



CHARGING FOR NON-RESIDENTIAL SOCIAL CARE TASK AND FINISH GROUP

MINUTES OF THE DIGITAL MEETING HELD VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS ON MONDAY 28TH JUNE 2021 AT 5.00 P.M.

PRESENT:

Councillor V. James - Chair

Councillors:

Ms A. Gair

Also Present:

Co-opted Members: Mr C. Luke (Caerphilly People First)

Together with:

Cllr. D. Cushing (Chair, Social Services Scrutiny Committee), M. Jacques (Scrutiny Officer), M. Jones (Financial Services Manager) and R. Morris (Principal Income and Assessment Officer).

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor L. Jeremiah and Mrs M. Jones (Parent Network).

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllr D. Cushing was attending the meeting as an observer and asked if an interest should be declared as a result of having used non-residential care services in the past. The Scrutiny Officer advised that it was not necessary to declare an interest for having previously used the service. The Chair advised the group that he had recently started a new job as Principal Manager (Adult Services) within the Social Services directorate of a neighbouring Authority. He queried whether or not adult placement, a shared service with Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council, was a consideration under the charging policy under discussion. The Financial Services Manager confirmed that the Shared Lives programme was considered a

shared non-residential care service but that the charging policy for residents within the Merthyr Tydfil County Borough would be determined by their Local Authority and not by Caerphilly County Borough Council. The Scrutiny Officer noted the Chair's new role with a neighbouring Authority.

3. MINUTES – 15TH FEBRUARY 2021

It was unanimously agreed that the minutes of the meeting held on the 15th February 2021 be accepted as a correct record.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Charging for Non-Residential Social Care Task and Finish Group held on 15th February 2021 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

4. NEXT STEPS?

The Scrutiny Officer had compiled a synopsis of the evidence received since the inquiry began in September 2019 and he shared it with the Group during the meeting. The information was divided into two columns, one highlighted the key issues identified and the other outlined the associated evidence received. Key issues included affordability of charges for residents, a comparison with the charges made by other Local Authorities, applying disregards when determining available income, the number of residents likely to be impacted by any increase to the charging policy and the legal framework for charging users for the service.

The Chair thanked the Scrutiny Officer for his presentation and said it highlighted the importance of setting an appropriate charging policy for this type of care. One Member also highlighted the quality of the non-residential care provided within the County Borough and this viewpoint was supported by other Members of the group.

The Financial Services Manager shared data with the Group which showed a comparison chart of rates for non-residential care charged by other Welsh Local Authorities and a rate modelling exercise of the councils surveyed by Caerphilly County Borough Council up until 2026/27. Based on the rates charged in 2020/21 the exercise showed future charges based on an assumed annual inflationary uplift up until 2026/27. It was then possible to forecast Caerphilly's position in a Wales-wide table after potential percentage increases were applied.

The Chair thanked the Financial Services Manager and highlighted to the group that if the current increase of 20% per annum for day care continued to be applied, the data suggested that Caerphilly charges would not reach the Welsh median by 2026/27. Cllr Cushing asked about the take-up of services if charges for day care were tripled over the next five years. The Financial Services Manager outlined how many people would not pay the full assessed charge due to the disregards which would be applied during the income assessment period and also reminded Members that nobody in Wales would pay more than £100 per week because of the cap. Cllr Cushing asked about the potential of the cap rising in the future and was advised that this was down to the discretion of the Welsh Government. The Financial Services Manager advised the group that currently due to restrictions caused by the pandemic day care was provided on a community basis and new users were charged on the hourly rate.

One Member asked about the number of residents receiving day care who did not pay for the service. The Principal Income and Assessment Officer confirmed that a high percentage of users did not pay for day care following assessment and also highlighted that everybody was entitled to have their ability to pay assessed.

Cllr Cushing asked if the care charges listed were figures for the whole of the UK or just Wales. It was explained that the rates were for Welsh Local Authorities who had responded to the survey and Cllr Cushing commented on the relatively high charges across Wales.

It was agreed that the Financial Services Manager would circulate the Day Care rates after a 10%, 20% and 30% increase was applied as information for Members. The Chair highlighted how these figures could then be included as recommendation options in the final report.

Discussion ensued on the need to increase the Home Care rate by 10% per annum until 2026/27, as the forecast was that the Welsh median would be reached in Caerphilly by 2023/24. The group were shown the impact of replacing the 10% increase with a 2% increase from 2024/25. The Financial Services Manager also reminded Members that it was impossible to accurately estimate the annual uplift made by other Welsh Local Authorities up until 2026/27, but for the purposes of the modelling exercise a normal inflationary uplift of 2% had been assumed. The Group were shown the impact of an uplift of 6% per annum for Home Care and the model showed that the Welsh median would be reached in Caerphilly at 2026/27.

The Chair suggested that the key matter for consideration was how quickly the Welsh median was reached in Caerphilly. If a 10% per annum increase was retained for Home Care until the Welsh median was reached and then a lower increase applied, or whether a more modest/phased increase be applied per annum for the next five years which would mean that the median would still be reached but at a later stage.

One Member suggested that the final report should focus on the desire to reach a Welsh median rather than being in the lower quartile for rates in Wales and that it should also give an indication of the number of service users impacted by any increase in charges.

The Chair asked officers if there were any anomalies in the charging policy that needed to be raised at the meeting. The group heard how there was nothing to add other than the service for Day Centres was under review due to pandemic restrictions. The Financial Services Manager advised that he had attended a regional meeting of Gwent Authorities to discuss the transformation of day care services and that the focus was on a community-based or virtual service provision whilst pandemic restrictions were in place. The group were also made aware that the possibility of a future regional charging policy for this type of care was discussed. The Chair noted this and commented that it would be a step towards a key suggestion raised at the previous evidence-gathering meeting. Owain Jones, Course Director of the Health & Social Care Management degree programme at the University of South Wales had suggested that there should be a national charge for non-residential care in Wales to avoid charging disparities.

The Scrutiny Officer sought clarification from the group that they wanted a series of options to be presented in the recommendations of a report to the Social Services Scrutiny Committee. It was agreed that the key recommendation should be the need to reach the Welsh median of charges for non-residential care and that the options would be on the various routes taken to reach this point.

In thanking Members and Officers for their contributions, the Chair closed the meeting at 6.15 p.m.

Approved as a correct record and subject to any amendments or corrections agreed and recorded in the minutes of the meeting held on 2021, they were signed by the Chair.

CHAIR