

Advice for supporting victims of pendant alarm scams.

There are companies using high pressure sales to trick people into signing for new pendant alarm systems. The callers can use misleading information about the 'digital switchover' to confuse people into signing for new alarms, which may be completely unnecessary. Or the NHS, the council or the GP surgery is mentioned during the call, which reassures the person that they are talking to someone they can trust.

Unfortunately, with these rogue companies, the devices sold may not work at all or more worryingly there may not be any telecare help at the other end of the system. National Trading Standards colleagues have warned of a case where the client fell in their garden. They pressed their recently purchased alarm, but no help came. A neighbour heard their cries the following morning and was able to get assistance for them.

- If you are carrying out a home visit to a client and you see that they have a pendant alarm, that you haven't seen before, make some initial enquiries about where the alarm came from.
- There should be paperwork from the company including contact details for the client to use in the event of an emergency. If that isn't available, then consider contacting the client's bank to find out who the payments are being made to.
- Which! Magazine has warned that there has been a surge in complaints about rogue companies and that these companies target vulnerable clients <https://www.which.co.uk/news/article/surge-in-cold-calls-targeting-older-people-about-personal-alarms->
- If your client has a Careline Plus system from the council you will need to advise them of the digital switchover but please reassure them that the current system will work, with any necessary adaptations, but they adaptations will be carried out by the Careline Plus team at no cost to them [The Digital Switchover | Croydon Council](#)
- If you find that your client has contracted with a company that you are concerned about, get in touch with the Trading Standards team for further assistance. As well as additional help the team has access to a shared enforcement database where they can log details of the problem company so that colleagues across the country are aware.
- Make sure the client's landline and mobile telephone numbers are registered with the telephone preference service. [Telephone Preference Service](#) While registration won't prevent rogue companies from contacting your client, it will reduce the number of sales and marketing phone calls that your client receives. Crucially the Information Commissioner's Office takes action including fines against companies that cold call people who are registered with the TPS. Cold calls received after registration can be reported to the ICO [Nuisance calls and messages | ICO](#)

These home monitoring systems provide much needed peace of mind for clients and their families. It is shocking that predatory companies are cashing in on people's concerns about telecare systems, but we hope by alerting Adult Social Care and Health colleagues to these tactics together we can prevent a tragedy happening.