Did you know

- Milton Keynes Community Alarm Telecare Service is a 24 hour a day, 365 days a year service which provides support and reassurance to thousands of people who live in Milton Keynes and the surrounding areas.

- The Community Alarm Telecare Service is not only beneficial to older people, we have many service users who are younger or disabled who need the reassurance that help is close at hand.

- The Community Alarm Telecare Service has been established in the Milton Keynes area since 1987.

- That all Milton Keynes Council Sheltered Housing properties are connected to the Community Alarm Service.

Essential Checks

- **New Keys**
  Have you had your door locks replaced recently? If you have did you remember to replace the key in your key safe or if we hold a key for you provide us with a new key?

- **Testing your Alarm**
  We ask that our service users test their pendants once a month, have you tested yours recently? It is especially important to remind all our service users to regularly test their alarm pendants. This will help maintain your pendants battery life and will help to ensure that in an emergency your equipment is in working order and functioning correctly. Just press your pendant and when the operator speaks to you just tell them it’s a test call – they will be pleased to hear from you.

  **We need** to hold your most up to date contact information.

- **Contacts**
  Have any of the contacts that we hold for you changed? It is essential that you keep us informed about any changes to your contact details, including phone numbers for landlines and mobiles. This will assist us in delivering the best response and actions to your calls. If you are in any doubt about your contact details please call us on 01908 222616, we will be happy to check your information for you.

The Community Alarm is keen to promote its services. If you know of someone who may be interested or would like further information about the Community Alarm Service please ask them to call us on 01908 222616.

---

The leading food producer for the health and social care sector, providing delicious, nutritious hot lunch-time meals for people at home. If you would like more information please call us on 01908 217 254
Changes made as a result of service user feedback

Actions taken as a result of complaints or feedback from service users either directly or in response to our questionnaire over the last year were as follows:

- Staff were reminded of specific procedures and/or given one to one training in relation to specific comments or complaints.
- Where appropriate procedures were revised and reissued.
- Service user notes, contact details or medical history were amended in response to specific concerns raised by service users.

Dealing with your Calls

All calls to the Control Centre are recorded so in the event of a problem we are able to listen to the call again.

During August the Control Centre answered over 19,500 calls from service users.

98.9% of alarm calls were answered within 60 seconds, 99.9% within 3 minutes.

Of the 19,500 calls we received throughout August 2,592 were made up of the following services:

- 130 calls for Ambulances
- 22 calls for the Fire Brigade
- 3 calls for the Police
- 63 calls for Doctors
- 609 Reassurance calls
- And 1,602 Equipment Test calls
- A Mobile Warden was also dispatched on 163 occasions.

Actions/Outcomes

All complaints were dealt with within the Council’s agreed response time scales (typically within the first 24hrs). Where the complaint could not be responded to immediately a letter of acknowledgement was sent whilst a more detailed investigation took place. Only 5 formal complaints were received against 15 service compliments over the same period. Staff were provided feedback in each case.
Preparing for the colder months ahead

Winter weather can be severe and can quickly disrupt our daily lives. Being aware and better prepared can help us, our families and our communities to stay safe, warm and healthy throughout the winter months and can also help to minimise interruption in our everyday lives both at home, and when we are out and about. Doing one or two simple things now could help save you time and money. Preparation now can also help you stay healthy and avoid becoming unwell.

Top tips…

- Keep an eye on weather forecasts, particularly severe weather warnings from the Met Office.
- Stock up on basics in case you can’t get out of your home for a couple of days.
- Nominate a flu friend or neighbour who can collect essentials such as prescriptions on your behalf.
- Keep a list of emergency contacts by your phone and add local organisations and charities that support older people.
- Know where your stopcock is located.
- Make sure your pipes are adequately lagged and your roof properly insulated.

Stay Safe

- Don’t take any risks in snow or icy conditions. If you have to go out, make sure you wear shoes with a good grip.
- Keep torches, a battery-powered radio and spare batteries where they’re easy to find in the dark in case of power cuts.
- Make sure you’ve got at least one phone in the house that doesn’t rely on electricity to work and keep mobile phones charged up.

