

EAST RENFREWSHIRE COUNCIL

CABINET

1 May 2014

Report by Director of Community Health & Care Partnership

CHCP CHARGING UPDATE 2014/15

PURPOSE OF REPORT

1. To update Cabinet on the developing approach to charging following implementation of the Self Directed Support legislation from the 1st April 2014.

RECOMMENDATIONS

2. It is recommended that the Cabinet:-
- note the phased approach planned for incorporating charging into SDS policies and procedures;
 - note the points of clarity in relation to current charge definitions; and
 - agree that the Care at Home hourly charge be realigned to the personal care equivalence rate.

BACKGROUND

3. The developing context in which the CHCP seeks to establish and operate a charging policy has previously been reported. Increasing pressure on budgets, service user vulnerability in the current economic climate, and the implementation of Self Directed Support legislation has required a fundamental review of how individuals contribute towards social care services received.

4. The redesign and review work being progressed through the CHCP Transformation Programme has formed the basis of developing opportunities to reform the approach to charging, and a phased implementation approach is now proposed.

REPORT

5. Considerable work continues across the CHCP to reform and redesign services, systems and processes. The focus of much of this work centres around ensuring obligations around Self Directed Support legislation can be met, while balancing the significant pressure on Council resources.

6. In line with developing national guidance, options for moving away from service based charging towards an approach where individuals contribute towards their overall personal budget have been considered. Requirements for relevant supporting systems and processes has been factored into existing projects underway as part of the Transformation Programme to maximise opportunities for change.

7. SDS legislation will be implemented on the 1st April 2014, and as it is recognised that further work and service user consultation will be required before a revised approach to charging could be implemented, it is proposed that the existing charging policy be continued for the 2014/15 financial year with some minor amendments as set out below.

8. A programme of review and consultation will then be taken forward to inform the annual charging for services exercise reporting in November 2014, with an implementation date for the new approach of 1st April 2015.

Self Directed Support and the Equivalence Model

9. As reported to Cabinet in November 2013, an equivalence model approach is being taken within the CHCP to establish individual budgets under SDS. The approved equivalence rate for personal care has been set at £13 for standard care, reflecting the direct costs associated with delivering such a service. The current Care at Home charge is set at £13.10 per hour, and this clearly delivers inconsistency for CHCP policy.

10. It is therefore proposed that the Care at Home charge be amended to £13 per hour for the 2014/15 financial year, bringing it in line with the equivalence rate. As the majority of Care at Home service users are over 65 and do not pay for personal care, the financial impact of this on the CHCP budget is minimal. Based on 2013/14 income levels, loss of income has been estimated at around £500 for the year.

Charging Policy Definition Updates

11. As the right of an individual to direct their own support continues to bring about changes in service delivery methods it has been recognised that the traditional definitions within the CHCP charging policy require to be updated. Clarification of the changes proposed and the potential implications are given below.

Care at Home

12. As reported in paragraph 9 above, the CHCP currently charge for Care at Home. In practice, this refers to those individuals who receive support through the Care at Home service, either by the in-house staff or commissioned by the team. These individuals are advised of the charges in place and taken through the financial assessment process where appropriate to establish the amount they can pay towards their care. Where an individual chooses to direct their support in a different way, either through a direct payment or through accessing other agency support, they have not been subject to the same charging approach. This clearly leads to inequity for service users.

13. It is therefore proposed that all individuals in receipt of 'care at home' services, regardless of the option they choose for directing their support, will be subject to the charging policy.

Housing Support

14. Existing charging policy refers to the approved Housing Support charge of £12 per hour. There has been no change to the rate in recent years as some elements of service have been subject to redesign work.

15. In practice, the charges levied around Housing Support have been for those individuals, largely older people, who live in sheltered and very sheltered complexes supported by funded warden services. As there are no set hours of support for individuals in these circumstances, a gross charge per property has been set with individuals only paying that deemed affordable following the financial assessment process.

16. From the 1st April 2014 much of the redesign around the sheltered complexes will be complete and charges will no longer be appropriate, although very sheltered support arrangements will continue. The resultant loss of income has been factored into efficiency calculations for the service redesign.

17. There are however a number of individuals in receipt of Housing Support type services within adult services who are not being charged, and it is therefore proposed that to ensure equity, the charge definition be clarified and all individuals will be subject to the charging policy in a consistent manner.

Day Services

18. A Day Services charge was approved in 2009 of £11 per day, however in practice the systems and processes required to support the operation of this were not in place, and the charge was not implemented.

19. As redesign work and personal choice bring about a wider approach to day opportunities alongside the traditional day centre service model, the basis of the previously approved charge is no longer deemed appropriate. An updated review of options on charging for day opportunities will therefore be considered as part of the programme of work to be reported in November 2014.

FINANCE AND EFFICIENCY

20. There are no significant short term impacts on the CHCP revenue budget anticipated from the proposals, and the more consistent application of the current charging policy will ensure income is maximised where service users have the ability to contribute to their support.

CONSULTATION

21. As the review of charging within the Self Directed Support context is taken forward over the summer, consultation will be undertaken with appropriate groups and individuals to inform the resultant policy.

IMPLICATIONS OF THE PROPOSALS

22. Realignment of the Care at Home charge to the personal care equivalence rate will ensure consistency and transparency for service users with minimal financial impact on the CHCP budget. It is anticipated that potential loss of income would be approx £500 for the financial year.

23. The proposed clarity updates over the definitions of care at home and housing support will ensure equity across care groups and provide for consistent application of existing charging policy. It is likely that this will result in some individuals now being charged who have been in receipt of social care services for some time without any charge being discussed. This will be taken forward as part of their annual review cycle, and each individual will be offered a benefits check with an income maximisation officer, and be taken through the financial assessment process.

24. As the amount each individual will ultimately pay will depend on what is affordable following the financial assessment process, it is not possible to project the potential impact on income levels. It has been estimated that up to 100 individuals may be impacted by the more stringent application of the charging policy, with these predominantly coming from the learning disability, physical disability and mental health care groups.

CONCLUSIONS

25. To ensure consistency and equity for service users, a number of minor amendments have been identified in relation to the CHCP charging policy.

26. Realigning the care at home charge to the personal care equivalence rate, alongside greater clarity on definitions of existing charges will ensure individuals across care groups are subject to a consistent approach to charging, and that in the context of difficult budget decisions individuals who are able to contribute towards their care do so.

RECOMMENDATIONS

27. It is recommended that Cabinet:-

- note the phased approach planned for incorporating charging into SDS policies and procedures;
- note the points of clarity in relation to current charge definitions; and
- agree that the Care at Home hourly charge be realigned to the personal care equivalence rate.

REPORT AUTHOR

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BACKGROUND PAPERS

Cabinet, 21 November 2013, Charging for Services 2014/15

KEY WORDS

A report outlining the approach to charging within the CHCP, and the developing context of Self Directed Support.

Key Words: CHCP, charging, self directed support, care at home, housing support