

CABINET RESPONSE TO SOCIAL CARE SERVICES BOARD

CONSULTATION ON A REVISED CHARGING POLICY FOR ADULT SOCIAL CARE SERVICES

(considered by Social Care Services Board on 23 June 2016)

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. That the Cabinet demonstrate they have taken the impact of carers and families into account and have sought to mitigate this impact through a more robust Equalities Impact Assessment
2. That Cabinet provide greater evidence for the cost-benefit of implementing the proposed changes to Adult Social Care charging policy
3. That the Cabinet provide evidence as to how the administration fee is calculated and when it will be subject to review
4. That, taking individual concerns into consideration, the Cabinet establish there are no indirect impacts on an individual's package arising from:
 - the implementation of the national living wage;
 - the review into the grants programme.

RESPONSE:

1. Representatives of key partner organisations, including Surrey Coalition for Disabled People, Sight for Surrey, Age UK and Action for Carers were consulted on the Equalities Impact Assessment and contributed to the final version. An updated version is available for circulation to the Social Care Services Board. The EIA identifies the actions that will be taken to mitigate the negative impacts wherever possible.
2. In a full year, the proposals to revise the charging policy will achieve £1.6m. We do not anticipate any significant administrative costs arising from implementation of the policy changes. The annual review scheduled to take place in March 2016 was deferred so that we could incorporate any policy changes into that review. There are therefore no direct costs solely as a result of these policy proposals. We will begin the process of reviewing people ahead of 2 October 2016, so that people have ample time to prepare for any change.
3. We already charge an administration fee for full cost payers in residential care and for setting up a deferred payment agreement. This proposal will therefore bring care at home in line with our existing arrangements. The fees will be added to the usual statements and are not an extra administrative cost.

The set up fee represents the cost in practitioner time of arranging support i.e. negotiating/corresponding with providers; ensuring appropriate contracts are in place etc. Depending on the provider there may be a need to involve procurement and data management colleagues. ASC finance colleagues have to arrange to pay the provider on receipt of an invoice. A more senior role is required to sign off the support plan, costs etc The FAB Team must undertake a financial assessment,

and then raise charges on a monthly basis. Business services are involved in issuing the statement and collecting the payment.

This annual charge was calculated as follows :

Admin charge - 15 hrs work minimum based on the above activities at £19.58 mid range S8 grade including 25% on costs. Additionally there are printing and postage costs and costs associated with invoicing.

The weekly fee represents the cost of processing ongoing invoices and dealing with disputes; full cost payers are one of the busiest areas for credit control and the service, with some people refusing to pay. It has been set at a weekly amount to ensure that people are only charged when they receive a service in a particular week. The fee will be reviewed annually. The charges will only apply to new people.

Below is a comparison of other neighbouring local authorities on this matter.

	Set up fee	Ongoing
Surrey	295	5 pw
Buckinghamshire	250	1.35 pw
Oxfordshire	500	0
Hampshire	296	6 pw
Kent	Not commissioning services	0
West Sussex	157.25 +157.25 per change	5.05 pw

4. The National Living Wage should generally be seen as a positive development, helping to remove dependency on the benefits system and ensure a fair rate of pay at the lower end of the job market. There will be no direct impact on people who receive care and support as all earnings are disregarded. It is possible that the NLW will have a direct impact on carers; if their earnings increase above the earnings threshold, they may lose entitlement to carers allowance. We will look at individual cases as they arise to determine whether the package of support to the carer and cared for person needs to be reviewed accordingly.

We are working closely with providers and partners, through a robust process, to maximise the efficiency of our grants and contracts. This includes identifying and drawing upon alternative services, including family, friends and community networks where appropriate, to minimise the impact of any changes on residents. On an individual basis if a person has increased disability related expenditure as a result of the grant and contracts review, we would take this into account in the financial assessment depending on the circumstances of the case.

**Tim Evans, Cabinet Associate for Adult Social Care, Wellbeing and Independence
on behalf of Mel Few, Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, Wellbeing and
Independence
14 July 2016**