

Report to: **Cabinet**

Date: **1 May 2007**

By: **Director of Adult Social Care**

Title of report: **Fairer Charging Policy – Outcome of Review**

Purpose of report: **To seek Cabinet approval to implement changes to the Adult Social Care Department's Fairer Charging Policy**

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Cabinet is recommended to agree the proposed changes to the Adult Social Care Department's Fairer Charging Policy for implementation from 7 May 2007

1. Financial Appraisal

1.1 The Adult Social Care department currently raises some £1.7m of income from service users through its Fairer Charging Policy by charging for home care services following financial assessment of service users means. A further £0.2m is also received by charging separately for day care attendance and transport to day centres.

1.2 The review considered the policy against guidance issued by the Department of Health in 2001; Fairer Charging Policies for Home Care and Other Non-Residential Social Services (Fairer Charging), which as the title suggests is about a wider charging regime for non-residential services. The review has also been set in the context of the new systems and processes that have been implemented in April because of the Business Transformation of the back office and aims to ensure that the policy is fair and consistent in its application.

1.3 The business case assumed a further £68k in income would be received through improved processes.

2. Background & Supporting Information

2.1 On 12 December 2006, the Cabinet received a report from the Director of Adult Social Care seeking approval to commence a period of consultation with service users and representative groups from 18 December 2006 to 19 March 2007.

2.2 The review focused on two main areas:

A) Fairer Charging Policy – Charging criteria review

- Basic Disregards
- Disability Related Expenditure
- Integrated Charges
- Carer charges

B) Fairer Charging Policy - Practice review

- Completion of Financial Assessments
- Notification of Charges
- Charging commencement
- Capped Charges

The proposed changes to the policy are contained in the Appendix attached.

3. Feedback from Consultation

3.1 The consultation took place via: -

- ⊙ The Council's website
- ⊙ An easy read version for people with disabilities
- ⊙ Writing to staff and service users at day centres
- ⊙ Visits to 6 day centres
- ⊙ Writing to voluntary organisations
- ⊙ Meeting with Mencap

3.2 A telephone number was issued and 80 calls were received, these were mainly enquiring about the impact on individual's personal circumstances. A small number of written responses were received; again some of this was to seek clarification.

3.3 The key issue that people felt was not equitable was the proposal to implement a banding system for Disability Related Expenditure (DRE). People reported that there were instances where the proposals would not take account of DREs adequately where a benefit might not be payable for example. This is a complex area where individual circumstances can vary greatly. On the basis of the feedback received this specific proposal has been altered. The banding proposals have been removed and the Basic Disregards have been updated.

4. Conclusion and Reason for Recommendations

4.1 This is a complex area and the department continues to work as part of a joint team with the Department of Work and Pensions to provide a holistic benefits advice and financial assessment service to service users. Whilst an amendment to the proposals has been made it is anticipated that the increased income levels will be achieved. The changes to the policy should give greater equity and clarity to service users regarding charges.

Keith Hinkley
Director of Adult Social Care

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Local Member(s): All

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS:

- ⊙ *Fairer Charging Policies for Home Care and Other Non-Residential Social Services* (Department of Health guidance)
- ⊙ Feedback from Consultation

CHANGES TO THE FAIRER CHARGING POLICY

A) Fairer Charging Policy – Charging criteria review

- Basic Disregards
- Disability Related Expenditure (DRE)
- Integrated Charges
- Carer charges

B) Fairer Charging Policy - Practice review

- Completion of Financial Assessments
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A) Fairer Charging Policy – Charging criteria review

- **Basic Disregards** – These relate to the capped levels of DRE and validation processes and are listed below.
- **Disability Related Expenditure (DRE)**

The government guidance states that if disability related benefits are in payment and taken into account within the financial assessment, provision should be made for any additional expenditure incurred in relation the disability.

As a general rule therefore if the service user does not receive, or have underlying entitlement to Disability Related Benefits no allowance will be given for DRE. However, where service users are in the process of seeking approval to entitlement to such benefits DRE allowances will be made.

The purchase price of equipment will be averaged over 3 years unless there is evidence to support the shortened or lengthened lifetime of the product.

- **Integrated Charges**

Day care attendance will be incorporated within the fairer charging policy so there is equity in the treatment of charges for home care and day care services. Financial assessments are required to assess service user's ability to contribute to their care and a visit by a member of the Joint Team will enable benefits entitlement checks to take place.

Service users will contribute on their holistic service. Where home care and day care are being provided the fairer charging assessment will look at the full service being delivered.

- **Carer charges**

Carers will continue to be exempt from charging

B) Fairer Charging Policy - Practice review

- **Completion of Financial Assessments**

Where visits have been frustrated or cancelled, notification will be issued to confirm charges will commence from the Monday following the date of the original visit which was to be undertaken or date service commences which ever is the later.

Postal and additional information completions will be required within 10 working days. Non returns and refusals to complete will be assessed as a self funder.

- **Notification of Charges**

The assessed contribution will no longer be rounded. The actual assessed amount will be the maximum contribution.

- **Charging commencement**

Charges begin from the first Monday following the completion of the financial assessment or the date care commences which ever is the later in all cases.

- **Capped Charges**

The Council's charge for an hour of home care will be £12 and for day care £12 a session, the actual amount payable will depend upon the outcome of the fairer charging assessment. The rates will be reviewed annually.

Fairer Charging DRE Allowances as from 7 May 2007

All DRE's to be supported with valid receipts or evidence of expenditure, Care plans and social worker validations can also support expenditure.

<u>MOW / Ready Meals</u>	£1.15	per meal (max 7 per week)	
<u>Special Dietary Needs</u>	£10.75	max per week	(additional food costs over average guideline single £26.00 pw / couple £44.00 pw)
<u>Chiropody:</u>			
Home Visit	£3.80	max per week	
Surgery	£2.80	max per week	
<u>Hair Washing</u>	£7.60	max per week	
<u>Gardening</u>	£6.40	max per week	
<u>Window Cleaning</u>	£1.70	max per week	
<u>Domestic Help</u>	£19.00	max per week	
<u>Laundry</u>	£0.55	per additional load (over 2pw single / 3pw couple)	
<u>Personal Pads</u>	£3.45	average per week (discretionary re client's needs)	
<u>Day Centre Costs:</u>			
** Meals	£1.15	per day	(actual standard cost £3.10)
Transport	£2.00	per return	(actual standard cost £2.00)

Transport Costs

Additional costs over and above Mobility allowance paid.

<u>Wheelchair</u>	£3.03	per week manual	
	£7.39	per week powered	
<u>Powered bed</u>			Actual cost divided by 500 (10 yr life) up to a maximum of £3.39 per week
<u>Turning bed</u>			Actual cost divided by 500 up to a maximum of £5.89 per week
<u>Powered reclining chair</u>			Actual cost divided by 500 up to a maximum of £2.68 per week
<u>Stair-lift</u>			Actual cost divided by 500 up to a maximum of £4.76 per week
<u>Hoist</u>			Actual cost divided by 500 up to a maximum of £2.34 per week

Excess Fuel Costs:

	Standard Costs
Single person - Flat/Terrace	£734
Couple – Flat/Terrace	£967
Single person – Semi Detached	£779
Couples – Semi Detached	£1026
Single – Detached	£947
Couples – Detached	£1248

Fuel costs that are evidenced by bills above these rates will be allowable.

Internet Access £10.00 max per month (Tiscali, Talk Talk, Virgin offer basic broadband at £10 or less)

**** Please note, now that Day Care clients have a separate full fairer charging assessment, no allowance for attendance at a day care centre is allowable**