

## **REPORT TO ABERDEENSHIRE INTEGRATION JOINT BOARD 01 MARCH 2023**

### **CHARGING POLICY & UNIT COSTS 2023/24**

#### **1 Recommendation**

**It is recommended that the Integration Joint Board (IJB) :-**

- 1.1 Note that in light of the continued impact of the Covid-19 pandemic and the cost-of-living crisis, it is proposed that the RPI increase of 5.9% is applied to charges and unit costs in 2023/24.**
- 1.2 Make comment and suggest any required changes to Aberdeenshire Council Communities Committee regarding the proposed charging policy for 2023/24. This comprises of:**
  - a) The Non-Residential charging policy 2023/24 document detailed in Appendix 1**
  - b) The rates for Charges and Allowances detailed in Appendix 2**
  - c) The Unit Costs detailed in the Charges & Allowances Appendix 2 and also detailed in paragraph 5.1**

#### **2 Directions**

- 2.1 No direction requires to be issued to Aberdeenshire Council or NHS Grampian as a result of this report.**

#### **3 Risk**

- 3.1 Risk 1 - Sufficiency and Affordability Resources. Without a fair and equitable charging policy in place, there is a risk to income and affordability of care and support services to service users.**

#### **4 Background**

- 4.1 Aberdeenshire Integration Joint Board, in-line with the Public Bodies (Joint Working) (Scotland) Act 2014, operates a number of services through Directions to Aberdeenshire Council and NHS Grampian. The setting of charges is not delegated to the Integration Joint Board and remains a power held by Aberdeenshire Council.**
- 4.2 Aberdeenshire Council has its own Corporate Charging Framework. The Framework recommends that a full review of charges is carried out every third year with the aim of moving services to a basis of full cost recovery.**
- 4.3 The full review of charges for social care services would have been due to take effect in 2021/22. It was agreed at Communities Committees on 18<sup>th</sup> February 2021 and 24<sup>th</sup> March 2022 not to carry out the full review due to the impact of Covid-19. It was agreed to apply the September RPI uplift to charges and unit**

costs. It was anticipated that the full review would be carried out in 2023/24. This review was paused pending the outcome of the Scottish Government and COSLA led working group to remove charges for non-residential care services.

- 4.4 The Corporate Charging Framework recommends that where a full review has not been carried out, the costs and charges that Aberdeenshire Council have the discretion to set are increased, as a minimum, each year by a suitable inflationary uplift. For 2023/24 it is expected that the uplift will be in line with the HM Treasury Forecast (September) Retail Price Index, this is currently 5.9%.
- 4.5 Following the publication of the Independent Review of Adult Social Care in Scotland, the Scottish Government and COSLA issued a joint statement of intent in March 2021. This stated that agreement had been reached to have outline plans in place by May 2021 to deliver an end to charging for non-residential services as soon as possible. Finance Officers are members of a Scottish Government and COSLA led short life working group to explore the above. Scottish Government have recently confirmed that the removal of non-residential charging will not go ahead in 2023/24 as anticipated, and have not given an indication of a revised timeline.
- 4.6 Covid-19 continues to have an impact on the provision of services for which charges are made. Some Day Care services have not returned to full provision. A lower number of service users impacts on the unit costs for these services and at this stage it is not yet clear what the activity levels and cost base of these services will be in the future.
- 4.7 Community alarm and Telecare are not subject to an increase every year due to the administration cost of implementing small increases on a low-level service. The charges were last increased in April 2022 from £3.50 to £3.75 per week, therefore no increase has been proposed for 2023/24. Adding an RPI increase would increase the charge to £4.00 per week (increased in 25p increments). This would be considerably less than the cost of providing the service and may offset a proportion of the increase in cost of the equipment, however the cost of implementing another low increase to a large number of service users should be considered. As the service is moving from analogue to digital provision nationally as telecom providers switch over, the true unit costs will be calculated at this time and highlighted for discussion.
- 4.8 The cost of living crisis has impacted on individuals receiving care and support services. The AHSCP Charging Policy allows for financial hardship and disability related expenditure to be considered on a case-by-case basis. Finance Officers have noted an increase in the number of cases that they have considered and supported waive of charges for in recent months. It is anticipated that cases will continue to increase in 2023 as the cost of winter fuel and other costs are realised.
- 4.9 The proposed DWP benefits and pensions increase for 2023/24 has been announced at 10.10% subject to parliamentary approval. This is higher than previous years and is reflective of the cost of living crisis and higher rate of inflation. This increase will be applied to individuals AHSCP financial re-assessments and considered as income. As such, the personal allowance for

non-residential financial assessments will also be increased at this rate to reflect this.

- 4.10 In light of the cost of living crisis and financial impact to service users, it is proposed that rather than undertake a full review of charges for 2023/24 a 5.9% uplift is applied to all charges and unit costs.
- 4.11 Some charges and allowances are set by various external sources including Department for Works and Pension (DWP), Scottish Government (SG) and COSLA. As such, some rates for 2023/24 have yet to be confirmed and are marked as such on the Charges & Allowances (Appendix 2).

## 5 Non-Residential Care and Support

- 5.1 The calculated unit costs for 2023/24 reflecting a 5.9% increase for RPI are as follows:-

Service	Type	Detail	2022/23	2023/24	% increase
Adult Services	Day Care		£44.13 per day	£46.73 per day	5.9%
	Respite Care		£25.97 per hour	£27.50 per hour	5.9%
	Respite Care	Overnights (11pm to 7am)	£39.17 per night	£41.48 per night	5.9%
	Supported Living		£19.94 per hour	£21.12 per hour	5.9%
	Transport	Up to 50 miles	£7.65 per one-way trip	£8.10 per one-way trip	5.9%
Older People & Physical Disabilities	Day Care		£33.14 per day	£35.10 per day	5.9%
	Homecare		£28.25 per hour	£29.92 per hour	5.9%
	Transport	Up to 50 miles	£7.65 per one-way trip	£8.10 per one-way trip	5.9%
	Very Sheltered Housing		£438.15 per week	£464 per week	5.9%

- 5.1.1 An individual budget is calculated based on the cost of the care and support services included in a service user support plan. This can be made up of services provided by in house or private providers. The cost of providing in house services are calculated and known as unit costs. It is from an individual budget that that the client contribution is calculated.
- 5.1.2 The higher the Unit Cost the less that an individual's budget can "buy." A change in the Unit Costs then do not automatically lead to increased fees and charges for service users, as they are subject to financial assessment. However, they can impact on the capacity in an individual's budget.
- 5.2 The proposed Charges & Allowances for 2023/24 are detailed in Appendix 2.

- 5.3 Aberdeenshire Council can provide help, support and advice to ensure a service user is receiving all the benefits they are entitled to. A benefits health check can be carried out if requested, by the service user. If a potential benefit entitlement is identified the service user will be signposted to the correct organisation who can assist them with any application required.

