

NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

20 February 2019

CARE AND INDEPENDENCE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

CHAIRMAN'S STATEMENT

Client Contributions to Cost of Adult Social Care Services

1. In my last statement I reported on initial proposals for charging for community-based services. Since then there has been a full consultation.
2. Once again, members acknowledged the financial pressures driving these proposals. But the people affected are some of the most vulnerable members of our communities; it is unsurprising, therefore, that opinion within the committee, on both changes, remained mixed.
3. Taking the proposals in turn.

Ensuring that the total cost of care and support is taken into account when determining the level of contributions paid by those people who use the service

4. At the moment, if a person needs to have two care workers at the same time on the same day, they are only charged for one. The proposal is to revise the charging policy to ensure that the client makes a contribution towards the cost of the whole package of care (including the second carer).
5. The expectation is that a small number of people may end up paying more. This whole exercise - including re-assessment of need - should give us further grounds for being confident that we are meeting people's needs in the best way we can - given current financial constraints. Some members repeated their discomfort with a situation where an individual who requires "two-handed" care will pay more because they have additional and/or complex needs. However, it was noted that the amount the person pays will continue to be calculated by completing the means tested financial assessment, taking into account an individual's income and expenditure accordingly.

Increasing the charge made to people who use the transport service, while confirming that NYCC will continue to pay most of the cost

6. The notion of a fairer and more efficient collection of charges for transport was supported. The committee considered that changes would be more palatable if there were to be a flat rate per journey and a weekly cap on the charge to any individual. To most members this seemed a fairer and less complex than schemes which, for

example, attempted to calculate cost per distance travelled. It is understood that rates of £7.50 per journey and a £40 weekly cap are under consideration in the Directorate. Nevertheless, whilst broadly supportive of the rationale behind the proposals on transport charges, the committee does wonder whether it will have a "chilling" effect on service users' inclination to participate in activities.

7. We found the consultation process to be thorough and well organised. The documentation was clear, easily understood and explained the proposals and their implications clearly.
8. Members expressed the view that consideration should be given, assuming either or both proposals go ahead, to some form of phased implementation.
9. The consultation ended on the 21 January 2019. I will be talking to the Directorate and to group spokesperson colleagues about what happens next, and how we might best assess the impact of these proposals should they be adopted.

Health and Adult Services Financial Pressures

10. When it was reported that Health and Adult Services was forecasting a projected overspend in Quarter 2 of 2018 of £3.5m, we sought a detailed explanation of the cause and possible implications.
11. The main area of overspend is within Care and Support, the service area which accounts for £124m of a net £155m directorate budget. An overspend in this area of £4.3m is being offset by underspends elsewhere in the Directorate. An effective action plan is now in place aimed at reducing the financial pressures, while continuing to look for other savings to support the Council's overall budget position.
12. The committee recognised that, despite all these pressures, the Directorate has already contributed significantly to the Council's savings requirement.
13. The committee believed it had received a reasonable, full and honest account of the financial pressures the service is facing, including a detailed and thorough explanation of how this situation had come about, and what the risks are to social care services and the council as a whole. We were satisfied that the right action is in place to address this situation.

Looking ahead

14. The joint members task group on Health and Social Care Integration is entering the key stage of its work - holding in depth conversations with representatives of key Clinical Commissioning Groups and NHS Trusts, based on submissions they have already made to us.

15. Also in the pipeline for the committee is:

- An understanding-building session on the importance, purpose and future of Respite.
- Support for Carers – in particular how we respond to pressures upon families
- How NYCC uses Assistive Technology to help people to live independently, manage or eliminate a wide range of risks to both themselves and their property, and helps deliver greater privacy or dignity.
- Take up of Direct Payments as a part of personal budgets - how NYCC is ensuring that Direct Payments enable more choice and control over the support people receive and how their social care needs are met.

JOHN ENNIS

Chairman, Care and Independence Overview and Scrutiny Committee

County Hall,

NORTHALLERTON

7 February 2019

Background Documents - Nil