

Wiltshire Council Charging Policy



Context:

On Tuesday 10th May Wiltshire People 1st held their monthly Speaking up Group for members. The theme for this meeting was the Charging Policy. 15 of WPF members took part in the consultation session.

In addition, on Tuesday 17th May 8 members from WPF's Salisbury Speaking up Group were supported to look at the Easy read charging policy letter and consultation question, using a similar format. The responses from the Salisbury session have been included in the final summary below.

Method – what we did:

To assist our members to better understand what was being proposed, we spent time reading out the letter WC had sent out to all service users, setting out the proposed changes that the council want to make and the reasons why.

WPF had made an easy read version of this letter for WC, but it appears that only a small number of people with a learning difficulty had received this version. [We would like WC to check their mailing lists and ensure social care databases match up].

Nicky Patrick from the Wiltshire Council Finance and Benefits team was invited to attend to explain in more detail the proposed changes and answer member's questions. Stacey Plumb from Healthwatch Wiltshire also attended the session to take notes for HWW and observe.

Following the presentation from Nicky, the group of 15 WPF members worked in 4 small groups and looked at selected questions from the charging policy consultation.

Wiltshire People First had tried to simplify this complicated subject and prepared some easy read papers containing 5 questions from the consultation. Staff supported members to consider the questions and write their answers onto paper. This is the feedback from that session.

The questions that the members looked at were:

Q1 Do you think it is right/ fair to be charged for a service that you need?



- Fair if it's something like a computer or phone
- If it is support for holiday it is fair that you pay for your support
- Yes but there are lots of services
- Depends on which service and if you have to pay
- Shouldn't have to pay extra for products or shoes if you need lots
- Happy to pay for swimming and horse riding
- Yes it is fair to pay as supporters need to be paid
- Yes you do have to be charged for the service
- Yes should pay more if you need more help
- Yes they should pay
- Yes think it is fair as staff are with you all the time
- Right to be charged 4 better service
- Some people don't have a lot of money to pay
- No people have to pay for things they do with support like gardening food tool kitchen equipment
- Yes i think i should pay toward support
- There are some things i should contribute for but not for medication
- I don't think i should pay for a bus pass
- I pay and yes it's fair
- If they charge too much it's not fair but if they don't charge too much it will be fine
- Some people may not tell the truth
- Sometimes things are too expensive
- It's not fair to be charged
- It should be free

- It depends how much it costs

Q2 The council think that everyone should pay what they can afford, this will depend on how much money you have coming into your house your wages, benefits and savings. Some people will pay more than others if they have more money. Do you think its right to pay the maximum contribution?



- Everybody should be realistic and budget wisely
- People should be treated equally some people should only pay more for a specific reason
- If you have more money than other people who need extra help
- One person shouldn't have to pay more
- Yes it is fair to pay what you can afford each person is different/ individual
- I think people should pay the same even if they have lots of money
- Pay what you think is right for what you get
- No pay something towards
- Yes people with disability need more support as equipment not included a contribution should be considered
- No pay something toward smaller
- Depends on what i can afford
- I don't think it's fair
- No, because money is needed for other important things as well
- I don't think it's fair to pay more think people should pay the same
- If people pay more it would help others out a bit

Q3. If the policy was agreed how do you think this might affect you? Work, social, getting about etc.



- No holidays
- Might get less support or fewer hours
- Might have to use less taxis stop going out
- Having you buy the stuff you need rather than extra for fun
- Might have to give up swimming
- Have to be more careful with money
- They should make sure I still have enough to go out and have a social life
- money Can still travel as have a bus pass
- If i had to pay more I don't think it will change anything as I live with mum and dad
- Still need to be able to have a holiday and have money for social life
- We would still pay for mini bus to gateway and Phab clubs
- Lose money - stop me working volunteering stop me shopping
- Would need to discuss with benefits advisor at the time.. weekly social life and getting out and about it is important to say how you feel
- Won't be going on trips holidays clubs
- If they take a lot more of my money I might not be able to have a holiday
- If I have to pay I might not be able to afford to go to the pub or to the cafe
- You might not be able to afford to go or to do social activities or go on trips and to go shopping for the right things that you need for everyday life
- You might end up stuck (at home)if there isn't a bus and you can't afford a taxi
- You might have less holidays
- It might affect household bills

Q4. How do you pay for your Care/Support now?



By A Direct Payment

10 (may be confusion over DP as DWP use this word for paying benefits into account)



Pay for your own care **5**



Care managed by the Council **9**



Have a mixture of above **6**



Other Comments

Rather not say
Live with parents

Q5 What kind of care and support do you have?



Home care **1**



Respite care **5**



Day care **8**



Supported living

15

3 people said live alone, have no supporter, but family help shop and budget



Other Comments

1 person lives at home with mum and dad

Summary:

Q1 Do you think it is right/ fair to be charged for a service that you need?



23 people answered this question

13/23 over half people said they felt it was fair to be charged for services.

3/23 said no it's not fair to be charged

3/23 said it depends on the charge

1/23 said it's not fair to be charged for extra products

3/23 gave answers that were not relevant to the question

Q2 Some people may have to pay more than others. Do you think it's right to pay the maximum contribution?

15 people answered this question.

4/23 said people should pay equal amounts

3/23 said no it's not fair some pay more

3/23 said yes you should pay the maximum you can

5/23 peoples answers were not clear answers to the question, pay something towards, depends what I can afford



Q3. If the policy was agreed how do you think this might affect you? Work, social, getting about etc.



The majority of response to this question shows a level of concern that it could impact negatively upon their social life - getting out and about and having a holiday could be affected if they had to pay or pay more.

Q4. How do you pay for your Care/Support now?

Many members either did not know or were unsure who paid for the support they receive or the amount.



From their answers about half said they paid by direct payment and half were managed by the council. Note of caution – people are often confused over the term Direct Payment as the DWP use this to mean benefits (unrelated to independent living) they pay directly into a person's bank account and many members frequently muddle up the two.

From WPF knowledge of the members who replied to this question, only one person has a DP for personal care.

Q5 What kind of care and support do you have?



15/23 members were in supported living
3/23 people said that they live alone in a flat or shared house with no supporter provided, but family help them to shop and budget
8/23 people attend day care and 5/23 have respite care.

Wiltshire People 1st made the consultation survey into Easy read, organised and supported member of Wiltshire People 1st to take part in this one hour session. If the findings of this survey are reproduced, please acknowledge the source and credit WPF. Thank you.

Please contact Angie Carmichael, Director, Wiltshire People 1st for more information.