## 6 Residential Care and Support

- 6.1 The 5-year phased increase to in-house care home charges was completed last year. All residents are now subject to the same charges. The impact of applying a 5.9% uplift in line with RPI is shown below:

2022/23	2023/24
£1032 per week	£1093 per week

## 7 Future Changes

- 7.1 **Personal Assistants Scottish Living Wage Increase** – Aberdeenshire Council is committed to increase the living wage in line with Scottish Government Guidelines. For a service user who employs Personal Assistants the lower rate will be increased accordingly. Increases to other Personal Assistant rates are applied in line with Aberdeenshire Council employee wage increases.

## 8 Communication Strategy

- 8.1 The communication strategy for 2023/2024 to service users will be as follows:
- Prior to financial re-assessment service users or their representative will be contacted to give notice of any proposed changes.
  - Following annual financial re-assessment, a further letter will be sent to affected service users. This will include specific information relating to their own individual financial circumstances. Again, service users will be given the opportunity to contact a service representative and discuss any concerns they may have about the changes in their personal contribution at this point.
  - An information briefing will be prepared and circulated to all relevant staff. This will contain a brief outline of any changes. It will also provide information on where staff can signpost service users to the correct team to assist with any queries that they may have.
  - The timescales for the above are outlined in the Equalities Impact Assessment.

## 9 Summary

- 9.1 The Chief Officer, Chief Finance and Business Officer and the Legal Monitoring Officers within Business Services of the Council have been consulted in the preparation of this report and their comments have been incorporated within the report.

## 10 Equalities, Staffing and Financial Implications

10.1 An equality impact assessment has been carried out as part of the development of the proposals set out above. The following impacts have been identified which can be mitigated as described:-

- An increase in unit costs would increase service user SDS individual budgets. This may affect their contributions. This would affect the protected group of Older and Disability.

The above can be mitigated by implementing our communication strategy and carrying out financial assessments as detailed in the equality impact assessment.

**Chris Smith**  
**Chief Finance and Business Officer**  
**Aberdeenshire Health and Social Care Partnership**

Report prepared by Sheryl Donaldson (Finance Officer) 27/01/23

**Appendix 1 - Non-Residential Charging Policy 2023/24**

**Appendix 2 – Rates for Charges and Allowances**

**Appendix 3 – Integrated Impact Assessment**



Aberdeenshire  
Health & Social Care  
Partnership

# Non-Residential Charging Policy 2023/24



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## Charging Policy Background

Aberdeenshire Council directly provides and externally commissions a wide range of care and support services to enable service users to remain in their home or in a homely setting, living as independently as possible. To ensure that services are sustainable for the future it is necessary to charge service users who use some of our services.

Aberdeenshire Council's power to charge for services is discretionary and subject to local accountability. The Council follow's legislation outlined in the Social Work (Scotland) Act 1968, the Social Care (Self Directed Support) (Scotland) Act 2013 and is based on the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (COSLA) Charging Guidance 2020/21.

Aberdeenshire Council's Charging Policy is based on the following principles:

- Participation: ensuring people requiring care and support are consulted on significant change
- Accountability: ensuring transparency
- Non-Discrimination and equality: ensuring fairness and consistency
- Empowerment: ensuring an individual has access to a full range of services and support
- Legality: ensuring information in relation to the Charging Policy is accessible.

This Charging Policy explains how Aberdeenshire Council considers and calculates a service user's ability to contribute towards their care and support package (as assessed by their practitioner).

Although contributions collected are minimal, the contributions collected enables the council to continue providing services to all those who have an assessed need and ensures the continued development and delivery of high-quality services.

Services will always be provided in accordance with the service user's assessed care needs and not their ability to pay.

Service users will not be required to contribute more than it costs to provide the services and normally a financial assessment will be carried out to determine contributions.

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## **1. Level of Funding for Non-Residential Care and Support Services**

Where a service user chooses to receive services that cost more than those that the local authority would arrange, the level of funding they will receive will not exceed the cost of the local authority arranged services.

Any care and support that exceeds the local authority level of funding will be the responsibility of the service user to arrange and fund.

Exceptional circumstances may be considered on an individual basis.

## **2. Financial Assistance towards your Chargeable Care and Support Services**

Practitioners will work with the service user to identify the services they require to meet their needs; this is known as a support plan. The total cost of the care and support identified in the service users Support Plan is called an Individual Budget.

It is Aberdeenshire Council's policy to apply 100% charge towards the chargeable elements of Individual Budgets, however service users may be entitled to financial assistance to help with the cost of these services.

An Aberdeenshire Council Officer can assist the service user with the completion of the Financial Assistance form. The Officer will explain:

- What individual data is collected and for what purpose
- What happens after the Financial Assistance form has been completed
- To whom individual and financial information may be disclosed to

The Financial Assistance Form will gather information such as:

- The service user's total income (and of partner if applicable)
- The service user's property details (and of partner if applicable)
- The service user's capital (and of partner if applicable)

Information from the Financial Assistance form is used to complete a financial assessment. The financial assessment calculates the service user's contribution, taking into consideration:

- Total weekly income
- Less Allowable expenses
- Less Disregarded income
- Less Personal allowance

A service user may choose not to provide financial information. In these circumstances they will be required to pay the full cost of their care and support services as identified in their support plan.

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## 2.1 Personal Allowance

A personal allowance is the amount of money that a service user must be left with before a contribution is payable towards care and support services. This is intended to cover daily living costs such as food, clothing, gas, electricity, telephone, internet etc. There is a single person allowance and a couples allowance which is higher.

There are two personal allowance levels in the COSLA Non-Residential Charging Guidance. One is for service users below state pension age, and one for service users of state pension age and above. Aberdeenshire Council apply the more generous allowances (for over state pension age) to all service users.

## 2.2 Verification of Financial Details

Aberdeenshire Council will verify the information provided on the Financial Assistance form. This will be carried out by verifying the information with the Department of Work and Pension (DWP) or the relevant financial institutions. Financial mandates must be signed by the service user or the service user's Power of Attorney or Financial Guardian to allow the verification of financial details to be carried out. A copy of the last 6 months bank statements for all bank accounts held by the service user (and partner if appropriate) must be provided with the application. Failure to sign financial mandates or provide any evidence requested may result in the service user paying for the full cost of their care and support services backdated to the date the service commenced.

