

NORTH LANARKSHIRE COUNCIL

REPORT

To: HOUSING AND SOCIAL WORK SERVICES COMMITTEE		Subject: CHARGES FOR NON RESIDENTIAL SERVICES AND MEALS PROVISION AND FOR IN HOUSE RESIDENTIAL CARE AND RESPITE CARE
From: HEAD OF HOUSING AND SOCIAL WORK RESOURCES		
Date: 25 FEBRUARY 2009	Ref: RP/JC	

1. Purpose of Report / Introduction

The purpose of this report is to advise Committee of the charging levels which will be applied in respect of non residential services and meals provision and for in house residential care and respite care in 2009/2010.

2. Non Residential Services and Meals Provision

2.1. Local authorities are empowered through the Social Work (Scotland) Act 1968 and the Housing Scotland Act, 2001 to apply charges for services. In setting its charging levels, North Lanarkshire Council follows the national guidance issued by COSLA in respect of charging.

2.2. The COSLA guidance operates on the principle that people on the lowest levels of income do not pay for the service and that those who do pay contribute according to their means. This objective is achieved by setting a charge threshold which is uprated annually and applying a taper contribution of income above the threshold level.

2.3. In line with the COSLA recommendations, the charge threshold for 2009/10 will be £152 for a single person and £232 for couples (2008/09 £145 and £221). Persons with income less than those figures will not be required to pay for home support services.

2.4. The taper contribution applied by North Lanarkshire is 25% of excess income. This compares favourably with other local Authorities and it is proposed that this figure remains unaltered for the coming financial year.

2.5. When calculating maximum service users charge, the Council deducts from their assessable income any costs which the service user is liable for in respect of housing costs i.e. rent, mortgage, council tax and water charges. For example, a single person with an income of £185 per week after deductions would have their charge assessed as follows: -

Income	£185
Threshold	£152
Disposable Income	£33

Calculation £33 x 25% = £8.25 client charge

- 2.6. In certain circumstances due to either income or capital levels, some service users will be liable for the full cost of the service. A report to committee in March 2004 indicated for charging purposes the hourly rate of the service had been maintained artificially low at £6.50 for a number of years, which did not reflect the actual cost. Committee at that time agreed the rate of the service should be increased by £1 per hour each year until such time as there was equalisation of the figures. Under this formula the hourly rate will increase in April 2009 from £11.50 to £12.50. The actual cost for 2009/10 is £13.00.
- 2.7. In January 2006, Committee approved a report which revised the charging policy for meals on wheels and meals provided to people in day services. The report highlighted the level of subsidy which Social Work were having to provide for the supply of meals. At that time the cost of meals provided to people through the meals on wheels was £3.06, the charge levied on the service user being £1.30. In day services the position was more pronounced – the average cost of a meal was £4.15 and the service user paid 75p.
- 2.8. In consequence of the report, Committee agreed that the charge for meals on wheels should increase to £2, and a similar charge should be applied for meals in day services. It was also agreed that charges should be increased year on year over a three year period from 2007 to 2010 until such time as subsidies were eliminated.
- 2.9. In applying the approvals agreed by committee, meals on wheels will increase from £2.77 per meal to £3.06 for 2009/10 (reflecting the actual cost).
- 2.10. In respect of day services the charge is currently £3.44 per meal. In line with the previous decision by the Committee, the charge for meals in day services will increase by 71p to £4.15 for 2009/10.

3. COSLA GUIDANCE FOR 2009/10

- 3.1. COSLA also recommends the following new guidance for local authorities on compensation, hospital discharge and four free weeks and Supporting People:
 - a) While councils charging policies may currently follow DWP guidance in relation to capital, for the purposes of compensation payments (including compensation payments held in trust), it is recommended that councils should establish the breakdown of any compensation award and consider whether some elements of compensation payments should be included when assessing a service user's ability to pay a charge. It is recommended that the Council follows this guidance.
 - b) The COSLA guidance currently states that the first four weeks of care should be free upon discharge from hospital. It has been proposed that the guidance be revised such that service users in receipt of a service prior to their admission to hospital do not qualify for that initial four week relief from charge. If this proposal is approved by COSLA, it is recommended that the Council follows this guidance.
 - c) The guidance will be amended to recognise that monies previously ring-fenced under Supporting People have been distributed within the overall settlement. As such, all the guidance that previously applied to Supporting People, including guidance on charging, is now not applicable, and councils are no longer obliged to have regard to Supporting People exemptions and protections. It is however recommended that the Council does not remove exemptions and protections from existing service users to whom they currently apply.

- 3.2. The proposed Charging Policy for 2009/10 has been amended to take into consideration the guidance on compensation and the free four weeks hospital discharge.
- 3.3. The proposed Charging Policy for 2009/10 has been amended to take into consideration the new legislation the Community Care and Health (Scotland) Act 2002 (Amendment to schedule 1) Order 2009, which comes into force on 1 April 2009, for Free Personal Care i.e. food preparation.

4. In House Residential Care and Respite

- 4.1. The Council is required for charging purposes to set a rate for residential care provided in its own homes. It is proposed to increase the rate for 2009/10 by 2.7% to £541.38 (2008/09, £527.17.) This increase is in line with the proposed increase for nursing homes run by the independent Sector.
- 4.2. It is proposed to increase the weekly charge for residential respite from £69.55 per week to £73.35 per week in line with increases in pensions and allowances.

5. Financial / Personnel / Legal / Policy Implication

- 5.1. The new threshold figure at which service users will become liable for home support charges is in line with the existing policy of the Council. It affords protection to those on incomes of less than £152 for single people and £232 for couples. People with incomes lower than these figures will be exempt from charges.
- 5.2. The decision to up-rate the hourly charge for home support services from £11.50 to £12.50 for 2009/10 follows the instruction of the report approved by Committee in March 2004.
- 5.3. The revision of charges for meals on wheels again follows the decision of Committee taken in December 2006.
- 5.4. The actual amount which a person will contribute towards the cost of their care in a residential home will be determined by a financial assessment applying National Guidance.

6. Recommendations

It is recommended that Committee:

- a) approve the threshold figure for payment of home support charges set at £152 for single people and £232 for couples;
- b) approve the hourly rate for home support increased by £1 from £11.50 to £12.50;
- c) approve the cost of meals on wheels for 2009/10 set at £3.06 per meal;
- d) in line with the previous Committee decision, approve the cost of meals provided in day services increased from £3.44 to £4.15 for 2009/10

- e) set the approved rate for in house residential care for 2009/10 at £541.38 (2008/09, £527.17)
- f) approve the charge for 2009/10 for residential respite at £73.35 per week (2008/09, £69.55)
- g) otherwise note the report.



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12 February 2009

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