

Contributing to your care and support Adult Social Care (Non-residential) Charging Policy

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Document Control

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Date and Changes: Appendix re actual social care charges to be updated annually following Aberdeen City Council budget meeting. Policy subject to review when system change created to deliver individual budgets. 06/06/2019 Contributing to Care Policy agreed by Finance and Growth committee, predates Policy Committee formation. 27/06/24 – Previous policy document updated to reflect Corporate Template 02/07/2024 – Contributing your care policy 2024 Policy presented to ACC Policy Group would replace 2019 Contributing to Care Policy – Revised policy aligns to practice in terms of mixture of flat charges and means testing depending on service type as opposed to individual budget model described in 2019 Policy. The change in policy reflects a procedural change not a policy intent.	

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1. Why does the Council need this Policy?

- 1.1 Aberdeen City Health and Social care partnership aim to help people live at home independently and safely. To enable this to continue and to provide services to people with a range of different social care needs a charging policy has been developed which means that some people who use and access chargeable care and support services will be required to contribute towards the cost of these services.
- 1.2 The policy explains the basis and types of charging that an individual may be subject to depending on their personal circumstances, which may vary depending on age, income, and assets and which social care services they use.
- 1.3 The policy provides an overview, with legal context for charging alongside providing specifics re process of how charges are applied, how calculations are undertaken, how to pay and how to appeal.

2. Application and Scope Statement

- 2.1 Individuals (adults) using non-residential social care services are impacted by this policy.
- 2.2 Within policy, there are flat charges that apply to everyone using non-residential, social care services. Flat charges are applied to meals provision in day care and very sheltered accommodation, sessional charges for day care and day opportunity attendance, transport costs and community alarms / TEC (Technology Enabled Care) equipment.
- 2.3 Means testing applies to a range of social care services, including housing support in all variants of delivery from community, supported living, sheltered housing, and very sheltered housing. Completion of a financial assessment will create an individualised contribution to support based on personal and financial circumstances. Failure to complete a financial assessment causes a full-service cost to be levied.
- 2.4 Some services notably personal care, medication management and meal preparation provided when someone has been assessed by Social Work staff are free. Whilst services arranged to deliver carer support are free by eligibility assessment has been completed by social work staff
- 2.5 The identification of potential charges forms part of assessment processes undertaken by social work staff. Support will be offered to complete financial assessment paperwork when required for means tested services.

- 2.6 Aberdeen City Council process all financial assessments, the confirmation of outcome of the assessment is provided in writing. Information around criteria for review requests and assessment appeals are outlined in communication provided.
- 2.7 Invoices will be generated by Aberdeen City Council for all services received. Where appropriate social work support will support with benefit maximisation and signposting for financial support as required.
- 2.8 There are a number of individuals in the following categories or circumstance who are exempt from being asked to contribute towards their care and support.
- People who have a progressive disease that can reasonably be expected to cause their death (as evidenced through consultation with a health care professional e.g. BASRiS/SR1/DS1500 forms as appropriate or letter). people who have been assessed as requiring the delivery of personal care in their own home.
 - People receiving new, intermediate, or additional reablement services in their own home following a one-off hospital discharge for 42 days.
 - People with a mental illness whose social care is mandated by a Compulsory Treatment Order under the Mental Health (Care and Treatment) (Scotland) Act 2003.
 - People in receipt of Criminal Justice Social Work services, including those who are subject to Compulsion Orders under the Criminal Procedure (Scotland) Act 2003.
 - Services for people who are subject to the conditions of a Short Scottish Secure Tenancy (SSST).
 - Outreach/Floating Housing Support services to people in receipt of support as a result of the Housing Support Duty (Scotland) 2012 where the support is likely to last under two years.
 - Carers who are eligible, following the development of an Adult Carer Support Plan, for the provision of services to give them a break from their caring roles.
 - Children and Young adults potentially up to 26 years old dependent upon their educational and legal status to the point that they transition to adult social work services.

3. Responsibilities

- 3.1 This policy is the responsibility of the Chief Finance Officer within Aberdeen City Health and Social Care Partnership. The charges are set and reviewed by the Chief Finance officer as part of annual budget setting process with Aberdeen City Council.
- 3.2 Aberdeen City Integration Joint Board (IJB) in line with Public Bodies (Joint Working) (Scotland) Act 2014 operates a number of services through Directions to Aberdeen City Council and NHS Grampian. The setting of charges is not delegated to the Integrated Joint Board and remains a power held by Aberdeen City Council
- 3.3 The policy will be adopted by ACC and ACHSCP staff as a policy to inform working practice to ensure that all individuals using services are aware of the potential charges arising from using social care services. Promotion of the completion of financial assessments to ensure compliance and equity from use of policy.
- 3.4 The policy requires individuals using means tested services to complete financial assessment forms. This ensures that individuals contribute what they are assessed to afford.
- 3.5 Any non-compliance surrounding policy use should be highlighted to the Chief Finance Officer to action.
- 3.6 Any feedback or suggestions for improving the policy can be made directly through communication with the Chief Finance Officer, this will be considered as part of regular review of the policy.

