

# A day in the life of a Herts Careline call operator



Have you ever wondered what it's like working in an emergency control room? Taking life critical calls which depend on the quick thinking and correct action made by the call operator on duty? Then walk a shift in the footsteps of a Herts Careline control room operator. They work tirelessly around the clock taking medical emergency calls from residents across the whole of Hertfordshire.

Residents who are signed up to the service have access to fall detectors, smoke alarms and temperature monitors, as well as a pendant alarm, depending on their needs. This is an emergency button worn around their neck or wrist and enables them to dial through to Careline's 24/7 control room.

One member of the team is Anne Tomlin and here she takes you through a typical 'early' shift –from 7am to 3pm.

"I arrive ready to take over from the night shift at 6.50am. It doesn't take long for the first call to come in: a lady had taken a fall, is on the floor and has bumped her head so can't get up. I telephone the paramedics,

inform the client's contact and stay on the line, taking other calls as they come in and going back to check on her.

"Between 7am and 11am is one of our busiest periods where we can take in the region of 400 calls. People are getting up for the day, they may be feeling unwell, suffer a fall, be wondering what time their carers will arrive, or be waiting for their transport to a day centre. Every call is different and we deal with any medical emergency that arises. We also take calls from site managers checking on the residents staying in their properties, and report any incidents to them which may have occurred during the night.

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"The lunch period is also a busy time for calls. So far today we will have taken around 700 calls, the majority from people feeling unwell and needing a doctor or ambulance, others enquire about their meals situation for lunch. I took a call from a gentleman's fall detector. He did not answer when I called through to see if he was OK so I immediately tried him on his own telephone. He didn't answer so I went through the process of ringing his named responder but they didn't answer

either. His other contacts were not available so I rang our professional responder who went out to assess the situation. When he got there

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he quickly rang back to confirm that the gentleman had fallen, so I called an ambulance. I then rang his contacts to tell them what had happened.

"Often it is in the afternoons when service users test their pendants, which we encourage them to do once a month to ensure the equipment is working correctly and get people into the habit of using their pendant. Many don't like to 'worry us' as they say, but that's what we're here for! It's 3pm so that's the end of my day shift, but Herts Careline is 24/7 so it's time for the late shift to start as the operators arrive ready to take the evening calls."

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If you'd like information about Herts Careline, you can visit [www.care-line.co.uk](http://www.care-line.co.uk) or call 0300 999 2 999.

