



Social Work and Health

**Charging Policy
For
Non-Residential Care Services**

2011

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Introduction

The policy is intended to help service users and carers, staff working for the Council, service providers, and other interested groups understand how we will calculate charges. It also explains how we assess ability to pay.

The Social Work (Scotland) Act 1968 and the Mental Health (Care and Treatment) (Scotland) Act 2003 allow us to make a charge for certain social care and housing support services. Charges made for services are an important part of the Council's income and are used to provide services for you in Angus.

Social Work and Health will assess the needs of and arrange services to support service users and carers. When they are being assessed for a service their care and other support needs will be identified. The services that are received may be delivered in a person's own home; a day centre or in their local community. In addition as part of this assessment we will offer a financial assessment and benefit check to make sure that individuals are receiving all of the welfare benefits to which they may be entitled.

Charges will be based on the type of service delivered and not on the location and provider of any service received. We will set charges by taking into account the full cost of providing services and the principles of achieving best value. We will review our charging rates on an annual basis and produce an information booklet "**Charging for non-residential care services**" detailing charging levels and income disregards.

This charging policy is based on:

Equity – The way that Social Work and Health charge for services will be fair and equitable.

Consistency – We will ensure consistent decision-making by staff.

Transparency – We will tell service users and carers how and why they are being charged for a particular service.

National guidance – We have based our charging policy on the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (COSLA) Guidance on Charging Policies for Non Residential Services.

Assessed Need – We will not ask service users or carers to pay more than they can reasonably afford. The level of service received is based on need. The amount individuals may have to pay towards the cost of a service will depend on their income and savings.

Maximisation of Income – We will offer a financial assessment to service users and carers when we assess their needs. We will offer to check that they are getting all the state benefits they are entitled to.

Exceptional Financial Circumstances – We have made provision for individuals with exceptional financial difficulties.

Continual Improvement and Best Value – We will monitor and review the policy to ensure it is achieving Angus Council's aims with regard to continuous improvement and best value.

1. Services that we charge for

1.1 Domiciliary care and domestic assistance for all age groups

This means help with house-work and household tasks. Some examples of these are:

- cleaning a bathroom and kitchen
- vacuuming and dusting
- general laundry and ironing
- preparing and lighting a fire and bringing in coal and sticks to do this
- advice and support with carrying out household tasks

1.2 Housing support

Housing support services are services which enable people to live independently in their home. Individuals can receive housing support whatever type of housing they live in. Some examples of housing support are

- help with safety and security
- help with arranging for adaptations to the home
- advice on preparing food
- help and advice on the use of domestic equipment
- help with arranging minor repairs and servicing of equipment
- advice or help with personal budgeting and debt counselling
- advice or help with relationships and neighbour disputes
- advice or help with benefit claims and other related matters

The range of services and activities will be tailored to meet specific needs as detailed in the assessment that will be undertaken.

1.3 Personal care (under 65 years of age)

- **Personal Hygiene**
Help with bathing, showering, washing, washing hair, shaving, brushing your teeth and caring for skin for example, applying creams or ointments.
- **Continence Management**
Help with going to the toilet, managing a catheter, stoma or other continence equipment or changing a bed as part of a continence management plan.
- **Food and Diet**
Preparing meals and snacks (or helping service users to prepare these), helping someone to eat, helping to manage a meals service for example, ordering meals, helping to prepare special diets which need extra preparation time such as pureed foods.

- **Personal Assistance**

Help with dressing and undressing, with surgical appliances such as surgical stockings, prostheses and mechanical aids, with getting up and going to bed and with moving about their home.

1.4 Shopping and pension collection

This is a weekly service where we will shop for groceries, collect pensions, arrange to pay bills at a bank or post office, and collect prescriptions as necessary.

1.5 In addition to any charge for the services already mentioned a flat rate charge applies to the following services:

- **Community alarm**

Community alarm is a service which provides help, in a persons own home including supported housing, when it is needed 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. The charge for this service does not depend on income and savings as a fixed amount is paid each week.

- **Meals**

A set charge will be made for each meal received. This will apply to community meals, meals provided in a day care setting and meals provided by adult resource centres and lunch clubs.

