

# Charging for Adult Social Care Telecare - Consultation Analysis draft

Report prepared by D Skinner

## Summary

A total of 564 people accessed the campaign which ran from 19 December 2023 to 26th January 2024 of that 14 responded online and 82 completed a paper document, the rest were aware, informed but chose not to comment. Residents who participated by email, telephone or post were notified that their contribution was added to the consultation, this was done by creating an online record, and this forms part of the responses. At the peak of the consultation, over 85 visits were made per day.

The total overall number of responses was 96.

There was no option for further comments included in the online questionnaire but some of those responding on a paper form did add additional comment, these can be found at the end of this report.

We received a letter of concern from Healthwatch regarding the proposals and highlighting with the cost of living crisis some current users may need to forgo a subscription if a cost was introduced and calls for the proposal to introduce a charge for using the telecare scheme to be dropped. Full content of letter can be found at the end of this report.

The consultation was promoted across social media and was available on the Councils interactive consultation portal <https://yoursay.southend.gov.uk/> it was also made available in a hardcopy format if requested. We also provided hardcopy questionnaires in all libraries across the city.

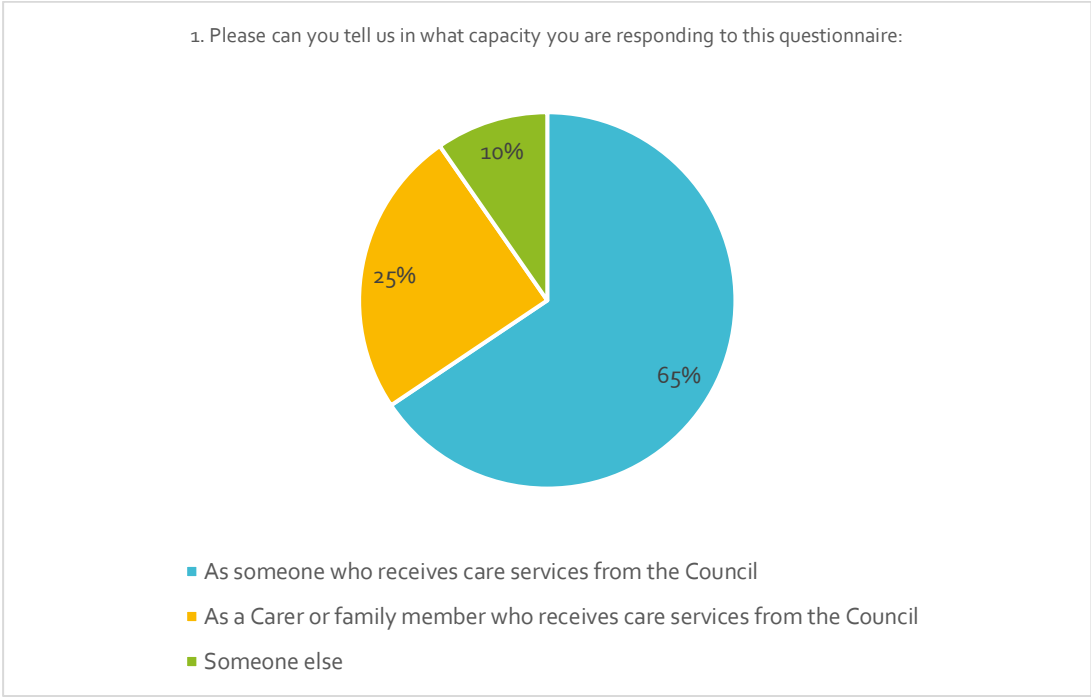
## Conclusion

The overall consensus from all those responding was that they understood why the Council was proposing these charges but felt with the cost of living crisis it could impact them being able to access the telecare service in the future, which could impact their quality of life and the security of staying in their own home.

**Full Breakdown of questions**

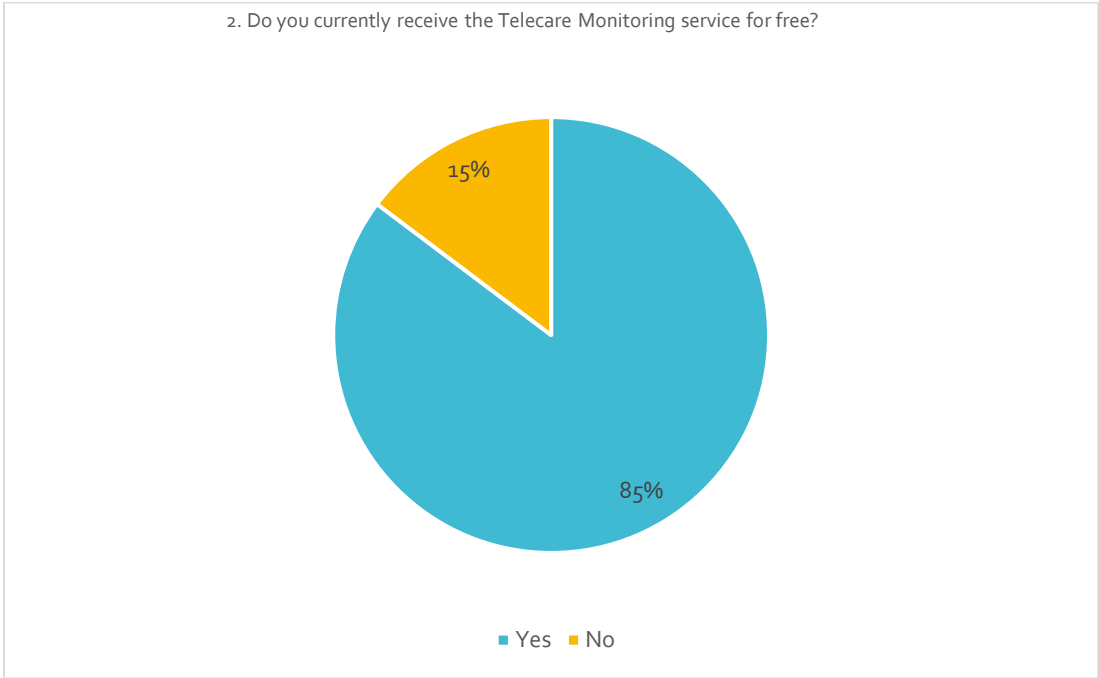
1. Please can you tell us in what capacity you are responding to this questionnaire

