



INFORMATION PAPER ON THE PROPOSED CHANGES TO RUTLAND COUNTY COUNCIL ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA AND CHARGES FOR ADULT SOCIAL CARE

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1 Introduction

Rutland County Council offers many different care services for adults with all types of social care needs and the Council is thinking of making some changes to the charges and entitlement to these.

The Council has agreed to consult upon:

- a) An amendment to the eligibility criteria for long term and ongoing social care funding, and;
- b) Changes to the charging policy.

A consultation will open in April 2013 to gain views on how the proposed changes might have an impact on people now and in the future. It will help us prioritise services for those with substantial and critical needs and allocate the right funding in a time where there is limited financial support. This consultation will help the Council determine the sort of support requested by those with moderate and low needs so that they don't have to go into residential care or receive formal care sooner than they need.

The proposals focus on two main areas:

- Changes to eligibility criteria
- Changes to the charging policy to ensure people are assessed fairly

The Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)

When the Council is looking at changing or developing services it needs to ensure that due regard is given to whether the proposed changes will have an unequal impact on any particular groups. To ensure the proposals for change have been looked at comprehensively, it is important to ask the people who may be affected, whether the proposals are likely to have a positive or negative impact on them and so an Equality Impact Assessment (E.I.A.) has been completed.

HOW ARE THE ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA USED AT THE MOMENT?

Rutland County Council currently provides social care support to those adults who have needs which are in the critical, substantial or moderate levels. This may include access to services such as day opportunities, home care, social activities, transport and care in the home.

An assessment of the person's needs identifies the level of risk a person would be in if support was not provided. Using the information about a person's circumstances, the assessor will discuss with them and their carer, where appropriate, which level of risk the person has and consequently their eligibility for social care support. This is based on national guidance contained within the Department of Health document: 'Prioritising Need in the context of Putting People First: A whole system approach to eligibility for social care. 2010'

The assessment is based upon the risk in relation to the individual's:

- independence,
- health,
- safety,
- managing daily routines
- Involvement in family and community life.

Every Council has to decide which level of need it can meet, taking account of the money and resources it has. It can then review this according to what has been spent and change the level of eligibility if it needs to.

The eligibility framework sets out four levels, which have been decided by the Government. They are described by the seriousness of the risk to independence and well-being or other consequences if needs are not addressed.

The four levels are as follows:

Critical

When:

- Life is, or will be, threatened; and/or
- Significant health problems have developed or will develop; and/or
- There is, or will be, little or no choice and control over vital aspects of the immediate environment; and /or
- Serious abuse or neglect has occurred or will occur; and/or
- There is, or will be, an inability to carry out vital personal care or domestic routines; and/or
- Vital involvement in work, education or learning cannot or will be sustained; and/or
- Vital social support systems and relationships cannot or will not be sustained; and/or
- Vital family and other social roles and responsibilities cannot or will not be undertaken.

Substantial

When:

- There is, or will be, only partial choice and control over the immediate environment; and/or
- Abuse or neglect has occurred or will occur; and/or
- There is, or will be, an inability to carry out the majority of personal care of domestic routines; and/or
- Involvement in many aspects of work, education or learning cannot or will not be sustained; and/or
- The majority of social support systems and relationships cannot or will not be sustained; and/or
- The majority of family and other social roles and responsibilities cannot or will not be undertaken.

Moderate:

When:

- There is, or will be, an inability to carry out several personal care or domestic routines; and/or
- Involvement in several aspects of work, education or learning cannot or will not be sustained; and/or
- Several social support systems and relationships cannot or will not be sustained; and/or
- Several family and other social roles and responsibilities cannot or will not be undertaken.

Low

When:

- There is, or will be, an inability to carry out one or two personal care or domestic routines; and/or
- Involvement in one or two aspects of work, education or learning cannot or will not be sustained; and/or
- One or two social support systems and relationships cannot or will not be sustained; and/or
- One or two family and other social roles and responsibilities cannot or will not be undertaken.

PROPOSAL ONE: AMEND THE ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA FROM MODERATE AND ABOVE TO SUBSTANTIAL AND ABOVE

The proposal is to focus social care funding on the critical and substantial levels of need of the most vulnerable people. Adult Social Care would, if the policy is approved, no longer provide support for any assessed needs for social care support which are moderate.

Since 2003, Adult Social Care has moved to a personalised approach which offers people more choice and control over their support. The Council's aim is to provide more personalised support rather than a limited menu of formal services. As well as this, the Council is now better able to help people stay independent for longer or regain their independence as quickly as possible. This will help to meet the needs of the wider community through community-based preventative programmes that will ensure that people are not isolated, help slow down deterioration in health and keep people in their own homes, close to family and friends.

Rutland's eligibility criteria have been set at moderate and have not been subject to review recently in relation to the resources available to the Council, or in the light of the increasing emphasis on personalisation and promoting independence. Rutland County Council is one of only 16% of local authorities that still provide for people with needs of moderate and above.

The White Paper: 'Caring for our future: reforming care and support' published earlier this year, shows that there is likely to be national guidance on eligibility criteria by 2015. It is expected that the national threshold will be set at substantial and above.

If a change in eligibility criteria is agreed then there would be no immediate change to current care packages. Before any changes could be implemented existing care packages would be reviewed to ensure that they are providing the right level of support and that needs have not changed. These reviews may find that the needs have increased but may also identify that someone might benefit from reablement or a different type of service/support available elsewhere. (By reablement we mean a short period of intensive support of up to six weeks - to enable an individual to gain or regain skills in living as independently as possible. Rutland County Council runs its own reablement service which remains free of charge and where eligibility criteria is not applied). Support will not be withdrawn where there remains a risk in doing so.

