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SAFETY IN THE HOME

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Care Alarms

Special equipment and monitoring services can provide people with the ability to get help in an emergency at home. Such services are known by various titles – care alarms, personal alarms, community alarms, carelines – and are provided by a number of different organisations.

What are care alarms?

You might feel a care alarm would be useful if you or your family are concerned that you could be unwell and unable to reach the phone to ask for help. The alarm involves a button worn around the neck, on the wrist or on clothing, which you can press to call for help. It sends a signal through your phone line to telephone a pre-set number. In most systems, the call will go to a call centre or monitoring service which operates 24 hours a day to pick up the calls. The call centre operator will alert a chosen relative or friend who lives nearby or, if necessary, the emergency services. There are also systems which can be programmed to telephone a chosen relative or friend directly instead of going through a monitoring service.

What equipment is necessary?

A transmitter - a pendant or wristband with a button which transmits a signal when you press it.

A receiver - which can be part of a standard phone or additional to it. This plugs into the socket which connects your phone to the telephone system.

When you press the button on the transmitter, the receiver picks up the signal and automatically rings a monitoring service or a chosen relative or friend. If you are near the receiver you may be able to speak directly to the person who answers the signal.

What does a monitoring service do?

The monitoring service is like a call centre operating 24 hours a day to respond when you press the button on the care alarm. They will then call the relative or friend whose name and number you have given them as contact, or the emergency services as required. If they cannot talk to you, they will call the relative or friend directly so they can go to your home and find out what has happened. Most systems with a monitoring service require you to provide at least 2 contacts living within easy distance of your home so that they can reach you quickly.

How do you pay and how much do they cost?

With most systems that provide a monitoring service you rent the equipment and pay a monthly or annual fee for maintenance. The current cost varies with the type of contract but is around £200-250 for the first year, including a one-off set-up charge.

Telephones which can be programmed to call a relative or friend directly are usually for purchase with no maintenance service attached. Current costs are between £100 and £250.

SUPPLIERS

1. Care alarms with a monitoring service

- **Age UK Personal Alarm** **0800 011 3846**

Or visit the website <http://www.ageuk.org.uk/products/mobility-and-independence-at-home/personal-alarms/>

- Require at least 2 contacts living nearby
- Equipment ranging from personal alarms, personal alarm watch and taking care anywhere alarms which have GPS
- Monthly costs from £17-£27 per month

- **MEDeQUIP** **01900 606777**

Or visit the website <http://www.medequip-connect.com>

Call and quote CONNECT30 for 30% off your first 3 months.

Come with a free pendant with a range of up to 300m and a call button that links to a 24/7 Emergency Response Centre.

They offer GPS range of wearables that can be used anywhere for emergencies whilst outdoors, and an Emergency Responder Service, whereby a responder visits if a client is at risk from a medical emergency, fall or distress.

- at least 2 contacts living nearby required.

- **Community Alarms South Lakeland** **01539 735805**

Or visit the website <http://www.lakelandalarms.co.uk>

- 2 contacts living nearby required – key safe required
(Reconditioned equipment may be available to rent at lower cost)
- Cost £55.00 every 3 months, no installation cost – delivery in 2 days

- **Saga SOS** **New customers** **0808 068 5059**

Existing customers **0800 056 9196**

Or visit the website <http://www.saga.co.uk/care/Care-Services/SOS-Alarms-Service> .

- At least 1 contact living nearby required
- Cost £15.95 per month plus installation cost of £99 plus VAT if an engineer visit is required

- **The Royal British Legion/supplied through Careline 365**

01603 964306

Call 01603 964306 and quote AUSL45 for £45 off any alarm plan. Or visit the website <https://www.careline.co.uk>

- Alarm can be set up without any available contacts
 - Cost starts from £16.99 analogue - £19.99 digital
 - Free next day delivery
- Non-landline digital alarms with 600m range for the home or go anywhere GPS alarms.
 - Available through assessment by a Legion Care Worker for those on a low income who have had at least 7 days' paid service in the armed forces, including National Service.

- **LifeConnect24** **0800 030 8999**
Or Visit the website <https://www.lifeconnect24.co.uk/>

- At least 1 contact required
- Cost £12.99 per month plus installation cost of £65
- Next day delivery

An Alternative to Care Alarms

- **Doro Secure 580 Mobile Telephone**

Available through **Sight Advice South Lakeland** **01539 769055**
Or through the RNIB website www.rnib.org.uk/shop

It has a simple key layout with only four dedicated speed dial buttons for your outgoing calls so is simple to use. You can also receive incoming text messages.

On the back there is an emergency button, which once pressed will send a text message to your recipients as well as text your location and call the first number on your list.

- **Alertacall Ltd**

0808 163 0088

Or visit the website <http://www.okeachday.co.uk>

Telephone which has an OK Each Day Check service via a button on the phone. It does not provide a pendant, instead it offers to ensure that if you do not contact a monitoring team by a given time each day, you will receive a call offering support, and if they can't confirm your wellbeing then they will call your named contact.

Also operates a free reminder service to make sure you attend to important tasks such as taking medicine or attending appointments. Their team will call you with an automated reminder at a time you request.