This was a single response question and those responding 65% are someone who receives care services from the Council, those individuals (10%) who chose the option for 'someone else' commented that it was a service they were looking to use for family members or themselves in the future.



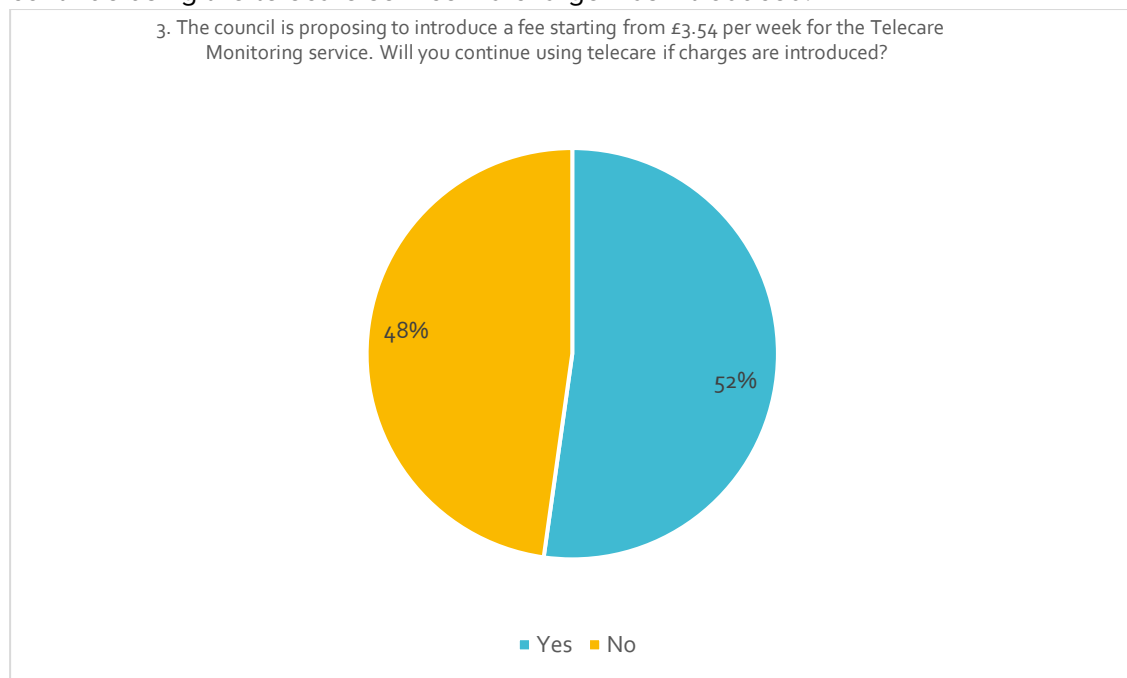
2. Do you currently receive the Telecare Monitoring service for free?

85% of those responding currently receive the telecare monitoring service for free.



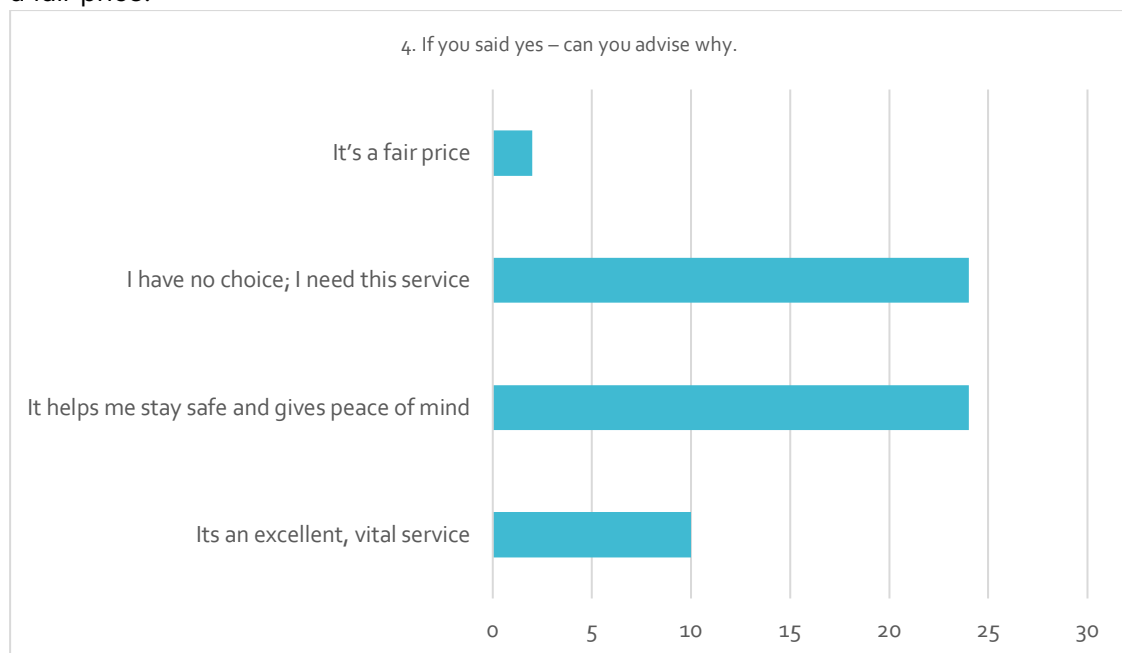
3. The council is proposing to introduce a fee starting from £3.54 per week for the Telecare Monitoring service. Will you continue using telecare if charges are introduced?

