

# South Somerset Careline

Annual Report  
2014/15



## Forward

I am delighted to present this year's annual report from South Somerset Careline. You will see how our service is valued by our customers, our most important people. Careline 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.

With our ageing population, families living further apart and changes in public services giving people more choice in how they organise their own care, South Somerset Careline is well positioned to provide a vital service to people across South Somerset.

I am very proud of the service and our dedicated team of staff who support our customers and visit them in their homes. 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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## 1. Background

South Somerset Careline is run by South Somerset District Council's Housing and Welfare Service. The service has been running for 33 years and offers reassurance to people living at home. We currently have Careline alarms installed in over 2,000 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 currently contracted to Sedgemoor District Council, who operate a control centre for a number of different agencies. Our contract with Sedgemoor 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.



*Careline Team Steve, Bob, Lynn, Sam and Alice (plus Karen, Pip and Shaun not pictured).*

As well as providing pendant alarms, our Careline team works in partnership with Social Services and the Fire Service to install and monitor a range of other Telecare products (personal and environmental sensors in the home) including fall detectors, smoke detectors, carbon monoxide detectors, bed and epilepsy sensors amongst others.

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 2012-2015:**

- To make optimum use of resources for home adaptations every year to enable people to live independently.
- To support communities which are healthy, self-reliant and have individuals that are willing to help each other

### **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



**“I feel very safe wearing my Careline pendant. I wear it all the time when at home. It also gives my family peace of mind.”**

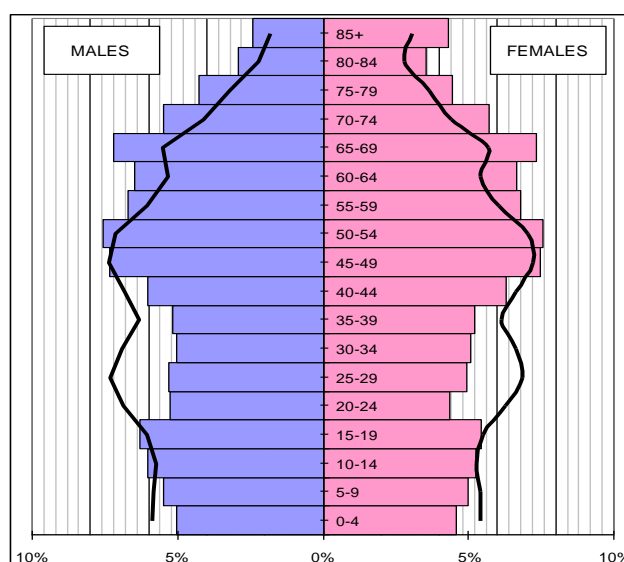
Careline customer

## Somerset Joint Strategic Needs Assessment:

The Somerset Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA 2015) highlights some key statistics for Somerset. Somerset has 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).



48% of the Somerset population live in a rural area; while the health of older people living in the countryside is statistically better than people living in urban areas, 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.

Nationally, organisations are having to adapt to the UK's ageing population. A recent report by Age UK identifies that the number of people in the UK aged 85 and over is now 1.2 million, while there are 87,000 carers in the UK who themselves are aged 85 and over (an increase of 128% in the past 10 years). At the same time, spend on social care services has dropped by £769million since 2010.

