

# South Somerset Careline

Annual Report  
2015/16



## Forward

I am delighted to present our latest annual report, in what has been a very busy year for South Somerset Careline. Our service is provided in peoples' own homes to ensure they can live independently for as long as possible. It helps them feel safe and provides reassurance to their families 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

We have noticed a significant increase in demand for our service which I think reflects the greater needs of South Somerset residents, but also is testimony to the great reputation of our Careline team. We are doing more partnership working which has helped raise awareness of Careline to the wider community in South Somerset, and are very pleased to be working closely with the Fire Service to respond to the needs of some of our most vulnerable residents, with free Home Fire Safety Visits and installation of free Careline-linked smoke detectors.

In April I was privileged to meet Freda Marks, one of our customers who shared her 90<sup>th</sup> birthday with her Majesty the Queen. I enjoyed hearing Freda's life story and the similarities and differences with the Queen's own 90 years. And of course I was delighted to hear how Careline helps her remain living independently in her own home.

I am very proud of the service and our dedicated team of staff who have been able to respond to these growing demands and changing needs, and whose top priority is to support our customers. I look forward to welcoming more customers to Careline in the year ahead.

**Cllr Sylvia Seal**  
**Portfolio Holder for Housing & Welfare**  
**South Somerset District Council**



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*Front cover – SSDC Councillor Sylvia Seal presents Careline customer Freda Marks with a bouquet of flowers to celebrate her 90<sup>th</sup> birthday, which she shares with Her Majesty the Queen*

## 1. Background

South Somerset Careline is run by South Somerset District Council's Housing and Welfare Service. The service has been running for 34 years and offers reassurance to people living at home. We currently have Careline alarms installed in over 2,100 homes, enabling residents to access support at the press of a button. The majority of our customers are elderly or vulnerable in some way, but the service is available to anyone who needs or wants it.

Careline is run by a team of dedicated staff who are out and about installing alarms across South Somerset and providing ongoing, high quality customer support. The 24 hour control centre which responds to calls for help is contracted to Sedgemoor District Council. Our contract with Sedgemoor was renewed in October 2015 and is closely monitored to ensure that the highest standards are achieved and that all of our clients receive the best possible response, 24 hours a day 365 days a year.



As well as providing pendant alarms, our Careline team works in partnership with the Fire Service to install and monitor smoke detectors linked to our Lifeline alarms, to help ensure some of our most vulnerable residents are living safely and independently. We also install and monitor a number of other personal sensors (Telecare items) such as gas detectors, bed sensors and pressure mats, in response to demand.

We take referrals from a wide range of agencies across the District including hospitals, occupational therapists, doctors, community mental health teams and social workers. We also take many enquiries from individuals and their families who are looking at ways in which they can remain safe and well in their homes.

## **2. Aims and Objectives**

### **Careline Objectives:**

To ensure we deliver a high quality service that meets the needs of our Careline service users, we will:

- treat all service users as individuals and keep them at the heart of all that we do
- provide a high quality, good value for money service
- ensure our service is accessible to all and enhances the quality of life of our customers
- support people to remain living independently at home for as long as possible

Careline meets a number of other SSDC aims and objectives:

### **SSDC Council Plan 2016 - 2021:**

- Enable people to live independently for as long as they are able
- Promote Careline to increase take-up and enable people to continue living independently

### **SSDC Housing Strategy Implementation Plan 2014:**

- Meet the housing related support needs of the most vulnerable and least resilient residents
- Provide and promote a high quality community alarm service through South Somerset Careline to support vulnerable residents staying in their homes.

### 3. Strategic Context

#### Somerset Health & Wellbeing Strategy 2013-18:

- People live healthy and independent lives, supported by thriving and connected communities with timely and easy access to high-quality and efficient public services when they need them
- People, families and communities take responsibility for their own health and wellbeing.
- Families and communities are thriving and resilient.
- Somerset people are able to live independently for as long as possible



According to the Telecare Service Association (TSA), 90% of people say that they wish to stay living independently for as long as possible. Telecare and community alarms can help people live independently while giving extra peace of mind to family members and friends that their loved ones are safely managing at home.



**“It made me feel more comfortable to know I can get help when I need it.”**

Careline customer

## Somerset Joint Strategic Needs Assessment 2015:

This report highlights some key statistics for Somerset, showing a higher proportion of older people living in the county than the national average.

