

Healthier Communities Select Committee			
Report Title	Linkline Community Alarm Service		
Contributors	Head of Adult Social Care	Item No.	10
Class	Part 1	Date:	1 st November 2017

1. Purpose

- 1.1 This report informs members of the Healthier Communities Select Committee on the intention to consult on proposed changes to the Linkline Telecare Alarm Service and asks for comment on the consultation.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 Members of the Healthier Communities Select Committee are recommended to:

- Note the planned consultation on proposed changes to the Linkline Community Alarm Service
- Note the intention to work with Lewisham CCG to review the service offer for people with dementia
- Comment on the proposed consultation questionnaire.

Consultation will be sought on:

- For new Linkline customers, to no longer offer the 'Telephone on' service and instead to provide a 'Full Visiting Service'.
- Revising Linkline service charges and annual uplifts in line with costs and inflation, where Linkline is provided to people living in their own home in the community.
- Plans to consult and review the service offer and charging arrangements with housing providers where Linkline is provided in the homes of social housing tenants.
- Proposal for annual increases in Linkline charges in line with inflation across all sectors.

3. Policy Context

- 3.1 Preventative interventions are critical in managing the increasing demand for health and social care services, reducing the overall burden of disease in the population and have the potential to underpin the financial sustainability of health and care services.
- 3.2 Preventative technology enabled care services like Linkline have a key place in future service delivery, by providing care, early detection and helping

older people and those with chronic health problems to maintain their independence and continue to live in their own homes.

- 3.3 Key national policy drivers in health and social care have placed prevention and early intervention centre stage, this sets the ambition for a strategic shift in how services are delivered. The Care Act 2014 placed greater emphasis on promoting prevention, wellbeing and independence. In particular the Act places a duty on local authorities to promote individuals wellbeing by preventing or reducing the need for care and support. Evidence shows that alarm services can play a role in supporting a more personalised approach to care and support.
- 3.4 The NHS England Five Year Forward View, asserts that the sustainability of the NHS, and the economic prosperity of Britain all now depend on a radical upgrade in prevention and public health. How we adapt and innovate to take advantage of technology will be a key element of this upgrade.
- 3.5 Assistive technology services, like Linkline support Lewisham's Sustainable Community Strategy priority of: Healthy, active and enjoyable, where people can actively participate in maintaining and improving their health and well-being and Safer; where people feel safe and live free from crime, antisocial behaviour and abuse.
- 3.6 The services in this report also support the Council's corporate priorities of Caring for adults and older people, working with health services to support older people and adults in need of care; and Inspiring efficiency, effectiveness and equity: ensuring efficiency and equity in the delivery of excellent services to meet the needs of the community.
- 3.7 The White Paper Putting People First: Commissioning for Connected Care, Homes and Communities published in October 2016 represents a significant step forward in raising the profile of technology enabled care services (TECS) and its benefits.

“Care technology, whether you define it as telecare, telehealth telemonitoring, telecoaching, ehealth, mhealth, digital health or indeed all of the above, when intelligently deployed, has a growing track record of delivering high quality care whilst reducing the cost of provision”¹

- 3.8 In Sept 2016 Adult Social Care savings were proposed to Mayor and Cabinet, this included a recommendation for “increasing the charge for Linkline”. At the time the changes relating to the Linkline proposal were not fully outlined and were agreed subject to consultation. This report provides further detail on the proposed consultation.

