

Dear

**Re: Potential changes to the current monitoring equipment in your home – Tunstall, Hereford control Centre and O K Each Day.**

The current hard wired system which comprises of your speech module and red pull cords (Tunstall) is coming to the end of its useful life. It is difficult and expensive to maintain. These systems have not been manufactured for many years and, although we still have support, the cost of maintaining them is rising. The cost to both source the materials for repair where still available, and maintain specialist Test Rigs are increasing rapidly. As a result, renewal of service contracts for existing equipment have seen a price rise of 15% and costs will only continue to rise.

In addition there are other considerations which I have listed below:

1. Residents are less accepting of units on the walls which can make properties look “institutionalised” and “unattractive”.
2. Pull cords are often tied up or cut off as they are not wanted.
3. False Alarms are generated when pulled by accident e.g. visitors/grandchildren.
4. Hard wired alarms only operate on a single telephone line – if faulty the whole scheme is not functional.

As technology improves, the changes in Telecom infrastructure are also necessitating reviews to explore approaches to improve and create efficiencies at the same time. A major investment to keep hard-wired alarm systems will be required due to the planned telecoms digital switchover in 2025 which may require us to review and increase your service charges.

There are many variations of a modernised monitoring system which will carry out the same functions however they do present the need for hard wiring throughout the building presenting a higher cost which will ultimately be reflected in your service charge. I have explored alternate approaches and have found Careline to be an excellent solution.

The benefits of Careline are:

- A more tailored service to individual need rather than a ‘one size fits all’ approach
- No red pull cords throughout your home.
- Hereford Control Centre will monitor the system – they currently monitor Sheltered Housing hard wire service
- You only pay for the service if you subscribe to it
- Site Officers can action any issue or fault with no external contract or financial outlay.
- If there is a fault it will only affect that property – at present if the hard wire telephone line goes down, the monitoring system goes down right across the scheme.

Careline is a national provider of Careline Alarms – they provide help and support by providing residents with a base unit and a pendant. The base unit is small and discreet and installed wherever they telephone socket it located. The base unit is also the vocal communication between the user and the monitoring team which is Hereford Control Centre who currently monitor our hard wire system. Careline can cater for up to five external devices to be programmed i.e. smoke detectors, movement sensors etc., this means should the user fall or activate the smoke detector it will send an automatic alert to the monitoring centre without the user having to press the button.

Following my investigations into alternative alarm systems, Careline is the system that I will be presenting for recommendation to Housing Committee in September 2019. It is robust and prepared for the Telecom digital upgrade. It is discreet and non-invasive whilst being easy to operate.

Careline is especially helpful for residents who are elderly, disabled or vulnerable as support is provided via a pendant which can be worn around the wrist or on a necklace. There are no cords to worry about and there is no hard wired system which have been known to fail – residents can feel safe in their home knowing that just one push of a button will request help or assistance as required and of course, you only pay for it if you subscribe to the service.

As stated, I will be presenting the recommendation for Tunstall to be replaced with Careline to Housing Committee in September 2019. I welcome your views and opinions on the service change recommendations, the consultation period closes 22 July 2019 and I will need all responses on or by this date: please contact me via email only at [tenant.consultation@stroud.gov.uk](mailto:tenant.consultation@stroud.gov.uk)

With regard to OK Each Day, there are currently 219 users across sheltered housing. This was rolled out as a pilot in 2013 as a free service to users however, as it is not financially sustainable to continue this service, further recommendations to remove OK Each Day from April 2020 will be presented. Options to subscribe as an independent user will still be available to you.

Tenancy Operations Manager Patricia Andrade will be accompanying me at the meeting to talk to you about the changes in your Tenancy Agreement. Again, should you have any questions, queries or concerns about the Tenancy Agreement please put them in writing to [tenant.consultation@stroud.gov.uk](mailto:tenant.consultation@stroud.gov.uk)

I have enclosed all Scheme Meetings across the district should you prefer to attend a different location.

If you are unable to attend any of the meetings, please contact me on 01453 754173 and I will make suitable arrangements to ensure you are included in the consultation.

I look forward to seeing you at the meeting.

Mrs Lynne Mansell  
Principal Sheltered Housing Officer