



How the alarm works

You can raise the alarm by pressing your alarm pendant (if supplied) or using one of the pull cords in your property. This is linked to control equipment usually located in the scheme coordinator's office or in a large box fitted to an external wall. If the scheme coordinator is "on site" they will answer you with their handset. When they are not available or not at work, for example in the evening, the alarm equipment dials the Telecare Response Centre in Plymouth, which is known as Call24. Your call is then answered by a member of the Call24 team who will know who you are and the other details you have supplied such as your medical condition and who to contact on your behalf.

If you have a stand alone alarm (one that plugs into your private telephone line) then alarm calls go direct to Call24, who then notify your scheme coordinator if they are on duty.

The Call24 team

There are 25 people in the team at Call24. Operator's work shifts on a rota to ensure we can handle your calls 24 / 7 every day of the year. There are no less than 3 operators during the day and 2 at night when the number of calls is quite low. If we are busy you will hear a reassurance message when we receive your call explaining that an operator will be with you shortly. Our staff are there to help and do care about making sure they get you the help you need. This is why we will always ask you whether you have an emergency at the start of your call.

What should you say?

The first thing to say is either yes or no to the question whether you have an emergency. This enables us to prioritise your calls; it is only right that we deal with medical emergencies first so sometimes we might put you on hold while we deal with an emergency on another call. The conversation you have over the alarm is not like a normal telephone conversation as the speech is “one way”. This means that you need to take it in turns with the operator to talk and listen. Remember that we might not be able to hear you clearly so there is nothing wrong with repeating what you need until we confirm that we are getting you help.

How quickly do Call24 answer?

Call24 are very proud of our response times. We will normally answer 99% of calls within 60 seconds and the remainder shortly afterwards. If you do wait it is because we are dealing with other emergencies. There is also a short delay at your housing site whilst the equipment calls us and one line out from the scheme equipment to Call24 so sometimes you are in a queue whilst we deal with your neighbour's call.

What happens if you can't hear clearly?

Keep repeating what help you need. Sometimes we might only be able to hear the word “help” but this is enough for us to know that there is a problem. If we aren't sure we will call you back on your telephone and then contact the scheme coordinator if they are at work, your nominated contacts, or the emergency services.

What happens next?

We always treat your call as a potential emergency. Our priority is always to maintain your wellbeing. If you need help we will check with you who you would like us to call. In a medical emergency we will call 999 and ask for an ambulance to attend. We will tell them what the problem is and arrange access to your property. We have worked closely with the emergency services and they have told us that it is the NHS trust's responsibility to tell

your next of kin if you are admitted to hospital; we won't do this unless you ask us too.

If you tell us that you need help but there is no immediate medical emergency, for example you have fallen but are not injured, then the ambulance might take a lot longer to reach you. This is not Call24's fault but the way that the Ambulance Service prioritise their calls.

Remember you can always press your alarm again if you are concerned or your situation has deteriorated.

Keep Call24 up to date

Call24 needs up to date information to ensure we get you the help you need. Please keep your scheme coordinator up to date if your circumstances change. This includes changes to the contact details of your friends and family.

Voice recording

All our calls are voice recorded and retained for one year. This is for your benefit as it means we can make sure we are dealing with calls appropriately.

Quality standards

Call24 is an accredited member of the Telecare Services Association code of practice. This means that we are subject to an independent annual audit of our service. The TSA code is an assurance of quality. As Call24 is a code accredited organisation you can be sure that we have your best interests in mind.



Equipment problems

Your landlord will have an agreement in place to maintain your alarm equipment. Normally this means that 9 out of 10 critical faults are repaired within 48 hours. Critical faults are normally faults that are a complete equipment failure that removes your ability to raise the alarm. Whilst Call24 can report problems on your behalf the terms of the maintenance service are often managed by your landlord and outside of Call24's control. Sometimes faults are with the telephone network provider and these can take longer to rectify.

Call24 will ensure that our service is available to you 24 / 7 and has rigorous Business Continuity Plans in place to ensure that there is no break in service.

Testing your alarm

Your scheme coordinator will test your alarm regularly. We would also recommend that you test your alarm independently and place a call to us; all you need to do is explain that you are testing when you speak to the operator.

If you are calling to tell us you are going away it is best not to leave this to the last minute; you can call us in advance. It is *very* important to let your scheme coordinator or Call24 know as this can prevent us from wasting Police time if your alarm goes off in your absence and we can't get a response.

Let us know

We are keen to hear your views about our service. You can let us have your comments in a number of ways:

- Let your scheme coordinator know
 - Call us on 01752 776000
 - Write to us at Call24, Runnymede Court, 125 Leypark Walk, Estover, Plymouth PL6 8UF.
- E mail us info@call24hour.com