

**NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL**

**14 November 2018**

**CARE AND INDEPENDENCE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

**CHAIRMAN'S STATEMENT**

**Client Contributions to Cost of Adult Social Care Services**

1. Clients of adult social care services receive a means-tested financial assessment to determine the extent to which they are able to contribute to the cost of their care. In 2013/2014, Health and Adult Services undertook a wide-ranging review of charging policy, resulting in a number of changes to the policy being made. This committee, under its previous Chairman, contributed to that debate.
2. Since that review, the Care Act 2014 now gives Councils the power to charge adults for care and support where an adult has been assessed as having eligible needs. The ability to charge therefore remains discretionary, although other regulations and statutory guidance stipulate that certain types of care and support must be provided free of charge. As part of the 4% savings challenge, Health and Adult Services have identified a range of proposals relating to charging for community-based services to be further explored. We reviewed two such proposals:
  - proposed changes around contributing towards the cost for providing a second carer based on the true cost of providing the care; and
  - charging a more realistic cost – in terms of what it costs the authority - for the use of subsidised transport, accompanied by clearer processes which enable all charges to be collected fairly and consistently.
3. Members acknowledged the financial pressures driving these proposals. They appreciate that, like all authorities, we are looking to charges to ease pressures on budgets and minimise service cuts. But opinion within the committee on both proposals – even at this early stage and before formal consultation - was mixed.
4. At the moment, if a person needs to have two care workers at the same time, they are only charged for one. The proposal is to revise the charging policy to ensure that the client makes a contribution to the whole package of care (including the second carer). Some members are uncomfortable with an individual, who requires “two-handed” care, paying more because they have additional and/or complex needs. In some cases provision for a second paid carer may be due to rural transport or lone worker issues, rather than, strictly, client need.

5. Members acknowledged that this will bring our practice more into line with other councils. It was also recognised that assessment of ability to pay means that this change would mostly affect self-funders, not those who don't have enough money to pay for their care workers (although it is likely to deplete their capital quicker).
6. The notion of a fairer and more efficient collection of charges for transport was supported. Members came up with some suggestions of their own to improve the commissioning and provision of the service. However, there was some clear disquiet about the size of the potential increase in the charge, how it would be applied, and what effect it will have on service users' participation in activities.
7. Whilst we were able to look at the principles involved, detail was limited about the full extent of these proposals. Since our meeting, the portfolio holder, Cllr Michael Harrison, has decided to proceed to full consultation. Given that there is more detail now - most importantly about the rates involved - the committee will be in a better position to reach an informed view when it reviews the full, formal consultation document in December.

### **Future funding of Adult Social Care**

8. Members will have seen the letter sent to the County Councils Network and to the Local Government Association about the future funding of adult social care. I will not repeat the contents again, but I do want to reiterate what is perhaps *the* key conclusion, a view consistently expressed in Area Constituency Committees and through scrutiny: *The County Council supports the view that the State-funded system of social care needs to be placed on a more secure and sustainable footing.*
9. The recent announcement from the Chancellor about some limited additional funding for adult social care, welcome though it is, does not detract from this need.

### **Budget Scrutiny**

10. I want to draw Council's particular attention to one item at our next meeting - the projected overspend for 2018/19 for HAS of £5m. We will be looking forward to a clear articulation of how this has come about, and what the risks are to social care services and the council as a whole (should the budgets not be brought back into balance and the deficit be made up from services elsewhere in the council).

### **JOHN ENNIS**

Chairman, Care and Independence Overview and Scrutiny Committee

County Hall,  
NORTHALLERTON

1 November 2018

Background Documents - Nil