

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITY SERVICES

SOCIAL CARE & HEALTH SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

DATE: 20TH JANUARY, 2016

SUBJECT: IMPLEMENTATION OF CHARGES FOR NON RESIDENTIAL SOCIAL SERVICES FOR ADULTS WHICH WERE PREVIOUSLY FREE – POST IMPLEMENTATION EVALUATION

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 In July 2014 Council approved the introduction of new charges for non residential social services for adults which were previously free. As part of the approval process the Social Care and Health Scrutiny Committee considered and endorsed the report as part of the consultation process and requested that an evaluation report in terms of its impact be prepared for consideration by the Committee during 2015/16. This report provides members with information relating to the new charges for consideration.

2. Service Information

- 2.1 At the time of writing the charges have been in place for just over 12 months. The charges that were approved were:

Service	Charge
Day Care – all adults	£10.00/session
Employment Services & Day Opportunities	Free
Supported Employment	Free
Education Support	£10.25/hour
Supported Living	£10.25/hour
Adult Placement Long Term Placement	£10.00/night
Adult Placement Short Term/Short Breaks	£10.00/night
Adult Placement Day Care/Sessional	£2.00/hour
Replacement Care	£10.25/hour
Community Support	£10.25/hour

The following is a description of the services:

- **Day Care** – covers a range of services whilst attending a centre
- **Employment Services and Day Opportunities** – attending a centre for employment training, personal development and support
- **Supported Employment** – supporting a disabled person in a work place
- **Education Support** – a disabled adult supported by a carer in a college
- **Supported Living** – support from paid carers within the service user's own home (other than Home Care)
- **Adult Placement** – where an adult lives with an approved carer who is paid to support them
- **Replacement Care** – where the informal carer is temporarily replaced by a care worker to provide care to a service user in their own home
- **Community Support** (One to One Support in the Community) – bespoke services for individuals (other than Home Care)

2.2 Although the Department had always charged for some services such as domiciliary care and telecare the charges above were being introduced for the first time for services that had been provided free for many years. It is important to remember that all service users who access any/all of these services are offered a financial assessment (means test) to determine how much if anything they contribute towards the cost of their care.

2.3 At the time the new charges were approved there was a maximum charge anyone could pay for all of the non residential social services they received, at the time the maximum charge was £55 per week. The maximum charge changed to £60 per week from April 2015 and is the figure that applies currently and it is also understood to be the figure which will apply for next year, 2016/17, as well. This maximum charge excludes meals and laundry charges which are levied in addition to the means tested charge and maximum charge.

2.4 In the original report it was estimated that approximately 1014 service users were accessing services where a new charge was proposed. Currently there are 1007 service users assessed as needing these services, therefore the estimated numbers of service users seemed to be relatively accurate.

2.5 There are currently 410 service users within this group who are paying or likely to pay a charge whilst the remainder will have a free service. This is slightly higher than originally estimated.

2.6 The table below gives a summary of the amounts that service users pay

£ Charge per week	Number of Service Users
No Charge	597
£0.01 - £19..99	147
£20.00 - £39.99	68
£40.00 - £59.99	32
£60	163
Total	1007

- 2.7 At the outset the department estimated that the new charges would generate approximately £500,000 in a full year. Based on the current number of service users assessed to receive services with the new charge, the estimated full year income would be £465k per annum. Although this is slightly lower than originally estimated there is no indication to suggest that the reduced income figure is due to services being terminated but more likely it is due to service users having a lower charge because their savings and income was less than originally estimated.
- 2.8 As with all new charges, there was a danger that implementing a charge may result in a service user(s) refusing the service simply because they did not want to pay, even though the financial assessment would have considered affordability. Any service user who declined a service due to a charge was referred back to the care management teams to ensure that service users were not at risk. This was the agreed protocol and was part of the original report.
- 2.9 During the last 12 months, 35 service users terminated a non residential service with a new charge due to the charge. However, 10 of these service users continued to receive at least one service and 1 user restarted the service again at a later date whilst the remaining 24 service users stopped having services.
- 2.10 There were a further 6 service users who simply reduced the quantity of services with a new charge that they received because of the charge.
- 2.11 As with all new charges the department received many contacts seeking an understanding on why the charge was being implemented, clarity on how an individual's personal charge had been calculated and also why different individuals paid different amounts for the same service. There were also some press articles which reflected the personal circumstances of individuals who were now paying for a service, focussing on hardship and how important the service was. Responses to the press articles were provided through the Authority's communications team. The volume of contacts currently and the reasons for contact are now more in line with the contacts we get for services that have had charges for many years.
- 2.12 With the introduction of the new Health and Wellbeing Act 2014, Welsh Government published a draft new code relating to charges and undertook a consultation on the draft during the summer. The Welsh Government issued the final guidance in respect of charges in mid November 2015 and officers are currently working through this information. It is likely that the current charging policy will need to be amended to include the new legislation and will be presented back to members for approval in due course.