PROPOSAL TWO: INCREASE NET ASSESSABLE INCOME FROM 85% TO 100%

Currently the Council looks at an individual's income; makes deductions for allowable expenditure and then reduces this by 15% to determine what is called; 'net assessable income'.

The proposal is to take into account all of a person's net assessable income (100%)

PROPOSAL THREE: INCREASE THE MAXIMUM WEEKLY CHARGE FROM £170 TO £364

Currently the most someone who is assessed as 'full cost' can pay per week is £170. If they are full cost they will have over £23,250 in savings or have refused to disclose their savings.

The Government sets limits for how capital or savings are treated in the financial assessment. Currently the lower saving limit of £14,250 is the amount of saving that is completely ignored and only levels above that are taken into account. The upper saving limit is currently £23,250. Anyone who has savings in excess of this will be expected to pay up to the maximum charge per week.

If the level of savings is between the lower and upper limit (i.e. £14,250-£23,250) a "notional" income is calculated. The Government suggests an amount of notional income at a rate of £1 per every £250 or part £250 above the lower limit.

Rutland has set the maximum contribution that someone can pay per week at £170 currently. The Council is proposing to change this to £364 This is the same rate as the current lower rate charge for residential care. In future, the Council would like to keep both charges in line i.e. the same as each other.

Some councils now have no maximum limit and charge against the full cost of care to people who have savings above £23,250.

PROPOSAL FOUR: CHARGE FOR THE SECOND CARER

Currently when the cost of a care package is calculated, if two carers are needed to provide support the second carer charge is disregarded. The sorts of situation that might call for two carers at the same time are if someone needs two people to assist move them or if they need a lot of specialist support with equipment or tasks.

PROPOSAL FIVE: INCLUDE DAY CARE CHARGES AND SOCIAL ACTIVITY/ACCESS ALLOWANCES IN THE FINANCIAL ASSESSMENT AT A CHARGE OF £25 PER DAY

Rutland does not currently take day service or access allowance charges into account when calculating care costs. This means that people receive day services and access allowances at no charge even if they might have savings in excess of £23,250 and can afford to pay. The proposal is to include day care charges and access allowances in charging calculations at a rate of £25 per session. (These will be means tested).

PROPOSAL SIX: TO AMEND THE HOURLY CHARGING RATE FROM £11.50 PER HOUR TO £13 PER HOUR

Unlike some local authorities Rutland County Council does not pass on the actual cost of care to the service user. For example, the Council buys homecare at approximately £16 per hour but the service user is assessed against a charge of £11.50 per hour. The charge of £11.50 per hour has not been increased since 2008. The council wants to ensure that people who can afford to pay for services are charged fairly.

PREVENTATIVE SUPPORT

We are consulting about what preventative options/support can be offered to people who may no longer qualify for social support. We need your views on these.

There is a range of preventative support already available. The Council is seeking views on other types of support which might help people to remain independent for longer and, therefore, not need to become reliant on Council-funded social care services. The Council recognises that people would like to remain in their communities and with their families for as long as possible.

The Council wants to look at the way it works with the voluntary sector to support communities. Your views on what is needed would be appreciated. We ask about this in the questionnaire.

Some examples of preventative services being considered are:

- Developing locality based champions – working with villages and Voluntary Community Services to identify and develop solutions with local communities
- Improving access to information and advice – including specialist advice on financial issues and effective signposting to services and support
- Developing a better adult social care, advice, advocacy and information. Support for people to identify community and personal assets available to them and to organise support.
- Supporting self-help groups working with health colleagues. This will help to identify local self-help groups.
- Identifying local support groups and community resources.
- Improving support for carers as part of the carer strategy.
- Establishing dementia support – offering accessible support to people with dementia and their carers.
- Ways to work better with health colleagues so that money can be used effectively.

At the same time we are exploring how we can involve people more in developing services to ensure that the voices of people receiving care services in Rutland are listened to and involved in how our services are designed and delivered.

WHY HAS THE COUNCIL PROPOSED THESE CHANGES?

There is an increasing elderly population within Rutland and this is predicted to grow over the coming years. The changes to the charging policy reflect the view that charges should be fair. People should be assessed fairly and pay what they can afford.

Some services have been provided free of any charging assessment. This is not sustainable in the long term.

We now have a Reablement Service which is free of any charge for a period of up to six weeks.

Charges have not been reviewed for the last two years and the hourly rate has not been reviewed for nearly five years.

The eligibility criteria need reviewing in light of population changes and current resources.

The number of people over the age of 65 is predicted to increase to 70% of the population of Rutland by 2030. Nationally the increase is predicted to be 64%.

A summary of the proposals follows for ease of reference.



Adult Social Care Consultation Proposal Summary Sheet

Proposal One: Amend the eligibility criteria from Moderate and above to Substantial and above.

Proposal Two: Increase net assessable income from 85% to 100%

Proposal Three: Amend the maximum weekly charge from £170 to £364 per week.

Proposal Four: Charge for a second carer.

Proposal Five: Include day care and social activity/access allowances charges in the financial assessment at a charge of £25 per day.

Proposal Six: To amend the hourly charging rate from £11.50 per hour to £13 per hour

The Consultation starts on 8th April 2013 and ends on 22nd June 2013. For more information contact ASCConsultation@rutland.gov.uk or phone:

We want your views

Please see the attached questionnaire and send in your views on the proposals.

Look at the website www.rutland.gov.uk

You can attend one of the meetings or contact us for more information.

Your views are important to us. If you need help understanding any of the information please contact us:

By phone: 01572 758444 (voicemail/answerphone – please leave a message and we will call you back).

By mail: Adult Social Care Consultation, Rutland County Council, Oakham, Rutland LE15 7PX

By email: ASCConsultation@rutland.gov.uk