

WIRRAL COUNCIL

CABINET

DELEGATED DECISION BY PORTFOLIO HOLDER

18 MARCH 2014

SUBJECT:	<i>CHARGING FOR TRANSPORT - ADULT SOCIAL CARE</i>
WARD/S AFFECTED:	<i>ALL</i>
REPORT OF:	<i>DIRECTOR OF ADULT SOCIAL SERVICES</i>
RESPONSIBLE PORTFOLIO HOLDERS:	<i>COUNCILLOR CHRISTINE JONES</i>
KEY DECISION?	NO

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 To recommend a change to the charging policy for transport

2.0 BACKGROUND

2.1 Each local authority with social services responsibilities must determine and operate a fairer charging and fairer contributions policy (FCP). It must keep the FCP under review.

2.2 It is now proposed to amend the charging policy in respect of transport.

2.3 The changes will be subject to an 8-week consultation period.

2.4 Under the current policy, the cost of transport is included with other service costs in order to make a financial assessment. In the great majority of cases there is effectively no assessed contribution for transport because the client's income is exhausted by the cost of other services received.

2.5 The cost of day centre provision to clients in 2013-14 was around £55,000 per week and financial assessments for these clients were £15,000 per week. The additional transport costs of around £15,000 per week yielded income in only a very few cases.

2.6 It is now proposed that transport should be a flat rate non-assessed charge of £5 a journey this being a public transport rate.

2.7 Under the National Assistance (Assessment of Resources) Regulations 1992, the mobility component of DLA must be excluded from income in making an assessment. This would continue to be the case under the new arrangements.

2.8 Two safeguards would operate to protect clients from hardship under the new charging arrangements.

- 2.9 If a client is in receipt of disability related benefits, then they are entitled to an allowance insofar as their transport costs exceed the mobility component of DLA.
- 2.10 Secondly any other client may appeal the charge if that and other charges taken together would cause the client's income to fall below the minimum income guarantee + 25%.
- 2.11 It is expected the revised charging arrangements will generate around £200,000 a year.
- 2.12 The position with Personal Independence Payments (that will ultimately replace DLA) is under review

3.0 RELEVANT RISKS

- 3.1 The charging changes do not yield the expected level of income..

4.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 4.1 Not applicable.

5.0 CONSULTATION

- 5.1 A general 8 week consultation will operate with users and stakeholders commencing 31st March 2014 and closing 31st May 2014.
- 5.2 Clients will then be notified of the proposed charging changes four weeks in advance of their introduction. This will allow them to determine whether to continue with the service provision.

- 5.3 It is expected any revised charges will be implemented from June 2014.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR VOLUNTARY, COMMUNITY AND FAITH GROUPS

- 6.1 There are no direct implications for voluntary, community and faith organisations.

7.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: FINANCIAL; IT; STAFFING; AND ASSETS

- 7.1 In the main body of the report.

8.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 In the main body of the report.

9.0 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 The Policy is in accordance with Fairer Charging and Fairer Contributions guidance issued by the Department of Health.

10.0 CARBON REDUCTION IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 None.

11.0 PLANNING AND COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

11.1 There are no planning implications arising directly from this report.

12.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

12.1 That subject to consultation a flat rate charge for transport of £5 per journey be introduced.

13.0 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

13.1 The Council is required to determine and maintain its FCP in accordance with relevant legislation.

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APPENDICES

None

REFERENCE MATERIAL

Fairer Charging and Fairer Contributions Policy Guidance and Charging for Residential Accommodation Guide issued by the Department of Health

SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

Council Meeting	Date