

Adult Social Care Charging Proposals - FAQs

This document will be regularly updated throughout the consultation process.

If you would like to ask a question, please email asc.chargingconsultation@sutton.gov.uk, call 0208 770 5280 or come to one of the events listed at the bottom of [the overview page](#).

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Consultation process

Why is the Council proposing these changes?

Like councils all over the country, Sutton Council is facing significant financial pressures as more people need our social care services while the cost of providing this care has increased.

One way we can save money is by making some changes to our Adult Social Care Charging Policy. The Charging Policy is about how we decide what people are able to pay for social care and the different costs of care.

We think that these changes mean we will have more money to support the people who need care and support but are unable to pay for it, and we want to hear what you think.

How long is the consultation?

The consultation began on Monday 29 July 2024 and was set to end on Sunday 8 September 2024. However, having listened to feedback from residents, we recognise that the proposals are complicated and have extended the consultation to Sunday 27 October.

Why did you consult over the summer?

We had planned to begin the consultation before summer. However, once the general election was called, the Council entered the [pre-election period](#) which meant that consultations could not begin.

The Council needs to urgently take action to address the financial pressures it is facing and so the decision was taken to consult over the summer, so that councillors of Sutton Council's People Committee could consider the views of residents when making a decision on changes to the Charging Policy in September.

However, having listened to feedback, we recognise that the proposals are complicated and have extended the consultation through to Sunday 27 October.

When will a decision on these proposals be made?

A report on the consultation will be reviewed by councillors at [Sutton Council's People Committee](#) in December.

Where can I find out more about the People Committee?

Details of the Council's People Committee, including upcoming meetings, recordings or previous meetings and membership, are [on our website](#).

What are you doing to make sure everyone can have their say?

People can participate in the following ways:

- Complete our online survey by visiting sutton.citizenspace.com
- Complete an easy read version of the survey, which can be collected from our Civic Centre reception or at one of the following local voluntary sector organisations: Carers Centre Sutton, Age UK Sutton, Community Action Sutton, Citizens Advice Sutton, Advocacy for All.
- Ask for a printed copy or easy read version of the survey by calling 0208 770 5280 or by emailing asc.chargingconsultation@sutton.gov.uk.
- Come to one of our events to speak to our staff.

Are the events drop-in sessions?

The events begin with a presentation explaining the proposals, followed by group and individual discussions. We advise you to come to the event at the published starting time, so that you receive all the information. However, if you are unable to be there at the start, that is no problem - Council representatives will be there to talk you through the proposals.

Why are you asking questions about equalities?

We completed an equalities impact assessment prior to the consultation to help us better understand how different people could be affected by the proposals. During

the consultation, we are monitoring responses to the equalities questions so we can see who is and isn't responding, and adjust our engagement approach.

The proposals

Do other councils charge for these services?

Different areas have different demographics. For example, areas like Sutton, which have an older population than the regional average, can have more pressure on their adult social care budgets. However, most councils have already made similar changes to how people pay for adult social care in their local areas.

How will the proposals affect those who live in a care home?

Proposal 1 (paying for assistive technology) and proposal 2 (to include the full amount of disability benefit in charge calculations and consider claims for night care costs on a case by case basis) will not affect people who live in a care home.

Proposal 3 (paying for appointeeship services) could affect someone living in a care home. Those receiving the appointeeship service are likely to pay a management fee if this proposal is accepted.

Which proposals will affect people with community-based services?

All three proposals may affect people with community-based services such as home care, supported living and day care, depending on their situation.

Please contact our Financial Assessment Team to discuss your individual circumstances by emailing asc.chargingconsultation@sutton.gov.uk or calling 0208 770 5280.

How will I be affected by these proposals?

If you are unsure if this proposal would affect you, please contact our Financial Assessment Team to discuss your individual circumstances by emailing asc.chargingconsultation@sutton.gov.uk or calling 0208 770 5280.

You can also attend one of our engagement events where staff will present the proposals and answer your questions.

Will the proposals affect me if I receive a personal budget?

The proposals may affect anyone who has care and support which is funded by the Council.

Is the value of my home taken into consideration when you look at income?

The value of a person's main home cannot be included when we look at their income, savings and assets to work out how much they can contribute towards their community-based care.

What if I cannot afford to pay my increased care contribution?

Anyone affected by the proposals can request a review of their financial assessment. Along with this, a financial inclusion check is available to help people review their household finances to make sure they are accessing all the financial help available and support them in managing their finances in the best possible way. All individuals are able to request a formal review of their contribution via the Council's Complaints Procedure.

Will the costs increase with inflation?

Assistive technology costs (proposal 1) will increase by a standard inflationary amount every April. Rates for proposal 3 will be reviewed annually by the Court of Protection.

All people who are assessed as being able to pay towards their care package will have their contribution reviewed each year to reflect increases in benefit rates and pensions, and allowances for things like day to day costs may also increase.

How do I cancel my service if I don't want to pay the proposed charges?

Talk to your social worker first or call the contact centre on 020 8770 5000.

What alternatives have you considered in coming up with these proposed changes to charging for care?

Demand for services such as adult social care has significantly grown while the cost of providing them has also increased. This means that the Council must look at ways of reducing its overall spend in different service areas so that it can deliver a balanced budget.

Within adult social care, the proposed changes to charging for care are part of a range of measures outlined in our three-year savings plan.

When developing these proposals, we have looked at what other councils are doing. The vast majority of councils charge for homecare and the changes we are proposing are in line with what many councils have already done.

Through this consultation, we want to hear your views on how the proposals would affect you as well as any alternatives you would like us to consider.

