

The TEC Tender Guide

A Guide to Procuring Digital
Technology Enabled Care (TEC)
Solutions

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About This Guide

This guide has been developed in response to requests by commissioners, to highlight the risks and opportunities of procuring digital TEC solutions. It is an impartial resource drawing from deep experience of purchasing digital solutions and working with UK councils, care homes, homecare providers and housing associations.

Please contact 2iC-Care Founder & CEO, at richard.keyse@2ic-care.com if you have any questions or comments.

7 Critical Considerations For Your Tender

This guide seeks to outline the key considerations when procuring your digital TEC solution to ensure a safe, future-proofed, and cost effective solution.

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Resilience

It is vital to ensure that your TEC solution effectively communicates with your (ARC) Alarm Receiving Centre and/or another responder (e.g. family member).

It is important to understand the new risks and points of failure digital TEC solutions introduce. Not all solutions offer the same resilience



RISK

A single connectivity to your ARC creates a dangerous single point of failure.

During Storm Darragh, numerous TEC solutions failed to deliver vital alarms due to network connectivity issues.

Questions to Consider:



Multiple Connectivity Methods "Does your TEC solution provide multiple connectivity networks built in?" e.g. SIM, Ethernet and Wi-Fi." TSA Reference



Automatic Switching "Does your solution automatically switch between connectivity types if one becomes unavailable?"



Future-Proof Networks "Can you confirm your solution uses 4G or higher technology rather than soon-to-be-obsolete 2G or 3G?"



True Roaming Capability "Does your SIM automatically AND constantly roam across all four Mobile Network Operators?"



Simplified Communication "Does the TEC solution use the same data (alarm) and voice channel?"

Why This Matters: When a vulnerable person triggers an alarm, every extra point of failure increases the risk that help won't arrive. Don't compromise on connectivity redundancy.

Cost vs Value

While it's tempting to award tenders to the lowest bidder, focusing solely on unit price can lead to significant long-term costs and missed opportunities.

Digital TEC solutions should be evaluated on their total cost of ownership and overall value, including initial procurement costs, installation and setup expenses, ongoing maintenance and support, additional licensing fees, required infrastructure investments, training and change management, future upgrade pathways, and end-of-life replacement costs.

RISK

Reactive-only TEC systems rarely offer simple upgrade paths to proactive and preventative capabilities. Many buyers are finding they have to buy a second solution or a complete replacement, due to a proprietary architecture. Short-term "savings" often lead to higher medium-long term expenditure.

Questions to Consider:

- ✓ **Total Cost of Ownership** "Provide a comprehensive 5-year cost model including all potential costs, not just unit price."
- ✓ **Value Added Services** "What additional services are included in your pricing model? How do these enhance the overall value proposition?"
- ✓ **Cost-Benefit Analysis** "Provide evidence of cost benefits achieved by other clients, including quantifiable ROI metrics."
- ✓ **Pricing Transparency** "Detail any additional charges that may apply throughout the contract, including software updates, feature enhancements, and support."

Why This Matters: Analogue (reactive) and digital (proactive and preventative) TEC solutions serve different purposes, making direct price comparisons misleading. Consider instead: "Could this solution save the equivalent of one month's care costs?"

Interoperability & Futureproofing



The Integration Challenge: Open architecture enables true interoperability, preventing Local Authorities from getting locked into specific providers.

This enables:

- Utilisation of new technologies
- Integration of reactive and proactive care technologies
- Connection between social care and health solutions
- Longevity of investment
- Ability to purchase more cost-effective and innovative devices as they emerge

RISK ALERT

Many suppliers claim to offer "open" systems but aren't truly open. This can be easily verified.

Questions to Consider:

-  **Documented Open Protocols** "Provide documentation of your open protocol specifications."
-  **Proven Integration** "How many third-party devices have been successfully connected via your open protocol?"
-  **Technology Roadmap** "What is your roadmap for integrating emerging technologies?"
-  **Cross-Sector Compatibility** "How does your solution support integration between social care and health systems?"

Why This Matters: To meet an individual's needs and outcomes, the solution needs to have an open infrastructure to increase/decrease the TEC package.

Technical Standards

Technical standards ensure reliability and safety.



RISK ALERT

Non-standard frequencies can cause interference, leading to missed alarms and incidents.

Questions to Consider:

-  **Appropriate Frequencies** "Does your solution utilise the RF868/869 frequency band for life-critical alarm communications?"
-  **Compliance Evidence** "What technical standards does your solution adhere to and how is compliance verified?"