This was a single response question and 52% of those responding stated they would continue using the telecare service if a charge was introduced.



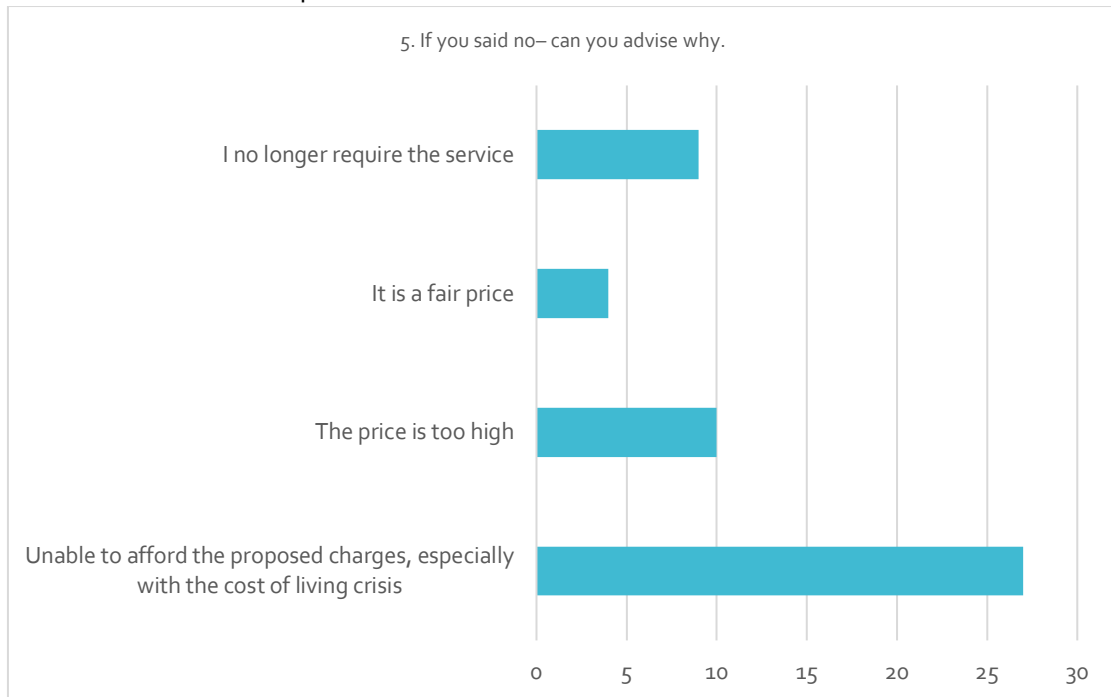
4. If you said yes – can you advise why.

80% of those responding specified that they had ‘no choice, they needed the service’ and that ‘it helps them stay safe and gives piece of mind’ collectively, with 3% indicating it was a fair price.



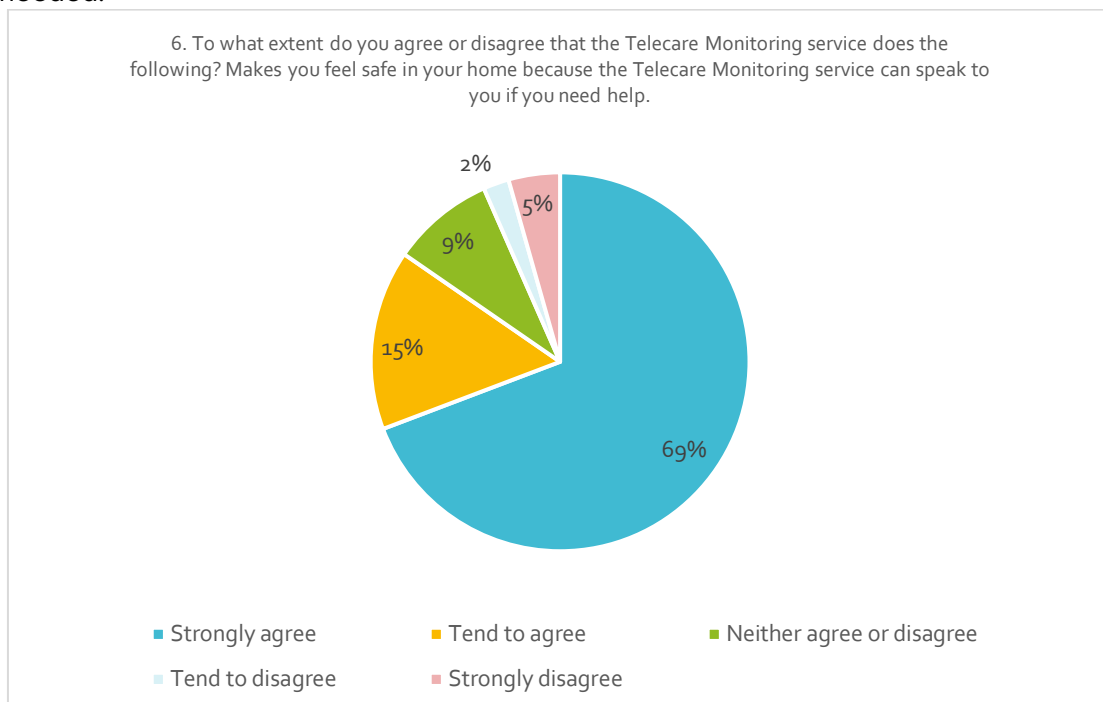
5. If you said no – can you advise why.

