SERVICE SPECIFICATION FOR THE PROVISION OF
A COMMUNITY ALARM SERVICE

The specification describes the Service to be delivered under the Steady State Contract for
Provision of Supporting People Services.

*Working in partnership to provide high-quality, cost-effective and flexible welfare services
for the vulnerable people of Kent, which promote independent living, facilitate social
inclusion and keep them safe and secure. It is envisaged that welfare services will in time
complement other service provision across the county.*
(Kent Five Year Supporting People Strategy 2005-10)

1. Introduction

The Kent County Council Supporting People Team is charged with the commissioning and
procurement of alarm services throughout the county. At the present time, provision is variable and
price varies considerably. The Supporting People Team would wish to make the delivery and price of
the provision of alarm services far more explicit whilst attempting to achieve consistency throughout
the county.

It should be clearly stated that these service specifications do not include a physical presence
response. Community Alarm Service provision does not include payments for physical attendance to
individuals and should be limited to advice, help and support given remotely.

2. Facility

2.1 The Supporting People Team is seeking to purchase a monitoring service (or a number of
monitoring services) for existing community alarm services. This service will be required on a
24-hour basis for every day of the contract.

2.2 Additionally we would wish to purchase regular testing arrangements of the individual
alarm units in line with standard TSA requirements.

2.3 It is expected that the monitoring service provider would have a good knowledge and level of
understanding of community/health/social care support services in the local area where the
accommodation exists, including the voluntary sector, and that this knowledge is used to
provide effective telephone response and support to individual clients and their families.

2.4 Any additional services to be provided must be fully described and priced.

2.5 In cases where the monitoring service provider is also the provider of the physical
alarm equipment, the alarm equipment should meet the technical requirements of a
Telecare service. If this is not the case, the equipment provider will make every effort to
upgrade equipment or, in the case of hardwired provision, provide an appropriate dispersed
system that can link to a Telecare service should the service user be assessed as requiring a
Telecare Service by KCC Adult Services.

3. Social Alarm Call Handling – Quality Requirements

3.1 The Supporting People Team requires that the service meets the standards of the prescribed
contract monitoring and review tool, namely the Quality Assessment Framework (QAF) Lite.
This monitoring tool is specifically designed for use with community alarm services.

3.2 In addition, providers must be accredited with part 1 of the Telecare Services Association
(TSA) Code of Practice at the outset of the contract.

3.3 The supplier shall have in place a quality management system to ensure internal control of
quality and consistency of practice. Contractors are required to describe the systems that they
operate.

3.4 The supplier shall be committed to a process of continuous service improvement. Contractors
are required to describe their service improvement plans and demonstrate their past
performance in service improvement. This will include the maintenance of the TSA standards
as set out above.

17/07/2013
4. **Call Handling Equipment**

4.1 The supplier shall fulfil the call handling activities arising under this contract using appropriate call handling equipment.

4.2 All calls from social alarm and Telecare systems shall be received and managed on call handling equipment that is specifically designed to receive calls from such systems. Contractors shall provide details of the equipment that they have installed and the age of that equipment.

The systems deployed by the contractor shall be compatible with the equipment utilised by the landlord. Details of these systems will be made available at a later date.

4.3 Contractors shall confirm that the call handling equipment that they use is able to correctly receive and decode messages transmitted from these systems, can correctly display the content of those messages to system operators and can correctly construct, encode and send messages to respond to those systems and remotely manage, configure and programme that equipment.

4.4 The landlord may reserve the right to change or augment its installed field equipment during the life of the contract, without an increase in unit monitoring costs or a decrease in key service quality indicators. It should be noted that certain Telecare and Telehealth products or services may affect the unit price. The landlord shall give the monitoring service reasonable notice of any such change in installed equipment types. Contractors shall certify:

a) Their commitment to meet the customer's requirements.
b) The range of equipment that they are currently able to support on their call handling systems.
c) Their intention to develop their call handling systems to support all social alarm and Telecare products entering the UK market during the period of this contract.

4.5 The contractor shall operate and properly maintain call handling equipment with sufficient capacity to fulfil the requirements of the contract associated with this specification, in addition to any other work transacted via that call handling equipment.

