

Appendix C - Careline Options Communications and Staffing Plan

Context

Careline is a service provided by Tendring District Council (TDC) to support around 7,500 vulnerable people living independently in their own home through Telecare. This includes fall bracelets, watches and pendants. It provides a 24/7 service to its paying customers, as well as some additional offers such as a lifting service. Careline also supports TDC's out-of-hours capabilities and CCTV control centre.

A deep-dive review has been conducted by a TDC officer external to the service – reporting to the Portfolio Holder and Assistant Director, with the Portfolio Holder presenting various options to Cabinet for decision-making.

Objectives

The overall aim of this communications plan (and subsequent activity) is to support a smooth transition from current Careline operations to whichever option is taken forward; recognising the recommended option is to cease the telecare aspect of the service.

Specific objectives are;

Ensure a good understanding of the rationale behind the review/chosen option by the public, Members and the wider organisation.

Support existing customers to a smooth transition to alternative or no provision (whether that be a new provider, revised TDC provision, or no service if that is their choice), with accurate information.

Support affected staff through the transition by effective communications of the support from Human Resources (HR) to them, both directly and through the trade union.

An outline timetable, with proposed actions, is outlined below. This is subject to change as the process takes place, with later dates particularly flexible.

Date	Milestone	Audience	Action	Owner
18 July	Pre- agenda publication	Careline Staff	Staff briefing & communication	AD / HR
		Members	Group Leaders	CX/AD
18 July	Cabinet agenda published	Public	News release & associated comms.	Communications
		Customers	Inform options	Lead officer
		TDC staff	Staff update	CX/AD (+ comms)
26 July		Customers	Update on decision &	Lead officers

	Cabinet; preferred option chosen		consultation. Initial info on alternative providers?	
		Public	News release & associated comms (e.g. website, social media)	Communications / Lead officers
		Careline Staff	Immediate written update on preferred option decision; to include dates for further updates	AD/HR
		TDC staff	Staff update	CX/AD (+ comms)
		Members	Update on decision & reminder of key messages	CX
August	Public consultation begins	Public/TDC staff/Customers	General information on consultation	Comms / Lead officer
		Careline staff	Staff encouraged to engage	HR/AD
Early/Mid- September	Public consultation reminder	Public/ Customers/ Staff	Encouragement to take part in consultation	Comms / Lead officer / HR
Late Sept	Public consultation ends	Careline staff	Short update on next steps	HR
~ 7 November	Cabinet agenda published. Report published. Consultation outcome. Recommended way forward.	All as per previous Cabinet agenda published: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Customer update • Careline staff update • Public update • Member update 		
15 November	Cabinet. Final decision made	All as per previous Cabinet: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Customer update, including next steps • Careline staff update, including next steps • Public update • Member update • TDC wider staff update 		
The below depends upon the chosen option; planning current on recommended (Option 2)				

~ 22 November	Formal staff consultation begins	HR process begins with staff and union, including possible notification to Insolvency Service		
w/c 6 Jan 2025	End of HR staff consultation	Careline staff	Feedback and outcomes	HR
Ongoing	Transition arrangements	Careline staff	Operational arrangements	HR
		Customers	Operational arrangements	Lead officers
		Public	Reactive media work	Comms

Engagement

The public consultation on the preferred and alternative options will be carried out in line with our Community Engagement Strategy.

This will include using a variety of channels to reach the public and encourage them to take part.

While a digital-first approach is preferred for the public at large, recognising the specific needs of segments of the Careline customer audience means this cohort will be contacted using the channels they are signed up to. This may potentially also involve contact with next of kin or other contacts where required to ensure understanding and accessibility surrounding the consultation.

Formal staff consultation, if required, will be carried out under the Council's existing human resources and employer policies.