



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

Overview

We currently spend around £1m each day on adult social services and are planning to increase the overall amount we spend on adult social services in 2017/18. However, the demands on adult social care continue to change so even with the investment we are making in services we still have savings to find if we are to continue to meet people's care needs.

Those who do receive support from the Council often need complex care packages, delivered in their own homes, to support and maintain their quality of life. We have to get the right balance between spending money on people's existing care needs and spending money that helps people live well and independently in the community.

To work out how much people need to pay towards their adult social care services, we carry out a financial assessment. We are considering changing a part of the financial assessment for non-residential care called disability related expenditure.

We would like to change our approach so that we are more consistent with other local authorities, better reflect what people are spending and help the County Council save money at a time when our budget is under great pressure.

The effect of the proposal we are consulting about is to reduce the amount of money automatically disregarded for Disability Related Expenditure. If you currently receive the benefit of the £15 per week disregard from your care costs, but do not actually incur this much disability related expenditure, the amount of money you contribute towards the costs of your care may increase.

Why we are consulting

We are looking at all of our services to see how we can do the best we can for people with the limited money that we have to spend.

When people pay for their care we look at what they can afford to pay. Some people have to pay more money for things because of their disability, illness or mental health condition. We call this disability related expenditure or DRE.

We take the amount people spend on disability related expenditure into account when we work out how much people have to pay towards their non-residential care. Disability related expenditure reduces the amount we ask people to pay. We call this reduction a 'disregard' or an 'allowance'.

We are proposing to change the amount we automatically allow for disability related expenditure from £15.00 a week to £7.50 a week.

If our proposal went ahead we would save £1.18m in 2017/18 and £0.23m in 2018/19.

We want to find out what people think about our proposal and how it might affect them if it went ahead. We are consulting from 23 January 2017 to 9 February 2017.

We are consulting through:

- Individual letters to everyone we think might be directly affected by our proposals
- Follow-up calls with a number of service users for a more in-depth conversation
- Discussions with groups and organisations that represent the views of people who use our services
- This online consultation, which is also available as a paper copy.

We will feed back the findings from our consultation to our county councillors as part of the evidence they will use to help them come to a decision about our proposals.

If you need a copy of this consultation document on paper or in a different format please email haveyoursay@norfolk.gov.uk

Background information

We currently provide non-residential adult social care services to approximately 8,800 people. We have the ability to charge people for these services following a financial assessment to see how much, if anything, they can afford to pay.

At the moment the majority of those who receive non-residential care services, around 4,000 people, don't have to make any financial contribution to their care. Around 600 people pay the

full cost - these are called self-funders. This leaves around 3,650 people who contribute something towards the cost of this care.

The way we carry out a financial assessment is set out in Norfolk County Council's Non-Residential Care Charging Policy which is based on the Department of Health's "Care and Support (Charging and Assessment of Resources) Regulations 2014" as set out under the Care Act 2014.

Under the Care Act there is a minimum income guarantee set by the Government to ensure people are left with a certain amount of money to live on.

In the financial assessment we see how much income people have coming in. We then take into account people's costs for expenses such as housing costs and day-to-day living expenses.

As well as these basic living expenses, some people have to pay more money for things because of their disability, illness or mental health condition. We call this disability related expenditure or DRE.

Therefore once we have looked at people's basic costs we then take into account the amount people spend on their disability related expenditure.

Disability related expenditure reduces what they are asked to pay. We call this reduction a 'disregard' or an 'allowance'.

Here are some examples of disability related expenditure:

- A community alarm system
- Specialist washing powders or paying for your bedding to be washed more often
- Having a larger water bill, to pay for more washing or for dialysis
- Spending more on your weekly shopping because you have a special diet
- Paying more for heating as you get cold very easily
- Special clothing or footwear
- Purchase, maintenance or repair of disability- related equipment

Disability related expenditure must be directly related to people's disability or illness and be greater than the average cost a person without a disability or illness spends on the same item.

How disability related expenditure works at the moment

Currently we automatically allow a flat rate amount of £15.00 per week for disability related expenditure for everyone.

Even if people do not spend £15.00 a week on their disability needs, we assume they do and reduce the amount we ask them to pay for their care by this amount.

If people spend more than £15.00 a week on their disability needs they can show us their receipts and tell us why they spend this money. If this amount comes to more than £15.00 a week we allow them the actual amount they spend.

For example, if someone is spending £17.50 per week on their disability related expenditure we will allow them £17.50 a week as their disability related allowance.

Here is a detailed example of how we currently take disability related expenditure into account

Mark is 80 years old and lives alone in his own house. He pays £71.55 per week towards the £100 per week cost of his care services. The balance of £28.45 is paid by Norfolk County Council

Mark's charge is worked out as follows:

INCOME

State Retirement Pension £119.30 per week

Pension Guarantee Credit £ 98.15 per week

Attendance Allowance £ 55.10 per week

Notional income from his savings of £15,000 £ 3.00 per week

Mark's total weekly income £275.55 per week

DISABILITY RELATED EXPENDITURE

We then agreed Mark's disability related expenditure at our standard rate of £15.00 per week.

