



Post Consultation Impact Assessment For Social Services Charges

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Section 1. The Proposal

Description Of The Proposal

The purpose of the changes is to ensure a consistent approach to charging for services as required by Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 (the Act). This legislation contains a number of safeguards in order protect the interests of people on low incomes. We also want to apply a consistent approach of full cost recovery to all chargeable services. We are proposing to increase and in some cases implement charges for some services.

The following Welsh Government page contains links to relevant legislation and regulations.
<http://law.gov.wales/publicservices/social-care/Local-authority-responsibilities/Care-and-support-for-adults-and-children/charging-and-financial-assessment/?lang=en#/publicservices/social-care/Local-authority-responsibilities/Care-and-support-for-adults-and-children/charging-and-financial-assessment/?tab=overview&lang=en>

Full details of the proposed changes are set out in the 12th June 2017, Cabinet report which can be accessed using the link below:

<http://vmmoderngov1:8070/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=281&MId=4036&Ver=4&LLL=0>

The final Cabinet decision post consultation can be viewed using the link below.

[http://XXXXXXX]

Section 2. Fit To The Well-Being Goals

A Prosperous Pembrokeshire / Wales

The proposals will not have a significant impact on this goal. Most Social Services clients are in receipt of pensions and / or benefits. Whilst the care sector is a major local employer, the proposals will not impact directly on local care businesses.

A Resilient Pembrokeshire / Wales

The proposals are unlikely to have an impact on this goal.

A Healthier Pembrokeshire / Wales

It is unlikely that there will be a significant impact on the health of individuals affected by the changes. It is accepted that an increase in charges may discourage some people from using some of the services. However, as most people who use our services are already paying the maximum that their financial assessment allows, the reduction in the number of people using services is not expected to be significant and therefore the impact will be limited.

The following table shows some of the services provided to each category of service user. Almost two thirds of this group have a Physical & Sensory Disability or are frail.

Service User Category	Day Opportunities	Direct Payment	Domiciliary Care	Respite
Physical & Sensory Disability / Frailty	14%	9%	40%	1%
Physical & Sensory Disability/ Frailty/Dementia	1%	1%	1%	0%
Learning Disability	12%	4%	0%	0%
Mental Health/Non Dementia	7%	1%	1%	0%
Mental Health/Dementia	1%	0%	1%	0%
Other	1%	1%	2%	0%

A More Equal Pembrokeshire / Wales

The charging regulations take into account a person's ability to pay for care and support. This care and support will have been identified through an assessment of their needs.

The regulations set out limits and disregards which allow for ordinary living costs and ensure only the most relevant income is used when determining how much a person can pay for services. As an example we disregard the full amount of mobility Disability Living Allowance or mobility Personal Independence Payment income.

If a service user refuses to provide details of their personal financial circumstances they are automatically charged at the maximum weekly charge for non-residential services. For 17/18 this is £70.00. This figure is set by Welsh Government.

Everyone who has had a financial assessment has the right to appeal their assessed charge. Our charge appeals process complies with the Act and uses a more personal approach to analysing a person's financial circumstances.

To understand the possible impact of the changes for those receiving non-residential services, we analysed 1,421 records. This showed that slightly less than 10% (139) may be charged more as a result of the changes. Of the 1,421 there are 627 who have a NIL charge as a result of their financial assessment and 395 who are already paying the £70.00 weekly maximum. The other 260 people will only see an increase in their charge, up to the £70 maximum, if their income increases and as this will balance out there is no impact.

Meals on wheels is a flat rated charge and this charge is additional to those covered by the charging regulations above. The 0.43p increase in the meals on wheels charge is equal to £3.01 per week for a person who receives a meal every day.

The table below shows how much some people could expect to pay if the charges are increased in line with the proposals. Most people receiving domiciliary care, day care, direct payments and respite won't see an increase. A small proportion may see an increase in weekly costs of less than £1 and very few will see a comparatively significant increase in weekly costs of over £3.00.

Price increase category	Estimated total increase in weekly charges as a result of proposals				
	No increase	Under £1	£1 to £1.99	£2 to £2.99	£3 and over
No increase	23%	9%	0%	0%	1%
Increase, but under £5.00	1%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Increase £5.00 to £9.99	1%	1%	0%	0%	0%
Increase of £10	3%	4%	0%	0%	0%
Increase not modelled	12%				

	Estimated total increase in weekly charges as a result of proposals				
	No increase	Under £1	£1 to £1.99	£2 to £2.99	£3 and over
Meals on Wheels		41%	1%	0%	1%

The likely impact on protected characteristics can be summarised as follows:-

	Positive:	Neutral:	Negative:
Young people		X	
Older people			Limited
Disabled people			Limited
Gender reassignment		X	
Marriage and civil partnership		X	
Pregnancy and maternity		X	
Race		X	
Religion or belief		X	
Sex		X	
Sexual orientation		X	

As mentioned above using financial assessment and applying the weekly maximum will limit the impact.

A Wales Of Cohesive Communities

The proposal fits within the Act which is to support individuals to maintain their independence in their own communities.

A Pembrokeshire / Wales Of Vibrant Culture & Thriving Welsh Language

There unlikely to be an impact on the implementation of the Council's Welsh Language Standards or on promotion of the Welsh Language.

A Globally Responsible Pembrokeshire / Wales

(Taking account of whether actions make a positive contribution to global well-being, eg climate change). There is unlikely to be a contribution to this goal.

Section 3. Appraising Sustainability



Long Term

Implementing the revised/new costs will contribute to the rising cost of providing social care now and in the future.