## 2.3 Allowable Expenses

Allowances will be made from a service user's assessed income for the following (please note this is not an exhaustive list):

- Rent
- Mortgage/Mortgage Interest payments
- Council Tax/water and sewerage charges
- House Buildings Insurance costs (£2 per week disregarded)
- Life assurance payments (must be clearly identified as such in official documents provided)
- Board or Lodgings (75% will be considered up to a maximum of £100 per week)

## 2.4 Income taken into consideration

The following details the most common types of income taken into consideration, (please note this is not an exhaustive list):

- Income Support
  - Job Seekers Allowance
  - State Retirement Pension
  - Universal Credit – some components
  - Pension Credit – guarantee credit & savings credit
  - Attendance Allowance
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- Industrial Injuries Benefit
- Disability Living Allowance (DLA) - Care Component
- Personal Independence Payment (PIP) – Care Component
- Constant Attendance Allowance
- Employment Support Allowance
- Severe Disablement Allowance
- Occupational/private pension
- Net Earnings
- Tariff Income (assumed income from any capital over £10,000. £1 per week for every £500 over the £10,000).

## 2.5 Income Fully Disregarded

There are certain types of income that will not be considered. This is known as disregarded income. Income fully disregarded (please note this is not an exhaustive list):

- Disability Living Allowance – Mobility component
  - Child Benefit, Child Tax Credit & Child maintenance payments
  - Universal Credit – some components
  - Working Tax Credit
  - The Eileen Trust
  - The Macfarlane Trust
  - Thalidomide Trust
  - The Independent Living Fund (2006)
  - Work expenses paid by employer
  - Crisis Grants/Community Care Grants
  - Cold Weather Payments/Winter Fuel Payments
  - The War Pension Scheme (WPS)
  - The Armed Forces Compensation Scheme (AFCS)
  - Statutory Redress Scheme and Advance Payment Scheme – Survivors of Historical Child abuse
  - Future Pathways – Discretionary Fund
  - Child Disability Payment (CDP) and Short-Term Assistance (STA)
  - Scottish Infected Blood Scheme (SIBSS) (and equivalent UK schemes e.g., England Infected Blood Support Scheme)
  - Victims Payment Regulations 2020
    - Redress Board (Northern Ireland) payments
    - Payment Scheme for Former British Child Migrants
    - Windrush Compensation Scheme
    - UK Energy Bills Support Scheme
    - Homes for Ukraine Payments
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## 2.6 Income Partially Disregarded

Income partially disregarded (please note this is not an exhaustive list):

- Net earnings £20 per week
- Voluntary/Therapeutic earnings £20 per week
- Charitable payments £20 per week
- MOD special pension £variable

If the service user is in receipt of any of the above income that is partially disregarded, the amount shown will be deducted as an allowance, the remaining amount will be taken into consideration as income.

## 2.7 Benefits Health Check

It is important that Aberdeenshire Council provides support and advice to ensure a service user is receiving all the benefits they are entitled to. A benefits health check can be carried out if requested by the service user. If it is identified that there is a potential benefit entitlement has not been claimed the service user will be signposted to the correct organisation who can assist them with any application required.

## 2.8 Disability Related Expenditure

Where a service users daily living expenses are higher due to their disability or illness, an additional allowance may be applied to the financial assistance form. Disability related expenditure will vary for each service user and will depend on the disability and the service user's needs. An example could be that a service user incurs higher electricity costs to accommodate mobility/medical equipment.

Aberdeenshire Council will consider whether to disregard more of a person's income or capital, over and above any existing disregards, to take account of any additional disability related expenditure. This process will be undertaken on a case by case basis by request to the service user's practitioner.

The service user will be asked to provide supporting evidence of the additional disability related expenditure.

## 2.9 Capital

If the service user's capital exceeds £27,250 or they choose not to disclose financial details, they will be required to pay the full cost of the services.

Capital up to the value of £17,000 will be disregarded and will not affect the financial assessment. A tariff will be applied to income calculations for capital over £17,000.

**2.10 Capital taken into consideration** (please note this is not an exhaustive list):

- Any savings held in building society accounts
- Any savings held in bank current accounts, deposit accounts or special investment accounts. This includes savings held in the National Savings and Investments (NS&I)
- National Savings
- Premium Bonds
- Stocks and shares
- Property that is not the individual's main home
- Land
- DWP backdated payment of benefits (any backdated benefits received from the DWP will be disregarded for 1 year from the date the payment is received)

**2.11 Capital NOT taken into consideration** (please note this is not an exhaustive list):

- Property in specified circumstances
- Surrender value of any life insurance policy
- Household goods such as a car
- Student loans

**2.12 Property**

The value of a service user's main home will not be included as capital when calculating the contribution. Any other properties or shares in other property owned by the service user will be included.

Where the service user receives rental from other properties owned this will be taken into consideration as income on the Financial Assessment.

**2.13 Trust Funds**

Trust Funds will be considered on an individual basis and you will be asked to provide a copy of the trust deed. This information will be shared with our legal department to determine if any part of the trust should be included in the financial assessment.

**2.14 Deprivation of Capital**

Aberdeenshire Council may identify circumstances that suggest a service user may have deliberately and intentionally deprived themselves of or decreased their assets in order to avoid or reduce the level of their contribution towards their care and support services. Aberdeenshire Health & Social Care Partnership may consider deprivation where a service user ceases to possess assets, or income from the asset, that would have otherwise been considered for the purposes of the financial assessment.

If upon investigation it is found that the service user has deliberately deprived themselves of any capital assets it may be included in the financial calculation as if the service user still possesses that asset.

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### **3. What happens after a Financial Assessment?**

After the financial assessment has been verified and calculated, available income is identified. If there has been no available income identified the service user will not be liable to contribute towards their care and support services.

Where there has been available income identified the service user will be liable to contribute towards their care and support services. The service user will be contributing towards the total cost of chargeable support in their Individual Budget. The individual budget will be based on planned care on an annual basis to meet the service user's outcomes.

Details of the service user's weekly contribution will be sent to the nominated individual, with a full explanation of the calculation, along with information about how to pay it. If the service user feels they will have difficulty paying or disagrees with the calculation, they should advise their local finance office within 28 days.

Contributions are payable based on your planned care and support however, we may consider a refund of contribution in exceptional circumstances.

Where a service user's care needs change, their contribution will be recalculated based on the financial information held. The service user will be advised if there is a change in contribution payable. Full details of the calculation will be provided.

#### **3.1 Interim Contributions**

Aberdeenshire Council aims to complete a financial assessment within 28 days of receipt from the service user. In circumstances where we have been unable to receive verification of financial information within the 28 days, we will calculate the service user's contribution based on the information provided on the financial assistance form.

Once verification of financial information has been received any differences will be applied. The contribution will be re-calculated and backdated. Any underpayment will be recovered, and any overpayments will be credited.

#### **3.2 Payment of Contribution**

The way in which the service user will be asked to pay their contribution is dependent on the option choices the service user has chosen and the content of the support plan.

In most cases the service user will be invoiced 4 weekly in arrears by Aberdeenshire Council. The service user will be informed in writing how their contribution should be paid.