It is possible that the number of connections monitored under this contract may increase. Contractors are required to certify that

a) they currently have sufficient system capacity within their call handling equipment.
b) they have the capacity to accommodate the landlord’s expected levels of business growth without disruption to service quality.

each contractor shall certify the additional capacity that it is able to offer to the landlord/SP Team and the number of new connections that could be absorbed in any 12 month period.

5. **Business Continuity Arrangements**

The contractor shall provide the specified services on a continuous basis during the periods specified.

5.2 The Supporting People Team wishes to assess the ability of the contractor to meet this requirement. Accordingly, contractors shall provide

a) A description of the arrangements that they currently have in place for ensuring business continuity for their services.
b) A copy of the current risk assessments underpinning their business continuity planning.
c) A copy of their business continuity plan.

6. **Data Ownership and Protection**

6.1 All data transferred to the contractor at the start of the contract or arising as a result of the performance of the contract shall be and remain the property of the Supporting People Team and/or the landlord.

6.2 The contractor shall process such data on the Supporting People Team’s behalf, shall facilitate timely access to that data and shall yield up all data to the Supporting People Team on termination of the contract.

17/07/2013
6.3 All contractors shall confirm that their Data Notification with the Information Commissioner extends to cover such data processing activity and shall provide a copy of their current Data Notification.

6.4 The contractor shall operate appropriate systems to ensure that all data is protected from loss, corruption or misuse. Details of these systems shall be provided by all contractors. The contractor shall ensure that all of the data held within electronic systems operated by the contractor is retained for a period of at least 12 months from the date of creation, update or last access, whichever is most recent.

6.5 The contractor shall indemnify the Supporting People Team in respect of loss or corruption of its data. The contractor shall indemnify the customer in respect of any breach of Data Protection legislation arising from their own actions or those of their employees, servants or agents.

7. Data Integrity

7.1 The Supporting People Team recognises that the details of the personal circumstances of service users will change over time. The contractor will be committed to ensuring that its data is accurate, up to date and, where held on more than one system, internally consistent.

7.2 As a result of this contract, the landlord’s data will be held within its own housing management system and the contractor’s call handling systems and notifications of changes to data may be received by the landlord’s staff or the contractor’s staff. All contractors shall provide a:
   a) Method statement for ensuring that relevant data, wherever received is updated in both systems on a timely basis.
   b) Copy of their own procedure for ensuring that data entered by their staff is checked for accuracy

7.3 Data held in respect of individual service users should be checked for accuracy on at least an annual basis and matched with the landlord’s records to ensure ongoing accuracy.

8. Data Coding

8.1 The contractor will agree a data coding scheme with the landlord to ensure that all of the landlord’s data is entered and maintained in a consistent form that will support analysis of user and activity data in a manner that meets the business needs. The contractor shall operate the agreed data coding scheme.

9. Data Entry

9.1 Tendering parties are required to describe the arrangements that they will make for the creation and update of the landlord’s service user and scheme records within the contractor’s systems.

10. Call Handling

10.1 Contractors are required to provide a copy of their current call handling procedures and the training specification that they use to ensure that their staff are competent to provide the service that seek to provide.

10.2 The contractor shall provide a high quality service that is focussed on identifying and responding to the needs of individual service users in an appropriate and empathic manner.

10.3 The contractor shall ensure that calls are answered courteously, in the manner agreed for the landlord’s service users, and with due regard to the caller’s needs and concerns.

10.4 Where urgent or necessitous circumstances are known to exist, the contractor will ensure that appropriate action is taken in response to those circumstances.

10.5 Where urgent or necessitous circumstances arise, the contractor will ensure that service users receive suitable guidance and reassurance until such time as the circumstances are remedied and/or responsibility is passed to an appropriate other party.

10.6 Where an alarm call results in a service user being admitted to hospital, taken into care or otherwise displaced from their home, the contractor shall ensure that a written report is forwarded to the landlord immediately.

17/07/2013
10.7 Where the calls history for an individual service user would suggest a deterioration in that individual’s circumstances, the contractor shall forward a written report to the landlord without undue delay.

10.8 The customer wishes to provide services that are tailored to its own mission, values and business processes and are specific to the distinct needs of individuals and the service promises that they have received. Accordingly, the contractor will be required to demonstrate that it can operate multiple procedures within its call handling processes.

