



Eich cyf/Your ref OQ61013

Altaf Hussain MS
Welsh Parliament

07 May 2024

Dear Altaf,

Further to your supplementary question to MMH&EY, I wish to provide you with the following information.

We are very aware of profound financial pressures on local authorities and concerns raised by the Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA). Local authorities, on average, spend nearly 30% of their budget on social care, with 37% on education and the remainder on other services like housing, transport, and the environment. We must carefully consider the case for and against raising some charges for some services and have launched the consultation for potentially increasing the non-residential care maximum weekly charge. Officials prepared a detailed consultation package, which was launched on the 19 February 2024, and will run for 12 weeks, ending on 13 May 2024, to seek views on the proposed amendment to the policy.

It is vitally important to reiterate, any decisions to change policy would only be made after careful consideration of consultation findings, with any subsequent timescales for potential implementation shared as part of any post-consultation publications and announcements. Any decision made to uplift the non-residential care maximum weekly charge amount would be accompanied by full impact assessments. The proposed change would ensure only individuals who have the financial means to pay an increased maximum weekly charge would do so. This would be determined by the usual process, as part of the financial means test carried out by an individual's local authority. Therefore, should a decision be made post-consultation to amend the policy, not everyone currently paying the maximum weekly amount of £100 would be required to pay an increased amount.

As a part of the financial assessment, because a person who receives care and support outside a care home will need to pay their daily living costs such as rent, food and utilities, the charging framework seeks to ensure they have enough money to meet these costs. As a result, after charging, local authorities **must** leave a person who is being charged with a minimum income amount (MIA), equivalent to a "basic entitlement" plus a buffer of 35% of that amount. In addition, to assist with disability-related expenditure, those being charged

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Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

must also be left with an additional 10% of their “basic entitlement” towards the cost of this. The level of these allowances may change from time to time.

In line with the Co-operation Agreement, we have published an Initial Implementation plan to deliver on the recommendations of the Expert Group report Towards a National Care and Support Service for Wales. This sets out Stage 1 of a three-staged approach and sets out the activity and research that we will undertake to end of this government term. A key factor in creating a National Care and Support Service will be national design principles for social care which will bring about greater consistency in the provision and quality of social care services. We are also establishing a National Office for Care and Support within Welsh Government which will have a key role in the implementation of the National Framework for commissioned care and support which will set principles and standards for commissioning practices. These are important building blocks towards the creation of a National Care Service. One of the key features of the National Office will be to maintain an oversight of the social care sector in Wales and driving forward transformation and consistency by working closely with Local Authorities and the sector.

The social care sector is very important, delivering care to thousands of people across Wales each day. In line with the recommendations of the Expert Group, focussing on ‘what matters’ to people and putting people at the heart of social care services will remain a key factor in moving towards a National Care and Support Service. We remain committed to our long-term vision for social care, which strikes the balance between immediate challenges and strategic sustainable solutions.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Dawn Bowden', written in a cursive style.

Dawn Bowden AS/MS
Y Gweinidog Gofal Cymdeithasol
Minister for Social Care