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### **3.3 Non-Payment of Contribution**

Where a service user fails to pay their contribution, Aberdeenshire Council will not withdraw the services being received. Aberdeenshire Council has a debt recovery process which will be followed where the non-payment of contributions has occurred.

If a service user is in a situation where they cannot pay their contribution it is important that they contact their practitioner or local finance team at the earliest opportunity.

### **3.4 Change in Financial Circumstances**

It is the responsibility of the service user to advise Aberdeenshire Council of a change in their financial circumstances.

If it is discovered that the service user has not advised Aberdeenshire Council of a change in circumstances, any change in contribution may be backdated.

### **3.5 Annual Financial Re-Assessment**

The initial financial assessment is updated annually to capture any changes to a service user's contribution. This process will take place from April each year. The service user will be advised of the outcome of the financial re-assessment by letter.

### **3.6 Financial Hardship**

Where a service user feels they will have difficulty paying the assessed contribution they should discuss this with their practitioner in the first instance.

If the practitioner agrees that there may be financial hardship, the service user will be asked to provide 6 months (most recent) bank statements for all bank accounts that they hold and any other relevant financial information. This information will be reviewed and if it is agreed that financial hardship applies, a waive of charge for part or all of the assessed contribution may be agreed. This information will be reviewed on a regular basis.

A benefits health check can also be carried out if requested by the service user to ensure they are receiving all benefits to which they are entitled.

### **3.7 Appeals Process**

If a service user wishes to appeal the amount of their contribution, the service user or nominated representative should contact their local finance team or practitioner within 28 days of being advised.

The appeal will be considered by the service at Senior Management level and the service user will be advised within 28 days of the decision.

The service user should continue to pay the contribution until the appeal has been considered.

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#### **4. Care and Support Services not subject to Financial Assistance**

A small amount of care and support services are not subject to a financial assessment and are payable in full by the service user. These are:

- Day Care Meals
- Very Sheltered Housing Tenants Meals
- Blue Badge

#### **5. Care and Support Services not included as part of an Individual Budget and charged separately**

A small amount of care and support services are not included in an Individual Budget. These are:

- Telecare
- Community Alarm
- Sheltered Housing – Housing Support (Local Authority and Non-Local Authority)
- Day Care Meals
- Very Sheltered Housing Tenants Meals
- Blue Badge

#### **6. Respite provided in a registered residential care setting.**

Where respite is provided in a registered residential establishment, a flat rate charge will apply for up to a maximum of 8 weeks. This does not include other types of respite such as creative breaks, respite at home etc which form part of the individual budget. The amount of respite provided is determined by your care needs assessment.

#### **7. Sheltered Housing – Housing Support**

Charges for Sheltered Housing are broken down into rent, service charges and Housing Support. The rent covers the cost of providing and managing the property, including repairs, maintenance, and housing improvements. The service charges cover the cost of providing additional services such as heating and light, lift maintenance, the cleaning of communal areas and more. Residents will be asked to pay the service charges along with their rent charges. Housing Support is charged separately.

The Housing Support Charge is for the low-level support provided by the Sheltered Housing Officers to help the service user to remain independent at home. This charge applies to all residents of Sheltered Housing and will be invoiced separately to their rent and service charges. Housing Support Charges are payable from the start of tenancy until the tenancy end date. This includes periods that the service user may be away from their accommodation such as holidays, hospital stays etc. Information

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about the Housing Support service, including the weekly charge will be provided when signing the tenancy.

A Financial Assessment will be offered to all service users to assess their ability to pay the Housing Support Charges. Service users will not be asked to pay more than they have been assessed as able to contribute.

Where a resident in sheltered housing enters long term care, the housing support service agreement will be closed on the Sunday following the date they were admitted. The service user will not be charged for the housing support charge for a period of up to 12 weeks. If the tenancy is not terminated within this 12-week period, the service user will be liable to start paying the housing support charge again until the tenancy is terminated.

Property that is no longer the service user's main home due to moving in to sheltered housing accommodation will not be considered as capital for a period up to 26 weeks. Evidence will be required to show that steps are being taken to sell the property or that the property is already on the market for sale.

Further information on sheltered housing is available on the Aberdeenshire Council Website.

## 8. Services that are not charged for:

- **End of Life Care** – a DS1500 or SR1 form is a certificate that is issued by a General Practitioner when service users have a terminal illness.

The certificates are used by the Department for Work and Pensions (DS1500) and Social Security Scotland (SR1) to facilitate fast track access to benefits. In these circumstances, on receipt of the DS1500 or SR1 certificate, the Practitioner will request a waive of charge for all non-residential care and support charges including Very Sheltered Housing and Housing Support.

A DS1500/SR1 cannot be used where respite care has been received in a registered residential care setting. This will be chargeable to the client at a flat rate fee under the Charging for Residential Accommodation Guide (CRAG).

- **Personal Care** – your Practitioner will identify elements of your support plan which are classed as personal care. Elements of the care that are considered as Free Personal Care are as follows: -
    - Assistance with laundry associated with medical conditions (e.g. bed changing)
    - Assistance with eating/drinking
    - Assistance with getting out of bed/going to bed
    - Assistance with dressing/undressing
    - Assistance with washing and bathing
    - Assistance with personal grooming/dental hygiene
    - Assistance with continence care
    - Assistance with toileting
    - Assistance with medication supervising/reminding
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- Assistance with mobility
- Assistance with specialist feeding
- Assistance with stoma care
- Assistance with catheter care
- Assistance with skin care
- Food preparation
- Special preparation of food associated with dietary requirements
- Administering of medication (including administering of oxygen)
- Rehabilitation work (under support of professional)

Further information on personal care services is available on the [Scottish Government Personal Care Guidance](#).