Stay Well

- Have your flu jab – book your appointment now if you haven’t already done so.
- Try to eat a balanced diet and eat small portions at regular intervals throughout the day.
- Drink plenty of fluids.
- If you can, get up and move around. If your mobility is more limited, do some chair exercises to help you stay warm and active?

Stay Warm

- If eligible, join the Priority Service Register of your energy supplier to ensure you receive support during prolonged power outages.
- Have a hot drink regularly and if you find moving about difficult, have a flask handy.
- Have your heating system checked every year and consider installing thermostatic valves on radiators in the rooms you use the most.
- Ask about any benefits, grants and discounts you might be entitled to such as pension credits, winter fuel payments and insulation.
- Wear warm clothes in layers and put on a woolly hat.

Stay in touch

- Make sure you know how to contact your neighbours by phone – it’s easy to lose touch in the winter months when people aren’t out and about as much.
- Continue to go to your social activities with friends or at the local community centre. If you can’t get out for any reason, call them to let them know and ask to keep in touch by phone.
**Winter Fuel Payment**

You could get between £100 and £300 tax-free to help pay your winter heating bills if you were born on or before 5 August 1953. This is known as a ‘Winter Fuel Payment’.

Most payments are made automatically between November and December. You should get your money by Christmas.

**You’ll qualify for Winter Fuel Payment if:**
- you were born on or before 5 August 1953
- you will be living in the UK throughout the week of 18 to 24 September 2017 (the qualifying week)

This is a yearly tax-free payment to help people pay for their heating in the winter. Getting the Winter Fuel Payment will not affect any other benefits you may get and is different to Cold Weather Payments which you may get for each week of very cold weather in your area. Most payments are made automatically between November and December. You should get your money by Christmas. You usually get a Winter Fuel Payment automatically if you get the State Pension or another social security benefit (not Housing Benefit, Council Tax Reduction, Child Benefit or Universal Credit). How much you get depends on your circumstances during the qualifying week.

**If you’ve claimed before:**

You should get your Winter Fuel Payment automatically from the organisation that pays your benefits. Contact them if you have any questions or there’s a change in your circumstances. You can find their details on any letters they’ve sent you.

If you’re eligible but don’t get paid automatically, you’ll need to make a claim.

You have until 31 March 2018 to claim for winter 2017 to 2018

For further information please visit the website: [https://www.gov.uk/winter-fuel-payment](https://www.gov.uk/winter-fuel-payment)

---

**Direct Debits**

Direct debits now play a major part in every adult’s life, many people use them each month or quarter to pay their household bills and to take away the worry of having to remember to make a payment on time. If you would like to pay your alarm charges by Direct Debit. Please complete the direct debit form on page 10 of this newsletter and post to:-

**Direct Debit - Community Alarm Telecare Service**

4 Woodhouse Court, 
Soskin Drive, 
Stantonbury Fields, 
Milton Keynes, 
MK14 6DQ

If you receive one of the means tested benefits listed below please let us know:
- Housing Benefit
- Income related support component of employment support allowance (this includes incapacity benefit and income support)
- Pension Credit Guarantee Credit

For your information Age UK offer a free benefits service to the over 65s
Recent Case Studies

The Community Alarm Telecare Service helps to support service users at home, this includes the use of some intelligent ‘telecare’ equipment to help manage risks that they may present within the home environment.

The number of referrals for community alarm/telecare equipment to support people returning home from a spell in hospital have increased significantly in the last year. These referrals are important and are a reflection of the service being a part of the support network required to promote safe discharge home from hospital.

The definition of telecare, also known as assistive technology, is ‘any product or service that maintains or improves the ability of individuals with disabilities or impairments to communicate, learn and live independent, fulfilling and productive lives’.

Managing the risks of dementia

‘William’ who had a diagnosis of dementia was referred to the Community Alarm Telecare Service by a family member who was very concerned about his safety at home he had also started to leave his home, at inappropriate times of the night. The family lived close by and were extremely supportive but it was becoming very difficult for them to maintain the level of support William needed particularly as they were have disturbed nights due to being contacted by the police when William was being returned home when found out and about in the local area at night.

