

ANGUS COUNCIL**SOCIAL WORK COMMITTEE.....25 February 1997****REVIEW OF THE CHARGING POLICY FOR NON-RESIDENTIAL CARE PACKAGES****REPORT BY THE DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL WORK****ABSTRACT**

This report reviews the charging policy for non-residential care packages and proposes some adjustments to the policy. Account will be taken of the recently issued Scottish Office circular on charging, and reference will be made in the report where the policy is affected by this circular.

1 RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Social Work Committee agrees to:

- (i) adopt the proposed income disregards for the purposes of calculating the maximum charge;
- (ii) adopt the unit costs at the same level as in 1996/97;
- (iii) adopt the same minimum and maximum charges as those applied in 1996/97;
- (iv) adopt the revised charge of 85 pence per meal for lunch clubs;
- (v) adopt the proposed changes in the policy regarding the non-householders allowance and the treatment of property.

2 INTRODUCTION

Members will be aware that the charging policy for non-residential care packages was reluctantly introduced because of the financial constraints which were placed on the Council on 1996/97. Reports on

the implementation of the policy have been presented to committee on a regular basis.

Now that the policy has been in operation for one year, it is appropriate to review certain elements of the policy and to address some of the issues which have arisen in the course of the first year of operation.

Members are asked to note that the benefit checks which form an integral component of the charging policy have now resulted in benefit awards in excess of £2 million.

3 PROPOSAL

Review of Limits and charges

In calculating the maximum charge which can be levied, a standard disregard is allowed, to cover the normal costs of living. It is proposed to amend these allowances as follows:

<u>INCOME DISREGARDS</u>	<u>Actual</u> 1996/97	<u>Proposed</u> 1997/98
Single person	£90.00	£93.00
Couples	£130.00	£134.00
per child	£28.00	£30.00

These proposals represent increases ranging from 3.1% to 7.1%, compared to the general DSS uprating of 2.6%.

No changes are proposed in the types of income which are considered for charging purposes. The current position is in line with the Scottish Office circular.

Calculation of unit costs

It is proposed that for 1997/98 the same unit costs which were used in 1996/97 are applied.

Home Helps	
Social Care Officers	£6.00 per hour
Crossroads Attendants	
Meals on Wheels	£1.20 per meal
Day Care	£12.00 per session
Community Laundry	£3.00 per week

Service users are asked to make a contribution towards the cost of their care package, subject to a minimum and maximum charge. It is proposed that the same maximum and minimum weekly charges will prevail, i.e. charges will range from a minimum of £4.00 to a maximum of £60.00 per week

The one exception to this proposal is in relation to the charge for lunch clubs. The price of lunch clubs has been depressed over a number of years, and it is proposed at this time that they should be increased from 80p per meal to 85p per meal.

Non Householder's Allowance

During the course of the first year of operation, it has emerged that there is no recognition of housing costs for adults who are not householders in their own right (this mainly applies to adults with learning disabilities living in their family home). It is therefore proposed that a notional allowance of £10.00 per week is established for all such cases. This rate has been derived from the rules pertaining to housing benefit/council tax benefit non-dependent deductions.

Treatment of Property

This is an area in which a few cases have highlighted anomalies in the charging policy, i.e. where a service user is the owner of more than one property. Under the current policy, the capital value of all property is disregarded.

It is proposed that in cases where a service user owns property other than the home they normally live in, this property will be regarded as a capital asset. Some exceptions will be applied to this proposal, and these are listed in Appendix 1.

Property will be assessed by looking at its market value. This means the amount of money which could be realised by selling the property or raising a loan against the property. In the case of a house or flat, an estate agents value for a quick sale would be appropriate. For land or business premises a valuation would be sought.

The market value will also take account of the costs of selling a property. This is normally taken to be 10% of the market value of the property. Any mortgage outstanding on the property will be deducted from the market value, prior to deducting the 10% for selling costs.

It is the responsibility of the service user to provide details of any property held and its market value. The valuation will normally be accepted where it appears reasonable, however the social work department may make further enquiries about the valuation. Where a service user refuses to provide details of the property held or its value,

the Social Work department will be unable to assess the service user's liability to pay, and accordingly, the maximum weekly charge will be levied.

4 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The proposals outlined in this report will have no significant financial implications and are consistent with the budgeted income for 1997/98.

5 CONSULTATION

The Chief Executive, the Director of Law and Administration and the Director of Finance have been consulted in the preparation of this report.

6 CONCLUSION

Reviewing the charging policy in the light of experience means that some adjustments - as detailed in the report - can be made and ensures that the policy is still valid.

8 February 1997

W B Robertson
Director of Social Work

NOTE

No background papers, as defined by Section 50D of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 (other than any containing confidential or exempt information) were relied on to any material extent in preparing the above report.

SITUATIONS WHERE THE VALUE OF SECONDARY PROPERTY WILL BE DISREGARDED

The value of property can be disregarded, even if the service user does not live in it, in the following circumstances:

- **The service user left their former home following a marriage or relationship breakdown**
The value of the former home will be disregarded for six months from the date of leaving. It will be disregarded indefinitely if the property is occupied by a former partner.
- **The service user is taking reasonable steps to dispose of the property**
The value of the property will be disregarded for six months from the date when steps were taken to dispose of the property. If the property takes more than six months to dispose of, the disregard period can be extended at the discretion of the Director of Social Work.
- **The service user is carrying out essential repairs or alterations**
The value of the property will be disregarded for six months in the first instance. Any extension of the disregard will depend on satisfactory evidence being produced, indicating the timescale for completion of work and will be at the discretion of the Director of Social Work.
- **The service user has sold the home they normally live in and intend to use the money from the sale to buy another home**
The proceeds of the sale will be disregarded for six months from the date of sale. If it takes more than six months to acquire another property, the disregard period can be extended at the discretion of the Director of Social Work.
- **The service user has acquired another property for occupation as their home but has not yet moved in**
The value is ignored for six months. The disregard period can be extended at the discretion of the Director of Social Work.

