

Report to: **Lead Member for Adult Social Care**

Date: **31 March 2016**

By: **Director of Adult Social Care & Health**

Title: **Consultation in relation to charging for Learning Disability Community Support Services**

Purpose: **To consider the results of the consultation and agree the recommendation that will be made to Lead Member in relation to charging for Community Support Services.**

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Lead Member for Adult Social Care is recommended to:

- **consider the feedback that has been received as part of the consultation process which sought comments and views about whether the Council should charge for the Learning Disability Community Support Service;**
 - **introduce charges for the Learning Disability Community Support Service from 1 July 2016.**
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1. Background

1.1. On 16th December 2014, the Departmental Management Team agreed to undertake a public consultation on the proposal to levy a charge for Learning Disability Community Support Services (LD CSS).

1.2. Under the “Charging for Care and Support Policy”, which outlines government legislation and guidance about how care charges should be determined, the service should be chargeable, so the key reasons for the proposed change are that it is fair and equitable under the charging policy.

1.3. A full consultation has been duly undertaken and the results of this are shown at Appendix B, a summary of which is given under Supporting Information in section 3 of this report. This information was derived from a range of feedback mechanisms developed to meet the different communication needs of the client group. This included a survey form that was available on the East Sussex County Council (ESCC) website, group and individual meetings. A consultation timeline is shown at Appendix C. All data and materials used in the consultation will be available to elected members prior to the Lead Member meeting.

1.4. An Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) has been completed to identify what effect, or likely effect, the proposal to charge for the service may have on different groups accessing the service. The EqIA is shown at Appendix D.

2. Supporting information

2.1. In summary, 64 responses were received with the majority (48) from a respondent described as a ‘community support service user’.

2.2. It is significant to note that all respondents have identified a connection with CSS apart from seven people, about whom a conclusion cannot be drawn.

2.3. In answer to the overall question 'Do you think we should ask people to pay for CSS?' 10 people responded yes; 34 no; 18 not sure; and 2 not answered.

2.4. Drilling down further, the top three reasons why people felt a charge should not be levied are shown below along with an initial response to the concern:

Reason given	No. of responses	Comment
Expense	13	This will be mitigated by the financial assessment process
Unfair	7	All other similar, core services are chargeable
Service should be funded in other ways	3	There are no other means of funding

2.5. The responses stating 'not sure' were analysed further and the results confirmed that the reason for this response was largely related to the fact that people did not know how much they would need to pay, rather than because people did not understand the question.

2.6. Finance staff supported the consultation events and offered to undertake outline financial assessments to help people to better understand how much they may be expected to pay. Nine people requested outline financial assessments during the consultation, one of whom experienced a positive outcome from the advice given during the outline assessment as it was found he was not maximising his benefits entitlement.

2.7. From the outset, it was acknowledged that not all clients had been through a financial assessment process, however undertaking financial assessments prior to consultation could have had an unfair impact on the results as it is anticipated that only 60% of all clients will need to contribute. Furthermore, we could not compel people to have an assessment undertaken prior to any agreement about charging for the service.

2.8. In response to the question 'would you stop using CSS if you had to pay for it?', 16 people said 'yes' and 23 'not sure'. To avoid the risk of clients becoming isolated, or their health deteriorating and their needs increasing as a result of charging, the EqIA action plan indicates that a full social care review should be undertaken for anyone who declines a service if the charge is implemented.

2.9. To allow time to ensure that all service packages can be reviewed and reconfigured if necessary, it is proposed that the charge is introduced on 1 July 2016, with all financial assessments completed during April and May 2016.

Financial Impact

2.10. The level of financial contribution each person will make, if it is agreed that a charge should be levied for the LD CSS, will vary as it is based on individual circumstances and affordability. A full financial assessment will need to be completed with each client to determine their individual contribution.

2.11. As LD CSS is not currently a chargeable service it is unclear at this stage how much income will be realised given that around 57% of clients have either not been financially assessed or do not have any current financial information available.

2.12. Clients who use another service, in addition to CSS, will have had a financial assessment completed if those services are chargeable, for example, day services and respite services.

2.13. Appendix A provides details of the level of income that could be achieved, based on financial assessment data from CSS clients for whom a financial assessment has already been completed, and estimating potential income using a variety of possible client contributions to illustrate that different levels of contribution are anticipated.

2.14. Based on data relating to people who already make a contribution to other services, it is estimated that clients will contribute between £0.00 and £97.81 per week, with an average contribution of £32.04 per week.

2.15. Using the calculations outlined in appendix A, implementing a charge for CSS could generate a predicted annual income up to £100,000.

3. Recommendations

The Lead Member for Adult Social Care is recommended to:

- consider the feedback that has been received as part of the consultation process which sought comments and views about whether the Council should charge for the Learning Disability Community Support Service;
- introduce charges for the Learning Disability Community Support Service from 1 July 2016.

KEITH HINKLEY

Director of Adult Social Care & Health

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Background Papers:

None

Appendices

Appendix A: CSS Potential Client Contributions

Appendix B: Learning Disability Community Support Service charging consultation – hub results

Appendix C: Consultation Timeline

Appendix D: Equality Impact Assessment