Total expenditure we allow £15.00 per week

MINIMUM INCOME GUARANTEE

Finally, Mark must be left a minimum amount from his income for living expenses. This is called a "minimum income guarantee" and is set by the government.

Mark's "minimum income guarantee" is £189.00 per week.

As a result of his social care assessment, Mark's care services cost £100 per week. We work out the amount Mark should pay towards his £100 cost of care as follows:

Total income £275.55 per week

Less total allowances £15.00 per week

Less minimum income guarantee £189.00 per week

Meaning Marks's charge is £71.55 per week. The remainder of the £100 cost of Mark's services is paid Norfolk County Council.

How we are proposing to change disability related expenditure

We have undertaken research into how much people actually spend on disability related expenditure. This tells us that that the average amount that people currently spend is £5.50 a week.

This means that many people are receiving more money for disability related expenditure than they actually spend. We also know that Norfolk County Council allows higher amounts for disability related expenditure than some other local authorities.

We want to change our approach so that we are more consistent with other local authorities, better reflect what people are spending and help the County Council save money at a time when our budget is under great pressure.

We are therefore proposing to change the amount we automatically allow for disability related expenditure for people in their own home in the community from £15.00 a week to £7.50 a week.

If our proposal went ahead we would save £1.18m in 2017/18 and £0.23m in 2018/19.

Remember - if people spend more than £7.50 a week on disability related expenditure they can ask for a review. If they can provide evidence that they are spending more on disability related expenditure we may allow them the actual amount they spend.

What this means for people who are affected by our proposal

Who will be affected by this proposal?

This proposal affects people who receive non-residential adult social care services that are fully funded or part funded by Norfolk County Council. It also affects people who receive direct payments in order to buy services.

It won't affect people whose income falls below the amount we take into account ie £189.00 a week. People with savings over £23,250 will still need to pay the full cost of their care.

It affects people who live in their own home and in the community. It does not affect people who live in residential or nursing care.

How many people might be affected if this proposal went ahead?

Our analysis suggests that around 3,850 people might be affected by our proposal. Of these, around 200 might have to start paying something towards their social care for the first time.

How will people be affected?

If people currently spend over £7.50 a week on disability related expenditure they can ask to have a review. If there is evidence that people are spending more than this on disability related expenditure we may allow them the actual amount they spend.

If people don't ask for a review, or if they currently spend £7.50 a week or less on disability related expenditure we will allow them £7.50 a week. When we recalculate everyone's allowance some people might start paying more towards the cost of their care.

If people receive a direct payment to purchase their own non-residential care they may need to contribute up to an additional £7.50 to their personal direct payments account.

Some people who don't pay anything at the moment might have to start paying towards the costs of their care. The most that anyone might have to pay as a result of us changing the amount of disability related expenditure we take into account would be an extra £9.99 a week.

If we are already allowing people more than £15.00 for their disability related expenditure they might have to pay more towards the cost of their care. If this is the case they would be able to send us their receipts and we will look to see if we can allow them the actual amount they spend.

Remember - If people spend more than £7.50 a week on disability related expenditure they can ask for a review. If they can provide evidence that they are spending more on disability related expenditure we may allow them the actual amount they spend.

When would the proposed change happen?

There won't be any changes until the consultation is finished. If we decide to go ahead with our proposal then the amount that some people will need to pay will change from April 2017. If the proposal goes ahead we will write to everyone to tell them what it means for them. If people think that they pay more than £7.50 a week on disability related expenditure they will be able to ask for a review.

Here are some detailed examples of how our proposals might affect financial assessments: The financial assessment can be more complex than the examples shown. However the examples illustrate how the reduction from £15 to £7.50 of disability related expenditure may or may not affect the contribution people make to the cost of their care.

Case Study one John

John has income of £102.15 per week from benefits. He pays £20 per week towards his rent, £6 per week on his Council Tax and spends £5 each week on disability related expenditure

What happens now:

The government says that John needs £110.35 to live on, based on his age and circumstances. The Council allows him to keep more than this amount in the "minimum income guarantee" (£189 per week). The Council will also allow him to keep an extra £20 to cover his rent and £6 to cover Council Tax. The Council also allows £15 to cover his disability related expenditure (even though he only has costs of £5). The total amount of income that the Council would allow is therefore $£189.00 + £20 \text{ rent} + £6 \text{ Council Tax} + £15 \text{ disability related expenditure} = £230.00$.

Because John's income of £ 102.15 is lower than the amount allowable by the Council, John does not have to make a contribution to his services.

If the changes were made how this would affect John:

The amount of income that John would be allowed to keep would be $£189 + £20 \text{ rent} + £6 \text{ Council Tax} + £7.50 \text{ disability related expenditure} = £222.50$.

