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## Report of the Director of Adult Social Services

### Scrutiny Board (Adult Social Care)

Date: 11<sup>th</sup> November 2009

Subject: **INCOME REVIEW – IMPLEMENTATION UPDATE**

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#### Electoral Wards Affected:

All

Ward Members consulted  
(referred to in report)

#### Specific Implications For:

Equality and Diversity

Community Cohesion

Narrowing the Gap

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### Executive Summary

Further to the previous report to Scrutiny Board on 8<sup>th</sup> April 2009, this report sets out the impact on customers of implementing the revised contributions policy for non-residential Adult Social Care services approved by Executive Board on 13th February 2009.

The revised service user contributions policy has been implemented without significant adverse reactions from customers. Only a very small number of service users have chosen to cease receiving services or reduce the service they receive as a result of the changes to their contributions and in all cases the directorate is satisfied that their safety and wellbeing has not been compromised by their decision.

A higher proportion of customers are receiving a free service than was estimated and the increases in payments are also lower than projected. Both of these factors have led to the overall additional income achieved being slightly lower than anticipated.

## **1.0 Purpose Of This Report**

1.1 Further to the previous report to Scrutiny Board on 8<sup>th</sup> April 2009, this report sets out the impact on customers of implementing the revised contributions policy for non-residential Adult Social Care services approved by Executive Board on 13<sup>th</sup> February 2009.

## **2.0 Background Information**

2.1 During the summer and autumn of 2008 an extensive consultation process was undertaken on customer contributions towards the cost of non-residential Adult Social Care services. Scrutiny Board received a report on the outcomes of the consultation process on 24<sup>th</sup> November 2008, prior to the revised contributions policy being approved by Executive Board on 13<sup>th</sup> February 2009.

2.2 On 8<sup>th</sup> April 2009 Scrutiny Board received a report on the review of the 2008 consultation process. This included lessons learned and actions to improve future consultation and involvement. It was agreed at that meeting that a further impact report would be submitted to Scrutiny Board during 2009/10. This report was intended to outline the impact on customers when the changes agreed by Executive Board were implemented.

2.3 In April 2009 the new contributions policy for non-residential adult social care services was introduced. The main changes were:

- An increase in the contribution for each service to just below the average for other authorities (or to the average for meals)
- An increase in the disposable income percentage from 50% to 90%
- An increase in the maximum weekly contribution from £88 to £140
- Capital taken into account, but in a way that is more generous than most authorities

A £20 per week maximum increase for the first year in the assessed contribution was approved for existing customers. The revised policy applied for meals and respite care and for new customers from 1<sup>st</sup> April. For existing customers the effective date for financially assessed services was 1<sup>st</sup> June to enable financial reassessments to be completed.

2.4 Following Executive Board approval for the revised contributions policy in February 2009, letters were sent to all customers explaining the changes and the process for financial reassessments. A leaflet was also sent outlining the new contributions policy and this is now being given to all new customers. A freephone helpline was provided, staffed by the team undertaking the financial reassessments.

2.5 The information sent to customers is attached to this report as follows:

- |            |   |
|------------|---|
| Appendix 1 | Letter to recipients of meals and respite care  |
| Appendix 2 | Letter to recipients of all other services (i.e. those that are financially assessed) |
| Appendix 3 | Leaflet explaining the new contributions policy                                       |

Some fairly minor changes have been made to the leaflet during the year to aid clarity and respond to customer feedback. The latest version of the leaflet is attached at Appendix 3.

## **3.0 Implementation - Initial Outcomes**

- 3.1 Adult Social Care has so far received 18 letters regarding the income review. This is very significantly less than when the policy was last changed in 2003. Most of the letters were queries rather than complaints and the breakdown is as follows:
- 5 informing us a person has died
  - 1 change of address
  - 3 felt the increases were too high
  - 2 regarding the consultation exercise
  - 4 regarding the way capital is treated
  - 1 regarding ignored amounts
  - 1 asking for details on meals transport
  - 1 asking if a person awarded continuing health care has to pay for meals at a day centre
- 3.2 An analysis of the financial assessment team's telephone recording sheets for the first 5 days following the receipt of the leaflet (after which time the calls reduced considerably) revealed 113 calls were been received. Of these, 72 were unrelated to changes to customer contributions and an analysis of the remaining 41 is as follows:
- 12 informing us the service had ceased or the customer was deceased
  - 1 concerned about the cost of their service
  - 1 wanted capital rules explaining
  - 1 complaint that the booklet/letter was incorrectly addressed
  - 13 wanted the changes clarified
  - 1 meals contribution query
  - 1 person called to say they wanted to pay for their service at the standard contribution rather than have a financial assessment
  - 2 wanted an explanation as to how the contribution is worked out
  - 3 wanted to know how the changes would affect their contribution
  - 1 person wanted the information provided in a different format
  - 2 queries about the contribution for respite
  - 1 person confirming their contribution
  - 1 person supplying details of their change in circumstances
  - 1 person enquiring how much a meal is without a pudding.
- 3.3 The feedback from the visiting officers undertaking the reassessments indicates that the explanatory letter and leaflet helped in making customers aware of the changes in general terms before the reassessment visit took place. It was also evident that the £20 per week cap on the maximum increase in the first year for existing customers helped to reduce customers' anxieties.
- 3.4 A review of the financial assessment is available to all customers. Some customers were unhappy with the outcome of their financial reassessment and ten people asked to have it reviewed. The outcome of these reviews was that six people had their assessed contribution reduced. The changes mainly related to additional disability-related costs being identified and these reduce the amount of a customer's income available to contribute towards the cost of their care.