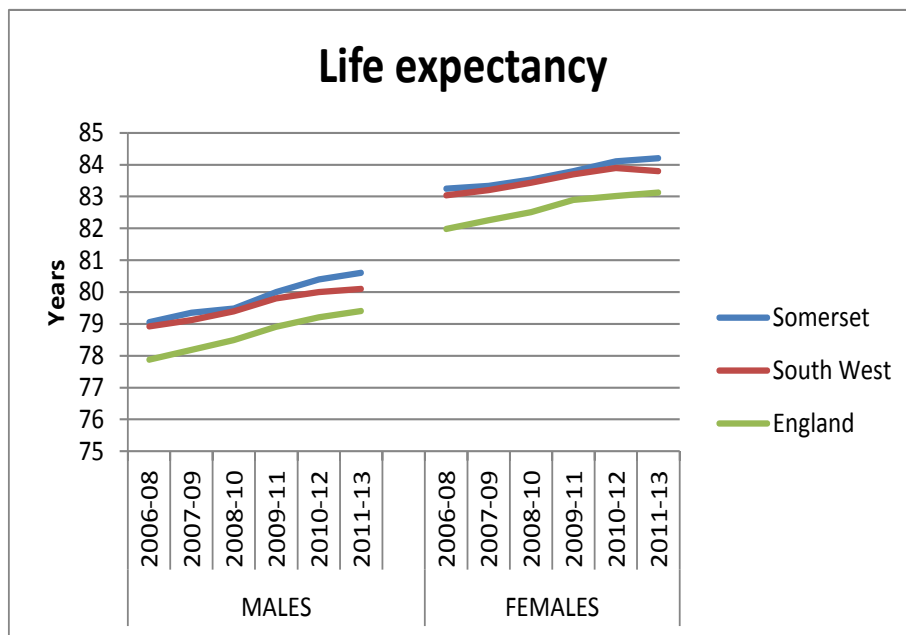
### Life expectancy in Somerset:

Life expectancy is higher in Somerset than the national average and is rising, currently at 81 and 84 for men and women respectively. However there is a widening gap between life expectancy and healthy life expectancy, with many people living with disabilities and health issues in their older age.

Latest figures from the Somerset JSNA show that only 56% of people in Somerset over the age of 65 live with good or very good health; 12% of people in the age bracket 65+ are living with bad or very bad health.

This is reflected in the increase in demand for care and support services across Somerset.

### Somerset Life Expectancy compared to England and the South West:





## The Care Act 2015:

The Care Act came into effect on the 1<sup>st</sup> of April 2015. The Care Act 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 that prevent their care needs from becoming more serious, or delay the impact of their needs
- can get the information and advice they need to make good decisions about care and support
- have a range of providers offering a choice of high quality appropriate services

To do this, the Government has advised local authorities they need to:

- encourage the development of a market which provides a wide range of sustainable care and support services
- engage with local providers and encourage partnership working
- engage with local people about their needs and aspirations and encourage community activities

Careline is naturally well placed to engage with Somerset County Council on implementing the Care Act and ensure that through partnership working we continue to offer vulnerable people in Somerset the choice of high quality, reliable services adapted to meet their needs. Careline has registered on the new **Somerset Choices** website, established by SCC in 2015 to help meet its responsibilities under the Care Act. The website provides people with quality information about care choices in Somerset.

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.

**“Apart from someone sitting on my doorstep all the time I could not have had a quicker or better help when I needed it!”**

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 - 6 week battery 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), 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.

