



Report to: Cabinet Meeting: 10 June 2025
 Portfolio Holder: Councillor Lee Brazier, Housing
 Director Lead: Suzanne Shead, Director - Housing, Health & Wellbeing
 Lead Officer: Ian Jackson, Careline Team Leader, Ext. 5233

Report Summary	
Type of Report	Open report / non-key decision
Report Title	Careline Service
Purpose of Report	To share with Cabinet the success of the Careline service. To provide insight into the vision for the future provision of the Careline Service and how it could be marketed.
Recommendations	That Cabinet: a) note the successes to date and the income generated from the Careline Service; and b) approve proposed budget for marketing of 10% of the income generated in year 24/25.
Alternative Options Considered	Standing still is an option, but continued business growth and external recognition of excellent, consistent service delivery places the Council in a good starting position through the optics of Local Government Reform.
Reason for Recommendations	To support the continued business growth and promotion of the Careline Service aligns with the Community Plan ambition 7 “Be a top performing, modern, accessible Council that get its everyday services right for the residents and businesses that it serves”.

1.0 Background

1.1 The Careline service, run by the Council, offers customers the ability to call for assistance 24 hours a day, 365 days a year by simply pressing a button. As part of the service offering, the Careline installers visit and install a Careline. Careline Advisors, based in two of our Housing with Care schemes respond to any calls. When the alarm is activated the Careline Advisor will take the most appropriate action based on the information provided at that time and any known information about the user.

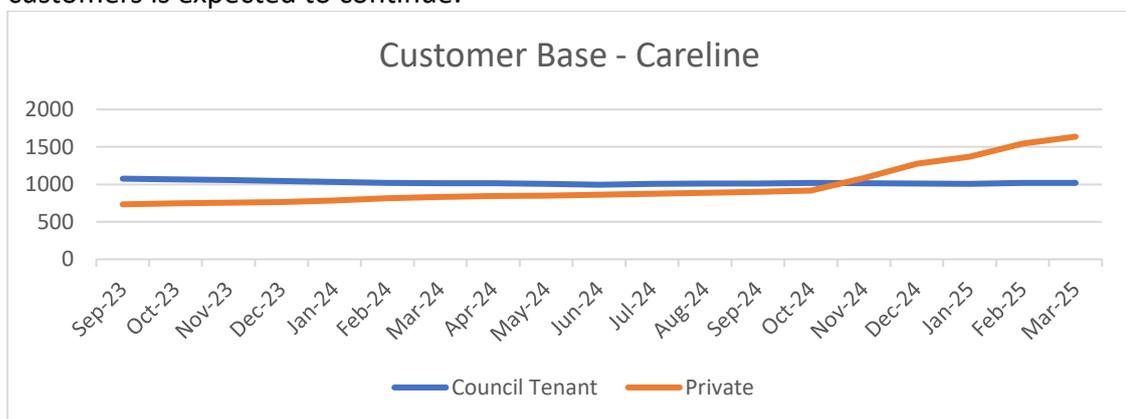
- 1.2 The Careline provides the service to both Tenant and Private users. Over the last two years, this has expanded across the Newark & Sherwood borders to include Ashfield, Bassetlaw, Gedling and Mansfield bringing in valuable income to the Council and providing a necessary service to allow those residents to continue to live independently in their own homes.
- 1.3 As advised by the Technology Services Association (TSA), the number of Alarm Receiving Centres (ARCs) has reduced in the UK. In 2020 there were just over 200 ARCs, this reduced to 170 in 2023 and then a constant decline to where we stand now with 156. This trend is likely to continue to fall given the up-front cost of the analogue to digital switchover. However, this is a vital service to many people and something that presents a great opportunity for the Council to not only support our tenants and residents but also to provide increased income.
- 1.4 In terms of Marketing, there has been no proactive marketing undertaken for the Careline Service. Those who take up the service hear about it through word of mouth.