10.9 The landlord may support individuals with special communications requirements. The contractor will need to facilitate service to individuals who:
   a) Require to communicate in a language other than English
   b) Have a hearing or speech impairment
   c) Have a cognitive impairment
   d) Have a visual impairment
   e) Have some other special communications requirement

The mechanisms used to communication with individuals with special needs shall deliver an independent, objective and auditable record of the information provided to and received from these individuals. Contractors shall provide method statement in respect of communication and service delivery for individuals with special communications needs.

10.10 The Supporting People Team and Kent County Council wishes to develop a range of customer-focused Telecare services. The contractor will be required to work with KCC to develop and implement a number of application and user specific procedures in respect of these services.

10.11 The contractor will need to ensure that its staff can identify those individuals receiving specialist services which require the use of customised procedures and that staff follow the correct procedure for each customer and call circumstance. Contractors shall provide a method statement covering this requirement and demonstrate their ability to fulfil the requirement.

10.12 The contractor shall ensure that the landlord’s staff (and Supporting People Team receive appropriate information on request) in respect of incidents occurring on the schemes in general and at the time when staff take a scheme onto local call handling. Such information should include details of emergencies and other circumstances dealt with and details of any service users about which there may be concerns.

10.13 The landlord may wish to demonstrate its services to potential customers and service users. The contractor shall facilitate and support such demonstrations by providing appropriate call handling services.

11. Handling Fire Alarm Calls

11.1 The landlord is required to undertake a fire risk assessment for each building and this document shall be both available for inspection within the scheme and its contents made available to the monitoring centre.

11.2 Signals from fire alarm systems or individual smoke detectors should be handled in accordance with the CFOA Model Agreement on Remotely Monitored Fire Alarms Systems. Test calls from fire alarm systems should be recorded but not passed to the Fire Brigade.

11.3 Signals from fire alarm systems or individual smoke detectors located outside the Fire Brigade area in which a Telecare Response Centre is located should be passed to the appropriate Fire Brigade.

11.4 When the all clear is given the monitoring centre should arrange for the system to be reset as necessary.

12. Proactive Outbound Calls

12.1 In certain circumstances, the landlord may require that the contractor place calls to all residents of selected sheltered housing schemes served by grouped alarm systems to provide those residents with important information. Contractors shall confirm their ability to make such calls to all residents within such a sheltered housing scheme.
12.2 As part of its development of specialist Telecare services, the landlord/Supporting People Team may require that calls be made to nominated individual service users on a regular time-scheduled basis. Such calls may be made for the purpose of obtaining information or providing an activity reminder to those individuals. Contractors shall confirm their ability to provide such a facility, provide a method statement for ensuring that such calls are placed at the required time and meet their required purpose and a pricing basis for such calls.

12.3 Similarly, the use of specialised equipment or need for specialist care may require referrals to specialised agencies, the customer or service user families. Contractors should provide a method statement or existing protocols with other agencies or customers for this service provision.

13. **Access Control**

13.1 Where sheltered schemes have door entry systems, the contractor will be required to determine and permit entry of individuals visiting that scheme during times when the customer’s staff are not on duty on that scheme. Additionally, contractors will be required to maintain a record of all occasions when access was granted. The information to be captured in that record shall be agreed with the landlord. Contractors are required to provide a method statement for management and recording of this activity.

13.2 Where remote electronically operated key safes are installed within the landlord’s premises the contractor will be required to determine whether and when those key safes are unlocked and to whom such key access is provided. Based on information given by the landlord. Contractors are required to provide a method statement for management and recording of this activity.

13.3 Where access to premises is facilitated via a numerical combination device the contractor will be required to hold details of that combination code within the premises / user record. In the event that access is required to premises utilising combination code systems, the contractor will be required to determine whether, when and to whom this code is given. Additionally, contractors will be required to maintain a record of all occasions when the combination code has been issued. The information to be captured shall be agreed with the landlord. Contractors are required to provide a method statement for management and recording of this activity.

14. **Relocation of the Call Handling Facility**

14.1 In the event that the contractor determines to relocate their call handling facility during the period of the contract, or any carry-over period following the initial expiry of the contract, the contractor shall bear the full costs of any reprogramming of the landlord’s equipment arising from this event.

14.2 Should the contractor decide to use a call forwarding or redirection arrangement instead of reprogramming of equipment, the costs of this arrangement shall be borne by the contractor.

14.3 Any relocation of the call handling facility, other than as a result of force majeure, shall be discussed and agreed with the landlord prior to any internal decision to commit to that relocation.

