



**TEC**  
Quality

 Colchester  
City Council

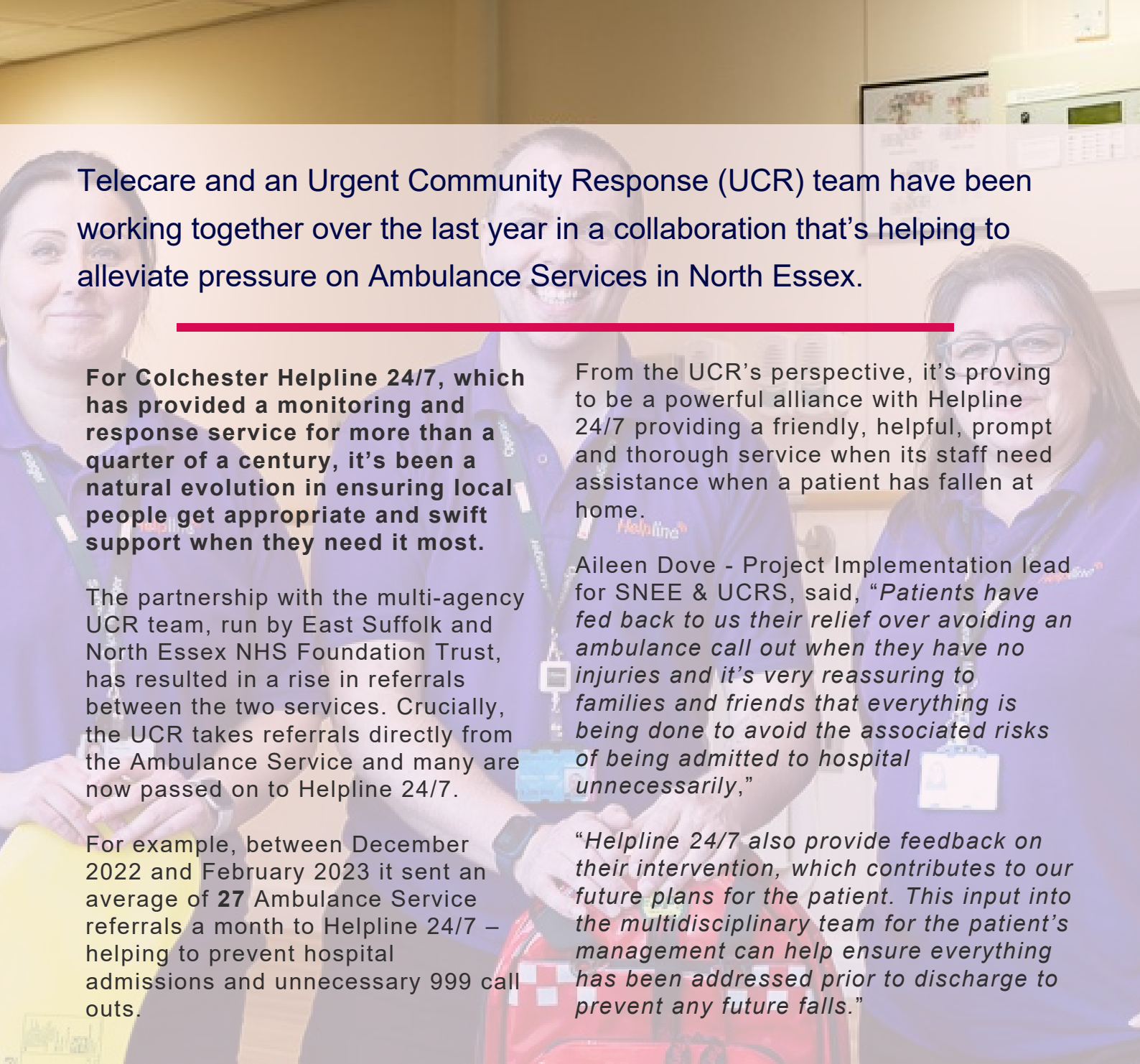
  
Colchester  
AMPHORA TRADING

# Case Study

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## **Colchester Helpline 24/7**

Strengthening collaboration through the  
TEC Quality Standards Framework



Telecare and an Urgent Community Response (UCR) team have been working together over the last year in a collaboration that's helping to alleviate pressure on Ambulance Services in North Essex.

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**For Colchester Helpline 24/7, which has provided a monitoring and response service for more than a quarter of a century, it's been a natural evolution in ensuring local people get appropriate and swift support when they need it most.**

The partnership with the multi-agency UCR team, run by East Suffolk and North Essex NHS Foundation Trust, has resulted in a rise in referrals between the two services. Crucially, the UCR takes referrals directly from the Ambulance Service and many are now passed on to Helpline 24/7.

For example, between December 2022 and February 2023 it sent an average of **27** Ambulance Service referrals a month to Helpline 24/7 – helping to prevent hospital admissions and unnecessary 999 call outs.

From the UCR's perspective, it's proving to be a powerful alliance with Helpline 24/7 providing a friendly, helpful, prompt and thorough service when its staff need assistance when a patient has fallen at home.

Aileen Dove - Project Implementation lead for SNEE & UCRS, said, *"Patients have fed back to us their relief over avoiding an ambulance call out when they have no injuries and it's very reassuring to families and friends that everything is being done to avoid the associated risks of being admitted to hospital unnecessarily,"*

*"Helpline 24/7 also provide feedback on their intervention, which contributes to our future plans for the patient. This input into the multidisciplinary team for the patient's management can help ensure everything has been addressed prior to discharge to prevent any future falls."*



## Striving for the highest standards

Helpline 24/7, which is owned by Colchester City Council, has 3,500 customers and a long standing dedication to quality, whether it's the development of a multi-skilled team or investment in latest equipment for its responder vehicles.

It recently embraced the process of going through the Quality Standards Framework (QSF) certification, run by TEC Quality, which NHS England regards as crucial for responder service providers like Helpline 24/7.

The QSF audit process has helped to further establish Helpline 24/7's credentials whilst strengthening and continually improving their processes, for example by ensuring it's completing home assessments within 45 minutes (an hour in rural areas) – one of many QSF standards that have become requirements in latest NHS guidance.



Helpline 24/7's partnership with the UCR team continues to evolve. The two teams are now looking at ways to share information and potentially use secure video conferencing that will enable responders to speak directly to UCR clinicians while they are with clients.

"I have always seen the benefits of being awarded QSF status in order to showcase our dedication to safety and quality, hence why we are embarking on this journey now," says a spokesperson for Helpline 24/7.

"For us, the QSF helps us to focus on the areas that we might be not be paying full attention to, ensuring that we are providing a quality service to our customers and helping to keep us on track."

**Wayne Powell, Monitoring & Response Service Development & Operations Manager**