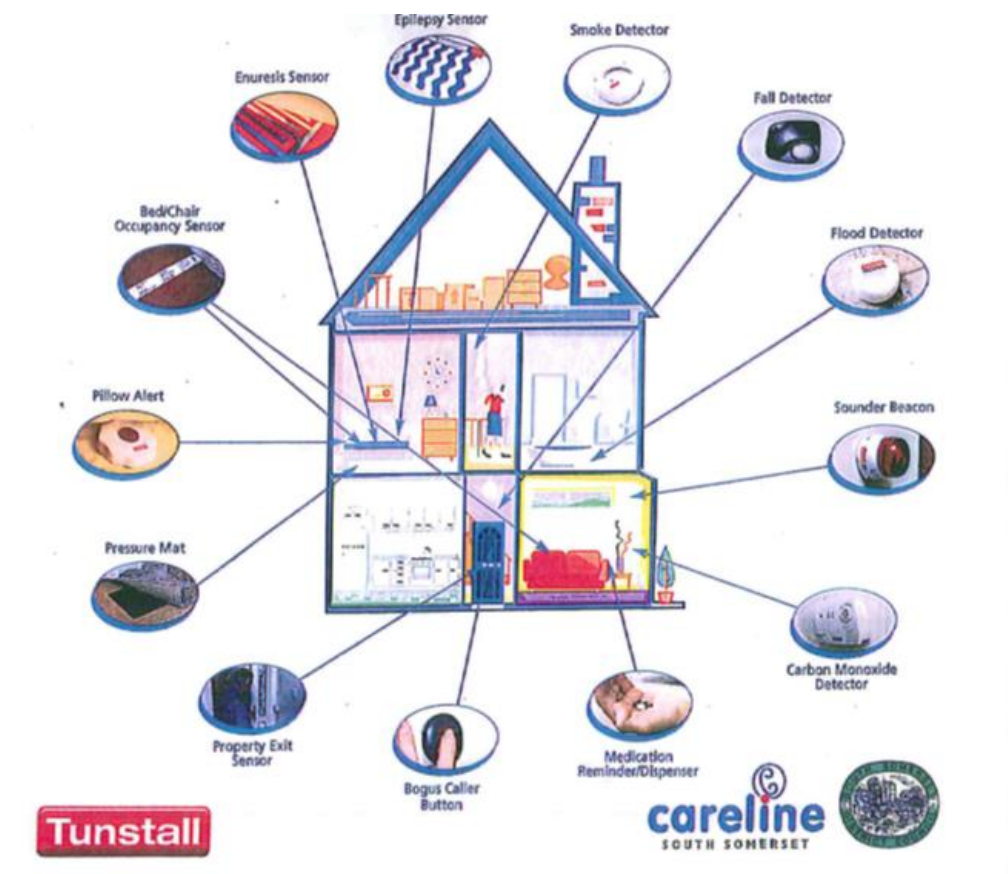
The Careline team also offers a Stepping Stones service which supports people as they are being discharged from hospital. When we receive a referral from the hospital regarding a patient being discharged, we advise the customer that the service is free for 6 weeks with no obligation to continue, and 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. Telecare

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.

A range of Telecare items have been designed to meet this growing need; all of these can be linked directly to our Careline alarms. These sensors include smoke detectors, fall detectors, epilepsy and bed sensors, flood and gas detectors amongst others. All of these trigger a warning alarm and generate a call to our Control Centre where the appropriate action is taken.



Telecare is currently a relatively small part of the Careline service. Of our 2,016 customers we currently have 152 Telecare sensors installed, the majority of which are smoke detectors, by far the most popular of the Telecare items.

## 7. Pricing

The installation of the Careline system is currently **£32.70** (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 **£3.81** per week. All prices are subject to VAT. However in some circumstances we can offer a discounted price (a hardship rate), and VAT is zero rated if the customer has a long term health condition or a disability. For customers who own their equipment, the hire and monitoring is £2.03 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 will contact them or their family to remind them.

All of this customer care is included in the customer's weekly fee. We do not charge for the Telecare items as historically funding for these has been provided by Somerset County Council (Adult Social Care) although this funding has now come to an end. In 2015/16 we have secured a small amount of money from SSDC to continue offering Telecare and we will explore options for the future sustainability of this service.

**In 2014 we launched our permanent Keysafe service which has proved very popular with customers.**

**We charge £20 + VAT for the supply and installation of a Keysafe. In 2014/15 we installed 160 Keysafes and demand continues to grow.**



**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. We currently deliver the service to 2,016 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 2014/15	
0-64 years	5.3%
65-69 years	3.3%
70-74 years	5.4%
75-79 years	10.8%
80-84 years	20.8%
85 years and over	54.4%

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 64 dispersed alarms; in addition we support 1 'hardwired' scheme containing 35 pullcords (17 in resident's flats and 18 in common rooms, lifts etc).

