

Adult Social Care Charging Policy Consultation

On 22nd February 2022, Cabinet agreed to implement the Adult Social Care Charging Policy subject to public consultation. In response this is to inform Cabinet of the Adult Social Care Charging Policy consultation; to request Cabinet to review and consider the findings and to agree to implement the suggested recommendation.

The consultation was widely promoted to all people receiving social care services in their own homes and more generally to the wider public. Out of approximately 4000 people receiving services in the community in a full year (4049 across year 2021) a total of 237 people contributed to the consultation:

We consulted on whether people agreed or disagreed with proposals relating to four key areas:

1. Full Cost Recovery

Implement a model of full cost recovery which means that the Council will seek to recharge at the same rates it pays care providers.

28 people agreed or strongly agreed to the proposal and 47 people disagreed or strongly disagreed.

2. Disability Related Expenditure

Strengthen the criteria around Disability Related Expenditure (DRE) allowances and ask for evidence to substantiate a claim for Disability Related Expenditure.

43 people agreed/strongly agreed to implementing DRE and 25 people disagreed or strongly disagreed.

3. Arrangement Fees

Introduce a policy of charging arrangement fees for new and existing people receiving non-residential care and who have savings over the full cost limit. This is permitted under the Care Act and is a cost incurred by the Council when arranging care.

27 people agreed or strongly agreed to implementing the Arrangement Fees and 45 people disagreed or strongly disagreed.

4. Minimum Income Guarantee

The Council should not increase the Minimum Income Guarantee (MIG) and should continue to follow the Care Act 2014 guidance until such time that this legislation is changed.

38 people agreed or strongly agreed to MIG and 37 people disagreed or strongly disagreed.

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We have considered all the consultation feedback as described in the Adult Social Care Consultation Report. A level of objection was expected at the outset of the consultation as fundamentally we were asking people to pay more towards the cost of their services. We received 45 objections to Arrangement Fees and 47 objections to Full Cost Recovery.

People who responded to the consultation are mostly in agreement with the suggested changes with Disability Related Expenditure and broadly split on whether to follow the Care Act 2014 guidance with the Minimum Income Guarantee until such time that this legislation is changed.

As the consultation progressed, we received increasing concerns about the impact of cost-of-living increases on the person's ability to pay their assessed charge. We heard individual accounts of personal hardship, but we are of the view that cost of living pressures is not for adult social care to resolve as they are national concerns requiring a national response. We note that the Minimum Income Guarantee is a nationally set sum of money designed to ensure a level of income which covers living costs which has not been increased in line with the cost-of-living increases.

In summary, considering these factors, the increase in income, and the positive impact that the new policy will have on the long-term sustainability of Adult Social Care and the need for a solid foundation on which to embed the rescheduled to 2025 Care Reform changes, we are recommending proceeding with the implementation as initially proposed to Cabinet on 22nd February 2022.

Recommendation

The recommendation is to implement the new Adult Social Care Charging Policy which includes the following four key changes:

1. Full Cost Recovery

Implement a model of full cost recovery which means that the Council will seek to recharge at the same rates it pays care providers.

2. Disability Related Expenditure

Strengthen the criteria around Disability Related Expenditure allowances and ask for evidence to substantiate a claim for Disability Related Expenditure.

3. Arrangement Fees

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4. Minimum Income Guarantee

The Council should not increase the Minimum Income Guarantee and should continue to follow the Care Act 2014 guidance until such time that this legislation is changed.