sessions which are held fortnightly, providing support for telecare service continuity during COVID-19. Join our next online session on Thursday 14th May from 12.30 - 1.30pm, to hear more about Remote Working for Alarm Receiving Centres.

REGISTER HERE

Remote Working: Call Handling

During the COVID-19 outbreak, one of the recommendations from the National Telecare COVID-19 Advisory Group is that Partnerships consider whether remote working can help improve the resilience of telecare service delivery, both during the COVID-19 crisis, and in the longer term.

Remote working arrangements for Alarm Receiving Centres (ARCs) would allow call takers, and other staff involved in telecare delivery, to access the telecare solution even if they are unable to physically enter the Partnership's offices, therefore helping to keep services operational. A number of ARC solutions currently in use in Scotland can support remote working, however, the exact detail of how this is implemented will vary between Partnerships.

Benefits of remote working could include:

- Allowing call takers to continue to work if they are self-isolating (but are otherwise healthy);
- Reducing the number of staff that work from the office; simplifying social distancing arrangements and reducing the likelihood of staff being exposed to infection;
- Allowing Partnerships to use home-based workers for short periods to help cope with any call peaks;
- Allowing installation and response staff to update client records without having to access offices.

These arrangements can potentially assist Partnerships respond to the COVID situation, but if implemented will also deliver benefits in the longer term, including:

- Allowing call takers to work from home during business continuity events, such as severe weather, or evacuation of a primary ARC;
- Using home-based call takers to provide flexible resource, potentially for short periods, to assist with call peaks, staff absence / sickness, etc.
- Using home working to assist with flexible working and job satisfaction.

Remote Working Support for Partnerships

Digital Telecare for Scottish Local Government and the Scottish Government TEC Programme are offering support to Partnerships looking to implement remote working and are seeking expressions of interest from organisations that wish to take up this offer.

The support available includes:
- Specialist advice and best practice to assist Partnerships develop the technical, security and operational arrangements required to implement remote working;
- Technical and project management resource to assist Partnerships develop and implement remote working.

If you would like to benefit from this support, please **complete this form**.

Update: Alzheimer Scotland's Dementia Helpline

As the period of self-isolation for shielded and vulnerable groups continues, complying with 'stay at home measures' when supporting someone with dementia is a growing challenge. The impact of disruption to normal routines and connections, and the physical constraints of staying indoors, might have a profound effect on someone with dementia, possibly leading to feelings of loneliness, lethargy, stress, anxiety or depression.

In our last update we reported that work was underway between TEC and Alzheimer Scotland to explore the potential for Alarm Receiving Centres (ARCs) to, where appropriate, transfer calls to the specialist call handlers at the **24-hour Dementia Helpline**. Since then, a protocol for directing people to the Helpline has been developed by Stirling Telecare Service, and is currently being tested in Stirling and Falkirk. This new way of working will be reviewed by all partners towards the end of May, with a view to TEC sharing the findings and learning across the Telecare network. More information will follow in due course.

In addition to the helpline, **Alzheimer Scotland's online hub** hosts a range of podcasts and printable resources to support people at this time.

The Scottish Federation of Housing Associations (SFHA) is publishing regular COVID-19 briefings, which includes information on care and support. The briefings can be found here.

Telecare Drop-In Sessions

Telecare Drop-In Sessions with Digital Telecare and the TEC Programme are currently being held fortnightly, providing support for telecare service continuity during COVID-19. All resources from the sessions including recordings are available on the **Digital Telecare website**.

Learning from COVID-19

Since the start of the COVID-19 outbreak Telecare Service Providers across Scotland have taken unprecedented actions to ensure service continuity for the ongoing support of their service users. Our collective learning from implementing COVID-19 contingencies has huge potential to help planning for the next phase of the response, and inform future Telecare Service developments more generally.

As a first step in this process of reflection and learning, the TEC Programme will be asking Telecare Services to complete a survey which aims to capture changes in telecare practice across Scotland during the COVID-19 outbreak.