% of population who are	England	South West	Somerset
65-74	9.3	11.1	12.0
75-84	5.7	6.7	7.2
85+	2.3	2.9	3.3
Older people being supported year-round by Adult Social Care	9.8	8.9	11.4

- The number of people aged 75 and over is expected to increase to 73,000 by 2021 (13% of the population).
- Life expectancy is higher in Somerset than the national average and is rising, currently at 81 for men and 84 for women.
- People aged over 75 living in rural areas are more likely to be admitted to hospital as emergency cases.
- The JSNA also identifies social isolation as a growing problem; there is a correlation between loneliness and ill-health in elderly people.

## The Care Act 2015:

The Care Act came into effect on the 1<sup>st</sup> of April 2015; it sets out new responsibilities for local authorities in the care and support for adults. Somerset County Council (SCC) now has a responsibility to ensure people living in Somerset receive services to support their care needs, can access information and advice they need to make good decisions about care, and have a range of providers offering a choice of high quality appropriate services

Through partnership working with Somerset County Council we continue to offer vulnerable people in Somerset the choice of high quality, reliable services adapted to meet their needs. Careline features on the new **Somerset Choices** website, and we also work directly with SCC's Adult Social Care teams who assess people's individual needs in and around the home.

## 4. How the Careline service works

Careline is very easy to use; it consists of a small base unit which plugs into an electric socket and telephone line, and a pendant which can be worn either around the neck or wrist, and works within a range of 50 metres from the base unit. By pressing the pendant a call will be put through to one of the operators, who will respond immediately and assess what help is needed.

1. By pressing the pendant, an alarm signal is sent to the base unit, which automatically dials the Control Centre. There is also an alarm button on the base unit.
2. The details of the person who activated an alarm appear on a computer screen, and a fully trained operator is then able to talk to them through a speaker and microphone.
3. If members of staff are unable to hear the customer who has raised an alarm they will try to contact them by their phone, contact a neighbour or other nominated person, or call the emergency services.



The operator is trained to establish quickly what help is needed, such as calling an ambulance, doctor, or a nominated contact. Specific information about the customer's health or disabilities is all available on the screen. The operator will reassure the customer that help is on its way, and liaise closely with relatives and/or emergency services according to what is needed.

**“I was extremely impressed, all was explained so clearly.”**

Careline customer

## 5. Our Service Standards



Answer 98.5% alarm calls within 1 minute from our Control Centre

Aim to have customers connected to the service within 3 hours of receipt of their information

Arrange for a referral appointment to be made within 3 days of receiving request

Provide a demonstration within 7 days of receiving a referral

Provide a 4-week test call to all customers

Our Careline Team is based at Petters House in the Council's Housing and Welfare Team. We consist of 4 part time Careline Support Officers (1.8 FTE), 1 part time Admin and Finance Officer (0.8 FTE), 1 part time Careline Assistant (0.4 FTE), a Careline Manager (0.8 FTE) and 2 Casual Careline Officers who help out during busy periods. Our staff visit customers in their homes to discuss Careline, see how it can meet their needs and carry out a demonstration of the system. We often liaise with relatives and carers to discuss the customer's needs and if they decide to go ahead, we install the alarm there and then, and update our records immediately.

The Careline team also offers a Stepping Stones service which supports people as they are being discharged from hospital. When we receive a referral from the hospital regarding a patient being discharged, we advise the customer that the service is free for 6 weeks with no obligation to continue, and prioritise our appointments to ensure they have the support they need at home through Careline.

In 2015, **98.5%** of our customers said they were very satisfied or fairly satisfied with our service

## 6. Fire Safety and Telecare

In 2015 we were delighted to agree a new partnership arrangement with Devon & Somerset Fire and Rescue Service (D&SFRS). All Careline customers are now offered a free Home Fire Safety Visit which enables the Fire Service to access some of the most vulnerable people in South Somerset. The visit may recommend that further fire safety measures are installed in the home, in particular Careline-linked smoke detectors, as well as gas detectors and carbon monoxide sensors.

Through this partnership, we secured £5,000 in funding from D&SFRS which we matched through our own Careline budget, which will enable us to install 250 smoke detectors during 2015-17.



Between September 2015 and March 2016 we installed **42** smoke detectors and referred **31** customers for a free Home Fire Safety Visit. Once our target is reached, we hope to secure further funding to enable us to continue this valuable service.

### *SSDC Careline with officers at Yeovil Fire Station*

Other telecare equipment for example bed sensors, property exit sensors, epilepsy sensors and medication dispensers are currently a relatively small part of the Careline service. Of our 2,130 customers we currently have **200** customers with additional telecare equipment installed. In the past these have been funded by SCC Adult Social Care, however now this funding has ceased we have to charge for these items and have noticed a subsequent drop in demand.



