

# **Disability Related Expenses Public Consultation Meeting Notes**

---

## **LEICESTER CITY COUNCIL DISABILITY RELATED EXPENDITURE (DRE) PUBLIC CONSULTATION 2016**

### **NOTES OF PUBLIC CONSULTATION MEETING**

Held at Friends Meeting House, Queens Road, Leicester on  
30th January 2016, 11.00am-12.30pm

#### **Introduction**

The meeting was attended by 8 members of the public. One member of the public attended as a representative for a service user and as a representative from Health watch. Two service users required Gujarati translations, which were provided by the officers attending.

Officers attending from the council included: Ruth Lake, Director of Adult Social Care and Safeguarding, Michael Lacey (Financial Operations Manager, Adults Social Care), Yasmin Mataria-Jenkins (Business Change Manager) and Prashant Patel (Administration Team Leader)

The meeting started with the Director explaining what the Disability Related Expenditure consultation was about. This was followed by the Director explaining there were two proposals.

Proposal number one: the council want to change the amount of money they allow if someone has a disability.

Proposal number two: to change which special items should be included by the council to help someone with their disability.

Following this the Director took questions and heard what people thought about proposal number one and proposal number two. The notes below consists of the questions asked (in black) and the answers given (in blue), and key points made by attendees.

#### **Notes on Questions and answers**

Q1. Service user didn't understand the Disability Related Expenditure and wanted it explained. They also required explanation of the financial assessment.

This was explained by the director: Disability Related Expenditure (DRE) is the extra cost that you have to pay each week because of your illness or disability. These are the costs that you wouldn't have to pay if you didn't have a disability. Some of the most common extra costs are related to gardening, alarms and heating.

## Disability Related Expenses Public Consultation Meeting Notes

---

- For example, your disability might mean that you have to stay in your home for most or all of the day, meaning that you have to heat your home for longer. The extra cost of your heating bills could be classed as Disability Related Expenditure.
- For example, if you are unable to manage your garden because of your disability then you may have to pay for a gardener to keep it tidy. If you didn't have a disability then you wouldn't need a gardener and you wouldn't have this extra cost.
- For example, if you have an emergency alarm, where you press a button to alert a member of your family then you have to pay for this. If you didn't have a disability then you wouldn't need an alarm, and you wouldn't have this extra cost

When the Council calculates how much you have to pay for services (such as home care or day care) we look at the income you have coming in and how much you need to be left with. We have to make sure that you are left with enough money to pay for these extra costs. At the moment we allow everyone an extra £20 per week to cover these costs, and where a person can show that they have to spend more than £20 then we allow them to keep a higher amount.

What we have found is that some people have very high costs of more than £20 a week, but on average, the rest have average costs of £7.50 a week. So, currently the Council is allowing a person £20 when the average cost is £7.50 meaning that most people have more than enough to cover their disability related costs.

What the Council is proposing is to make sure that everyone is still left with enough money to cover the actual costs they have to face. But, instead of allowing everyone to keep a minimum of **£20** to cover the costs, we are proposing that people are allowed to keep a minimum of **£10** to cover these costs. If the costs that a person pays for each week add up to more than £10 then the Council will allow the person to keep the actual amount they need to cover the cost in full.

Q2. How will the changes to Personal Independence Payment (PIP) affect disability related expenditure. Service users were worried that PIP would be reduced and they may have to pay more money towards their care; double reductions.

In response the financial assessment was explained and stated that their individual cases would be reviewed if there were changes to their income. Furthermore, if these proposals do go through everyone would have a full financial assessment.

Q3. Service user raised the issue of council funded day services funding being taken away by the council. Day/voluntary services are having to charge for their services. This is affecting people with mental health problems as their mental health is worsening.

## Disability Related Expenses Public Consultation Meeting Notes

---

The Director responded by stating that these proposals do not affect day/voluntary services.

One service user was concerned that benefits are given by the government to people who need it but councils are taking this money away.

A few service users mentioned community centres/day services/voluntary organisations were being closed down because of funding issues.

Again, reiterated that these proposals are not about service changes.

Q4. One service user had paid employment and concerned that her income would be counted as part of her financial assessment. Service user asked if her income would be counted as part of her financial assessment?

She was reassured that someone's income from employment is not included in the financial assessment as it is seen a barrier to working.

One service user was concerned that after these proposals are implemented, mental health services would worsen, resulting in community services being taken away. If that happens how do people cope? A lot of people with mental health issues will end up in hospital because of the pressure of all the changes.

Concerns also raised about the role of social workers and how they had changed from a caring role to a focus on money and financial changes. There was not time for social workers to carry out a caring role.

Service users highlighted waste of council resources e.g. meetings being cancelled because of incorrect papers.

Service users wanted help with completing questionnaires at the end of the session, which was provided by officers attending.

Meeting ended at 12.15pm