Because John's income of £102.15 is lower than the amount allowable by the Council, John still does not have to make a contribution to his services.

John is not affected by the proposals. He continues to pay no charge for his services.

Case Study Two Christine

Christine has income of £242.50 per week that we include for assessment purposes. This includes income from her state pension, occupational pension and attendance allowance. She pays £3.46 each week towards her rent and spends £8.50 per week on disability related expenditure. She receives services which cost the Council £178 per week.

What happens now:

The government says that Christine needs £155.60 to live on, based on her age and circumstances. The Council allows her to keep more than this in the “minimum income guarantee” of £189 per week. The Council will also allow her to keep an extra £3.46 to cover her rent. The Council also allows £15 to cover her disability related expenditure (even though she only has costs of £8.50). The total amount of income that the Council would allow is therefore $£189 + £3.46 \text{ rent} + £15 \text{ disability related expenditure} = £207.46$.

Because Christine’s income of £242.50 is more than the £207.46., Christine has to pay the difference as a charge for the service she receives. The charge is equal to $£242.50 \text{ minus } £207.46. = £35.04 \text{ per week}$.

How the proposed change would affect this:

The amount of income that Christine would be allowed to keep would be $£189 + £3.46 \text{ rent} + £7.50 \text{ disability related expenditure} = £202.46$.

Christine’s charge following the proposals would be equal to her income of £242.50 minus $£199.96 = £42.54$.

Christine’s charge would rise by £7.50 per week under the proposals.

Your views on our proposal and the impact it might have

1 What do you think about our proposal? How, if at all, do you think that the proposal might affect you, or the person you care for / people you represent? Please write in below:

2 Would you or someone you know be affected by this proposal? Please select all that apply to you:

Please select all that apply

- I would be affected by this proposal
- I care for someone who would be affected by this proposal
- My family or friends would be affected by this proposal
- I work for an organisation that supports people who may be affected by this proposal
- None of the above

About you

Personal information, confidentiality and data protection

We will process any personal information we receive from you in line with the Data Protection Act 1998. This means that Norfolk County Council will hold your personal data and only use it for the purpose for which it was collected, being this consultation. We use this information to see how representative the feedback is of Norfolk's population. We also use it to see if any particular groups of people are especially affected by our proposals. Under our record management policy we will keep this information for five years.

We will also, under normal circumstances, not pass your personal data on to anyone else. However, we may be asked under access to information laws to publish or disclose some, or all, of the information you provide in response to this consultation, including any personal information. We will only do this where such disclosure will comply with such relevant information laws which include the Freedom of Information Act 2000, the Data Protection Act 1998 and the Environmental Information Regulations 2004.

3 Are you responding as...?

Please select only one item

- An individual / member of the public
- A family
- On behalf of a voluntary or community group
- On behalf of a statutory organisation
- On behalf of a business

- A Norfolk County Councillor
- A district or borough councillor
- A town or parish councillor
- A Norfolk County Council employee

4 If you are responding on behalf of another organisation, what is the name of the organisation, group or business?

Please write your answer here:

5 Are you...?

Please select only one item

- Male
- Female
- Prefer to self-describe (please specify below)
- Prefer not to say

If you prefer to self-describe please specify here:

6 How old are you?

Please select only one item

- 18-24
- 25-34
- 35-44
- 45-54
- 55-64
- 65-74
- 75-84
- 85 or older
- Prefer not to say

7 Do you have any long-term illness, disability or health problem that limits your daily activities or the work you can do?

Please select only one item

- Yes

- No
- Prefer not to say

8 How would you describe your ethnic background?

Please select only one item

- White British
- White Irish
- White other
- Mixed
- Asian or Asian British
- Black or Black British
- Chinese
- Other ethnic background - please describe below
- Prefer not to say

9 What is your first language?

Please write your answer here:

10 What is the first part of your postcode? (e.g. NR4)

Please write your answer here:

How we will make our decision and report back to you

Our county councillors will consider the consultation responses we receive very carefully. In particular, they will take into account:

- The impact of any proposal on individuals, groups or communities and in particular on people identified as having 'protected characteristics' under the Equality Act 2010. The protected characteristics are: age; disability; gender reassignment; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion or belief; sex; and sexual orientation. As well as this equality impact assessment, councillors will consider the impact of proposals on rural areas
- The views of people and stakeholders consulted

- The evidence of need and what is proven to work effectively and well
- The financial and legal positions and any constraints at the time
- Any potential alternative options, models or ideas for making the savings.

Your opinions are valuable to us. Thank you for taking the time to read this document and respond.

Please note Paper responses to this consultation can be sent to Freepost Plus RTCL-XSTT-JZSK, Norfolk County Council, Ground floor - south wing, County Hall, Martineau Lane, Norwich NR1 2DH.

However, if you want to help the council save money please use a stamp and send to this address: Stakeholder and Consultation Team, Norfolk County Council, Ground floor - south wing, County Hall, Martineau Lane, NR1 2DH