2.0 Statistics

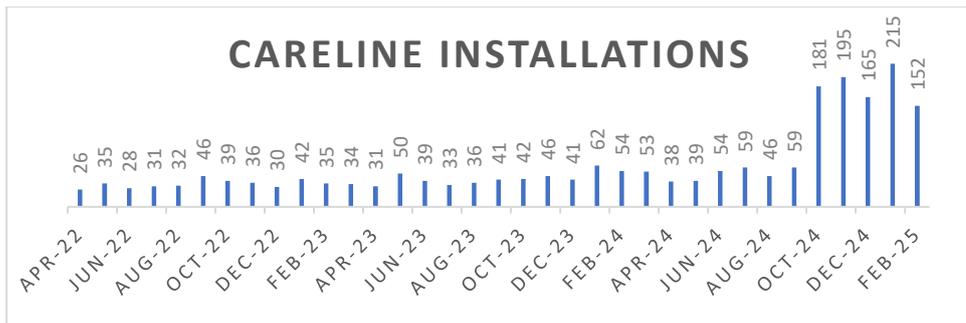
- 2.1 The graph below shows the number of customers signed up to the careline service and what type of customer they are (council tenant or private customer).

The private sector has seen an increase of 123% since September 2023 which means this revenue stream has more than doubled in this period. This is an increase from 733 to 1637 private customers.

With the expansion into the neighbouring districts, the trend for the increase in private customers is expected to continue.



- 2.2 In 2023 residents in our neighbouring districts were contacting us advising that they were struggling to access the service in their local area. This opened the exploration into the possibility of expansion and realisation that there was a gap in the market. Since July 2023 we have installed 595 carelines in neighbouring districts.
- 2.3 The graph below shows the impact of the recent Mansfield project. The Mansfield project was the acquisition of the private careline customers from Mansfield District Council as approved previously.



2.4 Even with the increase in volume of customers and calls, the call response times have still exceeded the measures of excellence set out by the TSA; consistently hitting almost 99% calls responded to within 60 seconds. The industry standard for calls being answered within 60 seconds is 97.5%.

3.0 Income Generation - Private Sector

3.1 The careline service has generated income from the private sector above what was forecast for this financial year even after the amendments for the Mansfield project.

Original Expected Income for rental and monitoring 24/25 - £219,450

Amended Expected Income for rental and monitoring 24/25 - £284,490

Actual Income for rental and monitoring (as at 24th March) - **£353,360.40**

Costs for the year are estimated to be £210,000 for 2024/25, providing an income of **£143,360.40**

This income, from the acquisition of the Mansfield scheme, could be matched again with appropriate marketing of the service, an incredibly exciting opportunity.

4.0 Proposal / Details of Options Considered

4.1 Based on our successes, our ambitious and forward-thinking vision for the future is to be the largest provider of choice in the County whilst delivering excellent Careline Services. To continue to be commercial and business like to increase income to the General Fund from the private sector take up.

4.2 Understanding that local Government Reform is around the corner, it would be beneficial to have a fully branded, well marketed and growing service which could continue to serve tenants and residents across the whole County. We are hoping to work with colleagues in our marketing and comms team on a marketing plan for the Careline service. Please see section 5 and section 9.

4.3 Data is essential for us to be able to demonstrate the impact that the Careline service delivers for our tenants and residents of both Newark and Sherwood and our neighbouring districts in which we now operate. Customer and Stakeholder engagement alongside this data will enable an informed service offer to be developed that is relevant and aligned with our Community Plan to serve people and improve lives, making a positive difference to those tenants and residents who receive our Careline service.

4.4 In our completion of analogue to digital switchover, the Council is already ahead of most neighbouring districts, having already installed over 50% or 1683 digital dispersed units, completion is on target to be completed by August 2025 and funding is already approved to achieve this project.

