

Wiltshire Council

Health Select Committee

9th January 2018

Adult Care Charging Policy – Update on Implementation

Purpose of Report

1. The purpose of this report is to update the Committee on the implementation of the Adult Care Charging Policy, which was initially introduced in August 2016.

Background

2. In July 2016, after a period of public consultation facilitated by Healthwatch Wiltshire, the Cabinet agreed to implement a new [Adult Care Charging Policy](#) which came into effect in August 2016.
3. An update on the Policy was provided to Health Select Committee in March 2017 and the Committee noted that the Cabinet Member had requested Healthwatch to undertake a review of implementation and requested that this report be made available to the committee and Cabinet once completed.
4. In September 2017, a paper was presented to Health Select Committee providing an update on the implementation of the Policy, including actions taken by the Council in respect of the Healthwatch review.
5. The Committee requested a further update on implementation at the meeting in January 2018.

Main Considerations for the Council

6. Approximately 3,500 people receive care at home services from the Council at any one time. The Council is required to assess individuals' contributions regularly. Approximately 75% of all service users receiving care at home are assessed as making a financial contribution to their care.
7. In addition to expecting regular reassessments, customers are required to inform the Council if their financial circumstances change (for example, through an additional benefit income, an inheritance or insurance claim).

8. Assessments are undertaken by the Council's Finance and Benefits Team (FAB).
9. The FAB Team is unusual in that it also undertakes benefit checks for individuals often allowing individuals to claim additional benefits. Since the implementation of the Charging Policy, the FAB team have assisted people to claim total of 446 new benefits, with an increased annual income of £842k
10. Since August 2016 (to November 2017), the FAB Team have
 - Undertaken 626 new assessments of new service users
 - Completed and informed existing service users of the outcome of 1,079 reassessments
 - Commenced a further 909 reassessments of existing service users.

A proportion of service users will not require a reassessment, for example, if they have moved into a care home. The original intention was to complete reassessments under the new policy by 31st March 2018, and the FAB team are on track to complete these within the planned timescale.

11. The income generated from the 626 new assessments has an annual value of £1.4m. Of this, £247,000 is deemed to be additional contributions resulting from the new Policy. The income generated from the reassessments of existing service users has an annual value of £3.425m, an additional £2.22m over income generated prior to the new policy. Some of this additional income is a direct result of the changes in the new Policy. However, there are also other factors that may impact on income generation. For example, some customers had not received reassessments of their contributions for several years, and may not have informed the Council of changes to financial circumstances.
12. The action plan which was developed following the Healthwatch Review was presented to Health Select Committee at its meeting in September. These actions are now fully embedded.
13. In addition to the actions discussed in September, the following new developments have been/are being undertaken:
 - The FAB Team have undertaken training for other operational teams, to improve their awareness of the new policy and processes and ensure more consistent communication with service users
 - The FAB Team have participated in public events, such as the recent Chippenham 'Senior Moment' event, to advise on charging and, in particular, give benefits advice
 - From January 2018, the FAB Team will have a presence in each of the 3 Acute Hospitals serving Wiltshire, to ensure that service users and their families receive early advice on charging and benefits before making decisions about long-term care needs.
 - Since the introduction of Universal Credit in Wiltshire from June 2017, the FAB Team have provided assistance in completing online

claims, and have also worked with the Library Service to ensure that service users without access to their own computer can complete their claims in their local library.

Safeguarding Considerations

14. There are no specific safeguarding implications relating to this report.

Public Health Implications

15. There are no specific Public Health implications relating to this report.

Environmental and Climate Change Considerations

16. There are no specific environmental or climate change implications. As referred to in the Cabinet checklist, your report will need to be seen by a member of the Climate Change team to either verify what you have included in this paragraph or for the team to add its comments on what is being proposed.

Equalities Impact of the Proposal

17. A full Equalities Impact Assessment was undertaken as part of the original policy implementation work.

Risk Assessment

18. This report provides an update on the implementation of a new policy. There are no specific risks associated with this update.

Financial Implications

19. The additional charges generated from assessments and reassessments under the new Charging Policy so far is an annualised figure of £2.5m which is in line with original projections.

20. There are no financial implications from the review of the Policy, or from this update, as the application of the new Charging Policy has continued throughout and beyond the period of the review.

Legal Implications

21. The Legal Service has been fully engaged in the development of the new Policy. There are no specific legal implications arising from this update.

Proposal

22. The Committee is requested to note this report and invited to discharge this item to business as usual within Adult Social Care

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