Of those individuals that responded 54% confirmed they would be unable to afford the proposed charges with the cost of living crisis, 20% felt the price was too high with 8% maintained it was a fair price.



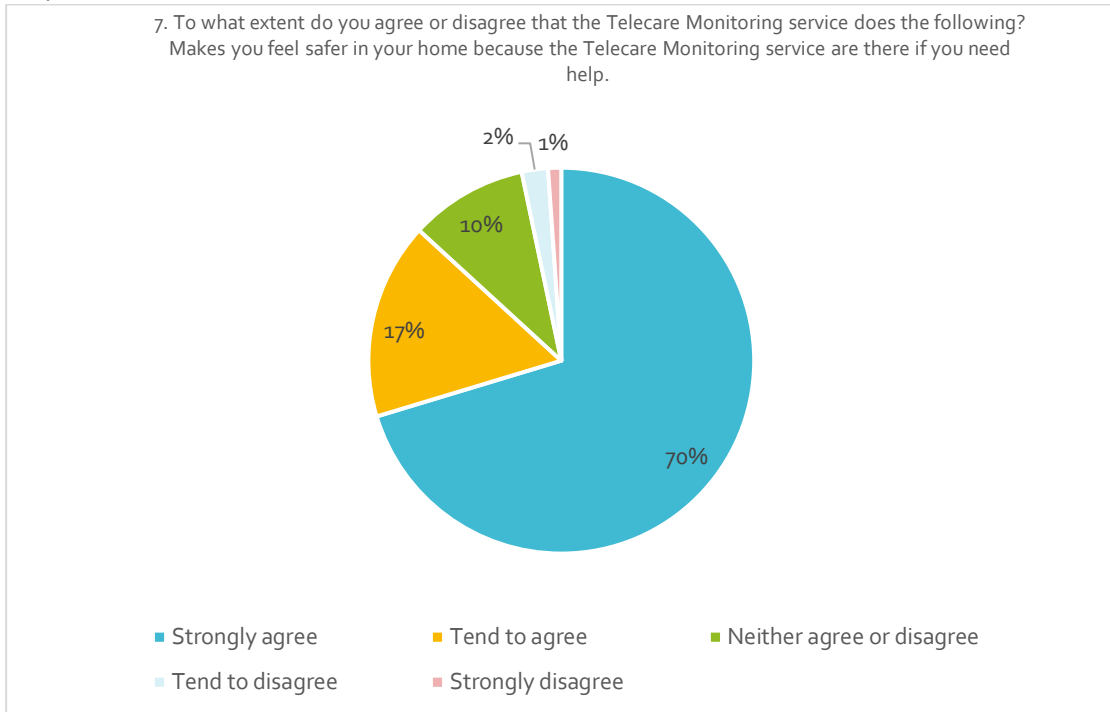
6. To what extent do you agree or disagree that the Telecare Monitoring service does the following? Makes you feel safe in your home because the Telecare Monitoring service can speak to you if you need help.

This was a single response question with 69% of those responding indicated they 'Strongly agreed' that it made them feel safe because they could speak to someone if needed.



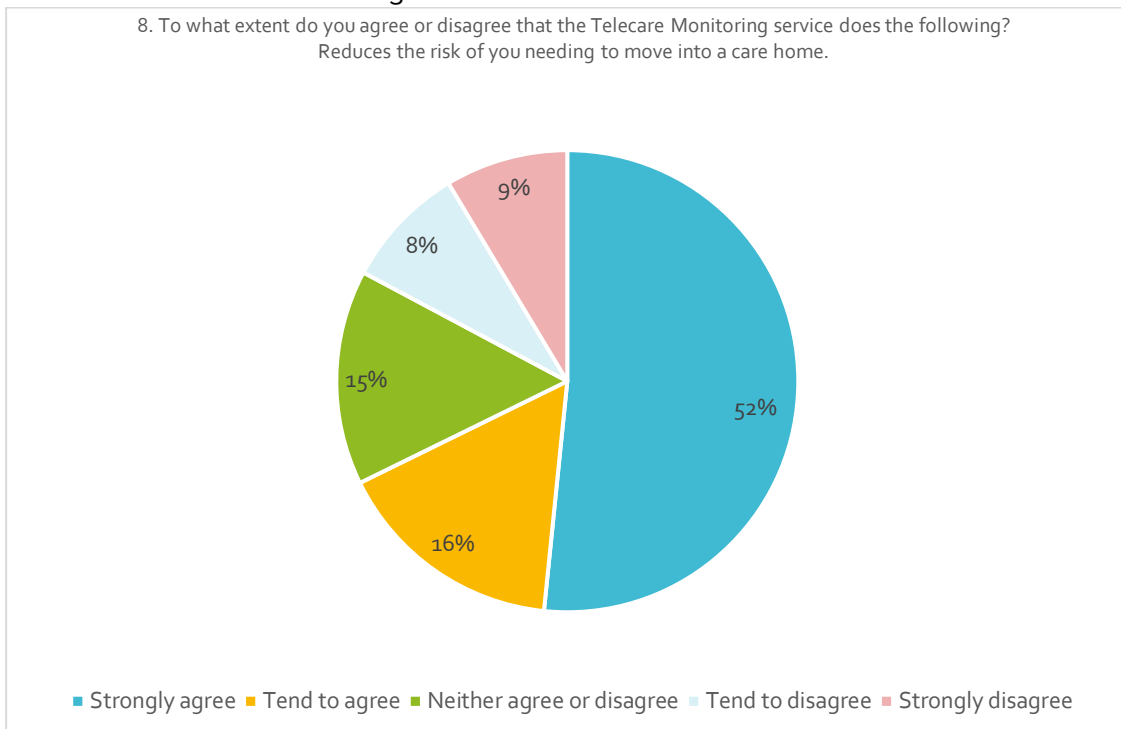
7. To what extent do you agree or disagree that the Telecare Monitoring service does the following? Makes you feel safer in your home because the Telecare Monitoring service are there if you need help.