The survey will ask Services to briefly outline what they have been doing differently in response to COVID-19. The survey will cover different aspects of service delivery including managing new referrals, installations, maintenance, reviews, call handling and response visits. Your assistance in completing the survey would be greatly appreciated.

Proactive Outbound Calling

Outbound calling during the COVID-19 outbreak provides an opportunity to check on the wellbeing of service users, identify or anticipate support required and sign post or refer for assistance, when necessary. It also provides an opportunity to check telecare equipment is working and information held on service users is up to date.

A number of Telecare Services have increased outbound calling since shielding and self-isolation was introduced. This represents a shift from usual practice, with outbound calls on average representing 25% of telecare calls and typically being in response to an incoming call, or routine check calls.

The TEC Programme has been collating information on the approach Services have been taking to outbound calling in recent weeks. Seven Telecare Services in Scotland and one in England provided information. A report of the findings will shortly be available and will include an 'Outbound Calling Checklist'. At this early stage, with best practice or the impact of outbound calling not yet clear, this is not evidence-based guidance, but aims to support planning, decision-making and implementation for Services considering introducing outbound calling. Understanding the practicalities of outbound calling also has the potential to inform future Telecare Service developments, which focus on shifting to a more proactive approach to support service users.

TSA Support and Resources

A part of their COVID response, to support their members, the TEC Services Association (TSA) is running an Outreach Programme, which includes regular Telecare-related email alerts and updates. Alyson Scurfield, TSA's Chief Executive has offered to add non-members in Scotland to their circulation list for these communications.

Please contact the TEC programme at **NSS.TEC@nhs.net** if you would like us to pass your email address to TSA so you can receive information directly from them. Email addresses will only be forwarded with permission.

A range of resources to support Telecare Services during the COVID-19 outbreak are available on their website.

Preventing Telephone Scams

Since lockdown there has been a rapidly increasing variety of Coronavirus-related scams. For more information see Trading Standards.

Local Prevention Teams can provide a good source of support to your Telecare service users, but if your staff are making calls to service users you may wish to consider including a conversation about nuisance calls. The following information may be helpful:

- People can sign up to the Telephone Preference Service, for FREE either online or by calling 0345 070 0707;
- Many home phone providers offer services (some of which are free) to block unwanted calls e.g. BT's Call Protect, Talk Talk's Call Safe;
- Unwanted calls can be blocked using built-in call blocking features on home or mobile phones;
- There is a range of standalone devices that can be used to block/ monitor calls;
- For more information on potential solutions check out Which's article on How to block nuisance calls.
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When advising Telecare service users about any call blocking options it is important to ensure that they know to include their Telecare Service numbers in their "trusted" / safe" numbers.

Scottish Fire and Rescue Service Update

The Scottish Fire and Rescue Service is taking all necessary measures to minimise disruption to their emergency response during the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic and they have robust contingency plans in place to ensure they continue to respond to every emergency to protect Scotland's communities. They have set up dedicated pages on their website, giving the latest COVID-19 guidance and **safety advice** and there is a **Home Fire Safety Checklist** that can be downloaded.

Their full programme of Home Fire Safety Visit (HFSV) delivery has temporarily been suspended due to COVID-19. SFRS are however delivering HFSVs to a targeted selection of communities specified as being at Very High Risk as detailed below:

- Visit requests that indicate a risk of fire related crime;
- Rated as High Risk and over 50 and smoke; and who have one or more of the following criteria:
- Living alone;
- Long term health or mobility problems;
- Use of medical oxygen.

In the meantime and until suspension is over you can contact them for any future visits:
- Call 0800 0731 999;
- Text "FIRE" to 80800 from your mobile phone;
- Complete the **online form**.

As an alternative to HFSV, you can still contact SFRS for advice by filling in their online **general enquiry form** or by contacting your local fire station by telephone.

You can find the contact numbers for local stations in each service delivery here:

NORTH | WEST | EAST