

Financial Contributions Policy For Adult Social Care Services

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 This report to the Overview & Scrutiny Committee provides background and context in relation to recent changes to the Council's Financial Contributions Policy (previously known as the Fairer Charging Policy) for Adult Social Care Services (Item 6b - link found in the Background Papers).
- 1.2 These changes were approved by Cabinet in July 2017 and by Full Council in September 2017. Prior to this, the proposed changes were subject to a full public consultation from 3rd April to 27th May 2017 and also a full Equality Impact Assessment.

2.0 Background

- 2.1 The Financial Contributions Policy for Adult Social Care Services explains the Council's approach to determining how much each service user should contribute towards the cost of their adult social care services. It outlines the Council's aims and principles on how we ensure a fair approach to setting the level of contributions to be made by service users in receipt of social care and support.
- 2.2 The recent changes were necessary to ensure that the policy complies with the requirements of the Care Act 2014 and the Council's charging principles. In addition, there has been national media coverage regarding the rising cost of delivering adult social care and the policy changes will help Barnsley Council to continue delivering adult social care support to an increasing number of people.
- 2.3 The overriding principle behind changes to the policy was that charges will be based on the full cost of the provision (which aligns with the Council's Fees and Charges Policy) and that service users will pay the amount that they can reasonably afford towards the full cost of their care. Individual financial assessments are undertaken to ensure contributions are based on a person's ability to pay, calculated using national guidelines and the Council's financial assessment framework.
- 2.4 Two of the changes in the policy came into force on 2nd October 2017:-
- the removal of the £150 weekly cap on contributions towards care and support in the community
 - the introduction of a one-off arrangement fee for people who are not eligible for financial support (self-funders) but still wish the Council to make their care arrangements for them. This fee has been calculated based upon the cost to the Council for making such arrangements.
- 2.5 The final change, relating to Disability Related Expenditure (DRE), was implemented on 1 April 2018:-
- any **additional** expenditure incurred in relation to a person's disability (not all expenditure) should be disregarded. (For example, if an individual required their home to be heated for longer periods of time due to a specific medical condition, then the additional costs of this would be disregarded).

- 2.6 The Council's medium term financial strategy 2017/18 included a requirement for £400,000 in additional income as a result of the changes to the Financial Contributions Policy. This is to enable the Council to respond to the rising costs and increasing demand for adult social care services.

3.0 Impact of the Changes

Removal of the £150 weekly cap

- 3.1 The £150 weekly cap only applied to those receiving support in the community, not those in residential or nursing care homes. People residing in care homes can be required to pay the full cost of their care and support, which was arguably unfair.
- 3.2 Removal of the cap has affected 6% of the service users who were receiving community based care and support (approximately 135 people).
- 3.3 All service users were offered the opportunity to have a full financial assessment to calculate their contribution. This assessment considers a person's income and any savings they may have as a basis for deciding how much, if anything, they can afford to pay as a fair contribution towards the cost of their services. Any charges are calculated against the full cost of the care/support a person receives.
- 3.4 The majority of other local authorities have already removed any cap on financial contributions; therefore these changes have brought Barnsley in line. Within the region, Wakefield and Kirklees Councils have no cap, whilst Sheffield, Rotherham and Doncaster Councils have caps which have been set in line with the cost of residential care.

Introduction of support planning charge for self-funders

- 3.5 For people who are not eligible for financial support but still wish the Council to make their care arrangements for them, a one-off fee has been introduced to cover the costs of making these arrangements. This only applies to new service users therefore existing service users were not affected by this.

Disregard of disability related expenditure

- 3.6 The final proposed change to the policy was in relation to Disability Related Expenditure (DRE). The policy allows for expenditure incurred in relation to a person's disability to be disregarded from their financial assessment. The policy has been amended to make clear that this only applies to any **additional** expenditure incurred in relation to a person's disability not all expenditure.
- 3.7 Currently 688 service users have DRE disregarded from their financial assessments. Within these assessments, most are already **only** claiming for additional expenditure; therefore only a handful of these service users will be affected by the policy change.

4.0 Summary of Service User Consultation

- 4.1 Following Cabinet approval of the policy changes, the 135 existing service users who were affected by the changes were sent correspondence informing them of how they would be impacted personally. A total of 48 enquiries were received in relation to this, summarised below; all of which have been actioned:

- 20 enquiries were requesting a new financial assessment
- Six enquiries were requests for Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council (BMBC) to continue to oversee care arrangements. This would ensure that the service user continues to benefit from BMBC contracted hourly rates which are generally lower than

the rates a provider would charge a private funder. (This option had been offered to existing service users as a mitigating action).

- Three enquiries were requests for a full review of their social care support
- The remainder of enquires were either from people informing us they would be contacting their current care providers to arrange for support to be delivered on a private/self-funding arrangement, or to discuss provider hourly rates to enable people to make informed decisions whether or not to remain with their current providers.

4.2 Only four people actually expressed dissatisfaction with the changes and believe they are being penalised for having saved all their lives or being in receipt of an occupational pension. However, they all understood why the changes are necessary and were generally accepting of the situation.

4.3 The above analysis provides evidence that the level of dissatisfaction was very minimal and supported the recommendation for adoption by Full Council.

5.0 Current Position

5.1 The changes came into force on 2nd October 2017 and are now business as usual for Adult Social Care Services.

5.2 Analysis following implementation evidences that 123 service users have been negatively affected by the changes, 109 of whom have been supported to become self-funders and 14 who have seen an increased charge.

5.3 As at the end of March 2018 a total of 21 new self-funding service users have requested the Council to arrange their social care support for them and have been invoiced for the cost of this service.

6.0 Future Plans & Challenges

6.1 The service will continue to monitor and evaluate the impact of these changes upon service users.

6.2 Disability Information Advice Line (DIAL) Barnsley are currently completing a research project to evaluate the impact of budget reductions and service redesign on disabled people in Barnsley. It is likely that the changes to the Financial Contributions Policy will be a significant element of the findings. The final report is due July 2018 and will be considered by Adult Social Care Services.

7.0 Invited Witnesses

7.1 The following experts have been invited to today's meeting to answer questions from the committee:

- Rachel Dickinson, Executive Director - People
- Lennie Sahota, Service Director - Adult Social Care & Health
- Sharon Graham, Head of Service - Joint Commissioning
- Jane Wood, Head of Service - Assessment & Care Management
- Claire Edgar, Head of Service - Mental Health & Disability
- Councillor Margaret Bruff, Cabinet Spokesperson for People - Safeguarding

8.0 Possible Areas for Investigation

8.1 Members may wish to ask questions around the following areas:

- What have been the key challenges since the changes were implemented and how have these been mitigated?
- What feedback have you received from service users since the implementation of the changed policy?
- What do you expect the outcomes of the DIAL Barnsley project to be?
- What impact have these changes had on carers?
- How confident are you that the additional income of £400,000 will be generated as a result of the policy changes?
- What actions could be taken by Members in support of this area of work?

9.0 Background Papers and Useful Links

- Item 6b – BMBC: Financial Contributions Policy for Adult Social Care Services
<http://barnsleymbc.moderngov.co.uk/documents/s22915/Appendix%201.pdf>
- Department of Health: The Care Act 2014 Factsheet 5 – Charging & Financial Assessments
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/268682/Factsheet_5_update_charging.pdf
- Department of Health: Care & Support Statutory Guidance
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/315993/Care-Act-Guidance.pdf

10.0 Glossary

BMBC	Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council
DRE	Disability Related Expenditure

11.0 Officer Contact

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