### 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 2015 newsletter can be found here: <http://www.southsomerset.gov.uk/housing/independent-living/careline/>

In 2014/15 we received 7 complaints and 9 compliments. We take all of our complaints seriously and abide by the SSDC Complaints Policy. We ensure that

appropriate action is taken and where appropriate 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 (the last one before that was in 2013). The results are summarised below:

Percentage of respondents who are very or fairly satisfied with the Careline service (TSA target = 90%)		
	2013	2015
<b>Quality of services</b>	88.7%	98.5%
<b>Speed of response</b>	87.2%	92.5%
<b>Helpfulness of staff</b>	87.9%	94.8%
<b>Value for money</b>	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 on 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 2014 our Control Centre responded to 38,556 calls for South Somerset Careline customers. On average 98.02% of calls were answered within 60 seconds which is slightly below our target and this will be discussed with the Control Centre.

Month	<1 Minutes (TSA target 98.5%)	< 3 Minutes (TSA target 99%)	>3 Minutes
April	98.03	1.88	0.09
May	98.16	1.62	0.22
June	97.38	2.36	0.27
July	98.19	1.70	0.11
August	97.33	2.51	0.16
September	98.02	1.98	0.00
October	97.87	2.04	0.09
November	98.19	1.77	0.04
December	97.52	2.29	0.18
January	98.19	1.73	0.08
February	98.98	0.95	0.08
March	98.43	1.50	0.07
<b>Average</b>	<b>98.02 calls answered within less than 1 minute</b>		

**“When I pressed the pendant I thought it would be quicker getting through to the control centre”**

Careline customer

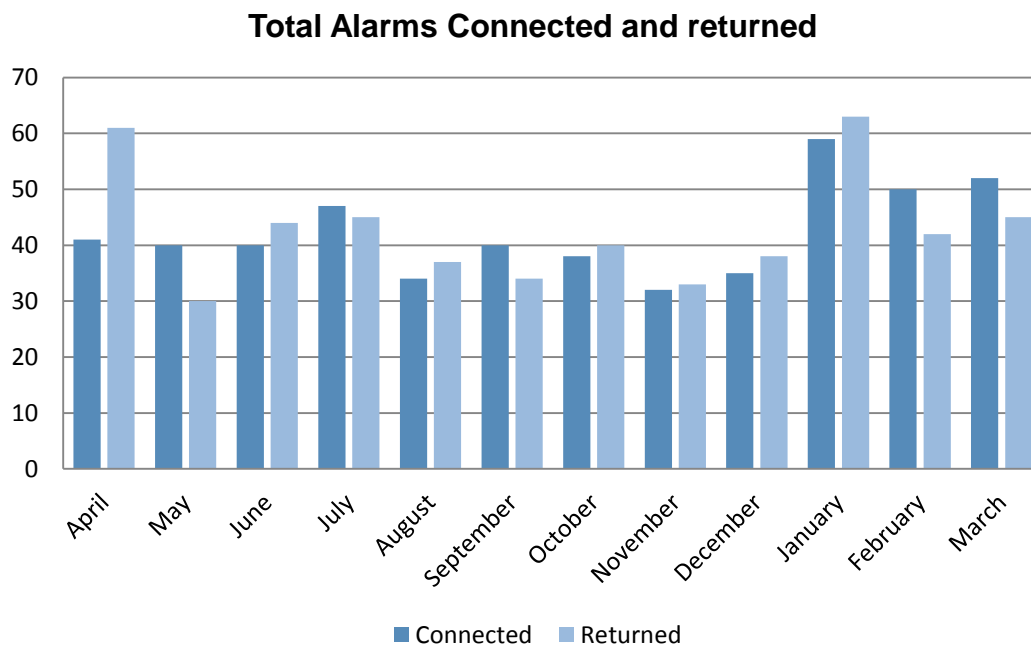
**92.3% of our customers rated the speed of response as very good or fairly good; we have contacted the 0.7% who said the speed of response was poor**



## Alarms connected and returned

Our team connected 508 new alarms in 2014/15, compared to 490 in 2013/14; this averaged at 42.3 new service users per month.

In the same period we had 512 alarms returned. Overall, our total number of customers remained fairly static at **2019** (31 March 2014) to **2015** (31 March 2015).