#### **4.0 Financial Impact on Customers**

- 4.1 There was some slippage in completing the financial reassessments due to a delay in getting the explanatory letter and leaflet distributed. Most of those customers likely to be affected by the changes had their reassessments completed by 1<sup>st</sup> July, with some supported living schemes being done in August and September.

- 4.2 Appendix 4 sets out the impact on customers for financially assessed services compared with those projected when the revised contributions policy was approved in February. The first table shows the amounts customers are paying and the second table shows the increases per week compared with the previous policy. Overall there are 98 less customers than when the figures were compiled for the Executive Board report, but within this net figure will be a substantial number of new customers and those leaving services, mainly due to death or admission to residential care. New customers since 1<sup>st</sup> April are not subject to the £20 per week maximum increase, hence Appendix 4 shows some customers with an increase in payment of more than £20 compared with the previous policy.
- 4.3 There are 991 more customers receiving a free service than was anticipated as fewer people than estimated who previously received free services have sufficient capital to make some payment under the new policy. Some of this will be due to the capital thresholds effective from April 2009 being increased by the Department of Health after the Executive Board report was approved.
- 4.4 There are fewer people than estimated in each of the increased payment bands in the second table of Appendix 4, except for the £20 to £29.99 weekly increase category. There are 422 more people in this category than originally estimated, a substantial number of whom are capped at the £20 per week maximum increase for 2009/10. The remainder will include new customers not affected by the £20 per week cap who would not have been included in the original cohort for financial modeling.
- 4.5 The Electronic Social Care Record (ESCR) system had been amended to enable reasons for people ceasing service to be recorded. A protocol has also been established to ensure that follow-up actions are taken where ceasing services may affect a customer's safety and wellbeing.
- 4.6 These revised procedures were not fully operational from 1<sup>st</sup> April, so manual systems have been put in place to identify anyone ceasing service due to the change in the service user contributions policy. Only two customers have been identified within home care and day care services who chose to cease receiving services or reduce the service they receive as a result of the changes to their contributions, although given the need to collect data manually this may not be wholly accurate. In the community meals service 23 people have stopped their service. This is not an unusually high level of reduction and the increased contribution has not been identified as the reason in all these cases. The reasons for ceasing the meals service include moving into residential care or moving away to live nearer to close relatives. The directorate is satisfied that the safety and wellbeing of these customers has not been compromised by their decision to cease or reduce their service.

## **5.0 Implications For Council Policy And Governance**

- 5.1 This report sets out the impact of the revised service user contributions policy approved by Executive Board on 13<sup>th</sup> February 2009.

## **6.0 Legal And Resource Implications**

- 6.1 There are no legal implications.
- 6.2 The impact on customers of the revised contributions policy outlined in section 4 will impact of the projected additional income. The additional income in a full-year is

now projected to be £1.9m compared with an estimated £2m when the revised policy was approved. It was acknowledged in the Executive Board report in February that the projections were best estimates based on the data available, which did not include details of customers' capital.

## **7.0 Conclusions**

- 7.1 The revised service user contributions policy for non-residential adult social care services has been implemented without significant adverse reactions from customers. Only a very small number of service users have chosen to cease receiving services or reduce the service they receive as a result of the changes to their contributions and in all cases the directorate is satisfied that their safety and wellbeing has not been compromised by their decision.
- 7.2 A higher proportion of customers are receiving a free service than was estimated and the increases in payments are also lower than projected. Both of these factors have led to the overall additional income achieved being slightly lower than anticipated.

## **8.0 Recommendations**

- 8.1 Scrutiny Board is recommended to note the contents of this report.

### **Background Documents referred to in this report**

1. Scrutiny Board (Adult Social Care) Report 24<sup>th</sup> November 2008 : Income for Community Care Services – Consultation
2. Executive Board Report 13<sup>th</sup> February 2009 – Income Review for Community Care Services
3. Scrutiny Board (Adult Social Care) Report 8<sup>th</sup> April 2009 : Income Review – Review of Consultation