**DEVON &  
SOMERSET**  
FIRE & RESCUE SERVICE

## 7. Pricing

The installation of the Careline system is currently £32.85 (a one off charge which is waived if on Income Support, Pension Credit, Employment Support Allowance, Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit). Hire and Monitoring for the majority of our customers is £3.82 per week. All prices are subject to VAT. However in some circumstances we can offer a discounted price (a hardship rate of £2.04), and VAT is zero rated if the customer has a long term health condition or a disability. For customers who own their equipment, the monitoring is £2.04 per week, although we no longer offer this to new customers.

Our team are out and about in the district all the time, installing alarms. This means we can visit customers who have any queries or problems, test Telecare sensors, change batteries and reassure customers that their alarms are working properly. All customers are encouraged to test their pendant monthly; however if we don't hear from them after a month our Control Centre or ourselves will contact them or their family to remind them. All of this customer care is included in the customer's weekly fee. Our full range of fees and charges for 2015/16 are listed at Page 23.



Our Keysafe service continues to be popular. In 2015/16 we installed **152** keysafes, helping carers, families and the emergency services respond quickly to our customers.

**In 2015, 92.3% of customers said they were happy with the cost of the Careline service and 95.8% said Careline is good value for money**

## 8. Our Customers

Our customer base has grown steadily over the recent years. At the end of March 2016 we delivered the service to **2,117** customers living across South Somerset. The majority of our customers are elderly, however we provide the service to anyone who requires it.

Age ranges of Careline customers 2015/16	
0-64 years	4.08%
65-69 years	3.79%
70-74 years	5.28%
75-79 years	9.93%
80-84 years	20.12%
85 years and over	54.62%
Other (eg. communal areas, empty)	2.18%

On average a new Careline customer stays with us for 3.94 years.

As well as individual homes, we support customers in a number of residential schemes owned and managed by others. Included in our total figure are 10 sheltered housing/almshouse schemes which contain 94 dispersed alarms; in addition we support 1 'hardwired' scheme containing 35 pullcords (17 in resident's flats and 18 in common rooms, lifts etc). This year we were pleased to welcome 2 new schemes, both of which had lost their in-house response service and turned to South Somerset Careline for a solution. We reviewed and updated our contracts with all of these schemes to secure a longer term commitment and ensure they were happy with the services they receive from Careline.

### Customer Satisfaction

We value feedback from our customers and consistently seek ways in which we can improve our service in response to feedback.

New customers are invited to complete a feedback form after every Careline demonstration; responses are consistently extremely positive. We produce an annual newsletter which is posted to every customer; this is highly valued and generates further opportunities for dialogue with customers and provides updates on new products. It also includes advice from other agencies about staying safe at home, eg. Police and Fire Service. Our 2016 newsletter can be found here: <http://www.southsomerset.gov.uk/housing/independent-living/careline/>

In 2015/16 we received 4 complaints and 61 compliments. We take all of our complaints seriously and abide by the SSDC Complaints Policy. We ensure that appropriate action is taken and where necessary we revise our policies and procedures to improve our service in response to valid complaints we receive.

## User Satisfaction Survey

Our latest customer survey was carried out in April 2015. These are carried out bi-annually so our next one is due in April 2017.

Percentage of respondents who are very or fairly satisfied with the Careline service (TSA target = 90%)		
	2013	2015
Quality of services	88.7%	98.5%
Speed of response	87.2%	92.5%
Helpfulness of staff	87.9%	94.8%
Value for money	91.5%	95.8%

### Summary of customer survey results

Overall our customers express very high levels of satisfaction with Careline.

- 98.5% of our customers are *very satisfied or fairly satisfied* with the service
- 94.8% are *very satisfied or fairly satisfied* with the way their calls are dealt with by the Control Centre
- 92.3% rate the speed of response in answering their call as *very good or fairly good*
- 95.79% believe Careline offers good value for money
- 92.3% are *very satisfied or fairly satisfied* with the current charges
- 95% feel safer since having Careline

As well as satisfaction levels, we also gathered other useful information to help develop the service and ensure customers are getting the maximum benefits from having Careline:

- 67% of customers have used their alarm/pendant for an emergency in the last 12 months; 22% have used it for reassurance
- 98.8% were wearing their pendant or it was within reach at the time of completing the survey; however 0.9% were not sure where their pendant was or it was out of reach/unavailable.
- 59% would consider using a Handyperson scheme for odd jobs around the home

*The full results of our customer survey can be supplied on request.*

## 9. Performance

At Careline we aim to meet the Telecare Services Association (TSA) Code of Practice key performance indicators as shown below:

- 98.5% of all calls to be answered within 60 seconds
- 99% of all calls to be answered within 3 minutes (with 1% tolerance)
- All calls exceeding 3 minutes to have an exceptions report produced, outlining reasons and actions taken
- Call analysis to be undertaken on a calendar month basis

In 2015/16 our Control Centre responded to **40,998** calls for South Somerset Careline customers. On average 97.84% of calls were answered within 60 seconds which is slightly below our target; this is now being addressed with our providers at Sedgemoor.