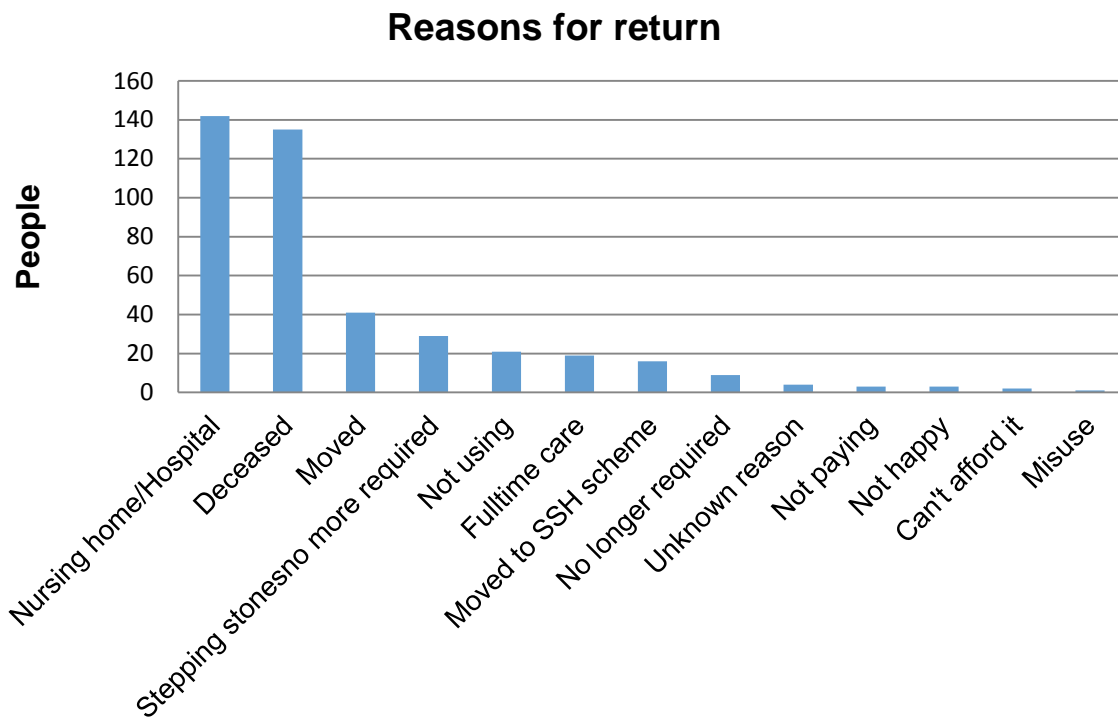


January 2015 was our busiest month when we ran a 'free month' promotion and supported an exceptional level of hospital discharges. Our highest months for returned alarms were April and January (a pattern which is similar every year).

**"I think you are not only a real lifeline but an amenity, giving confidence to those living alone that instant help is at hand. The birthday phone calls are such a kindness. Thank you all."**

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 dies. 6.8% of our customers return the alarm after the free 6 weeks 'Stepping Stones' service. Only 0.7% of customer returns have been 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.**