- **Leaving Hospital** – service users who are aged 65 years or over on the day of discharge from hospital, who have been an NHS inpatient for more than 24 hours or had surgery as an NHS day care, may be entitled to receive any additional care at home free of charge for a period of up to 6 weeks. This does not apply to admissions on a regular or frequent basis as part of the individual's ongoing care arrangements.
  - **Enablement Care** – is a time limited, intensive intervention that aims to reduce or remove the need for ongoing homecare support. This service is free for a period of up to 6 weeks. If the service user is already in receipt of chargeable care and support these services will remain chargeable.
  - **Aids and Adaptations** – where a service user has been assessed as requiring aids and adaptations by an Occupational Therapist, District Nurse or Physiotherapist there is no charge for any equipment supplied. Equipment is on loan to a service user for as long as it is needed. If aids or adaptations have not been assessed as being required and are purchased through an Individual Budget by the service user, this will be chargeable.
  - **Individuals under 18 years old** – where care and support services are provided to a service user under the age of 18 or whilst the service user remains in Children's services over the age of 18, care and support services will be free.
  - **Emergency services arranged by Out of Hours** – emergency arrangements will be free of charge, however if on-going care and support services are required, the normal charging policy will be applied when the case is allocated.
  - **Compulsory Treatment Order** – all non-residential care and support services provided to a service user under a Compulsory Treatment Order are exempt from charges under the Mental Health (Care and Treatment) (Scotland) Act 2013.
  - **Criminal Justice Social Work Services** – all care and support services provided to a service user in terms of the Criminal Procedure Act (Scotland) 2003 are exempt from charges.
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- **Care Management Services** – if a service user requires information and advice in relation to social care, there is no charge for the professional services provided.
- **Short Term Housing Support Services** – where a service user has designated short term services, which aim to bring about or increase the capacity for independent living, this service will be free of charge for a period of up to two years. Examples of people who may be eligible are:
  - Those suffering domestic violence
  - Homeless
  - Drugs/alcohol rehabilitation
  - Young vulnerable people
  - Ex-Offenders
  - Refugees
- **Double Up Care** - where a service user requires more than 1 to 1 support to assist the main carer, the service user will not be charged for the additional carer/s.
- **Unpaid Carers** – where an unpaid carer has been assessed as having eligible needs which are not met by support for the person they care for, any support provided will be free of charge.

Where the unpaid carer's eligible needs are already being met by support for the person they care for, a decision will be made by the Carer Practitioner around whether any of the charges will be waived under the Carer's (Scotland) Act 2016.

Further information on charging for carers is available on the [Scottish Government Statutory Guidance - Carers \(Scotland\) Act 2016](#).

## 9. Complaints Procedure

Aberdeenshire Council is committed to providing high quality customer services. We value complaints and use information from them to help us improve our services.

If something goes wrong or you are dissatisfied with the service you have received, please tell us. You can complain in person at any of our offices, by phone, in writing, by email or via our complaints form on our website (link provided below).

We understand that you may be unable, or reluctant to make a complaint yourself. We accept complaints from the representative of a service user who is dissatisfied with our service. We can take complaints from a friend, relative or an advocate, if you have given them your consent to complain for you. You can find out about advocates in your area by contacting the Scottish Independent Advocacy Alliance.

*Further information about the [Complaints Procedure](#) is available on the [Aberdeenshire Council Website](#).*

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2023/24 CHARGES AND ALLOWANCES  
EFFECTIVE FROM 10/04/23

**Charges for Non-Residential Care Services (Not part of SDS Personal Budget)**

Community Alarm	- £TBC per week
Telecare Equipment	- £TBC per item per week (Max £TBC per week)
Day Care Meals (2 course meal)	- £TBC per meal
Housing Support (local authority)	- £TBC per week
Housing Support (private landlord/RSL)	Variable
Very Sheltered Housing Meals	- £TBC per week
Personal Care	- FREE (for assessed care needs)
Additional care at home (over 65 year olds following discharge from hospital)	- FREE (up to a maximum of 6 weeks)
Contribution towards Individual Budget	- Up to 100% of the cost of the chargeable parts of a Personal Budget subject to financial assessment. See unit costs below.

**Unit Costs (forms part of an SDS Personal Budget)**

Adult Services:

Day Care	£TBC per day
Respite Care (Day)	£TBC per hour
Respite Care (Overnights)	£TBC per night
Supported Living	£TBC per hour
Transport (up to 50 miles)	£TBC per one-way trip

Older People & Physical Disabilities Services:

Day Care	£TBC per day
Homecare	£TBC per hour
Transport (up to 50 miles)	£TBC per one-way trip
Very Sheltered Housing	£TBC per week

**Charges for Residential/Nursing Care Services**

Local Authority Care Home	£TBC per week
Respite Care	£TBC (for over pension age) £TBC (for under pension age)

**Free Personal Care for Residential/Nursing Homes**

Personal Care	£TBC per week
Nursing Care	£TBC per week
Free Personal Nursing Care	£TBC per week

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2022/23 CHARGES AND ALLOWANCES  
EFFECTIVE FROM *TBC*

**Financial Assessment Capital Limits**

Non-Residential Upper Capital Limit	£27,250
Non-Residential Lower Capital Limit	£17,000
Residential Upper Capital Limit	£TBC
Residential Lower Capital Limit	£TBC

**Financial Assessment Tariff Income**

Residential	£1 for every £250
Non Residential	£1 for every £500

**Financial Assessment Personal Allowances**

Non Residential Single Person	£TBC
Non Residential Couple	£TBC
Residential	£TBC

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Aberdeenshire Health & Social Care Partnership				Appendix 2
Non Residential Care & Support				
Description	2022-23	2023-24	Principle	
<b>ALLOWANCES</b>				
Upper Capital Limit	£27,250.00	£27,250.00	Service has the discretion to change. Increased in the 2018/19 Charging Policy to be in line with Residential limits at that time.	
Lower Capital Limit (disregarded)	£17,000.00	£17,000.00	Service has the discretion to change. Increased in the 2018/19 Charging Policy to be in line with Residential limits at that time.	
Tariff Income	£1 for every £500 over £17,000	£1 for every £500 over £17,000	COSLA Guidance	
Low Income Threshold Personal Allowance Single Person (per week)	£228 per week	TBC by COSLA	based on DWP Standard Minimum Guarantee rates + 25% in line with COSLA Guidance	
Low Income Threshold Personal allowance Couples (per week)	£348 per week	TBC by COSLA	Based on DWP Standard Minimum Guarantee rates + 25% in line with COSLA Guidance	
<b>CHARGES FOR SERVICES PROVIDED</b>				
Day care attendance by tenants in Sheltered Housing	FREE	FREE	Discretionary by Service	
Day Care meals (Two Course Meal) - all functions	£3.80	£3.75	Discretionary by Service.	
Community Alarm (per week)	£3.75	£3.75	Discretionary by Service - rounded to nearest 25p	
Telecare Charges (per item per week)	£3.75 (Max £7.50)	£3.75 (Max £7.50)	Discretionary by Service - rounded to nearest 25p	
Day Care attendance by tenants in VSH	FREE	FREE	Recommended by Service	
Day Care Meals at VSH service	£26.79	£28.00	Discretionary by Service.	
<b>UNIT COSTS (Forms part of service users Personal Budget)</b>				