Again this was a single response question and those individuals responding 70% 'Strongly agreed' that they felt safe in their home because of the telecare service being there is help was needed.



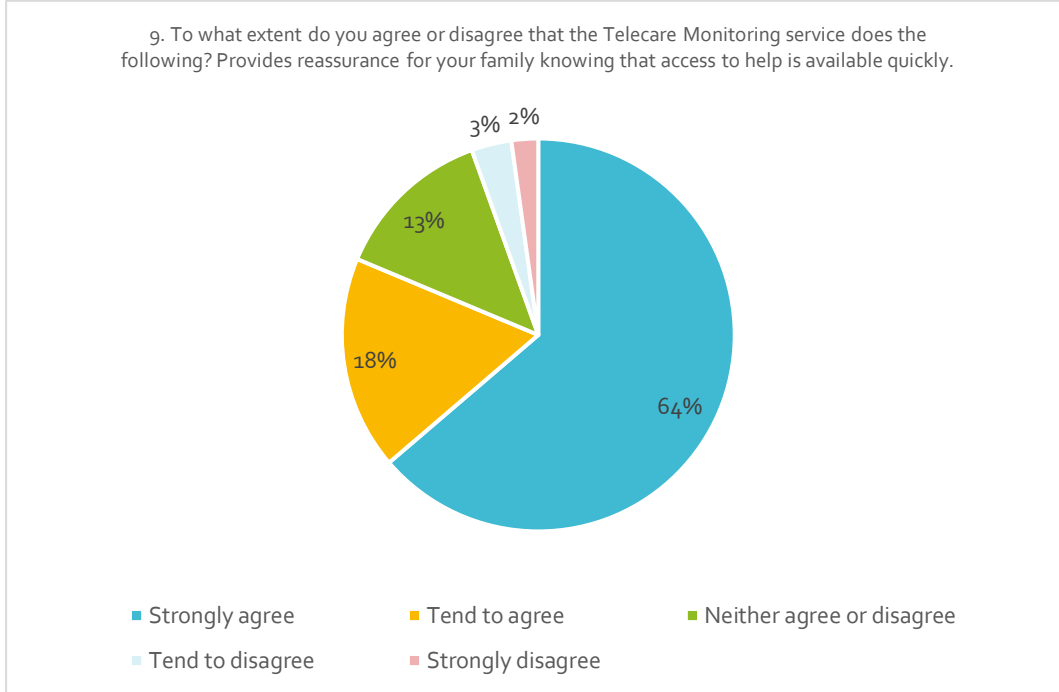
8. To what extent do you agree or disagree that the Telecare Monitoring service does the following? Reduces the risk of you needing to move into a care home.

68% of those responding declared that having the telecare monitoring service does reduce the risk of them moving into a care home.



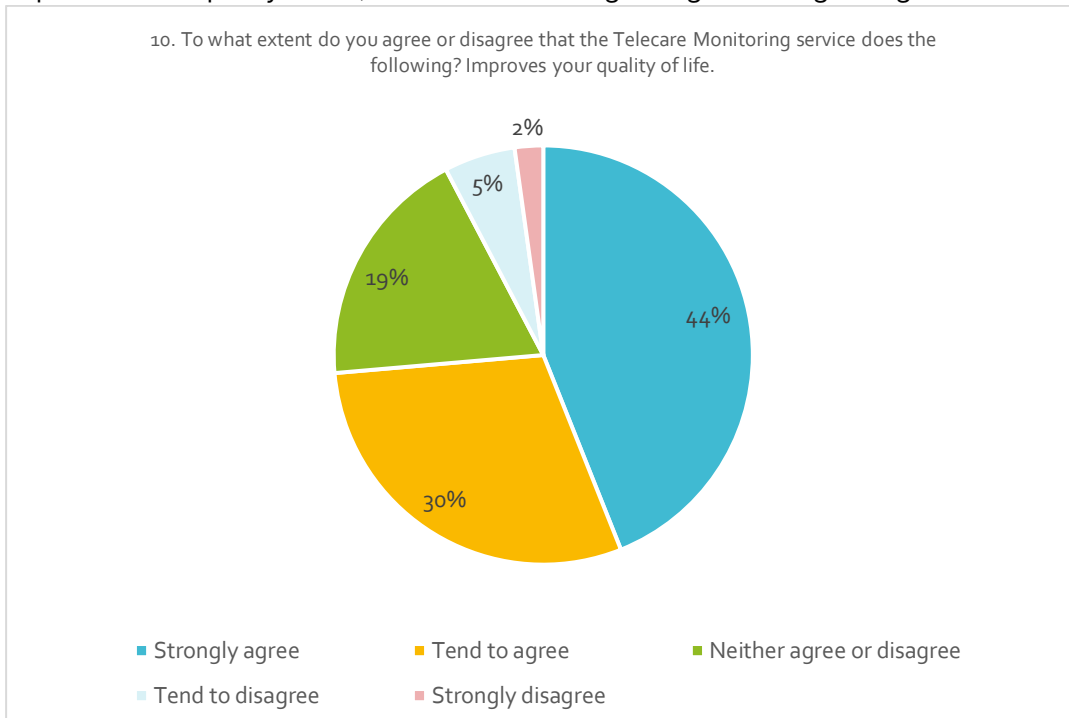
9. To what extent do you agree or disagree that the Telecare Monitoring service does the following? Provides reassurance for your family knowing that access to help is available quickly.

