

Non-Residential Charging Policy for Adult Social Care: Public Consultation Process

1. Summary

On the 8th October 2012 the City Council launched a consultation on proposed changes to the current Non-Residential Charging Policy for Adult Social Care. An officer led review undertaken to ensure the policy supported the development of personalisation in Adult Social Care, met revised national guidance, was equitable and fair and maximised income from those assessed as being able to afford to pay to ensure the sustainability of services in the future having made 21 proposed changes to the policy.

Service users, their representatives and family carers were contacted by letter and asked to comment and take part in the consultation, as were key advocate organisations and Day Care providers in the City. Specific service user and carer group meetings for people living in Extra Care, attending Older People's Day Care facilities, for individuals with Learning Disabilities and their carers and for those receiving a specific rent allowance, a meeting of advocacy groups and a People's Panel took place. In recognition of the complexity of the consultation, the City Council invested in an infrastructure including a telephone helpline, website page and dedicated e-mail and postal addresses and the production of 2 DVDs.

The City Council Compact Code of Practice says that a consultation must run 12 weeks, therefore the consultation should have closed on the 21st December 2012. However, in recognition of the complexity of the consultation, and because of Christmas period, it was agreed to extend the end of the consultation period to the 11th January 2013.

2. The Consultation Process

The consultation process is detailed below

2a. City Council Consultation Website

On the 8th October 2012 the Council began by launching the consultation on its website. The site opened the consultation on the policy and included a fact sheet with all 21 proposed changes, and other key information such as the telephone number and opening hours for the helpline, dedicated e-mail and postal addresses and how to volunteer to be part of the People's Panel. Equality Impact Assessment information was added at a later date within the consultation period, on 27th November 2012. The consultation website has had 117 views.

2b. Telephone Helpline

On the 8th October the telephone helpline went live. The Council felt that because of the complex nature of the consultation a telephone helpline was

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required from the beginning of the public consultation process. The helpline was run by staff who had undergone training on the proposed changes to the charging policy. This was run by Capita Contact Centre. The helpline was open from 8.30am to 6.00pm Monday to Friday. The function of the helpline was to ensure any of the 21 proposed changes could be clearly explained to a caller, and to act as a means by which a caller could leave a comment on the proposed changes or volunteer to be part of the People's Panel. If staff working on the helpline did not know an answer to a caller's question then a procedure was in place to escalate that question to a nominated adult social care or financial assessment officer to answer and feedback. This was also used as a means to alert social care staff to service users who may need reassurance or support because of anxiety caused by the consultation. . The helpline received 160 telephone calls between October and the end of December 2012.

2c. Letters to Service Users or Representatives

City Council letters were posted to 2,388 service users or their representatives with similar information to that on the main narrative of the website and enclosing the fact sheet. The letters were posted to service users or their representatives on:

Letter Type	Date posted
General	9-10 th October 2012
Extra Care	11 th -18 th October 2012 Rosebrook posted 18 th December.
Rent Allowance	13 th November 2012
Additional Rent Allowance (6 individuals who were later identified as also receiving this allowance)	23 rd November 2012
Day Care	24 th -25 th October 2012

2d. Dedicated E-Mail and Postal Addresses

The City Council set-up dedicated e-mail and postal addresses as methods through which people could respond to the consultation. There were 2 letters and 50 e-mails received.

2e. Advocate Organisations

Key advocate organisations in the City were alerted to the consultation by e-mail on or around the 24th September 2012 and most were individually visited to ask them to formally engage in the consultation. These organisations were Carers Together, Solent Mind, Age Concern, Southampton Centre for Independent Living, Mencap and Choices Advocacy. All of these organisations were invited to send representatives to an Advocate Meeting on the 20th December 2012. At this meeting they were able to give their considered views on the proposed changes directly to the City Council to both the Cabinet Member and the Senior Officer leading the process.

2f. People's Panel

A People's Panel (Citizen's Jury) is suggested in the Council Compact as a way of engaging service users and carers in a consultation process, so that a more meaningful and detailed examination of the proposed changes can be made by them.

The aim was for the People's Panel to be made-up of 12 service users and/or carers supported by an independent facilitator. The invitation to join the People's Panel went out to 2,388 service users or to their representatives. 13 people volunteered to be part of the Panel, however 9 people actually attended the meetings (not all attending each meeting).

On the 19th December 2012 the Panel had the opportunity to interview the City Council officer leading the consultation.

The Panel examined the 21 proposed changes over four workshops on the 4th, 6th, 11th and 19th of December 2012:

Workshop	Business Done
4th December	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understanding the role of the Panel. • General introductions and exploring issues. • Formulating initial questions for the City Council to get a better understanding of the 21 proposed changes. • Beginning to write the questions for 19th December meeting.
6th December	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Looking at City Council's response to the initial questions. • Continuing to write the questions.
11th December	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completing the questions.
19th December	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interviewing the Senior Officer. • Drafting the Panel's final response.

2g. Extra Care Meetings

Extra Care meetings took place to specifically discuss those proposed changes to the charging policy including those about 24hr and overnight care on the following dates:

Extra Care Facility	Date of meeting
Manston	15 th October 2012
Rozel	29 th October 2012
Rosebrook	2 nd November 2012

Approximately 40 individuals took part in these meetings including residents, their families and staff supporting residents at the complexes.

2h. Day Care Meetings and DVD

Providers of older people's day services were contacted on 15th November 2012 and asked to engage with their customers specifically on the proposed Day Care changes. The Day Care providers engaged in the process were SCA and Age Concern. To aid engagement in the consultation a simple DVD was produced, specifically focusing on the day care changes. Over a two week period the DVD was shown to individuals attending the day care sessions in the city.

2i Individuals with a learning disability DVD and meeting

A DVD was produced to explain the changes to individuals with a learning disability. This was used by Mencap, who hosted 2 meetings involving 67 individuals with learning disability and their carers.

Choices Advocacy met with 6 service users and publicised the proposals to individuals as widely as possible throughout the period from the 27th November to the end of December 2012. The self advocacy worker shared the DVD with 8 customers during this period

2j. Rent Allowance Meeting

A meeting took place in the Council Chamber on the 21st November 2012 to discuss the proposal to stop providing a special rent allowance for a small group and to look at other changes proposed in the consultation. 114 letters of invite were sent. The meeting was attended by 15 people and their representatives and was Chaired by the Cabinet Member and the Senior Officer involved in the project.

2k. Learning Disability Partnership Board (LDPB)

A presentation was given to the LDPB on 10th December 2012. This Board has representation from service users, carers and services supporting individuals with learning disabilities.