

# HEALTH & WELL-BEING SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

## SOCIAL CARE CONTRIBUTIONS POLICY

### REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF HEALTH, HOUSING AND ADULT SERVICES

7<sup>th</sup> December 2011

#### 1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To provide Members of the Health and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee with an overview of the consultation on proposed changes to social care contributions policies and processes.

#### 2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 There are 3 main drivers for proposing changes to the current charging regime for adult social care in Sunderland.:

- To support personalisation and the ongoing implementation of personal budgets;
- To bring the Council in line with national trends, and policy developments;
- To simplify the policy and process for the customer.

#### 2.2 Personalisation

The implementation of personalisation into Adult Services means that individuals will choose how they meet their assessed care needs and will be provided with the money and support to organise this themselves through a personal budget. This opens up a wider range of services available for the individual to call on to meet their needs, such as the purchase of a bicycle, a season ticket, tickets to the cinema or theatre as well as employing personal assistants directly, in place of the more traditional services such as home care, day care or short break.

#### 2.3 National Trends and Developments

Many Local Authorities are removing levels of subsidy and caps on maximum charge in order to ensure a level playing field for all people receiving assessed social care services. Instead the financial assessment process will determine what people can afford to pay and will require them to pay up to that, removing disincentives linked to taking up specific types of service, for example, there is currently a greater level of subsidy linked to the charge for day care as compared to that linked to home care.

## 2.4 Simplification of Policy and Processes

The charging policies that are currently in place are complex to administer and can be confusing for customers. It also results in many individuals finding themselves in arrears or credit with their social care charges without realising it. Additionally, there is a separate charging policy for short break care based on a different financial assessment process, which will normally result in an entirely different charge to that for non residential services.

2.5 In the personalisation process, an individual's needs are assessed and where they are found to have eligible needs under Fair Access to Care Services (FACS), they are informed of the amount of money required to meet those needs. This sum is known as their personal budget.

2.6 There are currently 3 ways for people in Sunderland to receive their personal budget:

- Managed Budget – the individual chooses the way in which they want their support to be delivered but the Council continues to manage the money for them, they can choose to spend their budget on Council run or commissioned services.
- Direct Payments – the individual takes direct control of their money and can purchase external services, which includes some of the more flexible options such as a season ticket for a local football club, membership of a gym, theatre or cinema tickets as well as employing a personal assistant or purchasing care through an agency.
- A combination of the two options detailed above.

## 3. **CURRENT POSITION**

3.1 Under the existing charging policy, individuals who are identified as having eligible social care needs are also required to undergo a financial assessment (which is completed using the Department of Health Fairer Charging Guidance for non residential services and Charging for Residential Accommodation Guidance for Short Break). This financial assessment checks their ability to pay for the chargeable services they receive which could include home care, day care, companionship and short break. Permanent residential care is charged for under different arrangements, there is no proposal to change this.

3.2 When an individual's ability to pay results in a charge for the cost of their care, the current policy assumes a traditional model of support through units of day care and home care.

3.3 The individual's financial assessment will determine the maximum amount they can afford to pay on a sliding scale from £nil per week up to a maximum of £108.70.

3.4 The individual is charged a sum of £10.87 per unit of service received. This equates to:

- Home Care – 1 Hour = £10.87
- Companionship – 1 Session of 4 Hours = £10.87
- Day Care – 1 Day = £10.87

- 3.5 Once the number of units of care provided in any given week exceeds the value of the individual's own maximum charge, there is no further cost to the customer.
- 3.6 Short break charges are calculated separately to those detailed above (based on DoH Guidance – Charging for Residential Accommodation Guide). Individuals receiving non residential services as well as short break may have 2 charges at very different rates. This is because the two sets of guidance apply very different criteria in order to calculate the charge.

#### **4. PROPOSED NEW POLICY**

- 4.1 The current policy has been reviewed taking account of the vision for personalisation, the principles under which personal budgets and direct payments operate and the practicalities of ensuring the system is open, fair, transparent and easy to understand.
- 4.2 We have also considered the guidelines within Think Local, Act Personal: *“Mobilising People’s own resources, skills and assets to meet their care and support needs, leaving public funding to cover those that cannot be met from such means.”*  
The consultation therefore proposes that those people that can afford to do so should contribute to the full cost of care.
- 4.3 The revised approach to contributions will reflect the key stages of care – linked to Reablement and Personalisation.
- 4.4 Reablement – the reablement at home service is delivered in line with a tailored care plan for up to 6 weeks and is free of charge.
- 4.5 Personalisation – an individual's long term support plan, including the need for short break, resourced through their personal budget.
- Individuals will make a contribution to their personal budget that has been calculated according to their ability to pay as assessed under Department of Health Fairer Charging / Fairer Contributions Guidance.
  - Those individuals whose maximum contribution exceeds their assessed personal budget will meet the cost of their own support plan (the cost of ongoing social work support is not charged for and not included within the scope of the personal budget).
  - Those individuals whose maximum contribution is lower than their assessed personal budget will receive the balance from the Council to ensure they can afford to meet their needs.
  - Where an individual has been assessed as a nil contribution, the Council will provide the full personal budget.

- 4.6 This new policy, in combination with the introduction of personal budgets, will minimise the number of transactions for the Council, as well as making the system simpler for the individual.

## **5. CONSULTATION**

- 5.1 A period of public consultation incorporating both contact with current recipients of services, as well as other stakeholders and potential customers began on 24th October 2011 with the questionnaire response closing on 16<sup>th</sup> December. The full results will be used to finalise the policy before its implementation.

## **6. RECOMMENDATION**

- 6.1 It is recommended that Members receive this report for information