Following the consultation, a report with the recommendations will be presented to the Council's People Committee for consideration.

Is it possible that these will have a cumulative impact on some people?

This may be the case for a small number of individuals, however, during the financial assessment, we will ensure that nobody is paying more towards their care than they are able to.

Is financial support available to ensure that a person can travel to their activities?

This depends on their individual needs. The Financial Assessment team can help by looking at individual circumstances and checking that people are getting all the benefits they are entitled to.

What are you doing to improve carers assessments?

We have made some changes internally to complete carers assessments more quickly and are working with the Sutton Carers Centre to improve the process and experience for carers.

Are you concerned about the impact of your proposals on unpaid carers?

Through our survey and events, we have heard from unpaid carers who are concerned about the impact of these proposals. We are listening and are looking at ways that this impact could be mitigated.

Will you be updating your financial assessment form?

We recently updated our financial assessment form and will review it again following the consultation.

How will the Council cope with increased demand for assessments?

We have been taking steps to speed up assessments. This includes reviewing our financial assessment form and improving our processes so that Finance and Adult Social Care teams work more closely together.

Proposal 1

If I pay towards my care, will proposal 1 affect me?

Proposal 1 on assistive technology will only affect people who pay for their care in full.

Are you going to charge for assistive technology when people leave the hospital?

Where assistive technology is a condition of hospital discharge, it will be free for up to six weeks if it is part of a reablement service.

Rather than introduce a charge for assistive technology, could you find a cheaper provider?

Before appointing Medequip as our assistive technology provider, we carried out a detailed procurement process to ensure that residents received a good quality and cost effective service.

Is Disability Related Expenditure (DREs) capped?

There is no cap on Disability Related Expenditure.

Can telecare be short term or only long term?

Tech-enabled care can be used on a short term or long term basis, depending on your needs.

Proposal 2

If two family members are on enhanced disability benefits, will they both be affected by the proposals?

These proposals only relate to people receiving care from the Council. If two family members are receiving enhanced disability benefits (AA, DLA or PIP) but only one of them receives care from the Council, only the person receiving care from the Council will have the full amount of their benefit taken into consideration when calculating how much they pay towards their care.

If two family members are receiving enhanced disability benefits (AA, DLA or PIP) and they both receive care from the Council, they will be affected by proposal 2. How they will be affected depends on their individual circumstances, for example which Disability Related Expenses they claim. We can do a financial assessment to check on each household's circumstances and will ensure that their Minimum Income Guarantee (MIG) is protected.

Will someone living in supported accommodation be affected by proposal 2?

If someone living in supported accommodation receives the enhanced rate of AA, DLA or PIP, they will be affected by these proposals. If they receive the standard rate of these benefits, they will not be affected by proposal 2.

Is there a risk that proposal 2 could push people into poverty?

When we calculate how much a person can contribute towards their care, we make sure that they are left with enough money to cover everyday expenses. This is called the Minimum Income Guarantee (MIG). The government sets this amount every year, and it varies depending on a person's age and the benefits they're getting.

During each financial assessment, check they get all the benefits they are entitled to and encourage them to claim all eligible DREs.

Does proposal 2 mean that all those on an enhanced rate of a disability benefit will pay more for the care?

Proposal 2 is about personalising the financial assessment, so the impact of this proposal would depend on each person's circumstances.

For example, where someone on an enhanced or higher rate of benefits pays for night care, they can claim for this as a DRE and may have less to pay for their care overall, whereas someone who does not claim for night care as a DRE would pay more. Please see the **scenarios** section within the consultation for some examples of what this proposal could mean.

What are Disability Related Expenses (DREs)?

Disability related expenses (DRE) are extra costs that a person may have to pay because of their disability or care need.

For example, laundry is an everyday expense for everyone. However, if due to incontinence it was necessary to undertake additional washes, the additional cost could be treated as a DRE expense.

DREs only relate to non-residential care and to people who have been assessed as being able to contribute towards the cost of their care.

How does the Council make decisions on Disability Related Expenses?

Disability Related Expenditure is additional money you may need to spend due to your disability or ill health.

When considering Disability Related Expenses (DREs), the Council will allow reasonable expenditure to help you to stay independent and maintain your wellbeing, in line with Statutory guidance from national government.

Where a DRE is claimed for something that is not in the guidance, the application is reviewed by the Financial Assessment and Adult Social Care teams to assess the claim. This helps to ensure that all claims are carefully considered alongside the needs identified in each person's care and support plan.

Will this proposal impact unpaid carers?

We recognise that unpaid carers may be impacted by this proposal and this will be considered when Sutton Council's People Committee meet to make a decision on these proposals.

If someone doesn't claim night care costs as a DRE, will they no longer be eligible for the enhanced or higher rate of AA, DLA or PIP?

The higher or enhanced rates of AA, DLA, and PIP are given by the national government's Department for Work and Pensions to pay for enhanced support, which can include day or night time care.

As part of these proposals, each person would have a more personalised social care financial assessment which checks they get all the benefits they are entitled to and encourages them to claim more DREs. The decision on which benefits you can get is made by the Department for Work and Pensions.

Proposal 3

Will everyone with an appointeeship service be affected by proposal 3?

Only people whose appointeeship is with the Council will be affected. Residents whose appointeeship service is provided by a third party will not be affected.

What steps have you taken to ensure that people currently receiving the Council's appointeeship service can understand and respond to the consultation?

We have produced an easy read version of the survey, are working closely with the VCS and have written to all those currently receiving the service. We recognise that there may still be challenges for people to respond to this proposal and this will be acknowledged in the report on the consultation.