



Lifeline

Somerset Lifeline Service

Annual Report 2024-2025



Somerset Lifeline Annual report April 2024 – March 2025

It's been a very busy and challenging year with Somerset Council facing a severe financial crisis. While the council has taken steps including a significant workforce reduction of over 700 staff by April 2025, and the sale of assets, Somerset Lifeline has seen increased investment due to the critical importance and successful nature of our service.

We will be offering the Lifeline service to residents in the Mendip area of the County, an area that previously did not have a Council Lifeline service and have recruited additional team members to enable this. We're not quite ready to offer the Emergency Response Service in this area yet but we intend for this to happen as soon as customer demand reaches the right level.

In our last annual report, we explained that we had some issues with Direct Debits, we're pleased to say that, working closely with our colleagues in the Council's finance teams, we have resolved these issues and have also changed our process, so wasteful monthly invoices are no longer needed.

Call Handling and Monitoring

Between the 1st April 2024 and 31st of March 2025 Somerset Lifeline handled 300,455 calls. These include Lifeline Monitoring Calls, Out of Hours calls for our Council and others, test calls from our customers, calls requiring the emergency services or our own Emergency Response Team attendance, smoke alarm activations, carbon monoxide detectors, heat detectors and reminders to take medication. Of course, we also make many out-going calls following up on your calls for assistance and making sure everything is ok, plus making welfare and reassurance calls.

- 95.94% of these calls were answered within 60 seconds. Our target for calls answered within 60 seconds is 97.5%.
- 99.57% were answered within 180 seconds. Our target for calls answered within 180 seconds is 99%.
- Our Emergency Response Team responded in person to 3,196 calls for help.

Business Continuity

New team members have been added across all departments in the past year, including an increase in management capacity. The call handling system has been upgraded to a digital, web-based platform, enabling staff to work both remotely and in office locations. Remote work options provide greater resilience and reduce risk if an office becomes inaccessible, as well as broadening recruitment opportunities within the County.

Lifeline Officers are now equipped with laptops that can connect to our systems remotely, allowing them to update customer information without returning to the office, resulting in greater efficiency.

Somerset Council has introduced Electric Vehicles for the team to continue service delivery while reducing environmental impact. Additionally, a postal return system has been implemented for customers ending contracts, making equipment returns more time and resource efficient, and providing an alternative to having to make appointments for an installer to attend.

Digital Switchover

A significant project was undertaken to upgrade the alarm service in Somerset prior to the completion of the national digital switchover, which has been completed ahead of schedule. In 2023, the UK Government announced an initiative to transition to digital-only telephone lines by the end of 2025; this deadline has since been extended to early 2027.

Over the past year, the Somerset Lifeline team successfully replaced more than 6,000 analogue units with new digitally enabled careline devices. These advanced units provide users with direct access to Somerset Lifeline's 24/7 monitoring centre, ensuring the ongoing safety and support of vulnerable residents throughout the region.

Through close collaboration with both service users and professionals, Somerset Lifeline has also implemented bespoke solutions for residents in remote areas with limited mobile signal or frequent power interruptions, thereby enhancing peace of mind for both users and their families. All upgrades were provided at no additional cost to Somerset Lifeline customers. We would like to express our sincere gratitude to customers for their cooperation and support during this process and is pleased to have completed the project ahead of schedule and under budget.

Thank you

As the Head of Somerset Lifeline, I would like to thank our customers, colleagues, and partners for their ongoing support of this service. My role involves receiving feedback from those who have used our services during the year, ranging from brief acknowledgments of assistance provided in difficult moments to formal notes of appreciation regarding emergency response. The team at Somerset Lifeline is always available to support you and your family members whenever you need us.

Richard Burge

Head of Lifeline and Out of Hours

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