Month 2015/16	<1 Minutes (TSA target 98.5%)	< 3 Minutes (TSA target 99%)	>3 Minutes
April 2015	98.61	1.32	0.07
May	98.36	1.57	0.07
June	97.94	1.98	0.08
July	97.98	1.77	0.24
August	98.22	1.55	0.23
September	96.99	2.75	0.25
October	96.95	2.85	0.20
November	98.15	1.61	0.24
December	97.64	2.17	0.19
January 2016	97.93	1.85	0.22
February	97.55	2.02	0.42
March	97.80	2.08	0.12
<b>Average</b>	<b>97.84% calls answered within less than 1 minute</b>		

**“This system is a big improvement on the system we supported some years ago.”**

Careline customers

**“Thankyou for the speedy and efficient way that the system was installed and working”.**

In May 2015, our Careline Team was awarded the SSDC Bespoke Award for Outstanding Customer Service. The Council's Chief Executive Mark Williams presented the team with the award in recognition for 'going the extra mile' in supporting customers and working with other agencies during the winter hospital bed crisis.



*SSDC Careline Team receive the Council's Bespoke Award for excellent customer service from Council CEO Mark Williams in May 2015*

bEsPoke  
Awards

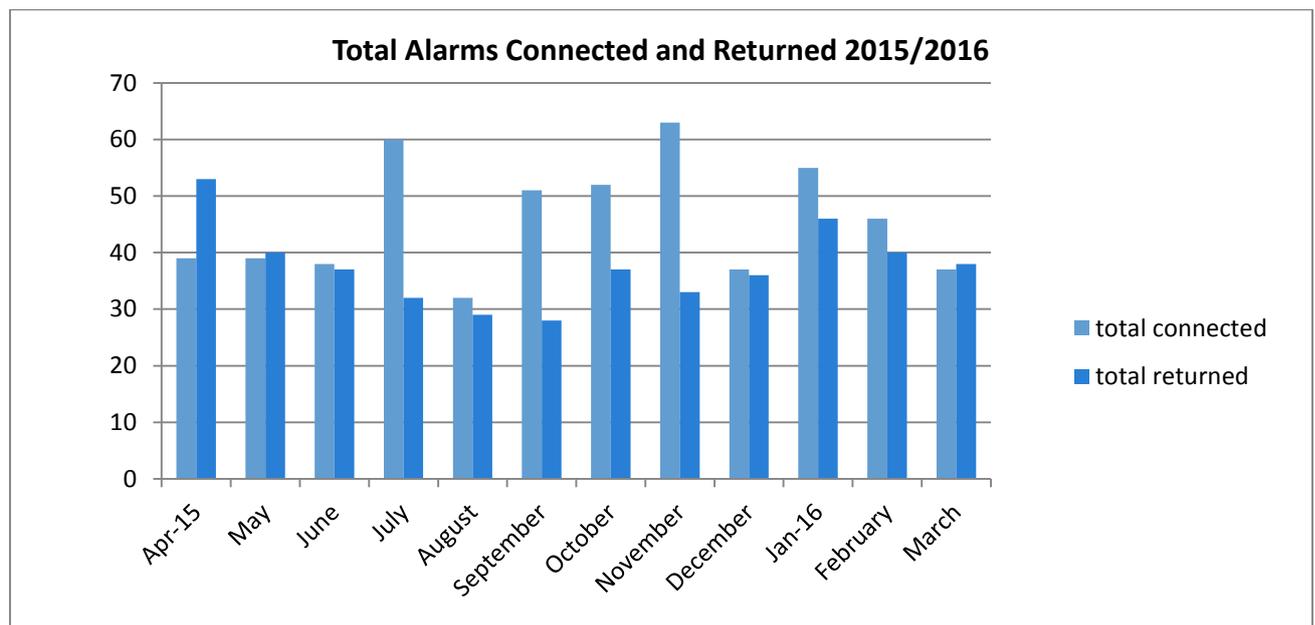
**“A very good handbook. The whole interview with instructions went well. Carried out in an efficient but relaxed manner”.**

A Careline Customer

## Alarms connected and returned

Our team connected 549 new alarms in 2015/16, compared to 508 in 2014/15; this averaged at 45.75 new service users per month. In the same period we had 449 alarms returned.