5.0 **Marketing**

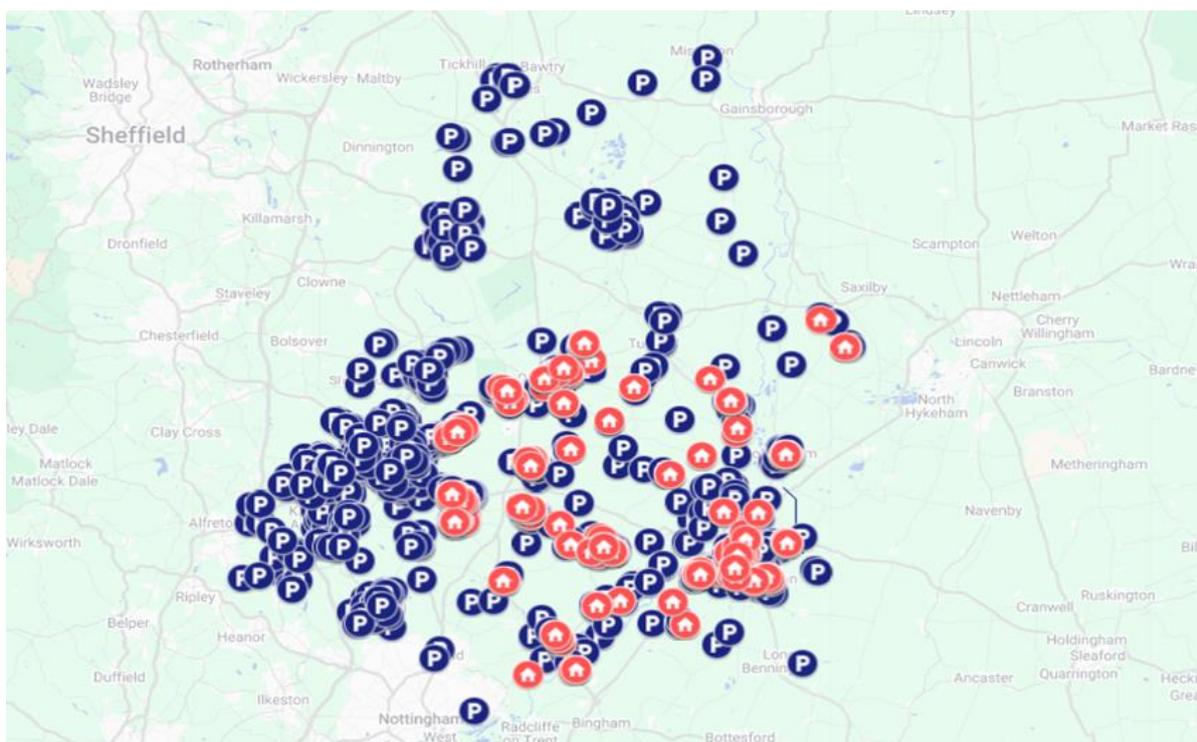
5.1 The proposal is to develop a brand, marketing strategy and marketing action plan for the Careline Service. This will better enable the service opportunities of expansion in the private sector and to bid for external contracts.

5.2 Marketing the Careline Scheme helps to deliver the objective in the Community plan that states: *'Through the Commercialisation Strategy and action plan, continue to seek out and generate new sources of income, whilst retaining our public service ethos'*. This a service that already generates income for the Council and the focus of marketing the scheme could increase the income even more.

5.3 The service itself is one that strongly benefits older residents and tenants across the district and further afield. The Careline service is there for when they need it most and we can do more through marketing to ensure more of our residents and tenants are signed up to it; Enabling them to continue to live independently in their own home.

5.4 Unlike other competitors such as [Nottingham On Call](#), Careline has no branding and simply has [one page on our website](#). In terms of price comparison, [Nottingham On Call](#) charge £6.60 per week, compared to £26 per month via our Careline service. This makes us £31 cheaper across the year.

5.5 Unlike other services for the Council, the Careline Service can take on residents from outside the district. More users joined following the transfer from Mansfield and it covers a wide area that includes private and tenants in Mansfield, Gainsborough, Bawtry and even locations with Derby and Sheffield post codes.



- 5.6 An initial data mapping exercise has been undertaken by the marketing team to identify opportunities. Despite the growth of the service already, there are still gaps in the market that would be helped with the support of marketing, as outlined in 5.8. The above map shows locations of private customers (P) and tenant customers (House) across all areas, from NSDC to outside the district, including Yorkshire and Derbyshire. There is a clear divide where the service users stop, depicting an opportunity of growth in the south of Nottinghamshire and into Lincolnshire.
- 5.7 Supported living customers (naturally within the district) numbers are fairly small. For the size of Newark, there are not many on the list, this is similar to Southwell.
- 5.8 Other areas of low “supported living” uptake for size include Rainworth, Blidworth, Clipstone and Collingham. There are little/no supported living tenants receiving Careline in the villages of the district. This will largely be down to fewer District Council properties, but again, we may be missing a trick with the remoteness of the properties.
- 5.9 Data would suggest that we could do more targeted marketing of the service to our council tenants too via our tenancy teams, with the production of appropriate marketing collateral. Marketing to these sites would be much easier compared to private customers due to the regular communications we already have to tenants.
- 5.10 The Careline service brought in an income of £143,360 last year and there is clear indication that the service could be marketed to even better increase this.
- 5.11 It is recommended that Cabinet approve a marketing budget of £14,360. Housing colleagues have confirmed that this budget is available from the income generated. At the end of year one, it is proposed the £14,360 will go back into the budget it was taken from via the income generated from the campaign or it will be reinvested into a year two marketing plan subject to further approval. A marketing plan will be created, outlining how this will be spent with appropriate sign up and income targets included in the plan. This marketing plan will be submitted to Director of Housing for approval before implementation. There are clear opportunities to link in with the NHS hospitals and GP surgeries who can signpost residents and tenants to our scheme if appropriate material was made available to them to do so. In addition, the service could also be promoted through targeted information to relevant groups and organisations, digitally to adults with older parents and via a range of other channels and opportunities.
- 5.12 After one year of marketing the scheme, a review of uptake shall be undertaken to review the impact of the marketing and if there should be an increase or decrease of the budget.
- 5.13 The marketing of this project is possible following the completion of the restructure in the Communications and Marketing team, the creation of a Marketing and Sales Manager post. This post will oversee the project, supported by the Senior Communications Officer (HRA) and the marketing team. The branding, content, management of all marketing activity can be delivered in house, with the marketing budget only being spent on material and advertising. The cost of delivering this service in house, including creating the brand identity is in the region of around £30,000.