Aberdeenshire Health & Social Care Partnership				Appendix 2
Non Residential Care & Support				
Description	2022-23	2023-24	Principle	
<b>Adult Services</b>				
Day Care (per day)	£44.13	£46.73	Discretionary by Service	
Respite Care (per hour)	£25.97	£27.50	Discretionary by Service	
Respite Care per night (11pm to 7am)	£39.17	£41.48	Discretionary by Service	
Supported Living (per hour)	£19.94	£21.12	Discretionary by Service	
Transport costs (per one way trip up to 50 miles)	£7.65	£8.10	Discretionary by Service	
<b>Older People &amp; Physical Disability</b>				
Day care (per day)	£33.14	£35.10	Discretionary by Service	
Very Sheltered Housing (per week)	£438.15	£464.00	Discretionary by Service	
Home Care/Housing Support/Supported Living (per hour)	£28.25	£29.92	Discretionary by Service	
Transport costs (per one way trip up to 50 miles)	£7.65	£8.10	Discretionary by Service	
<b>Self Directed Support</b>				
Employers Liability Insurance - Year 1	£50 - £67	£50 - £67	Discretionary by Service	
Employers Liability Insurance - Subsequent years	£50.00	£50.00	Discretionary by Service	

Aberdeenshire Health & Social Care Partnership			Appendix 2
Non Residential Care & Support			
Description	2022-23	2023-24	Principle
Employers Insurance including health related tasks	£150.00 - £420.00	£150.00 - £420.00	Discretionary by Service. New service provision agreed by SMT Jan 2019
Advertising Costs	£7 per annum	£7 per annum	Discretionary by Service - linked to new advertising agency costs which led to a reduced cost
Training for Personal Assistants	Consider on an individual basis	Consider on an individual basis	Discretionary by Service
Payroll Services Costs - Managed Accounts (per week)	£6.51 + £30.00 set up fee	£6.51 + £30.00 set up fee	Discretionary by Service
Payroll Services Costs - Basic Payroll (per week)	£2.08 + £30 set up fee	£2.08 + £30 set up fee	Discretionary by Service
Individual Service Fund (Option 2)	up to £20 p/h + annual fee of £100	up to £20 p/h + annual fee of £100	Discretionary by Service
<b>Personal Assistant Pay Rates</b>			
Direct Payments Allowance for Personal Assistant: Basic Rate per hour (Gross amount paid to employer)	£11.58	£12.72	Increases are applied in line with Scottish Living Wage increases as a minimum, and AHSCP salary increases
Direct Payments Allowance for Personal Assistant: Mid Rate per hour (Gross amount paid to employer)	£11.94	£13.08	Increases are applied in line with Scottish Living Wage increases as a minimum, and AHSCP salary increases maintain differential between rates
Direct Payments Allowance for Personal Assistant Enhanced rate per hour (Gross amount paid to employer)	£13.31	£14.68	Increases are applied in line with Scottish Living Wage increases as a minimum and AHSCP salary increases to maintain differential between rates
Direct Payments Allowance for Personal Assistant Gross Overnight Rate (overnight = 8 hours)	£66.70 per overnight	£66.70 per overnight	Discretionary by Service
Direct payment capped rate for external provider: Care at Home framework Median Point (Adults and Children)	£21.79	TBC by Commissioning Team April 23	Discretionary by Service as part of commissioning process
Direct Payment capped rate for external provider: Supported Living Framework Median Point	£21.79	TBC by Commissioning Team April 23	Discretionary by Service as part of commissioning process
Direct payment capped rate for external provider: overnight sleep-in (incl weekends): Care at Home Framework Median Point	£116.63	TBC by Commissioning Team April 23	Discretionary by Service as part of commissioning process
Direct payment capped rate for external provider: overnight sleep-in (incl weekends): Supported Living Framework Median Point	£116.63	TBC by Commissioning Team April 23	Discretionary by Service as part of commissioning process



Aberdeenshire Health & Social Care Partnership			
Residential Care			
DESCRIPTION	2022-23	2023-24	Principle
<b>RESIDENTIAL CARE (CRAG GUIDANCE)</b>			
<b>CAPITAL LIMITS</b>			
Upper Capital threshold	£29,750	TBC by SG in April 2023	Set by Scottish Government
Lower Capital Threshold	£18,500	TBC by SG in April 2023	Set by Scottish Government
Tariff Income	£1 in every £250	TBC by SG in April 2023	Set by Scottish Government
<b>PERSONAL EXPENSES ALLOWANCE</b>			
Personal Allowance (per week)	£31.00	TBC by SG in April 2023	Set by Scottish Government
Additional PA re Maximum Savings Credit - Single people	£7.30	TBC by SG in April 2023	Set by Scottish Government
Additional PA re Maximum Savings Credit - Couples	£10.85	TBC by SG in April 2023	Set by Scottish Government
<b>FREE PERSONAL AND NURSING CARE</b>			
Free Personal Care Allowance (per week)	£212.85	TBC by SG in April 2023	Set by Scottish Government
Free Personal and Nursing Care Allowance (per week)	£308.65	TBC by SG in April 2023	Set by Scottish Government
Free Nursing Care Allowance (per week)	£95.80	TBC by SG in April 2023	Set by Scottish Government
<b>FEE RATE FOR ABERDEENSHIRE CARE HOMES</b>			
Fee for Local Authority Care Home for Older People. (Self Funding Residents)	£1,032.00	£1,093.00	Discretionary by Service
	£1,032.00	NA	This was part of a 5 year phased increase for existing residents. 2022/23 was final year of this and all residents are now subject to the same rate
Fee for Local Authority Learning Disability Residential Placement	£1,473.25	£1,560.00	Discretionary by Service
Respite Care - flat rate charge - Pension Age (per week)	£127.47	Confirmed by DWP & SG by April 2023	Based on DWP Savings Credit threshold less PA set by Scottish Government
Respite Care - flat rate charge - under Pension Age (per week)	£82.20	Confirmed by DWP & SG by April 2023	Based on DWP Applicable Amount (Personal Allowance plus Disability Premium) less PA set by Scottish Government

<b>Aberdeenshire Health &amp; Social Care Partnership</b>			
<b>Residential Care</b>			
<b>DESCRIPTION</b>	<b>2022-23</b>	<b>2023-24</b>	<b>Principle</b>
<b>INDEPENDENT SECTOR FEE RATES</b>			
<b>NURSING CARE</b>			
National Care Home Contract headline Fee	£812.10	To be confirmed via National Care Home Contract by April 23	National Care Home Contract
Basic Quality Award QAF grade 2 or less in "Quality of Care and Support"	£832.10	To be confirmed via National Care Home Contract by April 23	National Care Home Contract
Enhanced Quality Award QAF Grade 5 or 6 in "Quality of Care and Support" and a Grade 3 in other categories	£834.10	To be confirmed via National Care Home Contract by April 23	National Care Home Contract
Enhanced Quality Award QAF Grade 5 or 6 in "Quality of Care and Support" and a Grade 5 in any one other category.	£835.10	To be confirmed via National Care Home Contract by April 23	National Care Home Contract
<b>RESIDENTIAL CARE</b>			
National Care Home Contract headline Fee	£699.50	To be confirmed via National Care Home Contract by April 23	National Care Home Contract
Basic Quality Award QAF grade 2 or less in "Quality of Care and Support"	£719.50	To be confirmed via National Care Home Contract by April 23	National Care Home Contract
Enhanced Quality Award QAF Grade 5 or 6 in "Quality of Care and Support" and a Grade 3 in other categories	£721.00	To be confirmed via National Care Home Contract by April 23	National Care Home Contract
Enhanced Quality Award QAF Grade 5 or 6 in "Quality of Care and Support" and a Grade 5 in any one other category.	£722.00	To be confirmed via National Care Home Contract by April 23	National Care Home Contract
Default rate for Nursing Care	£770.69	To be confirmed via National Care Home Contract by April 23	National Care Home Contract
Default rate for Residential Care	£657.77	To be confirmed via National Care Home Contract by April 23	National Care Home Contract
Interim contribution pending Financial Assessment	£151.60	To be confirmed via National Care Home Contract by April 23	Based on DWP (PC) MIG rate less PA set by Scottish Government