**“This is such an exceptional service, and it keeps the family from worrying about me.”**

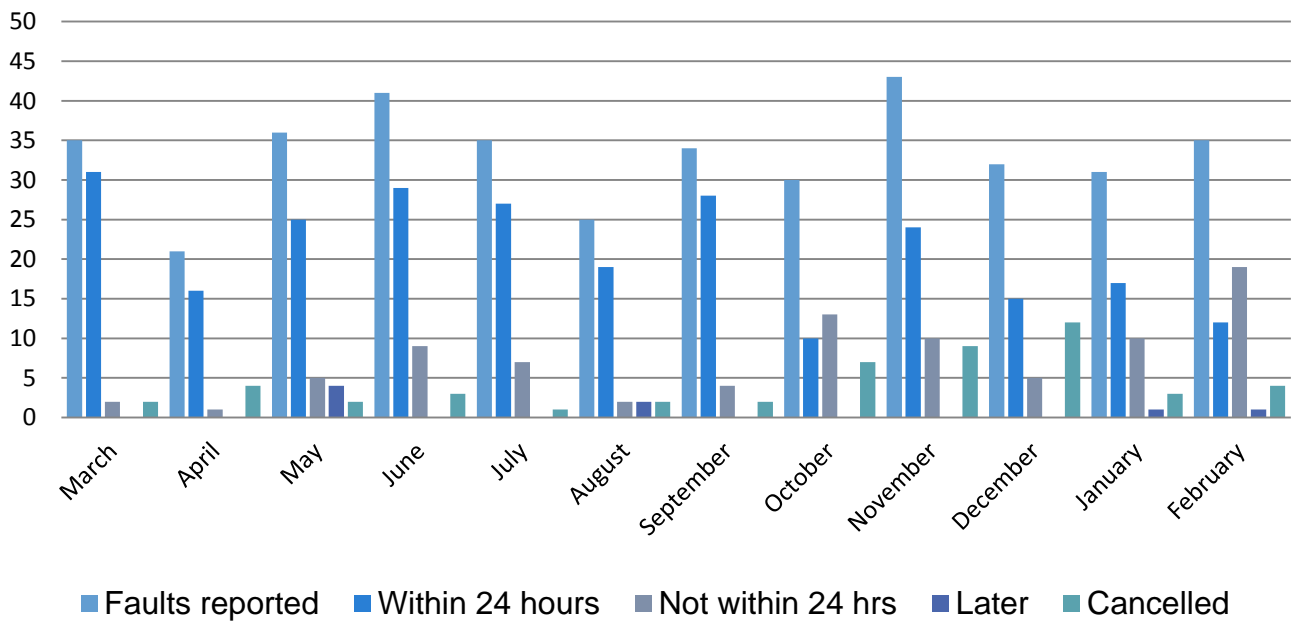
Careline customer

## 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 Telecare whose engineer responds to faults within 24 hours of being reported.

During the year 2014/15 we reported on average 30.25 faults per month. 87.4% were repaired within the target time of 24 hours.

Repairs in 2014/2015



**"It has been such a reassurance for us to know that Dad had access to immediate help & this was never better demonstrated than last weekend. Thank you all for your friendly and professional help"**

Son of Careline customer

## Emergency calls

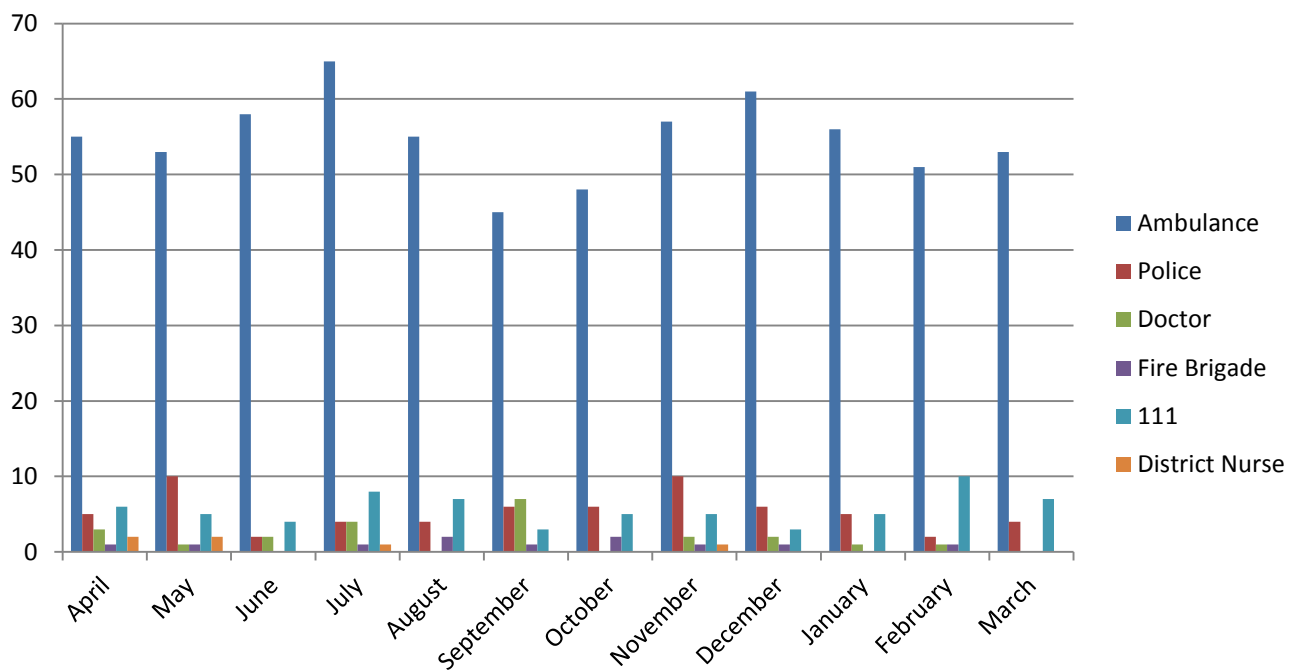
Our Control Centre responded to a total of 38,556 calls in 2014. In the vast majority of cases, a neighbour or relative was contacted to check on the welfare of the client.