¹ Commissioning for Connected Care, Homes and Communities, TSA October 2016

4. Background

- 4.1 A review of telecare and telemedicine was conducted in late 2016. The aim of the review was to identify the range of enabling technology e.g. telehealth, telecare and other patient monitoring devices that were being used across Lewisham, establishing the evidence base and exploring new opportunities for the role of technology in the delivery of health and care services.
- 4.2 A key aspect of the review was how the Linkline service provided by Lewisham Adult Social Care could be sustained in the current economic climate, providing for an increasing level of demand with reducing resources.
- 4.3 The review highlighted the potential for Linkline in the context of the development of a whole system model of care to take a more strategic approach to the future. Moving to a population health approach and patient access to patient health records will influence new models of care and there are opportunities for telehealth and telecare in the new environment. For example, linking technology and data sets, risk assessment and predictive analysis.
- 4.4 The Linkline service has introduced new and efficient ways of working over the years to contribute towards the Adult Social Care budget savings as well as creating a more efficient service for the Linkline customer. New technologies have assisted with reducing the number of times an ambulance service is called out and the incidence of A&E admissions. With a grant from Lewisham CCG, people with dementia have been supported to remain at home for as long as possible with the help of a GPS tracker.
- 4.5 The Linkline Team has been reorganised in the last two years to streamline management support for staff working on shifts as well as ensuring that the back office function is covered during office hours. A further change of the rota is due to be implemented in January 2018 to provide a more flexible resource at peak times e.g. Monday and Friday.
- 4.6 In 2005 a report to Mayor and Cabinet on “Charging policy and future developments of the Linkline service” sought a 5% increase for Registered Social Landlords and non-housing users and to support developing Linkline into an open access and self-financing preventative service.
- 4.7 Later in 2005 Mayor and Cabinet agreed to implement the new unit cost charging framework, and phasing in over three years under Fair Access to Care Services, the financial assessment framework. Since 2005 there have been periodic increases in the Linkline charge, although not on an annual basis. Most recently, In February 2017 the Budget Report set out an inflationary increase of 2.5%

5. Lewisham Telecare Service – Linkline

- 5.1 Lewisham Adult Social Care operate an in-house telecare and assistive technology service, 18 staff are employed to provide an emergency

response service 24 hours a day, 365 days a year to people who may be vulnerable or at risk. Many older people living alone and younger people with disabilities rely on the service to live independently in the community. In September 2017 there were **4,843** Linkline connections. There are more connections than people because a single dwelling may have several connections.

- 5.2 The Linkline service includes a home telephone unit and an emergency button, this can be fixed or worn as a pendant. When the button is pressed by the customer or activated by a telecare sensor an alert is raised at the control centre. Appropriate action is then taken by staff at the control centre, this may be to contact relatives, friends, to call the emergency services or for the Linkline staff to respond by visiting the customer at home.
- 5.3 A connection may be linked to a door entry system, for example in a sheltered housing scheme, hard wired in the home or be a pendant alarm that can be worn by the customer. 2,181 connections are in homes in the community, this might be in private rented accommodation or in the homes of owner occupiers. There are fourteen Social Housing Providers who have a contract with Linkline to deliver telecare in their accommodation, this accounts for 2,662 connections.
- 5.4 Linkline provide two levels of service. The **Full Visiting** service, where the Linkline Service hold keys for the customer, if the alarm is activated Linkline staff will visit the person's home to assist. The **Telephone on** response is where the Linkline Service hold the telephone numbers of family and friends. If an alarm is activated staff will contact a relative/friend who will assist. There are 2,634 people who have a full visiting service and 748 who have a Telephone On service.
- 5.5 Most Linkline Customers have been assessed by Adult Social Care and then are referred to Linkline. However, some people access Linkline directly, for themselves or on behalf of a relative. On the 1st August 2017 there were 598 private Linkline customers, the majority of private customers receive a Full Visiting Service.
- 5.6 Linkline customers range in age from under 60 to 100 and there are 17 people over the age of 100 living independently in the community. The age profile of people receiving support in the dispersed units is older which reflects the growing number of people presenting for social care services later in life as well as the number of people who are living longer often with complex health conditions.

6. Additional services provided by Linkline

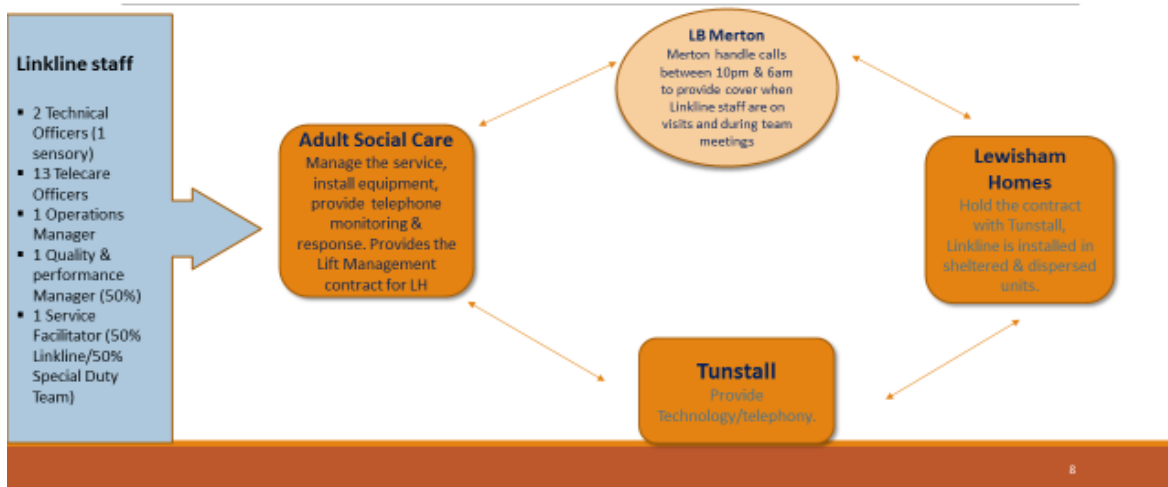
- 6.1 For people with dementia a variety of additional equipment, in the form of sensors can also be added to the basic alarm package. These sensors protect against environmental hazards, for example fire, flooding and the threat of intruders. If someone has a diagnosis of dementia the Linkline service is provided free of charge.

