

# Early Intervention & Prevention



## What is the Devon Mobile Response Service (DMRS)?

Not to be confused with the Rapid Response Service (Domiciliary care teams who can be sent into people's homes to look after them in a crisis), the DMRS can respond, instead of an ambulance, to a call which is not related to an urgent health issue.

*The most frequent assistance requested is for help due to a 'non-injury' fall.*

There are particular concerns about vulnerable, older service users in distress who are left to fend for themselves for long periods of time, because the majority of these 'out of hours' needs are not related to urgent health issues and service users are often very reluctant to call an ambulance.

More than 13,000 people aged over 65 in Devon need support to help them live independently, but over half of them will have no face-to-face support at home.

*The DMRS is a safe, popular and cost-effective alternative to hospital admission or admission to permanent care.*

South West Ambulance Services (SWAST) was commissioned to provide this clinically supported, but **non-emergency**, mobile response to incidents where the service user doesn't feel that they need an ambulance. **This increases the choice, independence and control that people have over their lives.**

An exclusive 24-hour service which covers the whole of Devon, the DMRS has a vehicle with equipment (for lifting and other jobs), staffed by an appropriately trained worker.



A response can only be triggered by a call to an alarm service. On arrival at the service user's home, the worker's role is to make contact, assess the situation, and take appropriate action which could include:

- Risk assessment
- Supervision and monitoring of health and wellbeing
- Signposting to health/treatment services
- Help in establishing personal safety and security
- Help in establishing the safety and security of the dwelling
- Emotional support
- Help in gaining access to other services
- Access to local community organisations
- Advice, advocacy and liaison
- Advice and support on repair work/ home improvement work
- Help with mobility.

## Case Study 1

The Mobile Response Service responded to a call from an elderly woman who had fallen and was unable to get up. She was found on her bed having spasms due to her Parkinson's disease - she had run out of medication that morning.

The MRS worker searched for the medication, or its empty container, obtained a prescription and picked up the medication from an out of hour's pharmacy. Once the woman had taken the medication, she was up on her feet and walking around. With no medication this woman would have been admitted to hospital.

## Who can have the service?

At present, to be eligible to receive this service, members of the community must be over 55 years of age, **and:**

- pay a charge for an alarm and/or a housing support service,
- be unable to access support, either because people that normally help them are unavailable or off duty, or because they have no regular or identified people to help them.

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## Case Study 2

The MRS attended a call out from a 100 year old woman who had fallen and was unable to get up. She uses a walking frame to get around her home as her balance is very poor. She had fallen because equipment was not in place to help her with sitting and standing when using her toilet.

The MRS worker sourced this equipment and arranged for it to be fitted. Records show that prior to the MRS call out, she was a frequent faller, but since the equipment was fitted no further incidents have occurred.

## The Benefits

Rising need and reducing funds place an increasing emphasis on the need to develop preventative, community-based services. There is very strong local evidence that a cost saving to partners of at least £211,000 has already been achieved. There is also some good national evidence suggesting that the wider net financial benefit to Devon is £2.53m.

The 2008/09 test of the Devon Mobile Response Service has demonstrated it is entirely feasible to link up a partnership of community alarm systems, call centres, sheltered housing support staff and clinically supported response staff to deliver a more personalised and less costly response to need.

The service will, as it did last winter, respond to the additional need created by seasonal pressures such as cold weather.

## Free 'phone calls from mobiles

**F**ree phone calls for most people using their mobiles to claim benefits and pensions are announced by the Department of Work and Pensions today. From next week, six of the biggest mobile phone network companies will no longer charge their customers for calls to the Department's 0800 Benefit Claim lines. Currently 12% of UK households use only mobile phones and do not have a land line.

Calls to claim benefits and state pension use 0800 numbers which are already free to customers using BT land lines and mobiles. But currently people calling 0800 numbers from other mobile phone providers are charged for these calls.

The Department has now reached agreement with O2, Orange, Tesco Mobile, T-Mobile, Virgin Mobile and Vodafone to end charges to their customers for mobile calls to around seventy of its 0800 numbers. These numbers are used by people making initial claims for benefit and pensions and to request emergency payments, such as crisis loans.

Together the six companies with whom the Department has now signed agreements cover over 90% of the mobile market in the UK.

Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, Yvette Cooper, said:

"We don't want people who lose their jobs or the poorest pensioners to be penalised when they need to claim benefits just because they call from a mobile phone. Lots of people need to use mobiles rather than landlines.

"That's why we've been working hard to get this deal to make sure people don't lose out."

The DWP estimate that there are around 60 million phone calls to its 0800 numbers each year, and around 15% (9 million) are from mobile phones.

