



Sandie Keene
Director of Adult Social Services
Merrion House
110 Merrion Centre
Leeds LS2 8QB

Contact: Janet Somers
Tel: 01132 477443
Fax: 01132 477452

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Dear Councillor,

Review of Income for Non-Residential Adult Social Care Services

Further to the report to Executive Board in June and the briefings that we have undertaken since then, we agreed to provide all members with some further information to help answer any questions raised by constituents as the consultation process takes place.

Attached for your information is more detail on the consultation plan and some additional briefing information in the form of "Frequently Asked Questions". The consultation plan outlines the work that has been undertaken since Executive Board in June and how the consultation will be undertaken over the coming months. It reflects the decision at Council last week to extend the consultation period to the end of October and provides dates/venues of meetings planned where these are known. Further updates will be provided as more dates are confirmed.

I hope this information is helpful, but if you have any further queries please contact Janet Somers (contact details above) or Ann Hill (tel. 2478555).

Yours sincerely

Sandie Keene
Director of Adult Social Services

Adult Social Care

INCOME REVIEW – FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Why does the Council want to raise more money from people who use social care services?

The cost of providing adult social care services will rise over time, for example as we have more older people and people with very complex care needs to support. Also, we want to invest in improving the services we provide to some of the most vulnerable people in the city. Leeds generates less income from service users than most similar authorities, which reduces our ability to invest in adult social care services for the future.

Why are you doing this review in Leeds now when there's a national consultation process going on about the funding of adult social care services?

The national consultation sits alongside the review in Leeds as both are considering how funding for care and support can be made sustainable for the future and what the balance of funding should be from individuals, their families and central/local government. We are hoping that a consultation event can be held in Leeds as part of the national consultation so that people can put forward their views. However, any changes nationally following this consultation are likely to take several years to bring in through legislation and in Leeds we need to look at our available funding more quickly.

Which services are affected by this review?

This review covers all services provided to people living in the community, for example home care, supported living services, day care and meals. It does not cover residential or nursing care. It includes those services provided following a care assessment, whether they are provided directly by Adult Social Care or arranged by the Department through voluntary or private providers.

Many service users have paid taxes and National Insurance all their lives. Why are they being asked to pay more for their social care services?

Local authorities do not get direct access to the money raised through taxes and National Insurance to fund their services. Instead, local government services are funded in three main ways:

1. Central government funding
2. Council Tax
3. Income from those who use council services

Why doesn't the Council increase the Council Tax rather than asking vulnerable service users to pay more for their social care services?

Central government restricts the increase in the Council Tax each year through its "capping" powers, so although the Council Tax in Leeds is low compared to most big cities Leeds City Council cannot make significant increases without central government intervening.

Rather than asking vulnerable service users to pay more, why can't the Council make itself more efficient?

Over the last three years the Council has achieved £72 million of efficiency savings and we will continue to look for additional ways of delivering efficiency savings in the future across all services.

Rather than asking vulnerable service users to pay more, why can't the Council stop spending money on things like big city centre projects that cost millions of pounds?

Some of the biggest projects have received substantial funding from outside organisations who would not have given the funding for any other purpose. The council funding that goes into these projects comes from borrowing money or from selling council assets that we no longer need, but we are not allowed to use this money to fund ongoing adult social care services.

Aren't there any alternatives to increasing income from service users?

Substantial efficiency savings have been delivered across the Council (£72 million over the last three years) and further savings will be achieved in the future, but this alone will not provide all the additional funding we need. We will continue to review our spending priorities across Council and within Adult Social Care, but some increased contributions from service users also have a part to play. Leeds generates less income from service users than most similar authorities, including our near neighbours.

How will the Council make sure that any changes that are made to service user contributions are fair and affordable?

We will analyse the impact of any proposed changes on our current service users. This will include an equality impact assessment to identify any options that affect some communities or groups of service users differently. Any changes we make must comply with the government's "Fairer Charging" guidance to ensure that people are not asked to pay more than they can reasonably afford. The Council provides a significant subsidy for Adult Social Care services. All the services provided following a care assessment will continue to be subsidised for all services users whatever their financial circumstances, although the level of subsidy may reduce.

Are there any service users who will not be affected by this review?

Many of the service users who receive free services currently will continue to do so. People whose income is less than the government's defined figures (Income Support plus 25%) and who have savings of less than £13,500 are guaranteed to continue to receive free services. The "Income Support plus 25%" figures vary depending on the benefits being received, but the **minimum** weekly amounts for each age group are:

Aged 60 or over	£155.06
Aged 25 to 59	£75.63
Aged 18 to 24	£59.94

11th July 2008