64% of individuals responding to this question 'Strongly agreed' that the service provides reassurance to their family members knowing there is access to help quickly if needed.



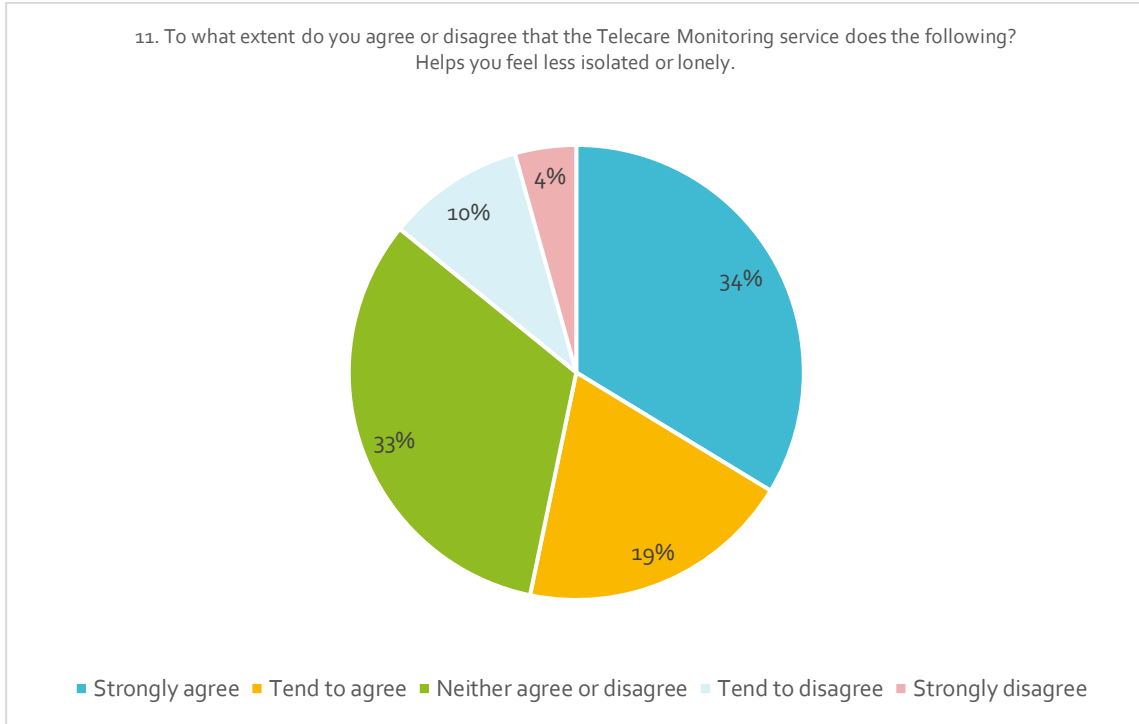
10. To what extent do you agree or disagree that the Telecare Monitoring service does the following? Improves your quality of life.

Of those responding 74% either 'Strongly agree' or 'tend to agree' that the service improves their quality of life, with 19% neither agreeing nor disagreeing with the statement.



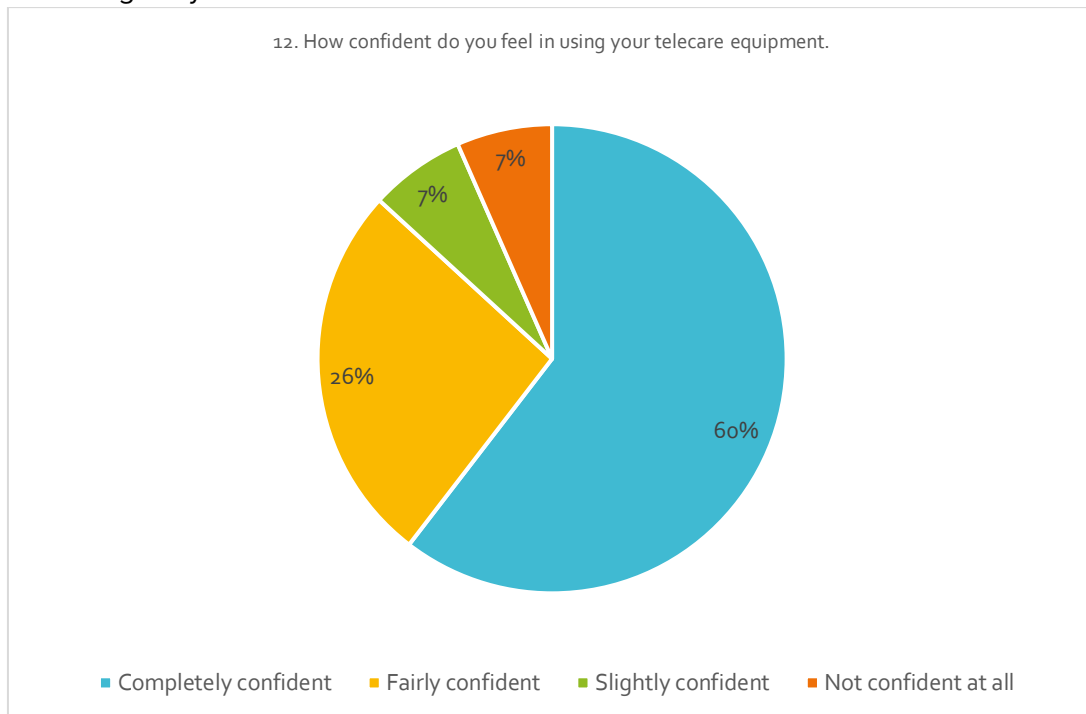
11. To what extent do you agree or disagree that the Telecare Monitoring service does the following? Helps you feel less isolated or lonely.

