

NAME OF SCRUTINY COMMITTEE	Services Scrutiny Committee
DATE OF MEETING	10 January 2013
TITLE OF ITEM	Reply to a question 'How effective are the Community Care Workers PDA devices across the County'?
CABINET MEMBER	Councillor Paul Thomas

1. Introduction to the item

1.1 The purpose of this report is in response to the question asked in the Services Scrutiny Committee 22 November 2012 'How effective are Community Care PDA's across the County'.

2. Considerations

2.1. Up until the end of November, 2012 there were 124 Community Care Service staff using the mobile devices on a daily basis. This equates to 46% of all staff within the Service.

2.2. The device is used to receive information in relation to the service users care plans and also to monitor the staff visits' start and finish times.

2.3. The devices are of course, used as one of the measures to mitigate the risk to Community Care workers as lone workers and in order to contact the Council in an emergency.

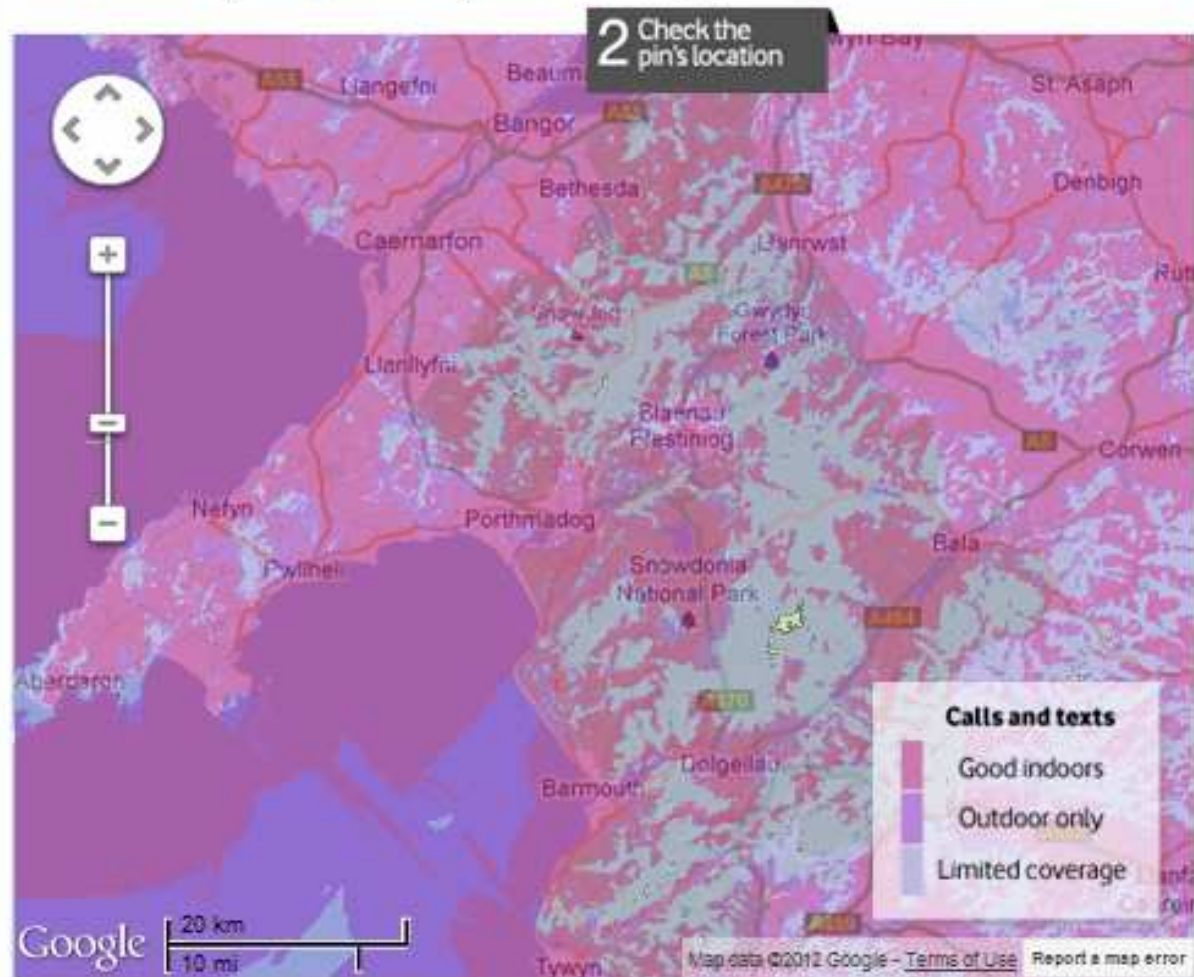
3. Signal Situation

2.4. The devices are connected to the Vodafone network provider and in general, we do not experience problems with signal strength. This is due to the fact that the devices receive and send information in areas which are within signal and store that information accordingly. It is not necessary therefore, for the device to be within a signal area in order to support the workers within their usual working pattern.

2.5. However, this is not the case if workers need to contact the Council in an emergency outside the reachable signal area. In that respect, the devices are facing the same shortfalls as any other mobile phone where there is a dependency on an adequate signal.

2.6. The Department does experience problems within certain areas of Gwynedd such as Aberdaron and some areas of Meirionnydd. Below is a map showing those areas. This does increase the risk to those lone workers in those areas.

Coverage may vary by location. This map shows a computer generated prediction of coverage in a given area. It should be used as a guide only and is not a guarantee of actual signal coverage.



2.7.1 The Department is continuously working with the software company providing the software in order to discover ways of overcoming this issue, however, solutions are restrictive without access to improved mobile signal strength across Gwynedd.

3. Recommendation

3.1. Members are requested to accept the report and note the present situation.