

ANGUS COUNCIL

SOCIAL WORK COMMITTEE.....(14 January 1997)

UPDATE ON THE CHARGING POLICY FOR NON-RESIDENTIAL CARE
PACKAGES

REPORT BY THE DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL WORK

ABSTRACT

This report advises the Social Work Committee of the current position regarding the charging policy for non-residential care packages which was introduced in April 1996.

1 RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Social Work Committee notes the contents of this report.

2 INTRODUCTION

The policy of charging for non-residential care packages has been in place now for eight months. During that time there have been some developments in the procedures, particularly in relation to communication with service users. A comprehensive review of the policy will be prepared and submitted to the Social Work Committee in March 1997.

3 UPDATE

Communication with Service Users

In line with the policy of Angus Council to effect continuous improvement in communication with service users, every service user has been provided with a detailed analysis of his/her financial assessment, in order that they can understand the way in which their contribution towards service costs has been calculated.

From November onwards, each invoice issued has been accompanied by a detailed statement, indicating the services which were provided during the charging period, which form the basis of the charge.

Feedback on these improvements has been positive, and it appears that the number of telephone calls querying invoices has reduced as a consequence.

Uptake of Benefits

A comprehensive benefits check is offered to all service users at the time of their financial assessment, to ensure that individuals are receiving the maximum benefit to which they are entitled.

To date a total of £1,633,000 has been claimed on a recurring basis, i.e. these are benefits for which people have an ongoing entitlement. This uptake represents an improvement for each individual concerned and also is an injection of cash to the wider economy in Angus.

Collection of Income

There are approximately 2,700 service users with non-residential care packages. Around 53% of service users are currently paying a contribution towards their care package.

The projected income for the current financial year is £825,000.

To date £451,614 has been invoiced, with payments to the value of £29,000 being overdue.

Use of Director's Discretionary Powers

As part of the policy, the Director of Social Work has discretionary powers to reduce or waive charges where exceptional circumstances apply. The Director has used these powers in twelve cases, leading to an annual reduction in charges equivalent to £7,900.

4 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The projected income for 1996/97 is approximately £125,000 above the target established in the Revenue Budget. Adjustments have been made in the Revenue Budget submissions for 1997/98 to reflect this.

5 CONSULTATION

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

6 CONCLUSION

The initial difficulties which were encountered in introducing the charging system have been overcome, and the system is operating in a relatively smooth manner.

W Robertson
Director of Social Work

16 December 1996

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.