Overall, our total number of customers increased during 2015/16 from **2,015** (31 March 2015) to **2,117** (31 March 2016), an increase of 102 customers (5% growth).



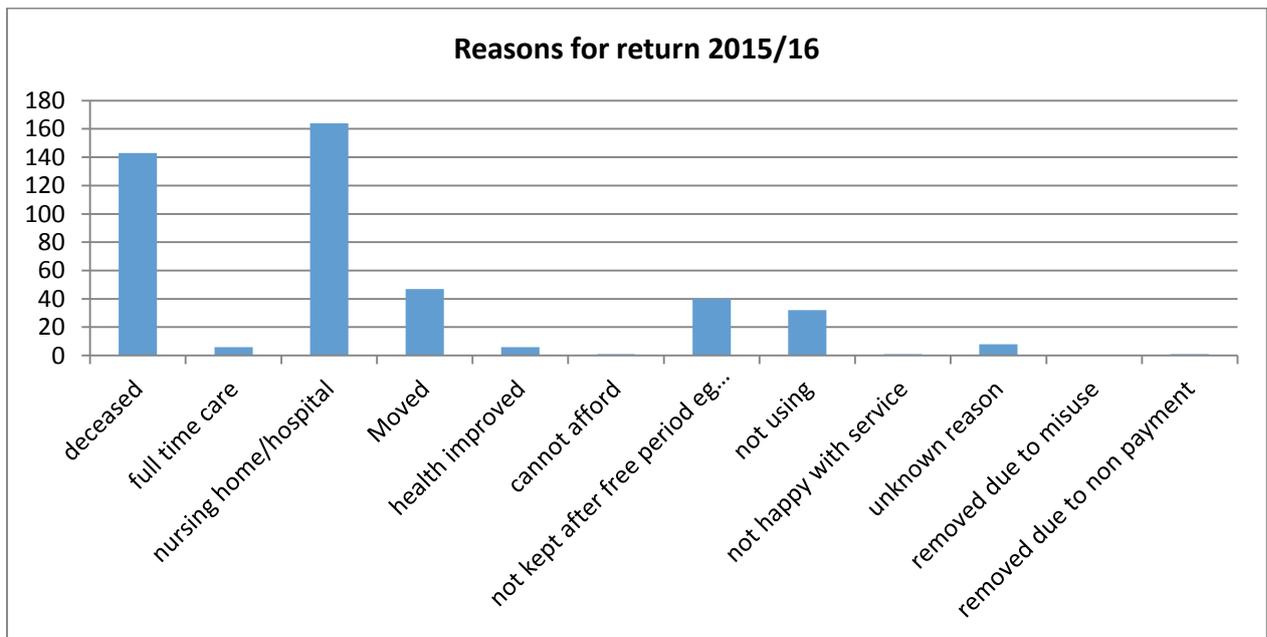
November 2015 was our busiest month when we ran a 'free month' promotion in local publications. Our highest months for returned alarms were April and January (a pattern which is similar every year).

**“Thankyou for the wonderful service in the installation of the Careline and to Bob for his time in fitting the Keysafe, your time was appreciated very much”.**

Careline customer

The majority of alarms are returned to us when the customer moves into care (for example into a nursing home or with a relative) or the customer passes away.

In 2015/16, 8.9% of our customers returned the alarm after the free 6 weeks 'Stepping Stones' service. Only 0.22% of customer returns were made due to dissatisfaction with the service.



*An NHS bed costs on average £1,925 a week compared to about £558 for a week in residential care or £356.58 for home care based on three hours support per day.*