- 6.2 For someone with a cognitive impairment the equipment can assist in managing risks which may threaten their ability to live independently. This might include dangers associated with unlit gas appliances, carbon monoxide or where someone may be prone to walking away from home. The sensors are available to people who have had a social work or occupational therapy assessment.
- 6.3 For people with a diagnosis of dementia an additional service Just Checking is also available, this is a simple on-line activity monitoring system that provides a chart of daily living activity via the web. Small wireless sensors are placed in the home and generate activity information based on the person's movements etc. The information can then be used as an assessment tool in planning individual care and support as it gives a clearer picture of a person's capabilities and actions when they are alone.
- 6.4 Linkline responders are increasingly called out to help people up from off the floor after a fall, which is known as assisted lifting. Between April and September 2017 they were called out to provide assisted lifting 96 times. This service can help prevent the ambulance service being called out unnecessarily and prevent visits to A&E, which is a considerable saving for the health economy.

7. Linkline Key Partners

- 7.1 The delivery of Linkline relies on partners working together to ensure that the service runs smoothly 24 hours a day seven days a week. Adult Social Care manage the service, install equipment, provide telephone monitoring and respond to calls. They also provide the lift monitoring contract for Lewisham Homes.
- 7.2 Tunstall have a contract with Lewisham Homes to provide the technology in schemes and in homes in the community. Lewisham Homes hold the contract with Tunstall and Linkline is installed in their dispersed properties and in sheltered housing schemes.
- 7.3 Lewisham Homes has contributed financially to the Linkline service over several years. The control room is based in a Lewisham Homes Sheltered Housing scheme. Equipment is hard wired into sheltered and extra care schemes which means Linkline appears as a charge on the rent account. Additional one off improvements to the Tunstall system and communication room are funded by Lewisham Homes through the Housing Revenue Account.
- 7.4 London Borough of Merton act as the disaster recovery partner and they handle calls between 10pm and 6am to provide cover when Linkline staff are on visits and during team meetings. Linkline also work closely with the Fire Brigade and receive a grant of £19,500 to support fire prevention in the community by carrying out fire checks and the installation of smoke alarms.

Linkline – Key Stakeholders



8. Linkline Activity

- 8.1 In September 2017 there were 2,181 alarms connected in privately rented and owner occupier homes in the community and 2,662 alarms connected in dwellings where social housing providers are the landlord. In 2016/17 there were 694 referrals to the service, this resulted in 469 installations. The first six months of 2017/18 show a similar pattern of referrals.
- 8.2 Linkline receive approximately 15,000 calls (alerts) every month, 75% of those calls are between 7am and 7pm. However, there are peaks in activity at 9am, 5pm and between 10 and 11 at night. Linkline has been working with the Community Falls Team to identify people who fall frequently and have put in place interventions to prevent future falls. Other information about frequent callers is now being shared with Adult Social Care to ensure that people are supported and appropriate preventative action is taken.
- 8.3 In September 2017 Linkline received an average of 376 calls (alerts) per day and 124 at night, these calls result in six to seven responses (visits) per day and six visits at night. The average duration of a visit is thirty minutes. However, some calls will be much longer if assisted lifting is required or other emergency services are involved. In this period emergency services were called out in 98 of cases. In 18 of those incidents people needed to be taken to A&E following the ambulance callout.
- 8.4 People contact Linkline for a variety of reasons, some people require reassurance, whilst others may require help after they have fallen or need help for another emergency, this type of call accounts for 56% of all calls. Linkline also respond to calls when visitors or carers need access to a sheltered housing scheme, this type of call makes up 10% of calls. Linkline

also make regular calls to customers to test the lines and provide checks, this makes up 34% of calls.