Lifeline – Providing Extra Support

What is Lifeline?

Lifeline is a care alarm which provides a wider range of support. Using sensors placed in the home, it can detect things like fire and smoke, carbon monoxide, extremes of heat and bogus callers. It can also monitor where you are at home, giving information which can, for example, signal when you have had a fall and are unable to summon help.

Who is it for?

Adult Social Care provide this service for older people with long term conditions, especially those who are unable to deal with risks in the home, are increasingly frail and at risk of falling. Lifeline can offer people a safer environment giving them support at home and help in an emergency. Lifeline is also available to private clients who do not meet Adult Social Care's eligibility criteria.

How does it work?

A system of sensors, detectors, and buttons are set about the home in addition to the pendant and can be triggered by events in the home or directly by the resident. There is a 24 hour a day telephone link between the home and the Lifeline call-handling centre. All that is required is a telephone line and an electric power point.

How much will I pay?

Lifeline equipment, installation and monitoring may be provided free of charge if the client's needs are deemed critical or substantial by Adult Social Care. You may, however, be asked to contribute to the cost of monitoring. You may also take up Lifeline privately by phoning **01323 644422** Or visit www.welbeing.org.uk for more information.

How do I apply?

For more information or a free demonstration you can contact Lifeline directly on **01323 644422** or visit the website www.welbeing.org.uk Or by contacting

Adult Social Care

0300 303 2704

Fire Safety Checks

Every home in Cumbria is eligible to apply for a **free Home Safety Visit** to help them deal with any potential fire hazards in their homes.

They can help you design a fire plan so that you and your family will know how to react if you have a fire. They will also fit, where applicable, a battery powered smoke alarm free of charge.

This service for the residents of Cumbria is completely free, normally takes about 30 minutes and is undertaken by **Cumbria Fire and Rescue Service** personnel.

To arrange a visit please ring Freephone **0800 358 4777**

All Cumbria Fire and Rescue Service personnel carry an identification card. Never let anyone into your home unless you know them or they can prove their identity.

Home Security

The Handy Person Scheme* is available for elderly or vulnerable householders who are unable to undertake simple but essential tasks around their homes.

Contact Westmorland and Furness Council Housing Standards Team on 01539 733 333

**See page 9 for more information*

Trading Standards may be able to help with **doorstep traders** who may call unannounced at your home. If you have doubts about the credentials or practices of a doorstep seller, call:

Trading Standards 01539 713594

Falls Prevention

Falls in the home can be caused by problems with balance, eyesight, weak muscles and unstable joints, or the effects of medication such as antidepressants, sleeping pills and some heart tablets which can lead to dizziness. Whatever the cause, it is possible to reduce the risk of falling by taking some easy preventative measures. Some examples are listed here.

Action Plan to Prevent Falls In The Home

Take **regular exercise**, even if this is only a short walk, to keep muscles strong and joints supple.

Keep stairs and living areas **well lit**, use 100watt bulbs where appropriate. Keep a torch by the bed.

Keep stairs and walking areas **free of objects** which may be tripped over and keep flexes and cables away from walking areas.

Fit **handrails** on both sides of the stairs.

Use **non-slip rubber mats** in the bath/shower. Fit a handrail near the bath or toilet.

Avoid the use of **rugs**.

To **minimise bending and climbing** keep frequently used items on racks or in drawers at an easy level. Have a letter tray fitted on your letterbox.

Get up slowly from chairs and beds. Blood pressure falls as you get up and your body may take longer to adjust as you get older.

Avoid **poorly fitting shoes** or slippers and high heels.

Avoid **long or trailing clothes** which may trip you up.

Have regular **eye tests** to ensure your eyesight has not deteriorated.

Don't rush to get up to answer the phone or the door. It is a good idea to have a cordless or mobile phone which you can carry with you. Remember to keep it charged.

If prescribed **medication** is making you feel dizzy, keep taking it, but consult your GP.

VAT Exemption

If you are chronically sick or disabled, and can declare yourself as such, ask your supplier (if possible prior to any work starting) for a VAT Exemption Form.

Chronically ill means that you have an illness that is likely to last for a long time, such as arthritis. Disabled means a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long term effect on your ability to carry out normal activities.

To claim the VAT exemption, you will be required to complete a form which the supplier of the equipment and the person making the claim will need to sign. This declaration form is available to download here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/vat-reliefs-for-disabled-people-eligibility-declaration-by-a-disabled-person>

Alternatively, we would be happy to provide you with a printed copy of the form.

Handy Person Scheme

As mentioned above, Westmorland and Furness Council operates a Handy Person Scheme designed to help elderly or vulnerable people to carry out simple but essential work at their homes. The service is free but a charge is made for materials, unless the materials are provided by a partner agency which has agreed to cover the cost.

To be eligible you must be 65 or over, live in South Lakeland and be:

- Disabled, or
- Vulnerable, or
- Recently discharged from hospital, or
- At high risk of falling owing to a medical condition

Work is limited to 3 labour hours on site if one handy person attends (1.5 hours if 2 handy persons attend together.) Gardening and Decorating are not included in this service.

For further information, including about the types of work covered, contact the Westmorland and Furness Housing Standards Team on **01539 733 333**.