

CONSULTATION – CHARGING FOR NON-RESIDENTIAL (COMMUNITY-BASED) ADULT SOCIAL CARE SERVICES

This consultation seeks views on the proposals to make changes to the way Hertfordshire County Council charges for some of our community based adult social care services. These services support adults living at home, and include things like home care, day care and transport. The current charging policy for non-residential community-based services is available on the internet at the following location:

[Paying for your care costs | Hertfordshire County Council | www.hertfordshire.gov.uk](http://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk)

The reasons Hertfordshire County Council want to do this:

- To bring charging arrangements up to date with the guidance on charging set out in the Care Act 2014
- To consider charging for services that the law says the County Council are allowed to charge for, but that are currently provided for free
- To charge an amount that reflects the true cost of providing these services to bring Hertfordshire County Council's charges in line with other local authorities

We continue to face pressure on resources and seek to make the best use of funds available to support all care requirements. We continue to be committed to providing a wide range of services to as many people as possible and collect a fair contribution if and when required towards them. If we don't increase our charges we may have to consider reducing the level of services we currently provide and the number of people we are able to support with these services.

The proposals set out in this consultation would produce extra income and help to keep current service levels. Your views on any proposed changes and any suggestions you have will be provided to County Councillors who will take them into account after hearing all of the evidence from the consultation. County Councillors will then make a final decision.

Any changes to the charging policy would not see a change to the financial assessment process; this will continue to take place to make sure that individuals are left with enough money to meet their essential household expenses and needs, including any extra expenses relating to a disability.

Why am I being sent this consultation?

You are being sent this consultation document because you, or someone you look after, is receiving a non-residential care service through our social services. We are proposing changes to our charging policy and seek your views and input.

How will this affect me?

That depends on your circumstances and on which services you are currently receiving. When a final decision has been made on each of the proposals set out in this consultation, we will re-assess everyone and let them know how they will be individually affected. Charges may increase for some, but not for others.

If any changes are made to the charging policy as a result of this consultation, it is proposed that those who are currently using these social care services and any future users will be affected by the proposals. If there are going to be any changes made, they will be effective from 15 April 2018. Individuals who have a change made to their charges as a result of this consultation will not be expected to make any back dated payments for services previously received before the new charging policy is brought into effect.

What do I do if I cannot afford to pay an increased charge?

When a final decision has been made on changes to our charging policy for non-residential care services, we will write to everyone to let them know how they will be affected. A new financial assessment will need to be carried out for all of those using a care service that may be affected. If you are affected, we will complete a financial assessment and write to you with the outcome. When we write to you, we will tell you what you can do if you feel you cannot afford your charge, such as submitting an appeal. You can also contact HertsHelp for free independent information and advice.

What are you proposing to change?

The proposed changes are set out below and we ask for your opinion on each proposed item in the enclosed form. Please note that we could decide to make no changes, make some of the proposed changes, or decide to implement all of the proposed changes. Your views will help us to form an opinion on each proposal.

1. Higher Rate Attendance Allowance and Higher Rate Disability Living Allowance (Care Component)

The Care Act 2014 allows councils to include any money people get from these benefits to be taken into account when we work out how much people should contribute towards the cost of their care. Currently, depending on which benefit is being paid we do not take into account the following elements:

- **Attendance Allowance:** we do not take into account the difference between the higher rate and the lower rate
- **Disability Living Allowance (Care Component):** we do not take into account the difference between the higher rate and the middle rate.

Both of these benefits are awarded to enable an individual to pay towards the cost of their care. We propose to include the full value of these benefits when calculating the contribution payable towards care.

This change would align how we treat those who receive Attendance Allowance and Disability Living Allowance (Care Component) to how we treat those who receive Personal Independence Payments, which are already taken into account in full.

2. Double-Handed Care (having more than one carer attend at once)

In some instances more than one carer is required to deliver a service (sometimes known as 'double-handed' care). Currently, we only charge for one carer to attend and provide this service. We do not charge for the cost of the second carer even though we incur a cost for this service.

So that the client contribution correctly reflects the cost of providing the service, it is proposed that the charge is based on the cost of both carers attending and providing the service.

3. Flexi-care Charges

Our Flexi-care service is provided to some people who live in 'sheltered or assisted accommodation' and receive a care service to support them to live there safely. Flexi-care is based on levels (or bands), these levels are worked out based on the level of care support an individual requires; for example, if a person receives two hours of care per week they would be classed in the 'low' band level and pay a charge which is calculated on 1.5 hours of care. We are proposing to increase the amount charged per level/band as follows:

Band	Hours of care received per week	Hours that charges are currently based on	Hours that proposed charges would be based on
Low	0-3	1.5	3
Medium	3-10	6	8.5
High	10+	14	15

4. Telecare

Telecare is the term for the use of technology, including monitors and sensors, to sustain and enable independent living at home. This could include remote monitoring or self-monitoring. A 'responder service' is usually included providing support to the service user when needed.

We pay a provider to supply and manage this care service which we currently provide free of charge to those with eligible social care needs. We propose to make a fixed charge for this service of £3.25 per week.

5. Transport to Day Care Services

Door to door transportation is available for journeys to and from day centres. The current charge for transportation does not reflect the true cost of providing the service which is subsidised by us. The cost to the council per journey is £6.89; however we currently charge £1 per journey.

We propose to increase this charge to £2 per journey to reflect a more realistic contribution towards the cost of providing the service.

The next steps

The consultation is open between 03 October 2017 and 31 December 2017.

All feedback and suggestions provided will be considered by County Councillors before a final decision is made on each of the proposals. Councillors may choose to adopt none, some or all of the proposals.

Councillors will be making their decision at the Cabinet meeting dated 19 February 2018.

When the final decision on the proposals are known, we will write to all the people who are currently receiving a non-residential care service to let them know the outcome of the consultation and to confirm the implementation date of changes, if any.

It is proposed that any changes to policy that are agreed by Councillors take effect from 15 April 2018.

How can I take part?

We will be sending a paper copy of the Charging Consultation to all of the people who currently receive a non-residential care service. If you need additional copies or an easy read version, you can view/download these online at www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/chargingconsultation, or they can be requested using the details below:

Email: chargingconsultation@hertfordshire.gov.uk

Telephone: 01438 845477

Lines are open Mon to Fri 9am to 5pm

Post: Adult Care Services, Non-Residential (Community Based) Care Charging Consultation, SFAR225, Farnham House, Six Hills Way, Stevenage, SG1 2FQ.

Additionally, you can find the charging consultation on our website. If you would prefer to complete this consultation online, please go to:

www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/chargingconsultation

We will be holding some focus groups for people to attend and meet with a group of representatives from the County Council in person to discuss the proposed changes and give us their feedback. If you would like to attend one of the focus groups please call us on 01438 845477, or email us at the address given above to reserve your place. Unfortunately, we cannot provide transport to and from these focus groups, however all of the venues are accessible and we will provide you with directions upon booking.

The focus groups will be held in the following venues at the dates and times indicated:

Date	Times	Venue
01 November 2017	18:00 to 19:30	Hemel Hempstead Library
07 November 2017	18:00 to 19:30	County Hall, Hertford
08 November 2017	18:00 to 19:30	Welwyn Garden City Library

Completed consultation questionnaires should be returned to us by **31 December 2017**. Consultation responses received after this date will not be included.

On the final page of the questionnaire you will find that there is an opportunity for you to provide further comments about this consultation as well as to share any ideas and suggestions you may have. Thank you in advance for your comments.