53% 'Strongly agree' or 'tend to agree' that the service improves their quality of life, with 33% neither agreeing nor disagreeing that the telecare service helps you feel less isolated or lonely.



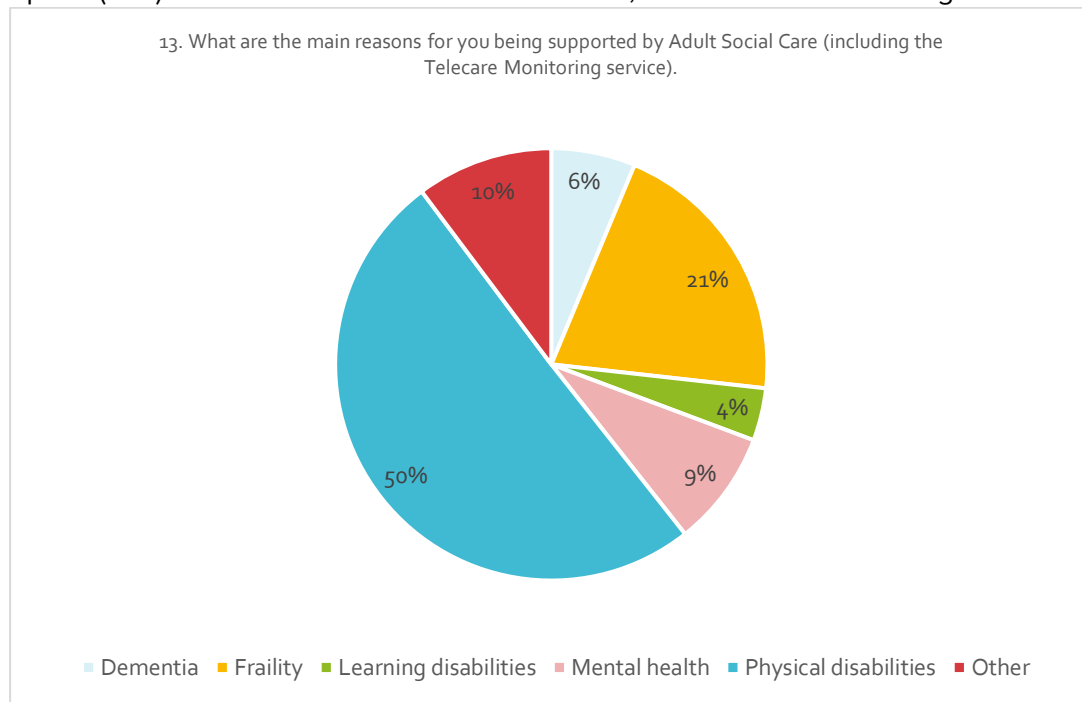
12. How confident do you feel in using your telecare equipment.

60% of respondents using the telecare system were completely confident in using it with 26% being fairly confident.



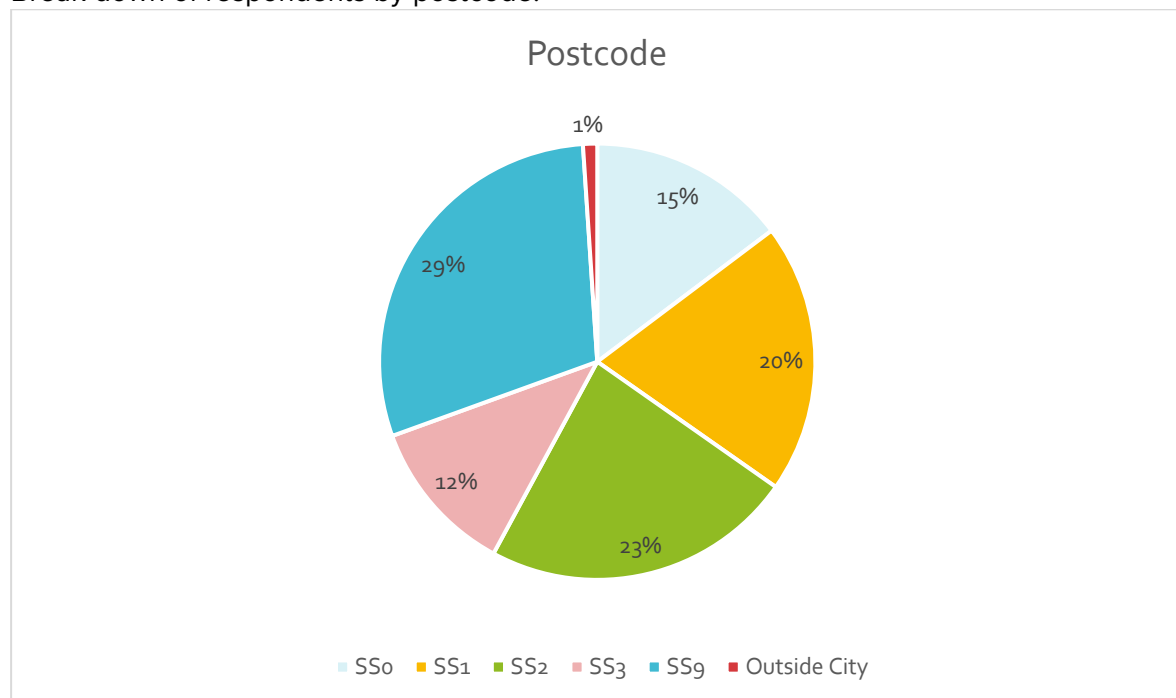
13. What are the main reasons for you being supported by Adult Social Care (including the Telecare Monitoring service).

