Annual Report 2018/19
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Introduction

Lifeline is a personal emergency response system that enables people to remain independent and more confident in their own homes, offering reassurance to our customers and their loved ones.

Ashford Lifeline has been in operation for over 25 years and is a service that Ashford Borough Council is proud of. We provide emergency assistance 24 hours per day, 365 days of the year to over 1800 customers.

In the event of an emergency, customers can alert our control centre by simply pressing their pendant or a button on the alarm unit near to their phone. Depending on the circumstances we can contact a friend, neighbour or family member, or if necessary, the emergency services.

We are able to provide our customers with tailored packages to suit their individual requirements. We offer a basic package of a lifeline unit and pendant and additional sensors can be added such as fall detectors, smoke detectors and flood detectors as required. We are also able to provide additional items to keep a customer’s property safe and secure but will allow the emergency services to gain access if necessary.

Ashford Lifeline is accredited by the Telecare Service Association (TSA). This accreditation gives the confidence to our customers that we are dedicated to delivering a high standard of service and that our procedures comply with the TSA Codes of Practice; which are the national accreditation standards. The annual surveys of our customers prove that we continue to meet the key performance indicators set by the TSA for the service quality, speed, response and value for money.

Our Mission Statement

Ashford Lifeline aims to provide assisted living technological services to prolong independent living and is dedicated to:

- Providing a friendly service to all our customers and their loved ones
- Demonstrating confidence, reassurance and efficiency in emergency situations
- Ensuring all of our customers are dealt with respectfully
- Genuinely caring and being committed to the customer and the service
- Continually looking to transform and improve the service, technology and delivery of the service
- Improving the application process to include full online application
- Marketing the service to drive sales and build client base
Achievements

In order to improve the service delivery, we have:

- Simplified the application and order forms
- Changed our advertising to show that we are not just for the elderly
- Included the operators in the call competency checks
- Moved Disaster Recovery sites.
- Added additional payment options
- Improved safeguarding measures
- We have had all staff trained as a Dementia Friend by the Alzheimer’s Society to be able to provide the best possible care and service to any of our customers who may be living with Dementia

Simplified the application and order forms where possible

Over the past 12 months, to improve our customer experience, we have made our application and order forms easier to read and fill out by making them simpler and also merging forms together to minimise the amount of paperwork that is sent out.

Changed our advertising to show that we are not just for the elderly

To build on our client base we have changed our Lifeline brochures and information leaflets to indicate that our Lifeline service is not just for the elderly but also for those who are vulnerable or at risk.

Included the operators in the call competency checks

In order to provide the operators with accurate feedback they have now been included in their own Lifeline call competency checks which has enabled them to hear their own calls and be provided with advice, guidance and to address any training needs.

Moved Disaster Recovery sites

We have successfully completed our Disaster Recovery site move to a sheltered housing schemes. This has provided us with a spacious and private office space with easy access in order for us to be able to continue to provide the best possible service to customers should we need to switch the service to a remote location.

Additional payment options

Customers are now able to pay for Lifeline services at the Pay Point machines in the contact centre as well as over the telephone to the customer services advisors and the AMC supervisors. A call back option is now also offered where an advisor will call the customer back at an agreed and convenient time to take their payment.
Improved Safe Guarding measures

When a lifeline is activated and we need to request an ambulance we have agreed to follow up calls with them to ensure attendance. This helps reassurance between the service and the client and the ability to keep them updated. This has now been set out as a procedure for operators to follow and a new system has been introduced to ensure compliance.
How did we perform?

Customer Feedback

As part of our annual survey we ask for feedback on our service and comments or recommendations of improvement they have. The vast majority praise our service and our call handlers for the friendly, helpful approach in responding to the customers’ needs. The comments that come back with details on how we can improve are valued and built into the reviews we regularly undertake to improve our service delivery.

Here are some of the comments received:

“I find the service extremely satisfactory and the confidence that it gives me. I would be prepared to pay a few more bob for it.”

Mr Hindley, Rolvenden

“It is always there if I need it.”

Mrs C, Ashford

“an extension speaker to place in other areas of the house so would be good”

Mrs E, Ashford

The questionnaire comments show that our customers are reassured by having and using our service and confident in providing ways to improve. They enjoy the peace of mind that it provides and most believe that nothing needs to be improved. The few comments made for improvement for service have been considered but are largely out of our control – this included making the wrist strap more attractive for females, having an extension speaker to be able to hear the lifeline in other areas of the house and the lifeline connecting quicker.
Key Performance Indicators

Below are the results of how we fared against our Key Performance Indicators set by the TSA:

Customer Satisfaction Survey Results

It is a requirement of the TSA Codes of Practice that we have to survey a minimum of 5% of our customers annually and achieve at least a 90% satisfaction score of what our customers thought of: 1. quality of service, 2. speed of response, 3. helpfulness of staff and 4. Value for money. This year we surveyed 20% of our customers. The results received are detailed below on the chart and demonstrates that we are greatly valued; 99% of our customers were satisfied with the helpfulness of staff and 95% the quality of service. The speed of response score at 96% is also higher than our KPI which is also pleasing. In total 98% of customer believed that the service that was provided by us demonstrated value for money, with several comments from customers saying that they would happily pay more for the service. With the range of payment options coming in just on the 90% mark it has highlight that we may need to explore the option of customers paying for additional equipment and installation via an online facility.

![Annual Customer Survey: Net Satisfaction Scores](image-url)
Call Handling Results

It is a requirement of the TSA Codes of Practice that 97% of calls are answered within one minute and 99% of calls are answered within three minutes. The chart below demonstrates we have consistently exceeded these targets throughout the year and 99.7% of our calls were answered within one minute and 100% within 3 minutes. This is something we are extremely proud of.
Partnership Survey

This year we received a response of 10% to our partnership survey being returned. We were able to gain from this that the vast majority of people are aware of the service but not necessarily aware of how to contact us – we will bear in mind for future advertisement campaigns.

The Future of the Service

We shall continue to review our service to ensure we are developing, improving and complying with the TSA’s Code of Practice in order to maintain our excellent customer satisfaction and compliance.

We have had a staffing structure change in the Monitoring Centre and now have 2 supervising officers in post who oversee new lifeline applications and account set ups ensuring a smooth process for the customer and who also work closely with our suppliers.

We will explore all the possibilities of having an online payment option added to the website to allow more payment options for the customer.

Options at the moment are being considered for a self-installation option for our customer which will help keep costs down as well as hopefully broaden the location of our client base.

We are also trying various other options for advertisement with a full page advert in the ‘Ashford for You’ Magazine which is sent out to all residents of the Borough quarterly in an attempt to build on our customer base.

What can you do to help us?

As a customer focused service we welcome and encourage your comments and feedback on anything in this annual report and indeed any aspect of our lifeline service. Please feel free to contact us in the following ways;

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Email: lifeline@ashford.gov.uk
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