In 829 cases, the operator made a call to the emergency services to provide immediate assistance to the customer.

657 calls requested an ambulance, 64 the police and 23 to doctors. 11 requested the fire brigade, 68 requested 111 and 6 contacted for the District Nurse.



## Emergency calls



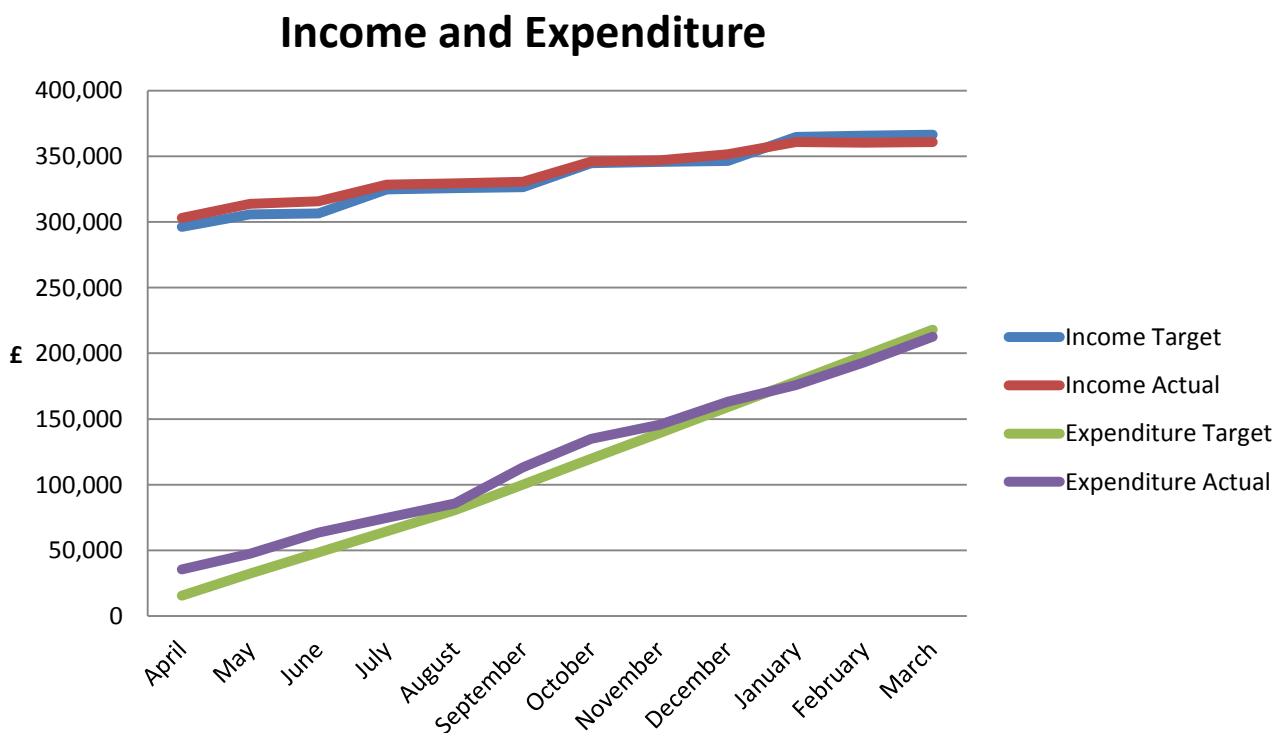
## 10. Income and Expenditure

In 2014/15, the total expenditure for South Somerset Careline was **£207,931**.

A breakdown of the costs is outlined below:

Salaries	£80,555
Travel	£13,664
Printing and Stationary	£4,985
Alarms purchases	£28,065
Adverts and promotion	£4,309
Control Centre contract (currently with Sedgemoor Council)	£29,734
Maintenance (contract with Tunstall Telecare)	£25,702
Telecare items	£5,319

In 2014/15, the service generated **£357,798** in income (an increase of £26,289 compared to 2013/14).



## 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 2014/15 we took 636 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.

Many of our referrals come from Yeovil District Hospital (YDH) and other community hospitals. Installing a 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 Age UK reported that £669 million was spent in 2014/15 keeping people in hospital while waiting for suitable care at home. 41,389 days were wasted with patients staying in hospital beds waiting for home adaptations.**

In 2014/15 we installed **149** 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 the Frail Older Person's Assessment Service at YDH 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 2014/15, 325 new Careline customers heard about us through their social worker or hospital staff.



We are always exploring new ways of working in partnership. In 2014/15 we gave 16 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 192 people. We also advertise Careline in a wide range of local magazines and advertising outlets, with just over 2% of our budget being spent on advertising and promotion.

### New referrals - Where did you hear of Careline?

Doctor	<b>46</b>
