Information NOW
Information for people in Newcastle upon Tyne

Telecare, telehealth and personal alarm systems

Telecare and telehealth can help you to stay living independently at home for longer. Also known as personal alarm systems, home care monitoring, careline systems, community alarms or pendant alarms.

‘Tele’ means at a distance. So Telecare is the use of technology to provide care at a distance. You can use telecare and gadgets to manage your own health (self care) and remind you to do things like take medication. There are also personal alarms, where you push a button on a pendant or wristband to raise an alarm if you’ve had a fall.

Telecare can your give carers peace of mind that you have help when they’re not there.

You may already be using some technology such as a mobile phone, that can be used to help keep you safe and well.

Support and equipment available

24 hour response centre and mobile wardens

A special alarm unit can be installed in your home, which can automatically connect to a 24-hour response centre.

When the alarm is activated, for example, if you fall, become unwell or feel unsafe, the 24 hour response centre is alerted. A member of the team will contact you straightaway to check you are ok. If you need help, a response officer will travel to your home to help you.

When you press the alarm, an operator in the response centre can speak to you through your alarm unit and give you advice, or contact your family, a doctor or the emergency services.

You can also wear a pendant or wristband round your home, which acts like a portable alarm button.

Telecare equipment available

Telecare equipment can be personalised and programmed to fit in with your normal patterns, such as how often you usually get out of bed during the night. All you need for the equipment to work is a phone socket that has an electric plug socket nearby.

Monitoring your day to day activity can help reassure you and your carers that you are safe and well or tell you if there's a problem or change in your behaviour or health. For example, if you're going to the toilet more than usual, you may have a urine infection. Or in an emergency situation when you need help straight away.

There's a huge range of technology available to help you at home and when you're out and about. This includes:

Activity monitoring or remote monitoring: uses sensors to monitor your activity during the day and night. This can be your liquid or food intake movement, door opening, temperature and electricity use.

Bed sensor: uses a pressure pad sensor to send an alert if you are out of bed for an unusual amount of time, don't get into or out of bed. It can monitor the whole bed, one side of the bed, or the whole room. It can automatically switch a lamp on or off to help prevent trips and falls.

Carer alert: used by your carer or warden to monitor alerts from the telecare devices in your home

Door sensor: sends an alert if your door is opened at unexpected times. Your carer, family or friends are contacted immediately.

Fall detector: calls the response centre if you fall and are unable to get up again. Includes a pendant button to press to call the control centre.

Flood detector: calls the response centre when water is detected. This may be because a tap has been left on. You and your carers can be informed straight away.

Location or GPS (Global Positioning System) devices: help people with memory problems stay in a 'safe area', to enable you to continue to live independently. GPS devices can be worn or carried when out and about. For example: keyring, insoles inside shoes, watch, pendant or downloaded to your phone. Family members or carers are alerted if you go outside your safe area.

Hydration reminders: to prompt you to drink water. A cup sits on a base which lights up to remind you to have a drink. Your carer or family member can record a message to remind you to take a drink.

Key safe: securely stores a spare key outside your home. Mobile wardens, the ambulance service or people you give the code to can access your home in an emergency.

Motion activated devices: a simple speaker or a tablet device where a family member, or carer can record messages which plays when you move past the device. For example if you move past before 7am in the morning it can remind you that it's too early to leave the house, or to make sure the door is locked.

Pendant alarm: a button you wear on your wrist or round your neck. You press it to call for help if you are unwell or have fallen.

Pill dispenser: reminds you to take medication at the correct times. The reminder can be visual or audio. It alerts the response centre if your medication is not tipped out.

Sensory impairment technology: lights, vibration and sound can be used to alert you when the doorbell or phone rings, to take medication, when the door opens or in an emergency For example a vibration pad under your pillow to wake you during the night if the fire alarm goes off. A flashing beacon uses a bright coloured (red, orange, yellow or green) light to tell you that something has happened.