<b>Aberdeenshire Health &amp; Social Care Partnership</b>			
<b>General Charges</b>			
<b>DESCRIPTION</b>	<b>2022-23</b>	<b>2023-24</b>	<b>Principle</b>
<b>CHARGES TO OTHER LOCAL AUTHORITIES</b>			
Home Care Service (per hour)	<b>£28.25</b>	<b>£29.92</b>	Discretionary by Service
Older People Care Home - residential placement including respite care	<b>£1,032.00</b>	<b>£1,093.00</b>	Discretionary by Service
Fee Rate for Professional Practitioners services - Practitioner K	<b>£31.49</b>	<b>£33.35</b>	Discretionary by Service
Fee Rate for Professional Practitioners services - practitioner L	<b>£34.86</b>	<b>£36.92</b>	Discretionary by Service
Fee Rate for Professional Practitioners services - Practitioner M	<b>£38.13</b>	<b>£40.38</b>	Discretionary by Service
<b>CHARGES FOR STAFF MEALS (all establishments across all functions)</b>			
Staff Not Working - Breakfast	<b>£1.24</b>	<b>£1.31</b>	Discretionary by Service
Staff Not Working - Lunch	<b>£2.54</b>	<b>£2.69</b>	Discretionary by Service
Staff Not Working - Teas	<b>£1.24</b>	<b>£1.31</b>	Discretionary by Service
Staff Not Working - Supper	<b>£1.24</b>	<b>£1.31</b>	Discretionary by Service
Staff Working (i.e. identified as part of service users care plan)	<b>Free</b>	<b>Free</b>	NA

<b>Aberdeenshire Health &amp; Social Care Partnership</b>			
<b>Non Residential Care &amp; Support - Shared Lives</b>			
<b>Description</b>	<b>2022-23</b>	<b>2023-24</b>	<b>Principle</b>
Allowance to Provider - Low Rate	<b>£213.21</b>	<b>£225.79</b>	Discretionary by Service
Allowance to Provider - Medium Rate	<b>£412.17</b>	<b>£436.49</b>	Discretionary by Service
Allowance to Provider - High Rate	<b>£546.53</b>	<b>£578.78</b>	Discretionary by Service
Service users contribution for long term care (paid direct to carer) - standard rate per week	<b>£148.20</b>	<b>TBC by COSLA</b>	In line with DWP Rates (Based on 65% of the Single Person Personal Allowance for Non residential Charging Policy - contribution is variable depending on income)
Day Care - Hourly rate paid to carer	<b>£10.98</b>	<b>£11.63</b>	Discretionary by Service

# Aberdeenshire Council

## Integrated Impact Assessment

### AHSCP Charging Policy 2023/24

Assessment ID	IIA-001229
Lead Author	Sheryl Donaldson
Additional Authors	Kelly MacLennan
Service Reviewers	Alison McCann
Subject Matter Experts	Kakuen Mo
Approved By	Chris Smith
Approved On	Tuesday February 21, 2023
Publication Date	Tuesday February 21, 2023

# 1. Overview

This document has been generated from information entered into the Integrated Impact Assessment system.

AHSCP Charging Policy for non-residential and residential care 2023/24

During screening 1 of 10 questions indicated that detailed assessments were required, the screening questions and their answers are listed in the next section. This led to 1 out of 5 detailed impact assessments being completed. The assessments required are:

- Equalities and Fairer Scotland Duty

In total there are 0 positive impacts as part of this activity. There are 5 negative impacts, all impacts have been mitigated.

A detailed action plan with 2 points has been provided.

This assessment has been approved by [chris.smith@aberdeenshire.gov.uk](mailto:chris.smith@aberdeenshire.gov.uk).

The remainder of this document sets out the details of all completed impact assessments.

## 2. Screening

Could your activity / proposal / policy cause an impact in one (or more) of the identified town centres?	No
Would this activity / proposal / policy have consequences for the health and wellbeing of the population in the affected communities?	No
Does the activity / proposal / policy have the potential to affect greenhouse gas emissions (CO2e) in the Council or community and / or the procurement, use or disposal of physical resources?	No
Does the activity / proposal / policy have the potential to affect the resilience to extreme weather events and/or a changing climate of Aberdeenshire Council or community?	No
Does the activity / proposal / policy have the potential to affect the environment, wildlife or biodiversity?	No
Does the activity / proposal / policy have an impact on people and / or groups with protected characteristics?	Yes
Is this activity / proposal / policy of strategic importance for the council?	No
Does this activity / proposal / policy impact on inequality of outcome?	No
Does this activity / proposal / policy have an impact on children / young people's rights?	No
Does this activity / proposal / policy have an impact on children / young people's wellbeing?	No

## 3. Impact Assessments

Children's Rights and Wellbeing	Not Required
Climate Change and Sustainability	Not Required
Equalities and Fairer Scotland Duty	All Negative Impacts Can Be Mitigated
Health Inequalities	Not Required
Town Centre's First	Not Required

## 4. Equalities and Fairer Scotland Duty Impact Assessment

### 4.1. Protected Groups

Indicator	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Unknown
Age (Younger)		Yes		
Age (Older)			Yes	
Disability			Yes	
Race		Yes		
Religion or Belief		Yes		
Sex		Yes		
Pregnancy and Maternity		Yes		
Sexual Orientation		Yes		
Gender Reassignment		Yes		
Marriage or Civil Partnership		Yes		

### 4.2. Socio-economic Groups

Indicator	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Unknown
Low income			Yes	
Low wealth			Yes	
Material deprivation			Yes	
Area deprivation		Yes		
Socioeconomic background		Yes		

