

CHARGING FOR ADULT SOCIAL CARE SERVICES

Department
Adults Social Care

Person Responsible
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Last Review

Status

Next Review
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Impact Assessment Data

What effects could your policy have on different equality groups and on cohesion and good relations?

AGE

Neutral

Older people are the largest client group serviced by Adult Social Care. Some older clients may not fully understand how their Client Contribution has been calculated. There was concerns at the one of the consultation meeting that older people may think that they need to be computer literate in order to communicate with the council. It was fully explained that this was not the case. Each customer will receive a full breakdown on how their financial assessment had been calculated using the DWP data base. A visit by a Client Affair Officer will also be undertaken should a customer required further clarification or if it is deemed that for specific customers this is the best way to convey information.

The policy could have a positive impact as in using information from a data base requires less forms paper evidence from customers which can be unsettling and cause confusion.

DISABILITY

Neutral

All customers receiving care from Adult Social Services will have a level of disability. The policy does not impact on disability in any form of way. Clear communication is key to ensuring all customers understand that there is a cost to the service they receive and what is their financial contribution are

The policy will have no impact on vulnerable people who may be on low income who meet Fair Access to Service criteria as there is no change to overall cost of the service and many customers on low income will not be charged. The Council has a legal obligation to provide services to meet assessed need regardless of a customer's ability to pay. The policy would ensure that the most vulnerable people continue to have access to and benefit from the services that they need

Disabled people should not receive fewer services as a result of this proposed change in policy.

GENDER

Neutral

This policy has neutral effect on gender. It is however, recognised that women do live longer than men and are more likely to require social care. There is also more female customers using Adult Social Care Services than males. It could be said that the policy would have a positive impact on females as the proposed financial assessment process is more streamlined and requires less input from customers

MARRIAGE AND CIVIL PARTNERSHIP

Neutral

This policy has neutral effect on the group.

PREGNANCY

Neutral

This policy has neutral effect on the group.

RACE

Neutral

There would be no racial group for whom the policy would have a disproportionately adverse impact Brent remains a majority Black Asian Minority (BAME) borough with 63.7% of the population being non- white. In England and in Wales the figure is 14% and 40% in London. The largest single ethnic group in Brent - is the Asian/Asian British, Indian or British Indian Group 18.6% of the borough population followed by the White: English/Welsh/Scottish/ Northern Irish/ British group with 18%. In England and Wales the Asian/British: Indian or British Indian group makes up 2.5 % of the population, rising to 8.8% in Outer London Kingsbury

RELIGION

Neutral

There would be no religious group for whom the policy would have a disproportionately adverse impact The Policy aims to continue to support service users accordingly to their faith and religion and any other spiritual needs they may have

SEX

Neutral

SEXUAL ORIENTAION

Unknown

We are unable to collect the evidence in this characteristic, therefore we are unable to specify of the policy will have negative or positive impact on the group.

OTHER (please specify

PLEASE PROVIDE A BRIEF SUMMARY OF ANY RESEARCH OR ENGAGEMENT INITIATIVE THAT HAVE BEEN CARRIED OUT.

A 30 days consultation process took place. Within that period 2 stakeholder meetings were held. Consultation methods included a paper survey and stakeholder meetings. The first stakeholder meeting provided the opportunity for stakeholder 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. The overall numbers who responded to the consultation is 41

For both stakeholder meeting notes were taken by those presenting the information in relation to the proposal. Questions were raised concerning the proposal and all questions were appropriately responded to at the meetings. There was a request for more written information in relation to financial assessments

Whilst the proposed change to light touch assessments and charging the average cost of £29.07 only affects new users of the service, existing users of the service may be affected if they have a change in circumstances, hence the target audience for consultation will be both new and existing users.

Stakeholders primary concerns and issues were as follows. They:

- wanted to know what was included in a financial assessment calculation
- 2 residents wanted to know if customers had to give permission to the council to access their DWP information
- 1 resident wanted to ensure enough time was allocated to the consultation period and requested that the consultation be extended by 5 days to take into consideration an end of the week closure rather than the beginning of the week
- wanted to know how customers identified for reablement services will know that they would not be a charge for up to six weeks
- wanted to know what constituted a Disability Related Expenditure
- were issues around customers not having a computer to exchange information with the Council

In response to the above issues and concerns it was explained what was included within a financial assessment, what was disregarded and the types of Disability Related Expenditure (DRE) that would be considered within the calculation.

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, applied and the timescales of informing customers of when the charges for their services will commence.

It was further explained that customers had already given their consent to the DWP to share data with other Government agencies and with Local Authorities and that 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. The response to this question also included information around means testing for Adult Social Care service and only those customers identified that they can afford to pay will be charged a financial contribution.

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

WHERE THE PARTICIPANTS IN ANY ENGAGEMENT INITIATIVE REPRESENTATIVE OF THE PEOPLE WHO WILL BE AFFECTED BY THE PROPOSAL

Yes the participants were residents of borough who used services. There was also representation from people who had experience of other local authorities charging policies as well as potential new customers.

COULD ANY OF THE IMPACTS YOU HAVE IDENTIFIED BE UNLAWFUL UNDER THE EQUALITY ACT 2010, PROHIBITED ACTS INCLUDE DIRECT AND INDIRECT DISCRIMINATION, HARASSMENT, VICTIMISATION AND FAILURE TO MAKE A REASONABLE ADJUSTMENT.

No. Adults Social Care ensures that all residents are treated with dignity, respect and equality. We also aim to ensure we take any actions for discriminatory behaviours. We ensure all residents are treated fairly and the backbone of this work is the right to independence and control the lives of vulnerable people.

WHAT ACTION WILL YOU TAKE TO ENHANCE THE POTENTIAL POSITIVE IMPACTS THAT YOU HAVE IDENTIFIED

1. Residents will be given alternative choice to how a financial assessment is undertaken should they not want the Council to use their DWP information.
2. Residents will be given verbal and written information to help them understand the financial assessment process.
3. For residents who have no capacity an Independent Mental Capacity Assessment will be arranged
7. Residents will have the same rights and responsibilities as other citizens.
8. We will make sure that we will work closely with other organisations e.g. advocacy
9. We will work closely with families and friends
10. We will work closely with other Council's departments

WHAT ACTIONS WILL YOU TAKE TO REMOVE OR REDUCE THE POTENTIAL NEGATIVE IMPACT THAT YOU HAVE IDENTIFIED

There are no negative impact. Our aim is to ensure people are treated equally despite their age, disability, gender, race, religion or beliefs or sexual orientation. We ensure that all customers have the same access to information and ensure they adapted in a format they can understand to ensure discrimination is eliminated.

PLEASE EXPLAIN HOW ANY REMAINING NEGATIVE IMPACTS CAN BE JUSTIFIED.

There are no negative impacts