

DUNDEE CITY COUNCIL

REPORT TO: SOCIAL WORK COMMITTEE – 16 December 2002

REPORT ON: COMMUNITY ALARM SERVICE EQUIPMENT REPLACEMENT

REPORT BY: DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL WORK

REPORT NO: 892-2002

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

To advise of the need to replace and upgrade equipment used by the Community Alarm service to support and monitor the care of vulnerable adults and older people

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that :-

- 2.1 Community alarm equipment currently outwith warranty is replaced
- 2.2 The main server is upgraded to develop its capacity to manage SMART equipment
- 2.3 The server upgrade and replacement units are procured from the current supplier, Tunstall
- 2.4 Resources are allocated from within the Social Work Department revenue budget to ensure that the Community Alarm Service can continue to deploy effective, safe passive alarms and to network with next generation SMART technologies

3.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The costs of these proposals are outlined in the attached financial appendix . This cost will be met from monies allocated by the Scottish Executive to invest in home based services.

4.0 LOCAL AGENDA 21 IMPLICATIONS

The proposed changes are intended to support frail, vulnerable individuals to remain in their own home for as long as they choose to do so, where their assessed needs can be met with appropriate services including effective response to emergencies. This should ensure that expensive NHS, residential or nursing home resources are not used inappropriately.

5.0 EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES IMPLICATIONS

This service allows the department to contribute to the support and emergency care of older people and other vulnerable adults over a 24 hour period frequently reducing the burden of care on mainly women carers in the community. The service is offered to everyone who requires this support.

6.0 MAIN TEXT

6.1 The Social Work Department provides community alarms to older people and other vulnerable adults who require to have their care and support monitored regularly or who require to be able to call for immediate assistance even when they cannot access a telephone.

This has been commonly achieved by providing active alarm systems which need action by the person to 'trigger' a call to the Social Work Department's control centre at Clepington Road. This centre will assess the call and decide what kind of immediate support is needed, whether it is one of the emergency services, a visit from a mobile response team of support staff, contact with a relative or simple reassurance

6.2 This service has been in place for 10 years having been instituted by Tayside Regional Council. During that time the City Council has relocated and upgraded the control centre to meet staff health and safety needs and to improve the reliability of the call service. However, the Council has been unable to develop a rolling programme of replacement for alarm systems placed in individual households, nor has it been able to invest in the more recently available SMART systems which provide for passive monitoring of individuals in the home and can be triggered in a variety of ways other than needing an action by the service user.

6.3 Further, a review of the age of the alarm systems has illustrated that most of the equipment is out of warranty and will need costly repair or replacement. The Council's Insurers provided an initial sum to commence replacement of the oldest stock to reduce liability for any failures within the system. The remaining outstanding units now need to be replaced and a budget established to ensure that a rolling

programme of replacement continues for the future. It is intended that a 5 year cycle be introduced as this is the maximum length of time for warranty on these applications and systems. The equipment should be safe or be safely maintained by the manufacturer during this period reducing the Council's liability arising from fault or failure.

- 6.4** This replacement programme will also deal with issues in respect of battery replacement in those units which require it.
- 6.5** Since the inception of Community Alarm services there has been an exponential development in Information and Communication Technologies on which this service is based. It is now possible, for instance to use these technologies to carry out basic support tasks for individuals - from turning on the kettle to turning off the taps when a flood is threatened; from monitoring whether a room is too cold to alerting the fire brigade that there is a fire; from alerting that there is an intruder in the house through to alerting that someone has fallen and is not moving - all of these can now be done remotely through computer based guidance systems. The Housing Department, in conjunction with the Community Alarm service is piloting a range of these monitors for use in sheltered complexes rather than the static alarms currently deployed.
- 6.6** To meet the developing sophistication of the different systems being installed across the city, and to make best use of the Home Care staff in the locality teams, it is proposed that the main server be up graded to handle SMART technology. One of the major benefits will be to direct calls automatically to the nearest source of assistance using mobile telephone systems. Further, additional capacity will allow the service to move away from active alarms, such as pull cords, to passive monitoring systems which can check on activity as described in 6.5 above. Such a system will provide much needed reassurance to older people; allow a more effective deployment of staff; and contribute to the Council's strategy of providing care at home wherever possible and practical. An allowance to meet the estimated cost of upgrading the facility has been included in the department's budget.
- 6.7** As the equipment is specialised and must be compatible with existing control centre equipment and replacement alarm units, the proposed server upgrade must be sourced from the current supplier, Tunstall.

7.0 CONSULTATION

The Chief Executive and the Director of Finance have been consulted about the content of this report.

8.0 SIGNATURE

Alan G Baird
Director of Social Work

6 December 2002

APPENDIX 1**Community Alarm Service – Equipment Replacement 2002/03**

	Total Cost 2002/03
Replacement of Existing Equipment Currently Outwith Warranty: 1,400 units	205,850
Upgrade to Main Community Alarm Server (inc upgrade to emergency call handling service)	61,000
Total Cost	266,850