4. Supporting Procedures and Documentation

- 4.1 This policy adheres to current best practice of co design of policy as presented by COSLA (Convention of Scottish Local Authorities).
- 4.2 Associated Policies – [Contributing to Care non – residential charging policy 2019](#)
[Contributing to Care non – residential charging policy 2024](#)
- 4.3 In addition to the Social Work (Scotland) Act (1968) referenced earlier, other relevant legislation includes.
 - [Social Care \(Self-directed Support\) \(Scotland\) Act 2013](#)
 - [Mental Health \(Scotland\) Act 1984](#)
 - [Mental Health \(Care and Treatment\) \(Scotland\) Act 2003](#)
 - [Housing Support Duty – Housing \(Scotland\) Act 1987 as amended.](#)
 - [Human Rights Act 1998](#)
 - [Equality Act 2010](#)

- [Community Care and Health \(Scotland\) Act 2002](#)
- [Carers \(Waiving of Charges for Support\) \(Scotland\) Regulations 2014](#)

4.4 National Strategy and Guidance in respect of Social Care Charging has been produced by COSLA ([COSLA Charging Guidance](#)).

5. About this Policy

5.1 The charging policy provides a framework to describe which social care charges will be deemed as requiring either a flat payment or a contribution towards based upon income.

5.2 This policy has a unit-based model of charging, which means that contribution is required per session of support per service. This means that an individual may have a mixture of both flat and means tested charges which they are invoiced for. Social work staff will offer benefit checks and financial signposting through process to ensure equity.

6. Risk

6.1 Strategic Risk -The policy creates an assurance that income can be generated fairly to meet wider strategic objectives. Failure of policy to be actioned could create disparate systems in operation. The usage and implementation of policy ensures greater equity for all individuals in receipt of social care supports.

6.2 Financial Risk – Without a fair and equitable charging policy in place, there is a risk to income and affordability of care and support services to individuals. Financial risk extends to the wider organisation if the Charging Policy is not applied with equity and with robust systems that demonstrate consistency.

6.3 Reputational Risk – The policy and supporting documentation sets out principles and processes to reduce risk of inconsistent decision making that could lead to reputational damage. Regular monitoring of theme and volume of customer complaints re application of the policy will enable feedback to be reviewed to further improve content and application of policy.

7. Environmental Implications

7.1 There are no environmental implications arising from this policy.

8. Policy Performance

- 8.1 ACC and ACHSCP staff will utilise policy as part of daily operational delivery, using policy consistently by ensuring that all clients in receipt of non-residential care out with free personal care or carer support complete a financial assessment form.
- 8.2 Demonstration of a consistent approach could be reviewed by a continuous return of financial assessments for processing, in line with services and budgets allocated.
- 8.3 Individuals understanding of their requirement to contribute towards care and support costs.
- 8.4 ACHSCP will utilise review of customer complaints along with staff feedback as an opportunity to learn and will review and modify the policy accordingly.

9. Design and Delivery

- 9.1 The policy provides a framework from Aberdeen City Council to exercise statutory obligations, in particular those afforded through Sec 85, Social Work (Scotland) Act 1968.
- 9.2 All local authorities require a charging policy for social care, to inform service users and carers of the charging structures for social care services they use, of processes to access financial assessment and how charges are levied. The policy outlines stage by stage role of ACC and ACHSCP staff in assessment and in providing support to complete financial paperwork.
- 9.3 The revised policy has supported the development of improved assessment processes and increased understanding via staff engagement. Guidance re application of charging policy forms part of Core skills training for all Adult Social work staff

10. Housekeeping and Maintenance

- 10.1 This policy replaces the Contributing to Your Care and Support – Adult (non-residential) Charging Policy (2019).
- 10.2 The development of revised policy has revised financial assessment documentation to support implementation and has developed a more comprehensive form enabling greater opportunity to highlight household costs and disability related expenditure.

11. Communication and Distribution

- 11.1 This policy will feature on both Aberdeen City Council and Aberdeen City Health and Social Care Partnership websites for public access.
- 11.2 A communication plan has been developed and will ensure that all social work staff receive an update once policy has been approved, from a staff access perspective, the policy will then reside on Adult Social Work Teams information with regular reinforcement through Core skills training.
- 11.3 Animation with voice and text with easy read versions of core themes of the policy have been created and will be displayed on websites of both Aberdeen City Council and ACHSCP as a means of engagement and explanation for individuals and carers.
- 11.4 A training plan for staff has included revised policy as part of core training to emphasise policy and its application. Additional training to support practical delivery of the policy has been scheduled.

12. Information Management

- 12.1 Any information generated in relation to this policy will be managed in accordance with the Council's Corporate information policy and supporting procedures.
- 12.2 All financial assessment paperwork utilised in determining levels of contribution have appropriate declaration, transparency information and privacy notices

13. Definitions and Understanding this Policy

Means testing:

The 2024 policy and financial assistance form highlights the thresholds of income and savings that someone can need to elicit a contribution towards their care. Means testing is a model of assessing how much someone pays as a contribution towards their care based upon their financial circumstances, which would include benefits, income, savings, and assets.

Unit based model:

Cost of service based on individual rate, i.e. per session / per journey / per meal and is not calculated on a sum of all services received.

Non – Residential:

Non-residential services include all social care supports that are provided in the community to maximise independence and support wellbeing.