

Consultation responses relating to proposal to change the way we work out how much people pay towards the cost of their adult social care services

Your Views on our proposal to change the way we work out how much people pay towards the cost of their adult social care services

Respondent information

Respondent Numbers

There were 941 responses received for this proposal. Of these, the majority (735 people or 78%) replied as individuals.

Responding as:			
An individual / member of the public	735	78%	766
A family	31	3%	
On behalf of a voluntary or community group	6	1%	7
On behalf of a statutory organisation	1	0%	
On behalf of a business	0	0%	
A Norfolk County Councillor	0	0%	4
A district or borough councillor	0	0%	
A town or parish councillor	2	0%	
A Norfolk County Council employee	2	0%	
Not Answered	164	17%	164
Total	941		

Of the 941 responses received, the majority (843 or 90%) were consultation paper feedback forms. These were printed versions of the consultation that we sent to all service users potentially affected by the proposal and includes both standard and Easy Read formats.

How we received the response			
Email	7	1%	
Easy Read consultation feedback form	32	3%	843 (90%)
Consultation paper feedback form	811	86%	
Online submission	91	10%	
Total	941		

In total we sent out 3662 paper copies of the consultation (made up of 3014 standard copies, 14 copies translated in languages other than English, 430 large print versions and 204 easy read versions). This means we had a response rate to our letters of around 23%.

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Responses by groups, organisations and businesses

7 respondents told us they were responding *on behalf of* a group, organisation or business but not all gave the names of their organisations. Some were residents or employees whose response may not necessarily represent the organisational view. The organisations cited were:

- Equal Lives
- Greater Good
- Nansa
- Opening Doors
- Norfolk Community Advice Network and the Specialist Contract Group
- Making it Real Group

Of the 7 respondents who told us that they were responding on behalf of a group, organisation or business, 3 told us that the timeframe for the consultation was too short:

“We are writing a letter because three weeks isn't enough time to get an easy read document sorted. We are very busy. It is not enough time to ask all of the self-advocates about what they think. We have managed to ask a good few. The DRE is a really difficult idea to understand and to take in. We needed more time to discuss and how it will affect us as people first.”

“Although Easy Read information was provided, the Making it Real Group would like the Council to know that two weeks is not long enough for people to understand what you are planning to do and then provide a response. Although most of the group had some idea that the consultation was out there no one understood it and most were very worried about what it might mean for them.”

“Although we recognise that the Government principles on consultation were changed in 2016, and no longer require the minimum 12 week consultation period, we believe that the new ‘proportionate amount of time’ requirement has not been provided. In addition, efforts to consult appear to have been focussed on service users. There has been a lack of clarity around whether members of the NCAN Steering Group and Specialist Contract Group were being contacted to respond as stakeholders, or in order that they might encourage responses from service users. We are concerned that the timeframe permitted for responding to this consultation has not considered that affected residents have just finished responding to the housing support and information and advice consultations. The same residents are likely to be affected by this proposed change. Many clients, for example with mental health conditions or learning difficulties, need support in order to be able to respond to consultations. Finding time for staff to provide this support clients to respond places pressures across the already underfunded services. This support cannot be sustained over successive consultations and short timeframes.”

Relationship of respondent to service (respondents can choose as many as applicable)

We asked people to tell us if they or someone they know would be affected by the proposal. Respondents could choose multiple options. Of the respondents who responded to this question, the majority said that they themselves would be affected (**648 or 69%**).

I would be affected by this proposal	648	69%
I care for someone who would be affected by this proposal	195	21%

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	My family or friends would be affected by this proposal	31	3%	
	I work for an organisation that supports people who may be affected by this proposal	10	1%	
	None of the above	6	1%	
	Total	890		

