

Minutes of Lead Portfolio Holder Adult Social Care Decision Making Session held on 26 May 2011

Present: Councillor Izzi Seccombe (Decision maker)

Others in attendance:

Councillors

Councillor Sid Tooth

Officers:

Chris Lewington, Service Manager - Learning Disability, Mental Health, Carers and Customer Engagement

Katherine Liggins, Carers Project Officer

Ron Williamson, Head of Communities & Wellbeing

Janet Purcell, Executive and Member Support Manager

1. General

(1) Members Declarations of Personal and Prejudicial Interests

None

(2) Minutes of Decision Making Session held on 25 March 2010

Approved as a correct record.

2. Charging Review – Further Proposals relating to both Community and Residential Care

The Portfolio Holder considered a report proposing consultation on specific charging methods for day care and transport and on charging for carer sitting services. The Portfolio Holder also considered final proposals in relation to the introduction of full cost charges for residents in the Council's own residential homes. The equality impact assessment put to Cabinet in October had been updated to take account of the proposals in the report.

Day care and transport

Ron Williamson reminded the meeting that Cabinet in October 2010 approved the following principles underpinning a four phased increase in charges:

- That Warwickshire should no longer subsidise the charge made for services where people can afford to pay;
- That there should continue to be protection for those on low incomes at the standard laid down in government guidance;
- That people should only have to pay for the actual costs of services received;

- That with the onset of personal budgets that further work should be undertaken to ensure harmonisation of charges and therefore greater equity within the Council's policies.

Decisions were taken by Cabinet on phased increases in charges for a range of services but interim solutions were applied for day care and transport pending a further review. The outcome of this further review, and the various options considered, is set out at sections 3 and 4 of the report.

In relation to proposals for charging day care services, the Portfolio Holder considered the options in table 2 and agreed with the conclusion that charging a differential rate per client group for day care gave a balance between fairness and deliverability and noted that, although the higher charges for physical disability and learning disability services meant the potential impact on those customers is greater, this is offset by those customers tending to pay less as a result of means testing.

In relation to transport, it was noted that this was complex in that the County Council's transport function runs the majority of services, with a total of 42 routes involving adult services with the addition of taxis and voluntary services. 11 are operated jointly with schools. Three options were considered and it was concluded that the banding method would be the fairest and most transparent. It was estimated that 56% would fall in the lowest cost band. (Additional income from both day care and transport proposals was estimated at £103,000 for 2011/12). It was noted that it was important with the move to personal budgets that services are charged at full cost.

Charging for carer sitting services

Chris Lewington explained the current position with regard to residential respite care which is a chargeable service and home based carer sitting (which can be up to 72 hours or longer) which is non-chargeable. The national view is that sitting services should be classified as a community care service and therefore chargeable. It was noted that the current approach in Warwickshire meant that there was inequity in access and a varied pattern of access across the County. (For example there was greater take up of carer sitting services in Stratford than in Nuneaton).

During discussion Councillor Sid Tooth expressed his concern that increases in charging and introduction of charging for this particular service would have a detrimental effect on carers and the families involved. Chris Lewington gave assurance that the change would create more equity of access and that means testing would ensure that those who cannot pay, will not.

Consultation

The meeting was given assurance that wide consultation was proposed and will include current providers, families, carers and organisations. Open meetings will be held as well as the on-line and paper questionnaires. Any member of the public will be able to respond to the questionnaire.

Internal Residential Homes Care Services

The Portfolio Holder considered the outcome of an analysis of options in relation to raising charges to the full cost for existing residents, so that the current charges of £397.18 per week are brought up to the actual cost of £659 per week. The Cabinet agreed in October that consultation could take place on raising charges up to the full cost for existing residents should the strategic directors consider this appropriate. The Portfolio Holder agreed that, given the analysis set out in the report, the new charging should not apply to existing residents or those who had been given an offer at the current rate, but that it should apply to new residents.

Resolved

- (1) That there be a further six week consultation with customers and carers in relation to the following proposals (and report back to Cabinet):
 1. The principles of proceeding with the phased increases in charges for day care to full cost by client group as set out in Table 3 at section 3.3. of the report.
 2. The principles of implementing a banded rate method for transport charging as set out in Table 5 at section 4.7 of the report.
 3. The principle of introducing full cost charging for carer sitting as a respite service as outlined in section 6 of the report.
- (2) That a new charging scheme whereby new customers in Warwickshire's residential care homes will be charged the full costs of care (currently set at £659 per week) as set out in Table 9 and Table 10 section 7.5(d) of the report be implemented with immediate effect. (The new charging will not apply to existing residents or those who have been given an offer at the current rate.)
- (3) That the Portfolio Holder notes :
 1. That actual charges will continue to be revised in line with RPI inflation at April each year.
 2. The additional savings from proposals on community care and residential care charging outlined in sections 5.1 and 7.5 9h) and the financial effects of charging for Carer Sitting Services have still to be assessed.
 3. The potential impacts on customers as set out in Table 7, section 5.1 and section 7.5 of the report.

3. Any other items

There were no other urgent items of business.

.....
Portfolio Holder

The session concluded at 12.50 p.m.