

# Response Prioritisation

# ATEC24

## Background Information

---

The Assistive Technology Enabled Care Service operates a wide-ranging set of Standard Operating Procedures to deliver multi-disciplinary services across Edinburgh, East and Midlothian regions.

This procedure guidance document sets out the key processes, in relation to the priority of response to Emergency call outs.

## Scope

---

This policy should be followed by all staff in ATEC24 Telecare service, when they are organising a response, or responding to Emergency Call Outs

## Procedure

---

Emergency Call Outs (ECO) are usually processed by the chronological order in which they present to the alarm receiving centre. However, often many different types of ECOs may report in high volume at, or around, the same time. This procedure is to provide guidance on prioritising emergency calls and deciding which requires first response considering available resources.

ECOs should be prioritised by assessing, with the available information, which situation poses the greatest risk to an individual's health, safety, and wellbeing.

As a rule, the priority of Telecare response is as follows:

1. Emergency service access
2. Unconfirmed alarms
3. Falls/ stuck in situ (interchangeable)
4. Inactivity alarms
5. Urgent technical tasks

## **Emergency Service Access**

If a client requires assistance from the Scottish Ambulance Service, Scottish Fire and Rescue or Police Scotland, and ATEC24 Telecare can assist with access to the property (in the case of holding keys at ATEC24) then these response calls must take priority over all other outstanding calls. Lifesaving assistance may be required so liaison with the emergency services to facilitate swift access to clients is vital.

Due to most Telecare clients now having key safes installed the need to attend for these types of calls is reduced but may still be required.

## **Unconfirmed alarm**

An Unconfirmed alarm is when a client activates their alarm, but no response is received, or the response is unclear.

Unconfirmed alarm calls must be treated as a high priority ECO as it has not been possible to ascertain what help the client requires. The client may not be able to speak due to accident, a health emergency or other serious incident. A Response team must be dispatched immediately.

## **Falls**

If a client has fallen and assessed over the alarm as potentially injured or unwell then this call must take priority over a faller who has confirmed they are uninjured. If medical assistance has not already been arranged the Response team must attend to assess further whilst on site and contact medical/ emergency services as necessary.

If a client has fallen and is uninjured then this should still be processed as high priority. Lying for long periods of time can be extremely detrimental to health so all falls must be responded to swiftly, see below:

**Long lie** If the client has lain on the floor for more than 2 hours, then emergency services should be contacted. The complications of a long lie can have devastating physical and psychological consequences for an individual and must be dealt with as a matter of urgency.

If a client has fallen outside their property in extreme weather, then this must be escalated for immediate response as the client may be at risk of heat stroke/ hypothermia. Extreme temperatures during Summer and Winter months should also be taken into consideration if fallen indoors, especially at nighttime during cold weather.

Always factor into call response prioritisation whether the client is alone or has family/ contacts on site to help keep them warm, comfortable, and hydrated when prioritising calls. The client who is alone may be in more urgent need of a prompt response.

### **Stuck in Situ**

These calls should be fully assessed at the alarm receiving stage to determine reasons why the person has become stuck e.g., unable to stand up/ get out of bed/ fallen onto furniture. Stuck in situ calls can be complex and must be treated on case-by-case basis and therefore may at times take priority over fallers.

If the client is stuck on a toilet/ commode, then as prompt a response as possible is required as this situation can have significantly negative effect on client health and threatens skin integrity.

Stuck in situ calls can signify a sudden change or deterioration in a person's ability to carry out daily tasks and must be investigated and assessed for reasons for becoming stuck as well as assistance from the situation.

Falls will usually take priority over stuck in situ call outs. However, a judgement must be made by treating each case individually. A person may have fallen, be uninjured and safely lying on the floor whereas a person may be stuck in a dangerous or harmful situation. In this case, although a team must be dispatched to the faller as soon as possible, they should attend to the stuck in situ first.

### **Inactivity alarms**

The bulk of the investigation into an Inactivity alarm call will have been carried out by the alarm receiving call handler and all possibilities of client's whereabouts explored before being passed to a response team, therefore the inactivity call must be attended to and treated as any other emergency call out with a target response time of 45 minutes from the job being passed over.

### **Urgent technical tasks**

Any technical issues which has caused or has the potential to cause interruption to a client's alarm system must be prioritised for same day action.

It is vital that the client has a working alarm. These calls must be prioritised and dealt with in between ECOs.

**Please note** - Always seek guidance from the Senior Officer or Telecare Coordinator on shift (including on call) if encountering difficulties in the prioritisation of Emergency Call Outs.

## Associated Documents

---

## Document Control

---

SOP Name	Response Prioritisation procedure
Responsible Team/Function	ATEC24 Telecare
SOP Owner	Telecare Coordinator
SOP Approver	Operations Lead
Approval/Reviewed Date	19/03/2025
Review Date	18/03/2026
Version Status/Number	V1

---