6.0 **Implications**

In writing this report and in putting forward recommendations, officers have considered the following implications: Data Protection, Digital and Cyber Security, Equality and Diversity, Financial, Human Resources, Human Rights, Legal, Safeguarding and Sustainability, and where appropriate they have made reference to these implications and added suitable expert comment below where appropriate.

HR & Equalities implications HR2425/2105 FK

- 6.1 The recommendations above to grow the service will have implications for staffing levels within the team and consideration should be given to ensuring that changes are made at the right time so as not to negatively impact existing staff in terms of increase in workload, and to ensure that any new staff are onboarded and trained in a timely manner.
- 6.2 The existing team has remained stable for a significant period of time and care should be taken if increasing numbers that this is done in a way which maintains and develops the existing culture.
- 6.3 If the proposals above are approved, further consideration will be given to the staffing levels required to meet the anticipated increase. HR will be able to provide more detailed comment at that point.

ICT Implications

- 6.4 Additional software and hardware will be needed dependent on size and growth of service. Further reports will be submitted as needed in the future.
- 6.5 Hardware required to be moved for the Careline office move for which we may require ICT support.

Financial Implications - FIN24-25/8719

- 6.6 Table detailing the 2024/25 costs and income for the Careline service

	Budgeted income	Actual Income	Budgeted Costs	Actual Costs
GF	284,490	354,511	191,860	215,000
HRA	-	321,000	348,440	290,000

- 6.7 As per the above table, the income for 2024/25 has surpassed the expected amount for the private customers by £70,021 with the costs increasing by £23,140 meaning additional income of £46,881 has been generated in this financial year. The costs for the HRA are less than budget for at £290,000 compared to the budget at £348,440, making a saving of £58,440.

- 6.8 The marketing team are requesting a budget of £14,360 to advertise the GF service. It is proposed that the 'Invest to Save' reserve be used for this budget, and the reserve topped up at the end of the 2025/26 financial year with the increase in profits expected from these advertisements.

Legal Implications (LEG2526/7411)

- 6.9 Cabinet is the appropriate body to consider the content of this report. The Local Government Act 2003 gives local authorities the power to charge for services which they have a power but not a duty to provide. The level of income is restricted to the amount it costs to provide the services; this can include the full cost of all aspects of service provision. All attributable overheads can be taken into account when making this calculation including the Council's buildings and IT systems, and support services for example.

Tenant/Resident Implications – Customer Testimonials

- 6.10 Any additional Health and wellbeing services developed would be to enable customers to continue to live independently and potentially have delivered a bespoke package to suit their needs. Service offers will be co-produced with tenants and residents.
- 6.11 A very recent testimonial received following the Mansfield project demonstrates the positive impact our service has on our customers:

"This is to say a massive thank you for your team and council for agreeing to continue my dad's care line service Mansfield Notts. He had a fall around midnight last Sunday 9 March, he pressed his emergency button and within 3 hours had been taken into hospital by ambulance. He came home on Friday 14th March and continues to improve. He's 94 years old, without this service I am in no doubt he would not have survived or managed to call for help. Please let your team know they are life savers. Thank you." Kind regards..... (son).

Background Papers and Published Documents

Except for previously published documents, which will be available elsewhere, the documents listed here will be available for inspection in accordance with Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972.

None