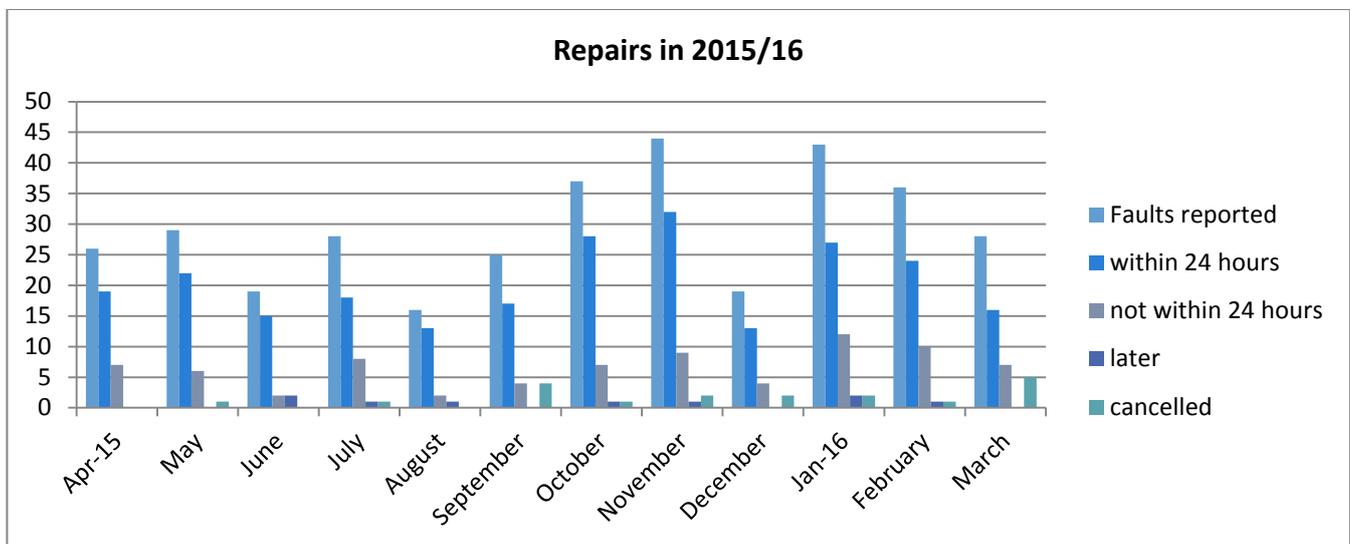
**“I am already very impressed by the service. Thank you.”**

Careline customer

## Faults and Repairs

Where possible our Careline Officers will try to resolve any problems over the phone or by visiting customers; however we have a contract with Tunstall whose engineer responds to faults within 24 hours of being reported.

During the year 2015/16 we reported 350 faults, an average of 29.16 faults per month. 80% were repaired within the target time of 24 hours. We are monitoring our contract more closely now with Tunstall to improve this service.



**"Your officer arrived promptly and spoke clearly to mum who is hard of hearing. Could not have been more helpful"**

Son of Careline customer

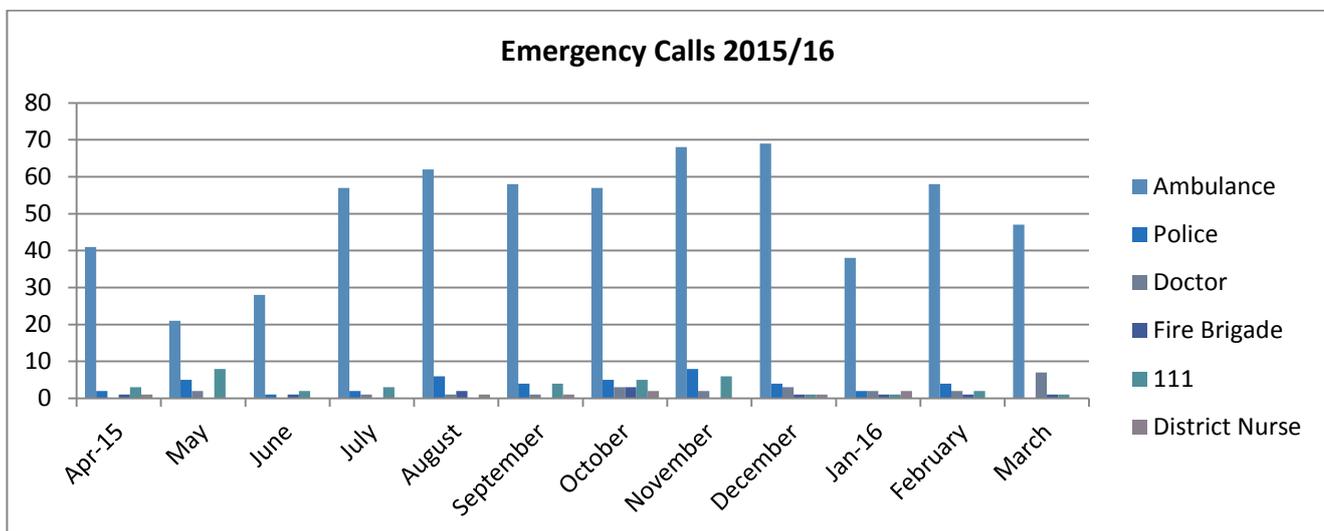
## Call reasons and Emergency calls

Our Control Centre responded to a total of 40,998 calls in 2015/16. These included 13,114 test calls and 4,646 false calls. 767 reported a fall, 739 made an anxiety call, 771 were identified as 'constant callers.'

