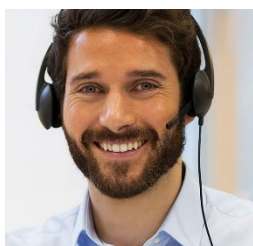


## Telecare



Telecare is a monitoring service that uses a range of personal alarm devices and sensors to help support elderly and vulnerable people continue to live independently at home. It is frequently used to support those living with dementia, who have mobility problems, are at risk of falls or wandering, or who have a physical or learning disability. It gives peace of mind for individuals and, the people they care for, by knowing that if help is needed, it is available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

A basic Telecare system includes an alarm base unit with loudspeaker and either a personal alarm pendant which is worn around the neck, or a personal alarm watch, worn on the wrist. The personal alarm is fitted with an SOS button that when pressed sends an alert to the response centre. For example, if you have fallen, an alert will be sent to the Telecare monitoring service, and they will talk to you through the loudspeaker on the base unit. The trained response team will assess the situation and get you the help you need. This may mean phoning a family member or friend who live nearby, your care provider, or if needed, they can also call the emergency services for you.

Sometimes you might hear Telecare referred to by the terms; pendant alarm, personal alarm, SOS button, or community alarm, but Telecare can also include additional sensors such as bed and chair mats, activity/movement sensors, and fall detectors. Some devices need you to press an SOS button to send an alert, whilst others can be set-up to automatically raise the alert for you when the device detects a problem and recognises that you may need some help or assistance. Some of the more common types of Telecare devices available are outlined below:

### Personal alarms



Also known as a community alarm or SOS button, a personal alarm forms the basis for most Telecare monitoring services and is either worn around the neck (pendant), on the wrist (watch/bracelet), or on the hip. When you press your alarm to call for help, the monitoring response team will assess the situation and notify either a family member, friend, or the emergency services that you need help. Some personal alarms are also fitted with a fall sensor to automatically detect when you have fallen.

### Fall detector/sensor devices

These devices automatically detect when you have fallen and send an alert to the Telecare monitoring service without you needing to press any button or call for help. They are worn in the same way as a traditional personal alarm pendant or bracelet, either around the neck or on the wrist. Some fall detectors can also be connected to a pager system, so if you have a live-in carer, the alert can automatically go to them, meaning you can get the help you need straight away.

### **Bed and chair sensors**

If you are at risk of falling, bed and chair sensor mats can be used to alert a carer when you get up (e.g. get out of bed at night) or if you are at risk of wandering, they can also be used to raise an alert if you get up and don't return by a certain time (e.g. if you tend to wander). They are typically linked to a pager system so that someone else in your home is alerted and can provide help straight away.

### **Floor sensor/pressure mats**

Floor sensors work in a comparable way to bed and chair sensor mats but are placed under the carpet or rug by the side of your bed or chair. They raise an alert when stepped on (e.g., when you get out of bed at night) and can be connected to a pager system. This means a carer or someone living in your home can provide assistance when you need it, for example to ensure you do not fall during the night.

### **Door sensors**



Door sensors can be attached to internal or external doors and let your family or friends know when one is opened unexpectedly. They can be particularly helpful in supporting those individuals who tend to wander but want to remain living safely at home. They can also be used to raise alert if you went out and had not arrived back home by the time you were expected.

### **Flood Sensors**

Sensors can be fitted on skirting boards or floors in the kitchen or bathroom so that if taps have been left running and cause a flood, the system will raise the alert.

### **Extreme temperature sensors**



Telecare sensors that detect changes in temperature can be used to raise an alert if the temperature in the home becomes exceptionally low, remarkably high or changes suddenly. This can help identify if someone is likely to experience heat exhaustion or dehydration due to elevated temperatures in the home and can also detect if the temperature becomes so low that you may become at risk of hypothermia.

### **Monitored medication reminders**



If you are at risk of forgetting to take medication or taking the wrong type or amount, monitored medication reminders can help. They are like automatic pill dispensers (please see Prompts, Reminders, and Medication Aids) but are linked to a Telecare monitoring service and will raise an alert if your medication is not taken at a set time, so that you can be phoned and given a reminder.

## Daily activity/movement sensors



Movement sensors can also alert your Telecare monitoring service, of any unexpected events that are not part of your usual routine so that help is provided when needed. In some cases, it can also be used as a preventative tool by identifying any changes and deterioration.

## FAQs

### What if you live alone?

If you live on your own but have a family member or friend you trust living nearby who would be able to help, you can nominate to have them as your named emergency contact or responder. But, if you do not have anyone close by who could help you, then the Telecare monitoring service will still be able to provide support and send help to you in an emergency.

When an alert is raised, the Telecare monitoring team will assess the call and determine what help is needed. They will then telephone either one of your named contacts, a care provider, or if necessary, the emergency services.

### What if a partner, family member or carer lives with you?



If you have someone that lives with you, then you can choose to have any alerts go to them via a **pager**, so that they can respond and help you straight away.

Pagers can be programmed to make a noise, display flashing lights, vibrate, or any combination of these. They can be linked to a variety of Telecare sensor devices. This can be particularly useful in supporting those at risk of falls or wandering. For example, if connected to a bed sensor and the person gets up in the night, the carer can be alerted using the vibrate only function and provide aid.

### What if I cannot get to the door to let someone in?



If you find it difficult to walk to the door, or you fall often and cannot get to the door, you might consider having a **key safe** fitted.

A key safe is a small secure box fixed to an outside wall that stores your door key(s) and can only be opened by entering the correct code. It provides a safe place to store a key outside your home that enables carers, response workers or emergency services to gain access quickly and easily.

### What if I cannot hear the loudspeaker or the person cannot hear me shouting?



Some personal alarms allow two-way communication through the device itself, but if you have a traditional personal alarm and are worried that you will not be close enough to be able to communicate to the monitoring team via the loudspeaker, new products such as the **Tunstall Sound Boost** can help.

The Sound Boost provides an additional speaker and microphone that can be placed at key points throughout your home, such as in the hallway, lounge, or bedroom, and gives peace of mind by knowing that you will be able to speak to and hear the Telecare monitoring centre wherever you are in your home.

### What if you want to go outside or are away from home?

Most Telecare systems will only work whilst you are in the home and the devices are able to link to the base unit, meaning you cannot use them if away from your home. However, there are now some new mobile Telecare devices that work using mobile network and GPS (Global Positioning System) technology. This means you can have the same level of reassurance with these devices as you would get from a traditional Telecare service but with the added benefit of being able to continue doing the things you enjoy, such as going to the local shops, going for a walk in the park or visiting friends.



Mobile Telecare products, such as the **Careium 450**, can be worn as a pendant or attached to a keyring. The Go includes a GPS locator, fall detection, SOS button and two-way communication and unlike traditional pendant alarms, allows the user to easily raise an alert to the Telecare monitoring centre should they need help while away from the home. If you are not keen on wearing a pendant, then other mobile Telecare devices are available and can be worn in place of a traditional wristwatch. Please see the section on GPS and Tracking Systems for more information.