September 2017	Emergency Visits to customers' homes
Daytime (7am- 7pm)	186
Night (7pm -7am)	185
Average duration	34 minutes

9. The Proposed Service Change for consultation

9.1 Proposal One - to have one service offer – Full Visiting Service for new customers

- 9.1.1 There are two levels of service provided by Linkline. **Full Visiting service**, this is where the Linkline Service holds keys for the service user, if the alarm is activated Linkline staff will visit the person's home to assist. The full visiting service charge is £5.64 per week.
- 9.1.2 **Telephone On response**, this is where the Linkline Service retains the telephone numbers of the customer's family and friends. If an alarm is activated staff will contact the designated person who will then respond. The charge for the Telephone On service is £3.55 per week.
- 9.1.3 The proposal is to stop offering the 'Telephone On' service for all new service users and instead to provide a 'Full Visiting Service'. Current service users will not be affected. However, during the consultation period an exercise will be carried out to review the level of service and assess if some customers would benefit from or prefer the Full Response service.
- 9.1.4 The different levels of service were established to provide choice. For those who have relatives and friends living locally the Telephone On service is a good option. However, the number of people who have that support has reduced during recent years, this is evidenced in cases where the nominated individual is not available to respond. When this happens the only option is for Linkline to call the appropriate emergency service.
- 9.1.5 For more frail customers there is an advantage in having a responsive service that can provide help in an emergency, for example help lifting after a fall. This fits with the aim of having a more preventative and holistic service.
- 9.1.6 The majority of customers, 78% receive a Full Visiting Service and 21% of customers receive the Telephone On service. The number of Telephone On customers reducing by 16% in the last year. 31 people receive a combination of the two services and this is based on a longstanding arrangement with a housing provider. This service is not available for new customers.

9.1.7 The proposal to change the service offer has an implication for the capacity of the service to deliver and for future staffing arrangements, although the impact is likely to be gradual in line with new referrals. Based on the current activity figures there will be an increase in activity in alerts that come through to Linkline. However, the main change will be the need for Linkline to provide a visiting response to additional customers.

9.1.8 Telephone On customers make up approximately 20% of all Linkline customers. A 20% increase in activity for the service (modelled on 100% Full Visiting Customers) results in 37 extra calls per month. This would result in 2-3 extra response calls per day. Initially the increase in activity can be contained with the current staffing structure and the new staff rota will support this. However, with this service change and the plan to promote and market the service more widely this would require review after twelve months.

9.2 Proposal Two - Revise Linkline service charges and uplifts in line with costs and inflation in the private sector

9.2.1 The weekly charges for Linkline are £5.64 for the Full Visiting Service and £3.55 for the Telephone On service. In the last twelve years the charge for the Full Visiting Service has increased by £1.75 and £1.87 for the Telephone On service. This is approximately 14 pence and 15 pence on average per year respectively over the last 12 years.

Charges for people living in private rented and home owners		
	Full Visiting Service	Telephone On
Charges from 1/04/05	£3.89	£1.68
Charges from 01/10/05	£4.19	£2.12
Charges from 01/04/06	£4.69	£2.77
Charges from 01/04/07	£4.90	£3.08
Charges from 01/04/12	£4.91	n/a
Charges from 01/04/14	£5.52	n/a
Charges from April 2017	£5.64	£3.55
Total increase	£1.75	£1.87

9.2.2 A benchmarking exercise has been carried out to see how Lewisham charges compare to those of other boroughs. Direct comparisons can be problematic because services vary and the number of connections have an impact on charges. However, taking this into account the information shows that Lewisham Linkline charges are lower than many other boroughs, the gap being greater for the Telephone On service

Benchmarking					
Borough	In House	Cost for response service per week	Cost for telephone only service per week	Installation cost	comments
Camden Careline	n/a	5.54	4.54	n/a	13/14 charges
Wandsworth Watch Line	no	Different rates, average 5.16	n/a	Yes	Do not pay if in receipt of homecare
Sheffield	yes	Average 5.28	n/a	n/an/a	Charges depend on the link
Bromley Carelink	partial	8.82	5.88	n/a	n/a
Islington	yes	8.23	4.16	n/a	n/a
Greenwich	yes	5.61	n/a	yes	Free to users receiving Housing Benefit
Lambeth	yes	3.60	n/a	£60	Includes a range of connection fees
Merton	yes	7.59	4.38	No	Reduction in cost if there is an assessment of need or pension credit
Lewisham	yes	5.64	3.55	yes	