Smart devices: can control things around your home for example the heating, lights, curtains, kettle or door locks. You or your carer can buy smart items and download an app to your phone or tablet. This allows you to turn things on and off without having to get up, by using your voice or at set times.

Telecare services in Newcastle

Ostara provide telecare and alarm equipment to help you live safely at home. They have a range of equipment from simple alarm buttons to flood detectors, pill dispensers and door opening sensors that are connected to a 24 hour response centre.

Anyone living in Newcastle (and some surrounding areas) can join the service, regardless of the type of accommodation you live in or who owns your home.

Ostara offer 2 services depending on the level of support you might need. Contact them to find out which service suits your needs and costs.

- **Ostara respond** includes the basic care alarm, 24hr warden and 6 week check.
- **Ostara Flex** includes medication reminders, fall sensors, unlimited telecare (after an assessment), holiday support calls and dementia support

Visit **Ostara.org.uk** to find out more or to book a free consultation. You don't always need a phone line and could link to a SIM card.

Ostara works with the **North East Ambulance Service (NEAS)** to help people who have fallen and are not injured.

TSA (Technology Enabled Care Services Association) have a searchable directory of telecare and telehealth services on their website. You can find local and national services that are registered members of TSA and may meet their quality standards and code of practice.

Just Checking use a telecare system with sensors and alerts called Just Roaming in some of Newcastle City Council's learning disability properties.

GrandCare offer a package to support wellbeing and independence, with instant video calling from anywhere to instant messages. The system enables activity monitoring and medical compliance.

Anchor Housing independent living schemes have a telecare system called Anchorcall.

Careline365 offer personal and pendant alarms for people at risk of falling. You can also include a Fall Detector plan in your package. This is a paid for service. They have different monthly plans available.

Telecare is a monitoring service that offers remote support to older, disabled and vulnerable people who live alone in their own homes. This is a paid for service. They have different monthly plans available.

Support for carers

Telecare can help give carers reassurance that the person you care for is safe and well. Knowing that you will be alerted if there's a problem can help give you time for yourself, to have a break and look after yourself.

Looking after someone who couldn't manage without your help, means you're a carer. Support is available in Newcastle to help you take care of yourself too.

Newcastle Carers give information, advice and support to carers. They run support groups, counselling, training, events and activities. They can help you to apply for benefits and grants and to prepare to return to work.

Carers Emergency Contact Scheme from British Red Cross is a free service, so the person you care for can be looked after if you have a personal crisis such as, an illness, accident or emergency. Your plan is kept safe and available in an emergency.

Paying for your care and support

Having technology in your home to help you can benefit your health and wellbeing long term. There is a cost for purchasing and running this kind of equipment. Many devices use **electricity** and **the internet.** If you are worried about the **cost of living** you can read more about local support on InformationNOW.

As your care needs change you can speak to **Adult Social Care at Newcastle City Council.** They can talk to you about your needs and signpost you to local support. They can carry out a financial assessment to find out if you are eligible for support from the council to pay towards **your care and support.**

Equipment, aids and home adaptations

Equipment is available to help you manage at home better and to get out and about. You can get advice from local services to find the right equipment for you. For example, a perching stool to help you prepare food, tap turners or stairlifts.

You can buy, borrow or hire equipment. There may be some charities who can help you buy equipment too.

Speak to Adult Social Care at Newcastle City Council for more information about equipment and to see if you are eligible for help from the council.

Read more on InformationNOW about:

- **equipment, aids and home adaptations**
- **paying for adaptations to your home**

Digital switchover for telecare, telehealth and personal alarms

The UK's telephone network is changing. It is being upgraded and improved by 2025. Telephone providers are moving customers from old analogue landlines to a new digital landline service. Services that use the old landline system such as, home phones and healthcare devices will be switched over to the new digital system.

People who use telecare devices that are connected to a phone line, such as a fall monitor, lifeline, or personal alarm. When you speak to your telephone provider tell them about the telecare service that you use. They can give you more advice about how the switch could affect you.

