

APPENDIX 2

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Date: March 2009

Dear Customer,

Changes to Payments for Social Care Services

This letter is to tell you about changes we are making to the amounts people contribute towards the cost of their services. Please accept our apologies if you no longer receive services and have received this letter in error.

Included with this letter is a leaflet called ‘Payments towards Non Residential Social Care Services’. It explains how we charge you for your services and how we work out how much you pay. We do this through a financial assessment so that we can make sure that no-one is asked to pay more than they can afford.

**Why are these changes being made?**

In September and October 2008 we asked all our customers for their views on some options for changes to what people

pay towards their services. We needed to increase our income so that we can expand and improve some of our services. This would also make payments in Leeds more like those in most other places across the country.

We received many helpful replies and the feedback was used to draw up proposals that were approved by the Council's Executive Board last month.

This letter is to tell you what the Executive Board decided. If you would like copies of the Executive Board report and the feedback from the consultation, details of who to contact are included at the end of this letter.

The increased income the Council will get from the changes will mean that we can expand our improved hot meals service across the city (it is only available in parts of north and east Leeds at present). We will be able to invest more in our services to protect our most vulnerable older or disabled people from neglect or abuse. Lastly, we will be able to give more help to carers and improve the way we plan and monitor your services.

I hope you will agree that these are very necessary improvements, but they are ones that the Council could not afford without the changes in payments that I am describing in this letter.

### **What changes are being made?**

The changes are summarised below and a full explanation is included in the enclosed leaflet:

1. Contributions for each service have increased (see page 3 of the leaflet for the new amounts), but they are still only the same or slightly less than the average across the country.

2. A new contribution has been introduced for the Telecare mobile response service (see page 3 of the leaflet).
3. The most anyone will pay for their services (except for meals and respite care) has increased from £88 to £140 per week, but very few people will have to pay this much. The Council has put a limit of £20 per week on the increased amount that anyone will pay as a result of these changes in the first year.
4. Disposable income means the money people have left each week after we have looked at what they have to pay out so that no-one is asked to pay more than they can afford. If people have any money left over this can be contributed towards services. At the moment in Leeds we only take half this towards services, but this will increase to 90%. Pages 5 to 10 of the leaflet explain this in more detail and give some examples.
5. Savings and investments will be taken into account when we work out your contribution. The value of your home and any savings below £14,000 are ignored. Page 7 of the leaflet explains how savings and investments are taken into account, and the way we will do this is more generous than most authorities.

### **When will these changes take place?**

Executive Board decided that the new contributions for meals and respite care would be effective from the start of the Council's financial year on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2009. As we normally increase the amounts starting on a Monday, they will increase on 6<sup>th</sup> April 2009.

For all other services your financial circumstances will be re-assessed before any changes are made. To give us time to

do the reassessments the effective date for these changes will be 1<sup>st</sup> June 2009.

The Council has put a limit on the increased amount that anyone can pay over the next 2 years through changes in the financial assessment:

- From June 2009 to March 2010 the maximum increase in the assessed contribution will be limited to £20 per week (increases for meals and respite care are on top of this £20 as everyone pays the same for these services)
- From April 2010 the increase in the assessed contribution will be limited to £25 on top of the previous year's amount.

### **Where can I get more information and help to understand the changes?**

Please contact the Freephone helpline (0800 7838516):

- If you would like a copy of the information we have sent you in another format
- If you have any questions about this letter or about the assessment of your contribution

### **What do I do if I am not happy with my new payments?**

If you are not happy with the assessment of your contribution you can ask that it is looked at again (see page 13 of the leaflet).

### **I am worried about how this might affect me**

You will not be asked to pay more than you can reasonably afford. Apart from meals and respite care, you will not be asked to pay more until you have had a financial

reassessment. The person who does this reassessment will look at your individual circumstances with you.

We hope that our explanations mean that you are not worried by this letter, but if you have any concerns please contact the Freephone helpline (0800 7838516).

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Sandie Keene".

Sandie Keene  
Director of Adult Social Services

## **Information available following the consultation process**

There is more information available on the the feedback from the consultation and how this was taken into account by the Council's Executive Board when the changes were approved.

The documents available are:

- The Report of the Income Review Service User and Carer Reference Group on the consultation outcomes
- A report on the comments received from people and organisations that took part in the consultation
- A report on the results from the questionnaire that over 1,000 people completed
- An explanation of how the outcomes of the consultation have been taken into account by Executive Board
- The report to Executive Board on the changes to service user contributions

These documents can be found on Leeds City Council's consultation portal "Talking Point" at [www.leeds.gov.uk](http://www.leeds.gov.uk) or by telephoning the Freephone helpline (0800 7838516). If you need them in other languages or formats you can contact Janet Somers on 0113 2477443.