After an assessment was carried out it was agreed that an alarm would be installed as well as two door exit sensors on the front and back doors, two smoke detectors and as William would not wear a pendant to call for help if he fell inactivity monitoring sensors were also installed. The door exit sensors were set to monitor if either of the exit doors were opened during the night. The family had agreed to be the first responders with the backup of the mobile warden service should they be unavailable. If William did leave the home and was not found in the vicinity then the police would be informed.

Very quickly it became evident that William was intent on leaving the property both at night and in the early morning hours of the morning. He had been found on a number of occasions at various locations in the local area. Despite the time of night William had started to become increasingly reluctant to return home. This was midwinter and therefore it was very cold at night.

Eventually the situation with the family and the mobile wardens having to constantly respond to the sensors activating became unsustainable and for his own safety a decision was made to move William into a care home. The family were very complimentary regarding the Service stating that the sensors installed had highlighted how vulnerable William was and that they had to make the difficult decision to move William into a care home where they knew he would be safe and that his care needs would be met. The family also thanked the Service for the dedication and compassion shown to not just William but also to the family.

www.milton-keynes.gov.uk/community-alarm
Managing the risk of falls

‘Violet’ was referred for telecare to support her discharge home from hospital where she had been since having a fall at home. Violet was 86 when she was referred, she lived alone with the support of carers who visited her several times a day. Although Violet’s family were supportive they did not live in the local area. The primary reason for referral was due to concerns about Violet’s poor mobility.

In order to ensure a prompt discharge home from hospital telecare equipment which included a bed sensor, fall detector and a smoke alarm were installed prior to her returning home. During the twelve months the equipment was installed the Service was alerted many times and when the mobile warden attended Violet was often found on the floor, she was also found on several occasions holding on to furniture midway to a fall. During this time Violet had also started to become quite confused but despite the frequency of falls she did not have a further stay in hospital. In the summer due to her increasing frailty and poor memory Violet went for a short spell to respite care. It was during this time that a decision was made for her to move into a care home. The family felt that Violet had been able to remain in her home for as long as it was safe to do so.

Compliments

Recent feedback from a relative

‘Mum was very happy in her own home, thank you to all of the team for making that happen. Mum would not have been able to stay at home without the equipment’

Recent feedback from a relative

‘When mum fell we were alerted by you and reassured mum was talking and conscious. Although mum died 5 days later in hospital without the alarm (which was only used once) she could have lain on the floor all night alone and been frightened. Your system is worth its weight in gold’

Other services you may be interested in

Homecare Laundry Service

Collected from and delivered to your door 10lbs of washing and ironing for just £10.25. More than one bag of washing can be sent each week. We are also able to wash and dry duvets, quilts and larger items as long as they are machine washable. If you are interested please ring MK (01908) 252671.

Telecare installations

Telecare installations have further risen to 792 connections; these are service users who benefit from the added support and independence offered by the use of additional sensors or triggers with the standard alarm unit. Our Service aim is to continue to deliver a high quality, outcome driven service to all of our service users.

The Community Alarm

Telecare Service is keen to promote its services. If you know of someone who may be interested or would like further information about our Service please ask them to call us on MK (01908) 222616.
We welcome feedback from our service users and family members. If you would like to complete a feedback form please see below:

---

**Community Alarm & Telecare Service User Feedback**

Dear service user, we would really appreciate it if you would take a few minutes to give us your comments, ideas, and views on the services we provide to you.

1. **Do you feel you receive a quality service?**  
   Comments: 

2. **Does our speed of response meet your expectations?**  
   Comments: 

3. **Are the staff you meet or speak to polite and helpful?**  
   Comments: 

4. **Do you feel the service provided is good value?**  
   Comments: 

All forms are treated anonymously. Thank you

Signature: .............................................................................................................. DATE ..............................................................

**Please return your completed forms to:**
Milton Keynes Community Alarm Telecare Service  
4 Woodhouse Court, Stantonbury Fields, MK14 6GB
And finally..... although a little early all the staff at the Community Alarm Telecare Service would like to wish you a very merry Christmas and a healthy and happy new year.