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Summary of main themes

Overall theme	Issues raised	Number of responses	Quotes
People with disabilities are already struggling with additional costs associated with a disability, cannot afford more	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Additional costs associated with having a disability such as higher utility charges (extra washing and heating), special diet, additional handling/safety equipment, and domestic support or carers • A further cost will be a last straw for those who are already struggling • People with disabilities already have to prove financial need for other benefits • Respondent outlined outgoings to show how much items cost • Rising costs make maintaining current standard of living difficult, even before possible reduction in DRE is considered 	515	<p>"I have a lot of health problems I need help undressing dressing and showering I'm constantly using the washing machine each da and the tumble dryer because constantly washing clothes for hygiene reasons because I have a stoma my utility bills are expensive I feel the cold so I have radiator for gas on shower twice a day and have to contribute towards transport fuel for cars because of mobility issues. "</p> <p>"I am running out of funds as I am incontinent. The pants provided do not last and I have to top up each quarter. I also buy tissues and creams for piles and sores on bottom as doctors will not supply what works."</p> <p>"As I currently spend £15.25 per week (on average) on disability requirements, due to my deteriorating osteoporosis and age related issues, this would have a significant impact. Cleaner £11.00p/w, Medic alarm £3.00p/w, Incontinence items £1.25p/w."</p>
General disagreement with proposal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disagreement with proposed change because it would affect the respondent negatively • More generally, the proposed change is wrong, 'disgusting', a bad idea • DRE is too important to be 'cut' • Respondents want system to remain as it is 	206	<p>"This is a shockingly ill-conceived and morally questionable proposal; a deliberate and pre-meditated attack on the most vulnerable in our society."</p> <p>"I disagree with it because I can't afford it."</p> <p>"The Mental Health Support I receive is essential, however I would be reluctant to have to spend more."</p> <p>"Leave the disregard as it is."</p>

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General agreement with proposal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agree because cuts have to be shared by everyone • Agree because proposal is fair, right, or reasonable • Agree because cuts won't affect the individual concerned • Agree because individual can afford to pay more • Agree because people should only be compensated for what they use 	98	<p>"I have been expecting cutbacks in my DRE. Like the council we have to put up with cut backs. To help out with the state the country is in moneywise."</p> <p>"Sounds very reasonable."</p> <p>"If people are not spending all there money it is better to pay them what they spending."</p> <p>"I am a carer for my husband I also am disabled and in a wheelchair I only pay £14 a week and would not object to it going up as I could not do without the care we get from our council."</p>
Ensure people can claim	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People may be too tired or ill to claim • Some people who have not claimed in the past will claim in the future • Forms should be easy to make claiming straightforward • Claiming should be means-tested • Difficult to produce receipts for some items • Claims seem geared towards older people and those with physical disabilities, not people with mental health issues • Claims should be paid quickly, eg. after high spend for additional heating in cold weather • Consultation has highlighted confusion over what can be claimed for and what is not eligible • Burden of proof is on individual to claim and providing receipts for some items (eg. additional cost of utilities such as heating or water) will be problematic. • Hard to prove how much extra cost (on top of 'normal' usage) is attributable to having a disability 	93	<p>"I think you might lose money because there are people who do not [currently] claim this money."</p> <p>"Was amazed to hear you considered things like community alarms as your assessor did not even ask about this at time of assesment."</p> <p>"!f this initiative saves money it will be because many disabled people, when faced with these additional hoops to jump through, will be too ill, too tired and too dispirited to claim the money that they are entitled to and that improves their quality of life."</p>

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<p>Proposal is unfair</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concern that proposal will affect some people (older/disabled/sick/wheelchair users/poorest/most defenceless) more than others – the impact will be unfair • Self-funders would be more affected than those in residential care • Unjust, affects those least able to afford to pay more • More effect on those less able to 'fight back' • Charges should be graded according to need otherwise unfair 	<p>88</p>	<p>"I think your proposal is unjust, Again such changes most adversely effect those least able to afford them." "I don't expect the care I get for nothing but myself and many more people like me have a lot more bills to pay because I'm not in a residential care home." "Why should I have to pay more because of a disability?" "It is sick that you keep picking on those with NO choice because they can't look after themselves."</p>
<p>The proposal is an additional cut on top of previous cuts and/or raised council tax</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People with disabilities have already experienced numerous cuts to services • Cost of living and care costs have risen but not matched by income • Repeated cuts are being experienced by those least able to afford them • Increased council tax equates to cut in income • Impact of previous cuts described. 	<p>66</p>	<p>"Personally with the cut backs I've already had with my personal budget, if you proposal goes ahead I would be struggling even more." "Both myself and sister are struggling to cope with spiraling care costs." "It seems to me that at the same time you are squeezing council tax payers with inflation busting increases,(many like me on pensions or minimum wage with no prospect of pay rises), whilst at the same time clawing back money from the most vulnerable in our community." "The proposal to reduce the allowance for disability related expenditure from £15.00 to £7.50 per week will affect me greatly as our household will have less disposable income. We understand that the amount of Council Tax we have to pay is also due to increase these two increases together may well result in my wife having to increase the number of hours she has paid work outside the home." "I personally think that this is another way of taxing disabled and elderly people who are the target of local and national government cuts anyway. Is it not enough</p>