In the vast majority of cases, a neighbour or relative was contacted to check on the welfare of the client.

In 793 cases, the operator made a call to the emergency services to provide immediate assistance to the customer.

663 calls requested an ambulance, 43 the police and 10 to doctors. 15 requested the fire brigade, 61 requested 111 and 1 contacted for the District Nurse.



In addition, we made 1,622 birthday calls and 396 comfort calls to our customers in 2015/16.

## 10. Income and Expenditure

In 2015/16, the total expenditure for South Somerset Careline was **£229,546**.

A breakdown of the costs is outlined below:

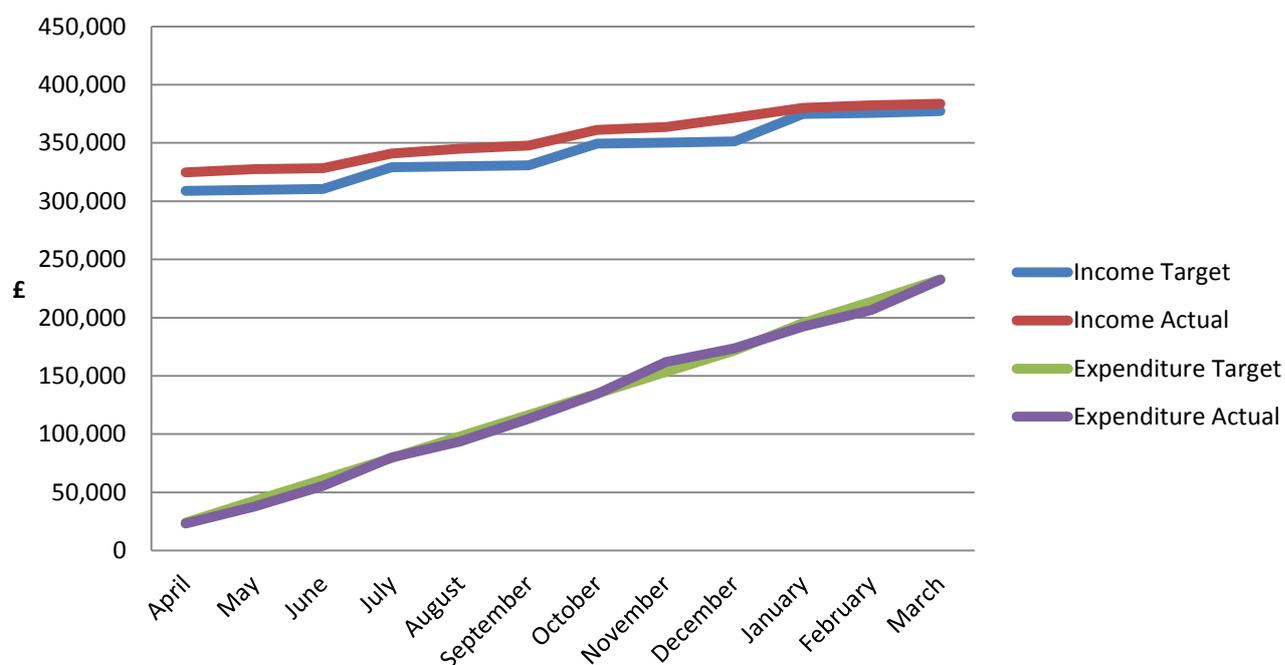
Salaries	88,649
Travel	13,773
Printing and Stationary	3,283
Alarms purchases	31,003
Adverts and promotion	7,152*
Control Centre contract (Sedgemoor Council)	29,424
Maintenance (contract with Tunstall Telecare)	24,601
Telecare items	8,505**

\*includes radio advert

\*\*includes smoke detector campaign with Fire Service

In 2015/16, the service generated **£383,677** in income (an increase of £28,379 compared to 2014/15).

### Income and Expenditure



## 11. Partnership Working and Promotion

We recognise the importance of partnership working when supporting vulnerable people, and our Careline team work with a number of agencies. In 2015/16 we took **634** referrals from a variety of sources.