ILT/Carer/Carer support/OT/Hosp staff	<b>325</b>
Family/Friends	<b>97</b>
Day Centre	<b>2</b>
Local Paper/Magazine Advert*	<b>44</b>
SSDC Website	<b>14</b>
Leaflet from SSDC offices or staff	<b>18</b>
Just knew of us - couldn't say where	<b>17</b>
Had an alarm before	<b>15</b>
Had demo before	<b>6</b>
Police	<b>1</b>
Fire Brigade	<b>4</b>
Compass disability group/rethink	<b>3</b>
Parkinsons Group	<b>1</b>
Careline newsletter (voucher intro a friend)	<b>3</b>
Not know (not on form/asked by us)	<b>40</b>
<b>Total referrals taken</b>	<b>636</b>
* breakdown of local papers/magazines	
Your Somerset	<b>7</b>
The Visitor	<b>9</b>
West Gazette	<b>2</b>
South Somerset News	<b>14</b>
Blackmore Vale	<b>1</b>
Client not sure which publication	<b>11</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>44</b>

## 12. Future Plans 2015/16

As well as the continued delivery of an excellent service to our existing service users we have a number of key areas for further development this year which include:

1. Develop a Business Plan and Marketing Strategy to ensure continued growth of the service and active promotion to a wider audience
2. Increase our customer base by 120 people per year
3. Explore improved IT and remote working
4. Explore further use of Telecare products and secure the financial future of our Telecare services
5. Assess the viability of a Handyperson service
6. Further partnership working with local support agencies
7. Work with Somerset County Council to implement the Care Act 2015

**The few times I have used the Careline in an emergency they have been fantastic, I can't see how you can improve on a well-tested service.**

**THANK YOU!**

A Careline Customer



### 13. 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.southsomerset.gov.uk/careline](http://www.southsomerset.gov.uk/careline)

Alice Knight Careline and Welfare Manager

Phone:          01935 462943

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



**Help is at hand – Every day and night of the year**