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			to raise the council tax payments and continue with the rest of the cuts you have proposed?"
Impact on vulnerable people	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The most vulnerable people in society will be affected by proposal • Although cuts may be necessary they should not be at the expense of the most vulnerable people 	46	<p>"It's outrageous and vulnerable adults will be left in an unacceptable position."</p> <p>"I realise the council has to balance its budget, but this proposal will affect the most vulnerable in our community, the elderly and disabled."</p> <p>"Ok for the NCC to save money, but not at the expense of the elderly and vulnerable."</p> <p>"I consider it is very sad that vulnerable people in our society may be asked to provide proof of extra expenses in relation to their condition / impairment."</p>
Proposal means people will not be able to pay for current levels of care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People may have to stop paying for some care • People may have to change the type or form of care they receive or prioritise one need over another • People may have to reduce the number of hours of care they pay for 	42	<p>"This proposal would affect me greatly because of the extra cost to myself I would have to probably reduce or stop my care package as not able to afford the rise in costs."</p> <p>"It would affect me if payments were cut I would have to decide whether I could use heating as I need, or try to cut care if I had less funds. As I get cold very quickly but cannot do without my carers."</p> <p>"If we get charged another 7.50 because the budget is already tight we are worried that we will have to reduce the care, he has disability related expenses and it will affect the heating and he may have to turn it off ect. Not fair when he has worked all his life. Washing Powder, Bed linen ect doubly incontinent and already on a tight budget."</p>
This proposal will not save money in the long run	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementing the proposal will cost more than it saves • Changes to DRE will result in more people requiring residential care which will cost NCC more 	36	<p>"The savings, to NCC, seem trivial and will create an admin burden. Hardly seems worth doing. "</p> <p>"This may well push more people into residential care, which would cost social services more."</p> <p>"It will cost more for the council to administer than the savings made and people will apply for every penny."</p>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• People who had not previously claimed some or all of what was due may now claim (which is good) but these amounts may cost much more• The proposed change will prompt many reviews which will cost NCC time and money		"Also given the increase in paperwork and calculations for the reviews (if people request them) was this taken in to account when the total savings estimated was published as part of the consultation?"
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Additional responses

Summarise petitions or campaigns

There were **no** petitions or campaigns received relating to this proposal.

Analysts' notes

Almost one in ten respondents were **confused by our explanation** of the proposed change, telling us that they are **unsure whether they will be affected** by the change or not.

Some people told us that they, or the person they cared for, did not understand our proposal because of age, learning disability, or our explanation, or their interpretation of the proposal was that their overall care package will be cut and they described the negative impact this could have on their lives.

Other respondents told us that reading about our proposal made them feel worried or anxious about the effects of possible changes.

"I think your proposal needs to be worded more clearly, so people understand it better. You make something that is quite simple to describe sound confused and complex when it shouldn't and it worries me others might not understand"

"I find this letter too complicated"

"I don't feel good about this proposal, I don't feel I would have any money left. I am totally dependant on full care. I feel worried and upset by this proposal, that some of my care may be taken away from me. My daycare at Nansa has been reduced from three days to one day, which has distressed me. I'm worried what will be next. (My carer has written this on my behalf as I do not have the ability to write)."

4 respondents **questioned the legality** of our proposal:

"I don't think you can legally do that. All the forms that I got and received said that we have to leave a certain amount and that if we take more than that then it will not leave us with enough. If this is the case then I will go to Norman Lamb. You cant do this you already take enough off me. I'm already paying the maximum!"

"Thanks to councillors voting to end my sheet service of 13 years, I had to buy a washer / dryer so my carers can wash 2-3 pairs of sheets ect dai, I have high disability expenses diet (ceiliac and diabetic) need internet as I cannot leave home without carers pushing me in wheelchair / supporting me to walk, so need internet to maintain contact with family and one son in Canada! Will not accept a restriction of my disability expenditure, will claim all my expenditure: It's not about what NCC allows its about my disability expenditure being deducted in full; If you take my SDP and DLA in account that's the law"

"This proposal would affect people with "protected characteristics" EqIA more than others."

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“Without the availability of this support [time for staff to help respondents understand and complete the survey] Norfolk County Council will not hear from those worst affected, and will make decisions based on insufficient evidence, calling into question the legitimacy of the consultation”

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