We work closely with Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue, who offer Home Fire Safety Visits to vulnerable people. If the client has a Careline alarm they will refer them to us to install smoke detectors; if they are not an existing customer, they will recommend Careline where appropriate. Currently we are able to supply smoke detectors connected to our Careline alarms free of charge, thanks to partnership funding from the Fire Service.

Many of our referrals come from Yeovil District Hospital (YDH) and other community hospitals. Installing Careline for patients being discharged from hospital can speed up their discharge as well as ensuring they have support at the right time.

A recent report by the National Audit Office (May 2016) claims that delays in hospital discharges are costing the NHS £820 million per year, The figures show the number of delays has risen by a third in the past two years to 1.15m days. The effects on older people are significant - unnecessary stays in hospital can reduce muscle strength and increase the risk of infection.

In 2015/16 we installed **153** alarms through our Stepping Stones service where we provided customers with Careline free for 6 weeks when they came out of hospital. We liaise closely with YDH and Musgrove Park Hospital, who will consider Careline as part of a package of support for patients leaving hospital.

The majority of our referrals came from hospitals and Adult Social Care teams where Occupational Therapists will consider Careline as part of a support package together with other standalone telecare items. In 2015/16, **323** new Careline customers heard about us through their social worker or hospital staff and a further 53 from doctors/health centre staff.

We are always exploring new ways of working in partnership. In 2015/16 we gave 22 talks to voluntary and community groups across South Somerset, including carer's support groups, lunch clubs, day centres and community support schemes, taking the Careline message to over 250 people. We also advertise Careline in a wide range of local magazines and advertising outlets, with just over 3% of our budget being spent on advertising and promotion. In early 2016 we experimented with radio advertising for the first time to help raise awareness of Careline in the wider community.

#### New referrals 2015/16 - Where did you hear of Careline?

Doctor/Health Care Centre	53
ILT/Carer/Carer support/OT/Hospital staff	322
Family/Friends	100
Somerset Direct	3
Local Paper/Magazine Advert* see breakdown below	29
SSDC Website	8
Leaflet from SSDC office or staff member	31
Just knew of Careline - couldn't say where	9
Had an alarm before	20
Had demonstration before	1
Paramedics	4
Fire Brigade	8
Careline newsletter (voucher to introduce a friend)	3
Not known (not on form/asked by us)	41
<b>Total referrals taken</b>	<b>634</b>
<b>*breakdown of local papers/magazines</b>	
Shop mobility	1
Your Somerset	19
South Somerset News	2
Blackmore Vale	4
Seavington News	1
Compass Magazine	1
Radio advert	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>29</b>

## 12. For more information please contact us

If you require any further information about the SSDC Careline service please contact us.

Write to:      Freepost RSKT-ZSBZ-YBZA,  
                    Careline Services,  
                    South Somerset District Council,  
                    Petters House,  
                    Petters Way,  
                    Yeovil  
                    BA20 1AS

Email:          careline@southsomerset.gov.uk

Phone:          **01935 479815**

Webpage:      [www.carelinesouthsomerset.co.uk](http://www.carelinesouthsomerset.co.uk)

Alice Knight Careline and Welfare Manager

Phone:          01935 462943

Email:          [alice.knight@southsomerset.gov.uk](mailto:alice.knight@southsomerset.gov.uk)



**Help 24 hours a day - 365 days a year**

## SOUTH SOMERSET CARELINE

### PRICE LIST 1<sup>ST</sup> APRIL 2015 to 31<sup>ST</sup> March 2016

Connection and set up fee *	£32.70 one off charge waived if on benefits listed below
Careline Hire and Monitoring *	£3.81 per week

Connection and set up fee not applicable if in receipt of following benefits

Income Support

Pension Credit

Employment Support Allowance

Housing Benefit

Council Tax Benefit

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#### **Miscellaneous**

4 way Extension lead	£3.83 plus vat (total cost £4.60)
Second pendant	free of charge (where 2 <sup>nd</sup> pendant required for a couple)
Falls detector*	£75.00
Telephone cables	free of charge
Telephone Socket doubler	free of charge
Pendant cords/wrist bands	free of charge
Collection from customer	free of charge
Comfort call	80p per call
Replacement pendant due to loss or damage*	£42.38
Replacement Alarm due to loss or damage*	£99.00
Telecare Sensors	Please enquire. Charges may apply.
Keysafe	£20 (plus vat = £24) including fitting

**\* All above prices are subject to vat unless you are eligible for zero rated vat relief due to illness/disability**