

**NORTH SOMERSET COUNCIL
DECISION**

**DECISION OF: EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR ADULT SOCIAL CARE
WITH ADVICE FROM: DIRECTOR OF PEOPLE AND COMMUNITIES
DIRECTORATE: PEOPLE AND COMMUNITIES**



DECISION NO: PC91 (2019/20 SCHEME)

SUBJECT: ADULT SOCIAL CARE FEES AND CHARGES UPLIFTS 2020/21

KEY DECISION: YES

REASON: Impact on communities across North Somerset

BACKGROUND:

Fees and charges represent an important source of income, providing finance to assist in achieving the Council's broad objectives. Some of our fees and charges are effectively set by legislation but many are locally determined. The amount that adult social care service users pay towards the cost of their care is determined by a financial assessment, which determines affordability.

Income derived from charging is used to offset the costs of providing the service being charged for, including support service costs. In setting an appropriate level of fees and charges, managers also take into account their client groups and corporate objectives.

A corporate increase of 1.25% has been applied across People and Communities budgeted income. The proposed increases in fees and charges are necessary to meet increased costs and budgetary pressures to which the Council is subject and will ensure that the contribution made by fees and charges to the Council's overall income budget is maintained.

The new charges have been set in accordance with the revised principles and guidance in relation to the setting of fees and charges approved by the Executive in February 2016.

Directors are empowered to make decision to increase fees and charges up to and including increases of 5%; Executive Members are empowered to make decisions to increase fees and charges up to and including increases of 10%. This decision sheet incorporates all those increases up to and including 10%.

DECISION:

To agree the 2020-21 fees and charges as set out in the report and in Appendix 1 to apply from April 2020.

REASONS:

The proposed fee increases for adult social care are detailed in Appendix 1, with a brief commentary below.

Community Meals

The Council provides a community meals service, the net cost of which is estimated at around £60,000 for 2019/20.

The Medium-Term Financial Plan includes a strategy to reduce this to zero over time. As a result, charges have increased historically and are proposed to increase further as illustrated below.

	2018/19 charge	2019/20 charge	2020/21 proposed charge	2020/21 increase	2018/19 increase %
Hot Meal	£5.00	£5.50	£6.00	£0.50	9.1%
Afternoon tea service	£3.30	£3.40	£3.50	£0.10	2.9%

Home Care and Day Care

The Council currently spends c. £2.2m per annum on day care and £7.5m on home (domiciliary) care. The fee increase proposals are reflective of the increases in costs, especially in relation to domiciliary care.

It is worth noting, in terms of the number of client impacts, it is estimated that:

- of the 157 day care clients, the increase in charge will impact on 53 clients, because of their financial assessments, 31 of whom are self-funders
- of the 691 home care clients, 73 are included in the day care clients above and the increase in charge will impact on a further 155 clients because of their financial assessments, 28 of whom are self-funders

Respite

Respite rates are updated in line with benefit entitlements and are based on government published personal needs allowances.

OPTIONS CONSIDERED:

Given the approach agreed in the Medium-Term Plan, no significant alternatives were considered in relation to Community Meals. The other changes are considered appropriate to reflect increasing costs / cost recovery.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

The Medium Term Financial Plan includes an increase in budgeted income for 2020/21 across the People and Communities Directorate of £258k, the majority of which relates to Adult Social Care. The proposed revision of fees and charges is designed to meet this income target and reflect increasing costs. There are risks associated with the revised fees as some of the service users who are impacted are the most vulnerable in community. Unrecoverable non-payment could increase the levels of debts held by the Council.

LEGAL POWERS AND IMPLICATIONS

Various legal powers allow the Council to make a charge for certain services. Charging decisions are fettered by a complex series of statutes and regulations. Services fall into five main categories for charging purposes. These categories are set out in the table below.

Category	Examples
No charge permitted	Service assessment for community care
Charges or charging scheme set by government – little or no local input	Client contributions for social services residential provision
Charging scheme set locally but must be in accordance with government prescribed principles	Client contributions for social services non-residential provision
Charge set locally, but essentially income cannot exceed the cost of providing a service	Charge for a discretionary service with no other charging rules Charge for a service provided using the general power of competence

Charges for Adult Social Care Services are governed by the Care Act 2014 and the associated Care and Support Statutory Guidance.

CLIMATE CHANGE AND ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

None identified.

CONSULTATION

These proposals were included in the medium term financial plan published in December 2019 and as such has been subject to review, scrutiny and consultation by a wide range of internal and external stakeholders. The uplifts contained here are consistent with the Council's fees and charges policy.

RISK MANAGEMENT

In social care, fee increases are a particular risk, as the client group are vulnerable and ability to pay or collect is often constrained. The risks associated with the Adult social care charges amendments include:

- potential negative impact on the take up of services
- increased risk of non-payment

- increase in bad debt

However, the fact that service users are subject to a Financial Assessment, which determines affordability, mitigates this risk.

EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

Have you undertaken an Equality Impact Assessment? Yes / No
Over-arching EIA included within MTFP budget report and specific EIA undertaken for Community Meals. Whilst the increases impact directly on disabled and older adults, this is mitigated by the existence of a financial assessment, which ensures that the actual charge levied is commensurate with their available resources.

CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS

None, other than those identified above.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1 - Proposed Changes to Fees and Charges 2020/21.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Revenue Budget & Medium Term Financial Planning reports - Executive January and February 2020.
Fees and Charges Policy – Executive February 2016.

SIGNATORIES:

DECISION MAKER(S):

Signed: 

Title: Executive Member for Adult Social Care

Date: 16.3.20

WITH ADVICE FROM:

Signed: 

Title: Director of People and Communities

Date: 11.3.20

Footnote: Details of changes made and agreed by the decision taker since publication of the proposed (pre-signed) decision notice, if applicable:

Appendix 1 – Proposed Changes to Fees and Charges

	2019/20	2020/21 Proposed	Increase
--	---------	---------------------	----------

Adult Social Care

Community Meals:-			
- Weekday	£5.50	£6.00	9.1%
- Weekend	£5.50	£6.00	9.1%
- Tea	£3.40	£3.50	2.9%

Day Care (session)	£23.00	£24.15	5.0%
---------------------------	--------	--------	------

Home Care (hour)	£18.40	£19.30	4.9%
-------------------------	--------	--------	------

Respite Care (day)			
- Pensionable age and over	£18.90	£19.80	4.8%
- 25 to pensionable age	£11.75	£12.05	2.6%
- 18 to 24	£9.60	£9.85	2.6%

Deferred Payments			
- Administration fee	£715.00	£730.00	2.1%
- Annual charge	£128.00	£130.00	1.6%