Prevention

The system for financial assessment enables customers on low incomes to access the care that they need. Recovery of costs through service charges supports our approach to the provision of preventative services.



Integration

The proposals are consistent with corporate strategy on income generation and full cost recovery.



Collaboration

The proposed changes to direct payments and Adult Placements/Shared Lives will bring us in line with the regional strategy.



Involvement

All customers, carers, third sector providers and multi agency partners have been given the opportunity to comment. Understandably people are concerned about any increases and feel that there may be pressure on their finances. However, the annual increase in benefits and pensions will go some way to mitigate this impact.

A brief summary of the consultation is included below and the full report can be accessed using the link below:

<http://vmmodern.gov1:8070/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=281&MId=4046&Ver=4&LLL=0>

Overall Consultation Analysis

Below is a list of key results and themes and a full analysis of responses is available.

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14 (2%) Welsh responses were received.	27 English versions were requested by those with Welsh as their preference.
Do you or the person you care for receive this service?	Mostly those in receipt of home and community support said Yes. On average 59% of those responding reported they did not use the service.
Do you or the person you care for pay a contribution for this service?	Most respondents (53%) did not find this question to be applicable. Only 10% said yes.
If we change the charge will you continue to use the service?	Of the respondents in receipt of home and community support, only 21% said they would not continue to use the service, with 79% responding that they would continue to use the service/were unsure/or the question was not applicable.
Please tell us if changing the charge is acceptable.	69% of all respondents said they were not sure if changing the charges was acceptable, with 31% responding acceptable/unacceptable/neither.
Introducing an interest charge on deferred payments. Respondents were also asked if they thought introducing this charge is acceptable.	Service users with property who go into a care home have the option of considering a deferred payment and they do not have to agree. A person who declines or does not qualify will still be assessed and will have to pay towards their care. If this person defaults on a payment a legal charge may be an option as part of the Debt Recovery process. 54% said this question was not applicable and this is understandable as most of our service users are receiving services in their own home.

	31% said the interest charge would put them off applying for a deferred payment. 61% were not sure and 28% found this unacceptable.
Is an annual uplift to charges acceptable?	24% found an annual uplift acceptable with 41% being unsure and 36% said unacceptable/neither.
Suggestions for other ways to meet increased costs of providing services.	Only 25% gave suggestions for other ways to meet increased cost, of those respondents 34% said the Council should make efficiencies/find the money elsewhere, 21% felt the responsibility lay elsewhere including with central government.
Overall qualitative responses on impact of proposed changes.	<p>Most respondents felt that the changes would put pressure on their finances. Some said they have little choice about whether to continue with the services in question. A small percentage said there would be little or no impact.</p> <p>Impact Analysis</p> <p>1,421 people currently assessed for charges were analysed for impact of proposed changes post consultation. Only 139 (10%) may be affected by an increase to care charges. This is because their assessable income currently exceeds their assessed charge. The annual increase in benefits and pensions will go some way to mitigate this impact.</p>

Conclusion of Analysis

- Overall we had a 21% return on the consultation which is in line with expectations for this type of survey.
- The charging regulations for social services are complex. Perhaps the key finding from the consultation is over two-thirds of respondents were not sure whether increasing charges was acceptable.
- Many of those who responded to the consultation believe the changes will place additional pressure on their finances.
- A small number of people(139) may have their charges increased. However, the financial assessments and care charge appeals processes will mitigate the impact.
- The annual increase in benefits and pensions should also balance out against the increased charges.

On the whole based on evidence from the consultation and the Impact Assessment, it appears that implementing the revised/new charges is unlikely to have a detrimental impact on vulnerable people.

Respondent Comments
If my mum can't meet the extra amount, it will put more pressure on me, as I am the only family member looking after her
No one likes to see costs rising! I'm ok with £16.00 an hour, but if this was to continue year on year I would be concerned about payments.
Not at all as I already pay maximum £70 per week.
The Government provide benefits to help disabled people live day to day - is this cost taken into consideration within the benefit payments?

Section 4. Recommendation / Mitigation

The financial assessment, charging regulations, weekly maximum and the charge appeal process should ensure there is a limited impact on those who may be affected by the

changes. Whilst the first three are applied in a structured way, the charge appeal process provides a more individual assessment of a person's circumstances and ability to pay.

The questionnaire results suggest that the majority of social care customers may be unsure of how charging regulations work. Further work may be needed on explaining how these work.

Goal	How The Proposal Progresses Well-Being Goals
A prosperous Pembrokeshire / Wales	Limited
A resilient Pembrokeshire / Wales	Limited
A healthier Pembrokeshire / Wales	Potential for an impact and needs to be seen within the broader Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act
A more equal Pembrokeshire / Wales	Potential for an impact and needs to be seen within the broader Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act
A Wales of cohesive communities	Limited
A Pembrokeshire / Wales of vibrant culture & thriving Welsh language	Limited
A globally responsible Pembrokeshire / Wales	Limited

Sustainable Development

Not implementing the changes will restrict commissioning of sustainable preventative services.

One of the main issues to consider is the opportunity cost upon wider Council services of not implementing increases in social care charges. These wider opportunity costs may well impact more heavily upon future generations.

The weekly maximum was increased from £60 in 2016/17 to £70 in 2017/18. As mentioned previously, the proposed changes may only impact on 139 service users who currently pay less than their net assessable income. The impact on these service users could be mitigated as part of the charge appeal process at an individual level.

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Section 5. Evaluation / Following Up

Post Implementation Evaluation

This will be completed following implementation of the proposal.