Have your say on proposed changes to Disability Related Expenses

This document tells you about changes that Bournemouth Borough Council are thinking about making to the application of Disability Related Expenses within Adult Social Care.

The proposal being considered is:

The Council is thinking about changing the list of allowances associated with Disability Related Expenses.

It’s important that you tell us what you think about this proposal. Your views are important.

Please read the information in this document and then fill in the questionnaire as soon as possible or by Monday 11 December 2017. If you need help or support with understanding or completing the questionnaire, or would like it in another language or format, then please call 01202 456820 or email consultation@bournemouth.gov.uk

We want to hear from you. Thank you for taking the time to help us develop our policies.
Background information

The Council is facing extreme financial pressures on all our budgets. As a result, we are being forced to make some very tough decisions about the services we provide, including Adult Social Care Services.

Over the last two years we have used £1.6 million from the Council’s reserves to contribute to the Adult Social Care budget but we cannot do this forever. People are requiring services for longer and at a higher level of support, this means there is an increasing demand for services. We are continuing to look at every opportunity to reduce costs and make our services more cost effective while still making sure our most vulnerable residents are supported.

In order to continue to focus on those in greatest need, we need those who can afford to pay towards their care to do so.

Important terms

We would like to start by explaining some of the terms that are used throughout this consultation.

Adult Social Care

If someone contacts the council for care and support, a member of staff from one of our social care teams will visit them to discuss their needs.

After we assess their needs, we compare them with national criteria that the government give us. This is known as eligibility criteria and we use this to determine whether we can help a person to get care and support.

If we can help a person get care and support, we ask about their finances to see how much they can afford to pay towards the care.

Financial Assessment

We offer a Financial Assessment (or means test) which ensures that:

- No one is asked to pay more than their financial assessment shows they can afford
- No one will ever be left with income below the Minimum Income Guarantee (enough money to cover living costs such as rent, food and bills)
- People with savings above £23,250 are expected to meet the full cost of their care.

People who refuse a financial assessment are expected to pay the full cost of their care.

**Disability Related Expenses**

Disability Related Expenses are the extra costs that you have if you are in receipt of a qualifying disability benefit such as Attendance Allowance or DLA. For example, if you do not move about much you may get cold easily, and need the heating on high – this is an example of a disability related expense or DRE. We calculate how much these extra things cost you, and deduct that amount from your available income when we work out how much you need to pay for your care.

We currently individually assess people for this expenditure.

The more living costs associated with a disability that are considered as part of the financial assessment, the less someone will contribute towards their care costs.
What are the proposals?

The Council applies a standard list of allowances when carrying out a financial assessment. It is proposed the list will no longer include expenditure related to the following:

- Gardening
- Cleaning products related to illness
- Incontinence products
- Manual wheelchair costs
- Powered wheelchair costs
- Home help (domestic)
- Stair lift maintenance

In addition, it is proposed that:

- Gas and electricity expenditure would only be considered for extra heating above normal usage
- Chiropody will only be considered if non-NHS
- Medical charges not on prescription will be replaced with prescription charges only
- Transport costs will only be considered when they relate to visiting a spouse or partner in a care home.

The Council will continue to consider expenditure related to laundry, call systems (careline) and the purchase of replacement/special clothing due to disability, extra heating above normal usage, Non-NHS Chiropody and prescription charges.

We will always consider any items that a client feels should be allowed as a disability related allowance, this will be on a case-by-case basis.

A financial assessment determines how much someone will contribute towards their care, therefore no one will be charged for services they cannot afford.

It is important to remember that it is the responsibility of the NHS to meet health needs such as incontinence products.
Why propose changes?

1. Adult Social Care has not had a formal review of the provision of Disability Related Expenses since 2012. This review will ensure that we are adhering to the Care Act 2014 legislation.

2. To protect vital services provided for the most vulnerable, we need to ensure that Adult Social Care make the best use of resources available and can continue to meet statutory responsibilities and focus on those in greatest need.

3. A recent internal Financial Assessment Audit identified that Adult Social Care needed to apply a consistent approach with regards to Disability Related Expenses.

4. The principles applied will align us with the Borough of Poole by taking the same approach in how we apply Disability Related Expenses.

5. The proposed changes will meet the council priority – An Efficient Council. With the increasing pressure on the Adult Social Care budget, generating income and creating efficiency savings are vital to avoid putting other services and service delivery at risk.

6. Charging would continue to be subject to means testing to determine how much people can afford to pay towards their care and those who can afford to pay more will do so.

The alternative option would be to implement no changes; however, the Council would not make a saving so we would have less money to spend on other vital services (e.g. residential and home care).
How will this impact people?

Based on information from April 2017, there were 432 people that were in receipt of one or more types of the disability related expenses which are being proposed for removal or change. Of these, 402 people would be affected by the proposed changes and would be paying more than they were previously.

The table below shows how many people will be impacted and by how much.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of people</th>
<th>Increase payment per week</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>114</td>
<td>£0.00 to £10.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>79</td>
<td>£10.01 to £20.00</td>
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<td>71</td>
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<td>14</td>
<td>£60.01 to £70.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>£70.01 to £80.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>£80.01 to £90.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Savings

It is estimated that the proposed changes will save approximately £525,000 in 2018/2019.

The exact amount of extra revenue will depend on the extent to which people choose to continue using our services or arrange their care privately. A financial re-assessment may also reduce the figures.

Some people who have until now chosen not to have a financial assessment and pay full charge for the service they receive, may now decide to be assessed and may therefore be required to pay less than full cost.
Help for those affected

Depending on the outcome of the consultation and any subsequent decisions, it is recognised that some people will pay more for services than they do currently and the following support will be available to them:

- Offer to complete a financial assessment for those currently paying full charge who have capital below the threshold

- Offer to undertake a review of their financial assessment and circumstances to ensure all information is up to date

- Whilst undertaking a financial assessment, ensure all benefits that someone is entitled to, have been claimed

- For those with capital above the threshold, the Financial Assessments and Benefits Team can advise on possible benefits they may be entitled to and signpost them to the correct agency.

- For those people who choose to reduce their services if the new charges are introduced, we will offer a follow up call six months later from one of our staff to review their current circumstances.

Further information

If you have any questions about this consultation or require the questionnaire in another language or format, then please call 01202 456820 or email consultation@bournemouth.gov.uk

We are holding drop in events if you would like to ask Council staff questions about the proposals on the following dates.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Venue</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tuesday 7 November</td>
<td>2:00pm - 4:30pm</td>
<td>Bournemouth Library Meeting Room</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tuesday 21 November</td>
<td>12:30pm – 4:30pm</td>
<td>Kinson Hub Meeting Room</td>
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</table>
**What happens next?**

Once the consultation feedback has been analysed, the results of the consultation will be considered before making any final decision. Proposals will be presented to the Council’s Overview and Scrutiny Committee early in 2018.

If the proposal is agreed, we will be writing to people about the changes and notifying them individually if and how they will be affected. The Financial Assessment & Benefits team within Adult Social Care will work with individuals affected by the changes and will provide information and advice where needed.

This document and the accompanying questionnaire can also be found online at: [www.bournemouth.gov.uk/ASCconsultation](http://www.bournemouth.gov.uk/ASCconsultation)