

APPENDIX A

Adult Social Service

Charging for Services Consultation Report

- **Introductions**

Over the 30 days consultation process 2 stakeholder meetings were held.

The first stakeholder meeting provided the opportunity for stakeholders to help design and comment on the on-line survey. The on-line survey went live on 25th April 2016 and closed on 27th May 2016

For both stakeholder meetings notes were taken by those presenting the information in relation to the proposal. Questions were raised concerning the proposals and all questions were appropriately responded to at the meetings.

Assurance was provided that the process would be open and transparent and that engagement with stakeholders was essential to ensure full understanding of how the financial contribution charges are calculated and applied

- **Key Questions, Answer and Comments**

- Q) Does the Council require permission from every service user to access the DWP data?
- A) No, as the service user has already given their consent to the DWP to share data with other Government agencies and with Local Authorities. The Council has been given access to the DWP data on the strict understanding that this data can only be used for the financial assessment process. For each record accessed, the officer has to complete a proforma which gives the details of the client and the screens accessed. In addition, the DWP conduct random Management Checks to ensure that number of records accessed to locate one person are kept to a minimum
- Q) How is the heating allowance calculated? Can we see the thresholds?
- A) The heating allowance is set in agreement with all the Councils. This is a fixed rate but is dependent on the size of the property and the number of occupiers. The Council can make these thresholds available
- Q) What is the personal allowance rate? Can we see this document?
- A) Apart from the personal allowance for over 65s in Domiciliary care, the rest of the rates have remained unchanged from 2015 – 2016. The Council will make the new rates available on their website

- Q) Will the client require access to email to send information about their expenditure to the Council?
- A) No. The Council will send a paper form which can be completed and signed and then mailed back using the Royal Mail service

- Q) What is the full cost rate?
- A) Currently, it is £12.97 per hour

- Q) What is the personalisation rate?
- A) Currently, it is £11.65 per hour

- Q) What kind of expenditure can be included as DRE?
- A) Any expenditure which is over and above that a non-disabled person will incur and is not the funding responsibility of another agency, will be taken as DRE

- Q) What other expenses will be taken into account when calculating the client contribution?
- A) Housing costs, where these are not funded through Housing Benefits

- There was a general discussion around the financial assessment process and how this is calculated

- Q) Can we extend the consultation period to take into account that it started on Monday and should really end on Friday
- A) Yes I don't see that as being a problem

- Q) How are reablement customers informed that their service is free
- A) Reablement customers are told by social workers that the reablement service is free for six weeks at the point when their reablement service commence. However, if it is necessary for ongoing care to continue after the six weeks this would be subjected to a financial assessment contribution.

- Q) The service is means tested that means that we look at how much income a person receives. We had to take into account a personal allowance, how much we leave a person to live day to day and then the financial assessment calculation is based on the remaining income. Only if a person can afford to pay a contribution following the calculation the a charge is made

- Q) If you do not carry out the visit then how does the client know what income we have taken into account and how much they need to contribute
- A) We will send them the FA letter and a breakdown which details the income and expenditure

- Q) What happens if the charge is less than the average cost of £29.07 per week after a financial assessment is undertaken

A) If the financial assessment demonstrated that the customer should contribute more than the average charge of £29.07 per week then the new higher charge would commence from the day the customer was informed of the new charge. Should the financial assessment demonstrate that the customer should pay less than £29.07 per week then the difference would be reimburse back to the customer and backdated to when the customer was informed of the average charge being made towards their care.

- In addition to the above issues raised stakeholders generally thought that combining the existing charging policies made sense and welcomed the use of DWP information to undertake financial assessments. One comment which had been made at the first stakeholder meeting was in relation to a stakeholder brother who lived in another borough and had their financial contribution calculated using DWP information. It was a positive experience for the brother as he did not have to find information or complete forms.
- Weekly check was undertaken to analyse the on-line survey responses to the consultation however there were no returns. It was generally considered that the face to face interaction with stakeholder provided a more qualitative response to the proposal where clarity of information could be better exchange and concerns addressed
- The closing summary from the stakeholder group ended in a comment stating Overall they are t happy with the proposals after having the opportunity to ask some questions