- 9.2.3 The current charges for Linkline fall short of the actual unit cost. A revised unit cost needs to take into account salaries, premises, transport, maintenance, supplies and specialist technical equipment. The Council receives income for the delivery of Linkline. Although, income is less than expenditure, this is for a number of reasons.
- 9.2.4 Firstly, some customers will have been assessed through the Charging and Financial Assessment Framework and pay towards the cost of services they receive, this includes Linkline. Other Customers will have been assessed and do not make any financial contribution to the cost of their service.
- 9.2.5 Secondly, Housing providers are charged different rates, this is partly because there are different service offers, in other cases this is because charges do not reflect current costs which are based on legacy arrangements. Finally, people with a diagnosis of dementia currently receive a free service.
- 9.2.6 For customers in private rented housing and home owners, consultation will be sought on increasing the weekly charge for the Full Visiting Response Service, Telephone On and where it is provided as a combined service. Consultation will be sought on increasing the charges by presenting a range, from 0.75 pence to £2 for the Full visiting service and 0.50 pence to £1.50 for Telephone On.
- 9.3 Proposal Three - Linkline charges in schemes provided by social housing landlords – to consult and review charges with landlords**
- 9.3.1 Linkline provide a telecare service to fourteen social housing landlords with schemes in Lewisham and in other boroughs. The service has been

provided by Linkline for many years and contractual arrangements vary depending upon the type of scheme, location and service offer - visiting or response. In total there are 2,662 connections, there are more connections than people because a scheme will have several connections in communal areas that will require monitoring.

9.3.2 Linkline provide a service to the following housing providers

Housing Provider	Customers
Abbeyfield	6
Hexagon Housing Association	28
Christopher Boones Almshouses	41
Scotscaire/ Royal Scottish Corp	45
Lewisham Parochial Charities	49
Affinity Sutton	61
Phoenix Community Housing	78
Hyde Housing	83
Corporation of London	90
Chislehurst & Sidcup	96
St Clement Danes Charity	110
London & Quadrant	132
Optivo (Amicus Horizon Housing Group Limited)	229
Lewisham Homes	1190
Total	2238*

** The number of connections varies from the number of people because there may be several connections in a single dwelling*

- 9.3.3 As a result of legacy arrangements which resulted in inequitable charging arrangement between tenures, Mayor and Cabinet agreed in 2005 to the recommendation to introduce a phased increase to align the differential charges across social housing providers, in sheltered housing schemes and in other tenures.
- 9.3.4 Linkline charges have increased since 2005. However, there remain differential charging arrangements with housing providers which result in different charges to tenants. Many Landlords add a maintenance charge on top of the Linkline charge. The contract with housing providers gives a reliable and consistent income stream, this is because the Linkline charge is collected by the landlord along with the rent, with the exception of one scheme where 19 tenants pay Linkline directly.
- 9.3.5 The proposal is for consultation with each of the Housing Providers, to review the Linkline service and charging arrangements and to identify any additional maintenance charges that tenants make. The results of this consultation will be reported at the Healthier Communities Select Committee meeting in January 2018. If there are subsequent changes to charges in housing schemes, the landlord will be required to consult with tenants.

9.3.6 Once the consultation has concluded and new charges have been agreed the proposal is that in future annual uplifts will be in line with inflation where Linkline is installed in social housing schemes.

9.4 Proposal Four - Review the Service Offer for people with Dementia

9.4.1 Lewisham CCG fund Linkline £95,000 per annum to provide telecare for people with a diagnosis of Dementia. The funding is used for the installation of standard and specialist equipment and provides a free monitoring service for people with dementia. The number of customers with dementia has steadily increased since the funding began in 2012. On the 1st October 2017 there were 456 people who received the service, this is an increase of 135%.

9.4.2 The increase in numbers of customers with dementia who receive a free service has a significant financial impact on the service. At the end of 2016-17 the total cost of the monitoring charges were £125,792. Other significant costs for the dementia service are the purchase and installation of standard and specialist equipment. In 2016-17 an additional £54,164 was spent on the purchase, installation and maintenance of equipment. In 2016-17 this resulted in an overspend on the grant of £84,956 which has been covered by the Linkline budget.