2. Service users who are exempt from charges

2.1 Services for children

We will provide free services to children up to the age of 19 in full-time non-advanced education up to and including Scottish Higher or National Certificate (NC). The services are also free for those under 21 and who were 'looked after' at school leaving age or:

- were 'looked after' for a total of 14 weeks during the period from their 13th birthday to reaching school leaving age; or
- have been 'looked after' at any time between school leaving age and their 18th birthday.

2.2 Services for people with terminal illnesses (not including community alarm and meals)

People who have a terminal illness and qualify for Attendance Allowance or Disability Living Allowance (care component) under the special rules set by the Department for Work and Pensions will not have to pay for our services.

2.3 People with a mental illness who are subject to a compulsory treatment order or compulsion order (community or suspended hospital order)

These service users will not be charged while they are subject to any of the orders outlined above.

2.4 People who have been assessed as requiring the following service as part of an enablement process will not be charged for:

- Personal care, domestic assistance or housing support for a period of up to 6 weeks

The enablement process is designed to assist people to regain skills and confidence and to increase their independence. This will be done by helping individuals to identify areas in their lives which they want to improve and enabling them to achieve it. The approach will be to “do with a person” rather than “do to” or “do for someone”.

Where services continue to be provided beyond the six week period the standard charge for any services received will apply.

3. Services that we provide through direct payments or similar schemes

The charging policy will apply as if the service is delivered by the Council.

4. How we will assess ability to pay

We will not ask anyone to pay more than they can reasonably afford. The level of service received is based on need. The amount an individual may have to pay towards the cost of a service will depend on their income and savings.

Each year Angus Council will set a weekly income amount for single people and couples receiving services, depending on their age. No one, whose income is below the weekly amount, will be charged for our services, except for community alarm and meals for which we charge a fixed amount.

When we assess an individual’s needs, the person carrying out the assessment (usually a care manager or home-care assessor) will offer to undertake a financial assessment.

Social Work and Health will take account of the service user’s income and that of any partner. We will include benefits, savings, investments and capital when working out how much they can afford to pay towards the cost of the services received. We do not count the value of the home that they live in. We will treat any other property as savings and investments.

We will disregard a proportion of their income, savings and investments before calculating what their charge is, if anything.

5. How we will calculate charges

- We will establish what income the service user receives.
- We will compare this income to the amounts set by Angus Council in line with the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (COSLA) guidelines. From this we establish what income the service user has available to contribute towards their services.
- We will then work out the maximum weekly charge by taking 66% of any excess income.

People will either pay the maximum weekly charge or the cost of services received if this is lower. Details of charges can be found in the booklet “Charging for non-residential care services”.

Social Work and Health will carry out a full financial assessment every three years to make sure that income and financial information have not changed. We may carry out another assessment before the three years are up if asked by the service user to do so, or if they tell us about a major change in their circumstances.

Each year in April we will update the information we have on our service users and carers welfare benefits and finances in line with the rate that the benefits are increased.

6. Invoicing and payment arrangement

Where a service user only has a community alarm, we will issue a charge every 13 weeks. For all other services we will charge every 4 weeks.

Services can be paid for by:

- Direct Debit –a statement of account detailing the services, charges and payment collection date will be provided.
- Invoice – payment methods will be detailed on the back of the invoice.

We will charge the full cost of the services received unless a service user or carer has provided enough information to show that they do not have to pay for services. Where they have been assessed as requiring a service and refuse to pay, the service will not be withheld where it is clear that the service is essential to their well-being. We will pursue such debt through the Council’s normal debt recovery process.

7. Waiving of charges (Director's Discretion)

In exceptional circumstances, Social Work and Health will consider a reduction to a weekly charge where the service user meets all of the following criteria:

- Their circumstances are exceptional.
- The application of charges would cause financial hardship.
- There is a complete record of income and expenditure.
- There is evidence that an application has been made for all benefits they may be entitled to receive.

8. Incorrect financial assessment

Where a service user, carer or their representative has given us the correct financial information and we have calculated the charge wrongly, the full amount of any over-charge will be reimbursed. The correct charge will apply from the date of the new assessment.

Where we have been given incorrect financial information by a service user, carer or their representative, and this results in an under charge, we may seek to recover the amount by which they have been undercharged.

9. Implementation of the policy

This policy will take effect from 11 July 2011.