



Report of the Cabinet Member for Care, Health and Ageing Well

Adult Services Scrutiny Panel – Tuesday 19th November 2019

Assistive Technology Commissioning Review

Purpose	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To provide a briefing requested by the Board about the project and the revised timescale and scope of the project
Content	<p>This report is giving a</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Background and context of the Assistive Technology review • A brief outline of Assistive technology and Community Alarms including costs and numbers of current users. • Overview, of the development of the options appraisal • Project activities to date • Risks and issues • Next steps
Councillors are being asked to	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Endorse the proposals
Lead Councillor(s)	Cllr Mark Child, Cabinet Member for Care, Health and Ageing Well
Lead Officer(s)	Interim Head of Service Adult Social Care Deb Reed
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Assistive Technology Commissioning Review

1. Background and Context

A report was drafted in 2018 outlining high level opportunities for Assistive Technology and Community Alarms going forward and highlighted the requirement of an Assistive Technology strategy for Swansea Council. In March 2019 a mini-commissioning review of Community Alarms commenced.

A separate commissioning review is being undertaken in Housing which includes provision of call monitoring and alarms. Housing are stakeholders within the Assistive Technology (and Community Alarms) review as there are a number of community alarms that provide a service to sheltered accommodation.

2. Assistive Technology & Community Alarms

As part of Swansea Council's Assistive Technology service, a number of users benefit from an array of sensors connected electronically to a lifeline unit and monitoring other events, such as smoke detection, extreme heat, falls, door access and exit, movement etc. These services are available to individuals following an assessment. It has been acknowledged that the development of the commissioning review of Assistive Technology will be dependent on Community Alarms as currently, the income from Community Alarms provides the funding for wider Assistive Technology.

The Community Alarm service consists of the provision of a special 'lifeline' telephone unit which connects to an existing telephone line and wearable pendant/wrist band which is connected to a 24-hour call monitoring centre. While the wider Assistive Technology services are not currently charged for, there is currently an annual fee irrespective of personal circumstances for Community Alarms. The fee for 19/20 is currently set at £172.22 per year (£143.53 plus VAT £28.70). In addition, the Service makes an annual charge for lifelines installed in Swansea Council Housing Service properties (Sheltered Housing).

The Community Alarms service has been provided by Swansea Council for over 30 years. Swansea currently provides the Community Alarms Service including Assistive Technology via Social Services to 4,665 users on the database (figure correct on 6.11.19). These figures can be broken down, approximately, to:

- Community Alarms in people's homes – 2809
- Community Alarms in Sheltered Housing – 1358
- Wider Assistive Technology - 498

3. Development of Options Appraisal

This commissioning review will follow the Swansea Council corporate commissioning cycle resulting in the development of an Options Appraisal recommending a preferred option with the intention to implement the option, if the recommended direction of travel of the service is agreed. Therefore, information relating to the Service Assessment is being gathered in order to offer a current position e.g. on budget, staffing, service use, performance information etc. Also following the corporate process, research has been and is being undertaken on other Local Authority's approaches to Assistive Technology and Community Alarms as well as the use of technology potentially across the UK/the world as part of the comparisons section of the Options Appraisal.

A key feature of the Options Appraisal, and linked to taking an agreed co-productive approach, will be including staff, wider stakeholders and service users when developing the options for Assistive Technology for the future. To this end, a Stakeholder Workshop with a wide range of staff within the Council as well as the Health Board and the Third Sector was arranged for 1st October 2019. Further, service satisfaction questionnaires have been developed for service users and carers to feedback their views regarding Assistive Technology and Community Alarms. These should be distributed in November 2019. A further stakeholder event will be organised for service users and carers to input to the options and a final stakeholder workshop is planned to present the final options back to stakeholders and agree the preferred option, as a collective.

Initial meetings have also been held to work up the possible options, particularly the possibility and opportunity of developing a regional service with NPTCBC who are also reviewing their current Assistive Technology service.

4. Project Activities

A monthly Project Board was established in May 2019 to monitor progress for the commissioning review. This Project Board involves key SMEs from the Assistive Technology/ Community Alarms service including finance along with Housing and Project Management representation.

The original Project Brief was agreed and signed off by the Project Board during May 2019. In July 2019, the scope of the commissioning review was updated to focus on Assistive Technology with the dependency on Community Alarms acknowledged.

Project Documentation has been prepared including a Project Brief, Action Log, Stakeholder Map, Communication Plan, Risk & Issue Tracker, Equality Impact Assessment Screening Form and these are monitored on a monthly basis to ensure the project and development of the Options Appraisal is on track.

A project timeline has been developed with key SMEs within the project. The original timescale for completion of the Options Appraisal was October/November 2019. However, due to the change of scope and the focus on wider Assistive Technology, timescale for completion was reviewed in July 2019. The milestones for completion of the project are currently:

- Work on the Service Assessment for Assistive Technology will commence in August 2019 and will be complete by the end of January 2020
- Comparisons for Assistive Technology with services from different areas will commence in August 2019 and will be complete by the end of January 2020
- Options Appraisal / Gateway 2 Report for Community Alarms will be complete by the end of April 2020.
- Co-production and Stakeholder Engagement for Community Alarms will take place throughout the duration of the project

5. Risks and Issues

Risk/ Issue	Detail
Issue	It will be difficult to co-produce the Options Appraisal due to the client group that use Assistive Technology and Community Alarms.
Risk	The digital switchover from analogue to digital phone lines needs to be complete by 2025 (when analogue phone lines are being switched off). There is no clarity yet what this will mean for wider Assistive Technology and Community Alarms. There is the potential risk that there will be a significant financial impact on Assistive Technology and Community Alarms e.g. for equipment, staff time, labour etc. to replace pendants that no longer work after the digital switchover.
Risk	The contract with Delta Wellbeing (part of Carmarthenshire Council) that provides the call monitoring service to Assistive Technology and Community Alarms users in Swansea expires 31st December 2020.
Risk	Housing are undertaking their own Commissioning Review which will encompass hard wired Community Alarms in sheltered housing accommodation and consists of circa 28% of the total Community Alarms usage by Swansea Council. If Housing decide to remove the hard wired Community Alarms from sheltered housing this would result in a significant decrease in income for the service. However, this Commissioning Review will not begin until 2020.
Issue	There is a savings target of £11,000 attached to Assistive Technology/Community Alarms for financial year 19/20. The budget for Assistive Technology and Community Alarms has been combined to reflect that income from Community Alarms funds the Assistive Technology service. Reviewing the budgets together, while Community Alarms generates enough income to ensure the service is cost neutral to Swansea Council, there is a projected shortfall in the budget of £46k for 19/20 when including Assistive Technology costs. When taking into account the savings target for 19/20, shortfall for this financial year is approximately £55k

	(estimated based on projected income for remainder of the financial year).
Risk	Since the Community Alarms prices increased in April 2019, there has been a 9% reduction of users. There is a risk that if we continue to increase prices/include additional charges there could be a further decrease thus reducing our overall income despite price increases.

6. Next Steps

The development of the Service Assessment, consolidating all feedback from the Stakeholder Workshop on 1st October to inform future options and undertaking comparisons on alternative models to Assistive Technology will be completed before a number of options are agreed. Further workshops (including to engage with service users and family members) to discuss the options and potentially score these different options before recommending a preferred way forward will be undertaken.