A majority of those responding expressed that the main reason for being supported by Adult Social Care was due to physical disabilities. Those who chose the 'other' as an option (10%) indicated conditions such as Autism, Blindness and breathing issues.



14. Postcode

Break down of respondents by postcode.





## Full Letter from Healthwatch.

24 January 2024

Adult Social Care Service,  
Telecare Monitoring Service Public Consultation,  
Engagement and Participation Team,  
Southend-on-Sea City Council,  
PO Box 2,  
Victoria Avenue,  
Southend-on-Sea,  
Essex SS2 6ER

Dear Sirs

### Charging for Adult Social Care Telecare - Consultation

Healthwatch Southend is the independent voice of Southend residents who use, or may use, NHS and social care services. Our role is to provide information about local services, capture the lived experience of residents so that it can inform service improvement, and to hold the NHS and Southend City Council to account. The contract for the Healthwatch Southend service is held by a registered charity, to underpin our independence.

Healthwatch Southend understands that Southend City Council is having to review its budget, given the service pressures it is experiencing.

We are disappointed that the Council is proposing to charge some users for the telecare service. We are concerned that during a cost of living crisis, many residents may have to forego a subscription to the telecare service. We are aware that the Council has been working closely with residents to understand the impact of the cost of living crisis. At the same time, we have also seen the efforts being undertaken by the Council and its partners, notably through the SE Essex Alliance, to reduce the number of falls. Whilst the telecare service in itself will not reduce the number of falls, it does mean that when a fall does occur, urgent advice, reassurance and support will be available. Lying on the floor for even a short period of time can also lead to pressure sores, which cause considerable pain and distress to individuals, let alone being a significant cost to the NHS. We would be interested to know how the NHS has responded to this proposal.

We have asked for a copy of the equality impact assessment relating to this proposal, but have yet to receive a copy. We would want to be reassured that the Council has taken into account the impact of its proposal under the Public Sector Equality Duty.

Healthwatch Southend therefore calls on the Council to drop the proposal to introduce charging for the telecare scheme. We are aware that the scheme has been running for a number of years and would encourage the Council to review its overall effectiveness.

Yours faithfully  
Owen Richards  
Chief Officer

## Appendix b

We had comments from individuals submitting paper copies, below is the full submission of comments.

Full comment	
1.	Q3 - That's £15.34 per month / I cannot manage my energy bills
2.	Q11 - She is always pushing the panic button. Q12 - My mum does not understand what it is for she is 98 years old
3.	Q5 - The machine does not work properly and would be a waste of money, I was told the machine was to be replaced but nothing has happened. Q6 - It does not work it is pointless, if it worked it would prove a great reassurance.
4.	Q3 - I will have to accept if I fall will die as I do not have the funds. Q4 - This is not a fair price! Then after a few months you will increase it even more. The funds wasted on Diversity Managers can be used to ensure your vulnerable people are kept safe! We already overpay for services we not longer get.
5.	Q5 - Have paid in total for it £167 per annum on telecare. Q11 - It is a voice only which asks if you are okay, not if you are feeling lonely or isolated.
6.	Q3 - No choice
7.	Q2 - Not sure what this is - If this is the red panic button. Q5 - Never used it, never really used it in 10 years
8.	Q3 - This charge is too much, Q4 - This service is a lifeline to me. Q10 - This service keeps me safe and gives my family peace of mind when I am indoors on my own.
9.	Q5 - Have no phone line anymore. Needs to be collected please.
10.	Q4 - put yes, because I need the service
11.	Q2 - Depends on the charge going forward, what could the charge mean. Q3 - It appears to be blackmail if introduced. Q4 - What could the price increase to 'starting from'?
12.	introduction of charge - I would be willing and able to pay for this service, however, I am concerned for those people who would not be able to make/ meet the payment. I do hope provision would be made for those people.
13.	Q3 - If I need help its nice to know someone is there
14.	Q2 - Offered and put in by Adult Services manager at that time wanted it in place. Q3 - I need to see if my son can afford it as he is also a victim of the cost of living rise and has to pay ( as others do) for many things so at present time I cannot answer if we will continue to use it. Q4 - My son has communication difficulties so I am teaching him to operate the box, my son and myself are on our own. If he is unwell/ needs assistance or if I am unwell/ need assistance – I am his carer he has nobody else in his and my life. The security is there. Q5 - Are you doing full assessments to see after everything else is paid that there is anything left to pay an extra charge (due to cost of living). Q6 - It does give security Q7 - It does add security if anything happens to myself (I am his carer) he would be on his own and vulnerable. Q8 - Sorry do not understand whether or not you have an alarm if you need extra assistance – as duty of care – help should be there it should not just depend on the alarm.

Q9 – For ourselves, my son only has me (as his mother and carer), his sibling does not live here.

Q10 - It is the security that is good, depending on the persons disability – a care alarm brings help into your property but if you have Epilepsy + Autism that will never change (wish it would but no) as the son has it is a lifetime disability.

Q11 - Whatever help you have (or don't have) if you have educationally and life skilled challenged person in your life you will always be isolated/ lonely (mainstream label is special needs). The care alarm is here to get help - it is not the Samaritans or a talk line as from experience they do not have time to chat or listen to life stories only to ask 'hello are you okay, do you need help' If you say no they shut you down immediately.

Q12 – I am teaching my son to operate the box and reply to the questions as he has communication difficulties amongst his other disabilities. If I was unwell he would need help.