Why This Matters: The RF868/869 frequency is specifically designated for social care in the UK. Solutions using this standard provide greater reliability for life-critical applications.

Return on Investment

The value of digital TEC lies not in replicating analogue functionality but in improving care through data-driven insights and proactive and preventative capabilities.

Questions to Consider:

-  **Enhanced Functionality** "What additional capabilities does your digital solution offer beyond like-for-like replacement of analogue systems?"
-  **Scalability** "How does your solution support scalability to meet increasing demand without proportional cost increases?"
-  **Outcomes Focus** "How will your solution enable us to deliver more for the same investment?"

Why This Matters: Your TEC supplier must align with your authority's broader commitments to quality, ethics, and sustainability.

Enriched Data for Better Outcomes



Data transforms reactive care into preventative care.

Digital TEC solutions generate valuable information that can improve outcomes whilst optimising resources through informed decision-making, personalised care, early intervention, and cross-organisational collaboration.

RISK ALERT

Many local authorities implement digital TEC solutions without planning for data management, creating "data lakes" they cannot effectively use - missing opportunities for preventative care despite having the technology.

Questions to Consider:

- ✓ **Data Security** "How does your solution ensure GDPR compliance and data security? What data protection impact assessments have been completed?"
- ✓ **Actionable Insights** "How does your system transform raw data into meaningful, actionable insights for care teams?"
- ✓ **Integration Capabilities** "What methods are available to connect with care records and other systems? How is data securely shared across organisations?"
- ✓ **Data Ownership** "Who owns the data generated by your system and what rights does the local authority have to access it independently?"

Why This Matters: Without a strategic approach to data, your digital investment merely replicates analogue functionality.

The true potential lies in using data to identify risks earlier, personalise care, and allocate resources more effectively - achieving better outcomes whilst managing constrained budgets.

Robust Supply Chain

A resilient supply chain is critical for ensuring the ongoing reliability and availability of TEC services that vulnerable people depend on.



RISK ALERT

Geopolitical tensions between major powers like the US and China have already impacted technology supply chains.

Several local authorities reported being unable to source replacement components for their TEC systems due to trade restrictions and export controls, leading to extended service disruptions for vulnerable users.

Questions to Consider:

-  **Geopolitical Resilience** "What contingency plans do you have for supply chain disruptions due to geopolitical events in the current landscape?"
-  **Component Quality** "What class of digital components are used in your TEC devices?"
-  **Ethical Production** "Provide details of your hardware supply chain, including manufacturing locations and ethical standards. How do you ensure your supply chain meets our local authority's policies?"
-  **Environmental Impact** "What are the carbon footprint and end-of-life disposal procedures for your hardware? How do these align with our Net Zero targets and Social Value directives?"

Why This Matters: Supply chain disruptions can lead to service failures affecting vulnerable individuals.

Ensuring your supplier has a resilient, ethical supply chain helps protect service continuity and aligns with broader social responsibility commitments.

Your Tender Checklist

Use this comprehensive checklist to ensure your tender addresses all critical aspects of modern TEC procurement:



Resilience & Connectivity

- ☐ 4G+ compatibility
- ☐ Simplified communication paths
- ☐ Multiple connectivity methods (SIM + broadband)
- ☐ Automatic switching between connections
- ☐ SIM roaming across all MNOs

Cost vs Value

- ☐ Total cost of ownership
- ☐ Pricing transparency for future charges
- ☐ Cost-benefit analysis with ROI
- ☐ Value-added services included in pricing

Interoperability & Futureproofing

- ☐ Documented open protocols
- ☐ Technology roadmap
- ☐ Evidence of third-party integration
- ☐ Cross-sector compatibility

Technical Standards

- ☐ RF868/869 frequency for life-critical applications
- ☐ Compliance verification

Return on Investment

- ☐ Data collection and analysis capabilities
- ☐ Enhanced functionality beyond analogue
- ☐ Scalability without proportional cost increases

Enriched Data

- ☐ GDPR compliance and data security
- ☐ Actionable insights generation
- ☐ Cross-organisational sharing capabilities
- ☐ Analytics tools

Robust Supply Chain

- ☐ Component quality standards
- ☐ Geopolitical risk assessment
- ☐ Ethical manufacturing verification
- ☐ Environmental impact considerations

REMEMBER

The analogue to digital transition isn't just about compliance with the 2027 switchover. It's an opportunity to transform care delivery for years to come.

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