

## **Adult Social Care Charging Proposals - FAQs**

### Consultation process

#### **Why is the Consultation taking place?**

The Council last reviewed its policy in 2016. It is important that as part of this review we look at how the policy is working and consider a tidy up on some detailed aspects of the policy. This is to ensure fair and consistent treatment for everyone receiving chargeable services.

The policy should be reviewed every three years, however the review that was due to take place in 2020 was postponed due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

With this in mind, the Council have put together three charging proposals which the public are being consulted on and which will need to be approved by our Councillors.

#### **Why are you consulting now?**

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 consultation must go ahead over summer, so that the members of the People Committee can consider the views of residents when making a decision on changes to the Charging Policy in September.

#### **How long is the consultation?**

The consultation is to run for six weeks and is due to begin on Monday 29 July 2024 and end on Sunday 8 September 2024.

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

We have worked closely with local voluntary organisations to make it easier for people to take part in this consultation. People can participate in the following ways:

- Complete our online survey by visiting [sutton.citizenspace.com](https://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](mailto:asc.chargingconsultation@sutton.gov.uk).
- Come to one of our events to speak to our staff.

#### **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 will monitor responses to the equalities questions so we can see who is and isn't responding, and adjust our engagement approach.

## The proposals

### What are the changes proposed?

There are three suggested proposals:

1. To include the full amount of Disability Benefit in charge calculations and consider claims for night care costs on a case by case basis.
2. To introduce a set fee for assistive technology (telecare) - Residents who pay a contribution towards the cost of any existing care package would not be required to pay this charge. Anyone who gets telecare but no other services or who pays the full cost of their existing care package will pay a flat rate of **£8.57** a week towards the cost of their telecare services.
3. To charge for the Council's appointeeship service. This is currently a free service. In order to ensure the sustainability of this discretionary service in the longer term it is proposed to charge an annual management fee of 3.5% of each service user's savings up to a maximum of £824.00 per year.

### How will it affect those who live in a care home?

The majority of the proposals will not affect those who live in a care home.

The one proposal that could affect someone living in a care home is proposal 3. Those receiving appointeeship service are likely to pay a management fee should this proposal be accepted.

### Which proposals will affect users getting community based services (e.g home care and day care)

**Proposal 1** - Including the full amount of Disability Benefit in charge calculations and consider claims for night care costs on a case by case basis.

**Proposal 2** - Introducing a set fee for assistive technology - £8.57 per week to cover the costs for assistive technology services paid to LBS's suppliers. The following recipients of assistive technology will **not** be required to pay this charge:

- Service users who currently pay a contribution for an existing package of care
- Service users who are currently on the assistive technology pilot will continue to receive technology free of charge for the duration of the pilot

- Service users where assistive technology is installed for an interim period to inform a package of care
- Service users who require assistive technology to ensure safety / reduce risk when being discharged from hospital under Discharge to Assess (ongoing needs assessed within four weeks).

**Proposal 3** - Charging for the Council's appointeeship services. This will apply to users living in the community and in residential care homes.

**How will the proposed changes to Council Tax reduction affect me?**

Users who are affected by changes to their Council Tax reduction will be able to offset this increase in the financial assessment should they be currently paying a contribution towards their care package cost.

**I have had my Disability Related Expenditure (DREs) reduced to £40 per week. How does proposal 2 change this ?**

If any claim for night care costs is accepted your total allowances for DREs will be increased above this £40 limit. Existing DRE claims previously agreed will continue to be honoured.

**When will I know if I have to pay increased charges/fees?**

The proposals will need to be agreed by Councillors and a decision on this will not take place until after the consultation period and following the Councillor meeting due to be held in September. This means that the earliest date, if the proposals are agreed, will be October 2024.

**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 being offered to help those review their household finances to ensure that they are accessing all financial help available and to help support them to manage their finances in the best possible way. All users are able to request a formal review of their contribution via the Council's Complaints Procedure.

**What happens if I refuse to pay the contribution ?**

Those users who chose not to pay towards the cost of their care are subject to the Council's corporate debt recovery procedures.

**Will the costs increase with inflation?**

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

All users who are assessed to pay for their care package will have their contribution reviewed each year to reflect increases in benefit rates and pensions - however allowances for day to day costs and other allowances will also increase.

**How do I go about cancelling my service if I don't want to pay the proposed charges?**

Talk to your social worker first or call the contact centre.

**Q. How long is the consultation?**

The consultation will run for six weeks, from 29 July 2024 to 8 September 2024.

Feedback on the proposals can be shared using an online or printed form. Easy read copies are also available on request.

Additional information on the proposals and the online consultation form can be found by visiting: <https://sutton.citizenspace.com/adult-social-services-and-housing/charging/>

**Q. When will these proposals begin?**

The proposals will need to be agreed by Councillors at People Committee in September, once the consultation period has closed. If the proposals are agreed, the earliest date they will begin is October 2024.

**Q Is night care provided by a family member allowed as a DRE ?**

No - For a night care cost to be considered as a legitimate DRE it needs to be evidenced as a payment made to a bonafide care agency or self employed carer and deemed as an unmet need that has not been arranged by the Council. As with all DRE claims, night care should be evidenced (eg a receipt or recorded on a bank statement) with any claim above £40 referred to the relevant Head of Service in Adult Social Care for consideration.

**Q My DRE has been limited to £40 per week recently - how is this linked to these proposals ?**

This is a separate issue to the proposal. The council is continually reviewing DREs to ensure the charging policy is applied fairly and consistently. This means that some expenses previously allowed may be reviewed and removed from your financial assessment calculation. These proposals are separate to any DRE reviews currently taking place and you are free to appeal your current contribution if you do not agree with it.