### 4.3. Negative Impacts and Mitigations

Impact Area	Details and Mitigation



Impact Area	Details and Mitigation
<p><b>Age (Older)</b></p>	<p>An increase in unit costs will increase SDS individual budgets, which in turn may increase service user contributions. Without a fair charging policy in place, this may have a negative impact on this group and cause financial hardship.</p> <p>Can be mitigated                      Yes</p> <p>Mitigation                      An increase to care and support services does not automatically mean an increase to a service user's contribution. The annual re-assessment process ensures that all service user's contributions are re-calculated with the correct DWP benefits. A service user will not be asked to pay more than they can afford to pay. New service users are offered a Financial Assessment to calculate their ability to contribute. The Charging Policy also allows exceptions to be made for financial hardship and disability related expenditure.</p> <p>Timescale                      Ongoing</p>
<p><b>Disability</b></p>	<p>An increase in unit costs will increase SDS individual budgets, which in turn may increase service user contributions. Without a fair charging policy in place, this may have a negative impact on this group and cause financial hardship.</p> <p>Can be mitigated                      Yes</p> <p>Mitigation                      An increase to care and support services does not automatically mean an increase to a service user's contribution. The annual re-assessment process ensures that all service user's contributions are re-calculated with the correct DWP benefits. A service user will not be asked to pay more than they can afford to pay. New service users are offered a Financial Assessment to calculate their ability to contribute. The Charging Policy also allows exceptions to be made for financial hardship and disability related expenditure.</p> <p>Timescale                      Ongoing</p>

Impact Area	Details and Mitigation
<p><b>Low income</b></p>	<p>An increase in unit costs will increase SDS individual budgets, which in turn may increase service user contributions. Without a fair charging policy in place, this may have a negative impact on this group and cause financial hardship.</p> <p>Can be mitigated                      Yes</p> <p>Mitigation                      An increase to care and support services does not automatically mean an increase to a service user's contribution. The annual re-assessment process ensures that all service user's contributions are re-calculated with the correct DWP benefits. A service user will not be asked to pay more than they can afford to pay. New service users are offered a Financial Assessment to calculate their ability to contribute. The Charging Policy also allows exceptions to be made for financial hardship and disability related expenditure.</p> <p>Timescale                      Ongoing</p>
<p><b>Low wealth</b></p>	<p>An increase in unit costs will increase SDS individual budgets, which in turn may increase service user contributions. Without a fair charging policy in place, this may have a negative impact on this group and cause financial hardship.</p> <p>Can be mitigated                      Yes</p> <p>Mitigation                      An increase to care and support services does not automatically mean an increase to a service user's contribution. The annual re-assessment process ensures that all service user's contributions are re-calculated with the correct DWP benefits. A service user will not be asked to pay more than they can afford to pay. New service users are offered a Financial Assessment to calculate their ability to contribute. The Charging Policy also allows exceptions to be made for financial hardship and disability related expenditure.</p> <p>Timescale                      Ongoing</p>

Impact Area	Details and Mitigation
Material deprivation	<p>An increase in unit costs will increase SDS individual budgets, which in turn may increase service user contributions. Without a fair charging policy in place, this may have a negative impact on this group and cause financial hardship.</p> <p>Can be mitigated Yes</p> <p>Mitigation An increase to care and support services does not automatically mean an increase to a service user's contribution. The annual re-assessment process ensures that all service user's contributions are re-calculated with the correct DWP benefits. A service user will not be asked to pay more than they can afford to pay. New service users are offered a Financial Assessment to calculate their ability to contribute. The Charging Policy also allows exceptions to be made for financial hardship and disability related expenditure.</p> <p>Timescale Ongoing</p>

#### 4.4. Evidence

Type	Source	It says?	It Means?
External Consultation	COSLA non-residential charging guidance	This guidance provides a guide to Local Authorities on developing fair and equitable charging policies for the provision of non-residential care and support. It provides guidance as to what services may have charges applied and how financial assessments should be calculated.	By applying COSLA guidance, this means that the AHSCP charging policy is consistent with many other Local Authorities in Scotland.
External Consultation	COSLA Benchmarking	All COSLA members complete an annual benchmarking return for non-residential charges, and results circulated.	<p>This allows benchmarking to be carried out to compare charging policy with other Local Authorities to ensure fairness and consistency is applied.</p> <p>COSLA have yet to facilitate the return for 2023. Discussions have taken place at the COSLA non-residential charging working group and information shared between Local Authorities.</p>

#### **4.5. Engagement with affected groups**

There has been past consultation with the SDS service user reference group. There has been no further consultation this year as there are no significant changes to the policy. Should the service be asked to carry out a full review of charges and calculation of unit costs, consultation with impacted groups would be a priority as this may negatively impact on service users.

#### **4.6. Ensuring engagement with protected groups**

Engagement with service user reference group prior to any significant changes to the policy. At other times we consider feedback from service users and families, and explore if the policy should be amended in future to accommodate.

#### **4.7. Evidence of engagement**

Expansion of the guidance on what may be considered as Free Personal Care. Expansion of guidance on how properties are dealt with under the policy. Expansion on Housing Support guidance. Inclusion of unit costs and charges in the policy to ensure transparency.

#### **4.8. Overall Outcome**

All Negative Impacts Can Be Mitigated.

By offering a financial assessment, we ensure that financial hardship is not encountered. The policy also allows provision for waive of charges, and additional allowances for individuals experiencing financial hardship, or who encounter disability related expenditure.

#### **4.9. Improving Relations**

A good communication strategy which clearly explains the charges and the financial assessment process. This includes information on who to contact if advice and support is required and offers an individual meeting to discuss their circumstances.

Service user engagement and financial impact assessments are carried out prior to any significant change being proposed. This information is made available for elected members to review as part of the decision making process.

#### **4.10. Opportunities of Equality**

The policy allows for exceptions to be made, which may be that a person is disadvantaged because of their individual circumstances.

## 5. Action Plan

Planned Action	Details
<p>Provide Information to service users on changes to the Charging Policy and the annual financial re-assessment process.</p>	<p><b>Lead Officer</b> Sheryl Donaldson  <b>Repeating Activity</b> No  <b>Planned Start</b> Friday March 25, 2022  <b>Planned Finish</b> Friday April 29, 2022  <b>Expected Outcome</b> All affected service users are made aware of changes, reminded of the financial re-assessment process and provided with information on who to contact if they require advice or support.  <b>Resource Implications</b> NA</p>
<p>Prepare information briefing to be circulated to all finance staff and practitioners</p>	<p><b>Lead Officer</b> Sheryl Donaldson  <b>Repeating Activity</b> No  <b>Planned Start</b> Friday March 25, 2022  <b>Planned Finish</b> Friday April 29, 2022  <b>Expected Outcome</b> Briefing will be circulated to above mentioned staff to ensure all are aware of the communication being circulated to service users, the potential impact, and where to signpost if advice or support is required.  <b>Resource Implications</b> Minimal impact.</p>