15. **Indirect Telephone Connections**

15.1 Indirect telephone connection arrangements shall include any arrangement that results in a call from the landlord’s equipment being routed to the contractor’s call handling systems via a non-geographical numbering system, a call forwarding or call redirection system or least cost routing system.

15.2 In the event that the contractor wishes to utilise an indirect telephone connection facility, the landlord must be consulted prior to utilising such a facility. The customer will need to be assured of the:
a) Capacity of the facility in respect of the number of simultaneous connections contacted and delivered via that facility
b) Reliability of that facility in respect of % availability and up-time
c) Acceptability of any delay to receipt of calls arising from routing calls via that facility
d) The impacts of any multiplex ratios, audio compression and digital / analogue conversion algorithms and frequency response characteristics associated with that facility on call quality in respect of speech intelligibility and dynamic range and the reliability of command and data transmission
e) The impacts of any additional end-to-end network latency arising from use of that facility and the impact of this on technical service quality and data / control signalling.

For the purposes of assessment, comparison will be made with the relevant average achieved performance metric of the British Telecom UK telephone network.

16. Complaints
16.1 Should the contractor receive any complaint from one of the landlord’s service users, or their representative, this shall be accurately recorded and promptly passed to the landlord for investigation.
16.2 In the event that the landlord/Supporting People Team receives a complaint about the performance of the service being provided by the contractor, the contractor shall co-operate fully and openly with the landlord/Supporting People Team to investigate the circumstances of that complaint and to identify the substance of the complaint, along with any with errors that took place and learning from that incident.

17. Key Performance Indicators & Management Information
17.1 The Supporting People Team shall measure performance of the contractor and the contract using a range of KPI’s and performance management tools as set out in the Supporting People Contract.
17.2 The contractor shall provide the Landlord/Supporting People Team with regular management reports.
17.3 The Supporting People Team will specify the content of the above reports in discussion with the contractor. The Supporting People Team and/or contractor may identify additional reports that may further identify performance or issues.
17.4 Reports may be provided in printed or electronic format, as agreed between the Supporting People Team and the contractor.
17.5 Contractors shall complete the template using ACTUAL DATA for their organisation (over a specific time period), adding other KPI or information regularly reported.
17.6 Contractors should identify existing customers that they provide a similar range of information to for their specific data.

18. Contract Start Up
18.1 The Landlord/Supporting People Team will provide the contractor with details of each of the sheltered housing schemes to be monitored under the contract.
18.2 The Landlord will provide the contractor with details of each service user to be monitored under the contract.
18.3 Contractors are required to provide a detailed project plan for set up of the new service. This should include details of:
   - Data transfer arrangements
   - Any recoding / reprogramming of equipment
   - Customer liaison arrangements
   - Client contractor liaison arrangements

17/07/2013
19. **Out of Hours / Weekend Arrangements**

19.1 Contractors should provide details of arrangements for providing the service outside normal office hours. This should include:
- Detailed staffing arrangements – specific numbers & escalation procedures in case of emergency.
- With regard to KPI performance if Out of Hours service varies significantly from the overall averages.

20. **Recent Audit & Inspection Outcomes**

20.1 The contractor shall provide details of any inspection/review of its services carried out over the last 18 months (if prior to that the most recent – clearly dated).

20.2 The contractor should also provide results (only) of TSA, Audit Commission and Housing Corporation inspection of parent company.

21. **Equipment Fault Reporting and Management Service**

21.1 The Landlord requires a 24/7 service to receive reports of faults in its installed social alarm and telecare systems. This service shall receive reports of faults from service users or automated alerts from systems. Additionally, the service shall carry out regular remote equipment testing activities for identified installed systems.

21.2 When faults are reported or identified, the contractor shall seek to identify the cause of the fault and rectify it remotely with the service user. In the event that the fault cannot be remotely rectified, the contractor shall report the fault promptly to the relevant service organisation.

21.3 All faults shall be recorded in a form to be agreed with the Landlord/Supporting People Team. Such reports shall include the unique system identification, the nature of the fault, the date and time when it was identified, reported to the service organisation and resolved, the name of the service organisation and the reference number provided by the service organisation.

22. **Assignment and Sub-Contracting**

22.1 The contractor shall not assign the contract of which this specification forms part or sub-contract any element of the service without the customer’s express written agreement.