9.4.3 With the current rate of increase it is predicted that by the end of 2017-18 there will be over 540 customers. There is an urgent need to review the way the service offer for people with dementia is delivered and to ensure that there is equity between people with different long term conditions. However, some customers with dementia may still receive a free service in response to their assessed eligible need.

9.4.4 The recommendation is to work with Lewisham CCG to review the service offer by December 2017. Consideration will be given to how the grant is best utilised by the service. One option is to introduce a monitoring charge and use the grant for the purchase, installation and maintenance of equipment. This would provide the opportunity to invest in new innovations available on the market, for example, GPS devices.

9.5 Proposal Five - Annual charges to be increased in line with inflation across all tenures.

9.5.1 Since 2005 there have been periodic increases in Linkline charges, although not on an annual basis. Most recently, in 2017 the budget report set out an increase in the charge of 2.5%. The proposal is that in future uplifts will be annual and in line with inflation. The intention to increase Linkline charges will be set out as part of the annual budget setting process

10. Financial Implications

- 10.1 This report describes proposed consultation with users of the Linkline service. In addition to proposing that charges be increased annually in future it proposes two changes to existing charges.
- 10.2 First, it proposes that no future clients be offered the Telephone On service. If this change were to be actioned, and if the current client base remained constant, the move to a single offer of the Full Visiting service would generate an estimated additional £28k p.a. The rate at which this were achieved would depend on the rate at which existing service users migrated to the Full Visiting service.
- 10.3 Second it consults on increases to existing charges. Initial financial modelling suggests that an average increase of £1 per week for service users in privately rented and owner occupied homes would generate an additional £51k in billed income. More detailed financial modelling will be undertaken for the final report next year once the results of consultation are known

11. Proposed Consultation Plan

- 11.1 The consultation will begin on the 6th November and close on Monday 1st January 2018. The consultation questionnaire (appendix 1) will be available on the council website. We will report back to the Healthier Communities Select Committee with the finding from the consultation in January 2018.
- 11.2 The consultation will be in two parts:
- Customers who live in private rented housing and home owners. The consultation survey (appendix 1) will be sent to by post. Customers, relatives, carers and other stakeholders will also be invited to attend open access sessions with the Linkline Team.
 - Social Housing Landlords. A series of meetings will take place with each of the fourteen housing providers to review the current service offer and pricing model.

12. Legal Implications

- 12.1 Previously, the provision of Linkline services to members of the community requiring or requesting the service, was made available through diverse statutory routes, not all of which required Social Care assessment. As the service has developed, and with the introduction of the Care Act 2014, and the preventative support requirements it brings to the provision of services, the framework for the provision of the service outwith a housing support service and also as part of the service of supported housing, has made it necessary to streamline and clarify the charging structure.

12.2 Local Authorities have duties and powers to charge for both Social Care and Housing services and should apply charging policies in a transparent and equitable manner. Any changes to such policies should be subject to adequate consultation, with information being provided so as to facilitate informed and timely response. In making any decision, the Mayor and Cabinet should take into account the results of such consultation, having regard to all relevant matters, before coming to any final decision.

13. Crime and Disorder Implications

13.1 There are no specific crime and disorder implications arising from this report.

14. Equalities Implications

14.1 The Linkline service supports people who may be vulnerable due to age or disability to live independently in the community, we would therefore expect the profile of customers to be older than in the general population.

14.2 The majority of customers are over the age of 60, 35% of Linkline customers are between the ages of 60 and 80, 38% are aged 80 – 100 and 17 people are aged over 100. 55% of customers are women.

14.3 Fewer than 30% of customers reported having black and ethnic minority heritage compared with 46 % of Lewisham residents in the 2015 census. The proportion of customers who identify as white is 40% compared to 54% of people who identify as white in the 2015 census. This might be expected given the demographics of the borough and the aging older population.

14.4 The survey that will be used in the consultation exercise will seek to capture more detailed equalities information and this will allow us to assess if the proposed changes will have a disproportionate impact on specific groups.

14.5 A key aspect of the consultation is to improve equity between customers who live in the private sector and customers living in housing provided by Social Housing Landlords.

15. Environmental Implications

15.1 There are no specific environmental implications arising from this report.

16. Conclusion

16.1 This report informs members of the Healthier Communities Select Committee of the intention to consult on the proposed changes to the Lewisham Linkline telecare Service. A report on the findings of the consultation will be presented to the Healthier Communities Select Committee in January 2018.