



Norfolk County Council

Changes to Charging 14th August 2019

The decision made by the Council in February to make changes to the means tested charging policy, for people in receipt of services that are working age, has not been put forward lightly and has been made in the context of some very challenging pressures for Adult Social Services.

Increasing demand and costs, coupled with a diminishing Government grant means that Adult Social Services faces a shortfall of almost £39m over 3 years (2019/20, 20/21 and 2021/22).

When it comes to charging for services, the Government issues guidance on minimum statutory rates. In Norfolk, up until this financial year, we were able to set a level above the statutory rates. We have actually increased the total amount we spend on Adult Social Services from £355.5 million in 2016/17 to £427.6 million in 2019/20, something we were able to do by taking money from other departments of the Council.

However, given the pressures on Norfolk County Council as a whole, we consulted on moving in line with the Government guidelines before making the decision. Many other councils have already decided to move to the Government guidance and operate this level of charging and others are in the process of consultation.

We do understand that this will have a significant financial impact on many people with disabilities across Norfolk. We have taken advice from other councils who have already undertaken this change and know that the transition to the new charges can be challenging for many people. This was also reflected in the consultation responses which set out specific examples of how individuals would be affected.

Therefore, following the consultation, it was agreed to only part implement the changes in 2019-20 with a cap on the maximum additional amount per week of up to £33. This phased approach over 3 years will give people who are affected time to manage the increase in their charges. We will also make sure that people can seek support regarding their finances, something which people highlighted as important to them as part of the consultation.

If a person or their representative would like to speak to anyone about these changes or would like a new financial assessment they can contact the Financial Assessment Team 01603 222133 **Option 2** or email fab@norfolk.gov.uk

The Team will be able to provide a new assessment, discuss the assessment and ensure that all relevant expenditure such as Disability Related Expenses (DRE) or Housing Costs such as Rent, Council Tax etc. not covered by benefits have been allowed. If the person would prefer to meet someone on a one to one basis this can also be arranged.

The new Money Support Service has been introduced to help people with an assessed care need with their finances. This team can offer help with identifying DRE, personal budgeting, benefits and debt advice. If you need help, you can contact the Money Support Service on telephone number 01603 223392 **Option 4** or email mss@norfolk.gov.uk.



Norfolk County Council Independent Advice Agencies

- Age UK Norfolk 0300 500 1217 www.ageuk.org.uk/norfolk
- Age UK Norfolk offers information and advice to the public on a wide range of issues. We will provide you with the facts and you can make choices and decisions knowing you have reliable information.
- Alzheimer's Society 01603 763556 www.alzheimers.org.uk
- Alzheimer's Society provides a range of support services for people with dementia, their families and/or their carers in Norfolk.
- Carers Matter Norfolk 0800 083 1148 www.carersmatternorfolk.org.uk
- Supporting Norfolk's 94,000 unpaid carers. Led and shaped by carers, empowering and enabling them to improve their lives.
- Deaf Connexions 01603 660889 www.deafconnexions.org.uk
- Deaf Connexions is part of the Norfolk Deaf Advocacy Service which provides advice and support for deaf people in Norfolk.
- DIAL Great Yarmouth 01493 856 900
- Provides financial and personal advice and guidance with expertise in disability matters for people in Great Yarmouth and surrounding areas.
- Diss, Thetford & District Citizens Advice 03444 111 444 www.cadat.org.uk
Provides free, confidential and impartial advice and campaign on big issues affecting people's lives.
- Equal Lives 01508 491210 www.equallives.org.uk A user led organisation providing advice and support to disabled people.
- Money Advice Hub 0333 305 7648 www.moneyadvicehub.org.uk
- Money Advice Hub is based in King's Lynn. They provide an integrated advice service, including: Debt Advice, Housing Advice, Welfare Benefits, Money Advice, Digital Inclusion & Wellbeing.
- Money Advice Service Free and impartial money advice, set up by government
<https://www.moneyadviceservice.org.uk/en>
- Norfolk Citizens Advice 03444 111 444 www.ncab.org.uk
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- Norfolk Citizens Advice is an independent, local charity offering free, confidential, impartial advice and information on a wide range of subjects.
- Opening Doors 01603 631 433 www.openingdoors.org.uk
- Opening Doors is a user led organisation run by people with learning difficulties for people with learning difficulties.
- West Norfolk Disability Information Service 01553 782558 www.wndis.org.uk
- WNDIS (West Norfolk Disability Information Service) provides information, advice and an advocacy service for disabled people and carers.