

Adult Social Care Charging Policy - Consultation Feedback

In autumn 2023, we held a public consultation on proposed changes to our Adult Social Care Charging policy, to gather your views on a range of proposals.

Thank you to everyone who took part using the online survey or came to one of our face-to-face sessions. All of your feedback was carefully reviewed and considered before the new policy was approved in February 2024.

This document provides a summary of the results and explains how we are acting on your feedback.

Your feedback

We have summarised the results of the online survey in a table below. We have also considered your written comments and feedback from the face-to-face sessions.

Many of your comments related to wider issues such as whether social care should be free of charge and the current cost of living challenges.

We received a number of comments about financial assessment and charging processes being difficult to understand. There were also questions about how we assess what people can afford to pay, with some people feeling that the amount left for daily living costs was insufficient.

How are we acting on your feedback?

The proposed changes to our policy have been agreed. We will be making changes to our procedures and communications to address the concerns raised during the consultation.

Affordable charges

We assess what you can afford to pay towards the cost of your care, using a means test called a financial assessment. The process is set out in the Care Act 2014, and the legislation requires that individual circumstances are taken into account.

To help cover the cost of care, we will be encouraging people to claim disability related expenses where they are entitled to do so. This will reduce their weekly charge. You can claim disability related expenses if you:

- receive disability living allowance, attendance allowance or personal independence payments (PIPs), and
- can provide evidence that you have additional daily living costs due to a disability.

We are:

- Creating a factsheet on disability related expenses, and how to apply for them.
- Including disability related expense claims in the financial assessment process. You will be able to submit data and evidence online (or on paper/via email if you prefer).
- Refreshing our staff training on disability related expenses, to ensure that they advise you well, and that they include information in your Care Act Assessment and Support Plan which will support your claim.

Making our charges and financial assessments easier to understand

- The new policy has been re-written to make the charging process clearer and we have included a diagram to help explain it.
- We are producing factsheets which will cover financial assessments, how we calculate charges, how direct payments work and information about disability related expenses. These will be available on the Adult Social Care section of our website from 8th April.
- Staff are being briefed on the new factsheets, to ensure that they are able to provide you with well-informed and consistent advice about your financial assessment and charges.
- We are also working with a group of customers to review the letters we send about financial assessments, to make them easier to understand.
- We are providing additional support for those people who are finding it difficult to submit the information and evidence for the financial assessment. This has already reduced the number of people being charged at full cost.

SURVEY RESULTS

| Question | Disagree or Strongly Disagree | Neither Agree nor Disagree | Strongly Agree or Agree |
|---|-------------------------------|----------------------------|-------------------------|
| Overall | | | |
| Do you agree or disagree with the proposed changes? | 20% | 33% | 47% |
| Have you read the proposed policy? | 30% | 45% | 25% |
| Do you agree that the proposed policy is easy to understand? | 14% | 24% | 61% |
| Do you agree that the proposed policy provides sufficient information? | 17% | 28% | 56% |
| Do you agree or disagree with these individual change proposals? | | | |
| Improvements to the process for managing people's disability-related expenses | 12% | 28% | 60% |
| Changes to the way we charge for care which is cancelled | 7% | 17% | 75% |
| Explaining how charges get going when care starts | 13% | 26% | 61% |
| Changing the method for calculating the cost of non-residential care, from an average rate to the actual cost | 24% | 41% | 35% |
| Introducing charges for transport | 29% | 32% | 39% |
| Increasing the administration charges for processing deferred payment loans | 27% | 46% | 27% |
| Changing the "Minimum Income Guarantee" rate used for new customers aged between 60 and state pension age | 23% | 39% | 39% |
| Improvements to the general structure and accessibility of the ASC Charging Policy document | 4% | 22% | 74% |