Ostara provides telecare in Newcastle. For new customers, they now only new install digital base units. For existing customers, they will contact you to swap your old analogue equipment and replace it with new digital equipment. The new digital units have a 72-hour battery back-up and a 4G roaming sim. This means your phone can still be used if there is a power cut or problems with the landline, so you can get help in an emergency. This process is being managed by Newcastle City Council. It is planned that by March 2025 the telecare service will be fully digital. This is well in advance of the switch off date.

The Housing Plus schemes (Sheltered and Assisted Living) are being upgraded to ensure they can operate when the landline networks are switched off.

If you have other devices connected to your telephone landline, such as alarm systems, you might need to upgrade your device to make sure it is compatible. You can contact the equipment supplier or device manufacturer to find out if it will still work when you switch to the new digital phone line.

Read more about moving landline phones to digital technology: what you need to know from Ofcom

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Other useful information

Introducing telecare factsheet from The Disabled Living Foundation

Scope provide information and support to disabled people, families and carers. They have a free disability telephone helpline. They can answer questions and talk you through a wide range of topics connected with disability, such as: equipment and assistive technology, benefits and social care.

Last updated: April 11, 2025

Useful Organisations

Ostara

Email: ostara@newcastle.gov.uk

Website: https://ostara.newcastle.gov.uk/ostara-help-touch-button

Telephone: 0191 278 7878

Address: Ostara, NE7 7LX

Newcastle Council Housing Services

Email: council.housing@newcastle.gov.uk

Website: https://new.newcastle.gov.uk/housing/council-housing/

Telephone: 0191 278 7878

Address: Newcastle City Council, NE7 7LX

Age UK England

Email: contact@ageuk.org.uk

Website: www.ageuk.org.uk

Telephone: 0800 678 1602

Address: Age UK, EC3N 2LB

Anchor

Website: https://www.anchor.org.uk/

Telephone: 0800 731 2020

GrandCare

Email: info@grandcare.co.uk

Website: https://www.grandcare.co.uk/

Telephone: 0161 241 1777

Address: 18 Edward Court , WA14 5GL

LifeConnect24 Personal Alarms

Email: info@lifeconnect24.co.uk

Website: https://www.lifeconnect24.co.uk

Telephone: 0800 999 0400

Address: 40 Barnard Road, NR5 9JB

Careline365

Email: info@careline.co.uk

Website: https://www.careline.co.uk/

Telephone: 0800 101 3333

Address: Careline 365, SG5 1EH

SureSafe Personal Alarms

Email: info@personalalarms.org

Website: www.personalalarms.org

Telephone: 0800 112 3201

Address: Anfield Business Centre, L6 5DR

Just Checking

Website: https://justchecking.co.uk/

Telephone: 01564 785 100

Address: The Mill, B94 5RB

Telecare Choice

Email: support@telecarechoice.co.uk

Website: https://www.telecarechoice.co.uk

Telephone: 0800 635 7000

Address: Hayfield House, NR20 5BU

Living Made Easy

Website: https://livingmadeeasy.org.uk/

Address: Living Made Easy – Shaw Trust, B69 2D6

Newcastle Carers

Email: info@newcastlecarers.org.uk

Website: www.newcastlecarers.org.uk

Telephone: 0191 275 5060

Address: 135-139 Shields Road, NE6 1DN

Carers Emergency Contact Scheme Newcastle

Email: Carerscard_Northeast@redcross.org.uk

Telephone: 0191 273 7961

Address: British Red Cross, NE4 8SR

TSA (Technology Enabled Care (TEC) Services Association)

Website: https://www.tsa-voice.org.uk/find-tec-services/

Address: TEC Services Association , SK9 5AG

Scope

Email: helpline@scope.org.uk

Website: https://www.scope.org.uk/

Address: Here East Press Centre, E15 2GW

Related Articles

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