**Appendix C**

**Consultation Findings on Proposed Changes to Disability Related Expenditure (DRE)**

1. **Introduction**

A Statutory consultation was carried out between 3 July 2018 and 28 September 2018 on proposed changes to Disability Related expenditure (DRE).

A similar consultation exercise regarding DRE was carried out between 19 January 2016 and 12 April 2016. Previously, Leicester City Council consulted on the below proposals:

1. To reduce the amount of money someone can keep to manage their disability from a minimum of £20 (or £15 if one of a couple) to a minimum of £10 a week (for everyone)
2. Changing the list of expenses that count as disability related expenditure and removing items provided by the NHS
3. No longer allowing money for items which are already provided by the council or included as part of a person’s support package

The Executive team deferred the decision at the time and the Council did not proceed with the proposals outlined. As there are financial constraints facing local authorities, there is now a need to revisit options to ensure that all service users are being assessed fairly and that charges to service users are appropriate.

On this occasion, the Council re-consulted on just proposal 1; ‘to reduce the amount allowed for disability related expenditure to a minimum of £10 per week (whether single or one of a couple)’.

DRE is the extra cost that someone has to pay as a result of their illness or disability. These are costs that someone would not have to pay if they did not have their disability.

Commonly, some of these costs are for specialist equipment or services, transport, and heating:

1. A service user requires a specialist hypoallergenic laundry detergent as to not agitate their bed-sore prone skin.
2. A service user has extreme difficulty in walking and requires transport to attend important health appointments and day-care.
3. A service user has a condition which affects their sensitivity to cold environments and they require their home to be heated more often.

DRE is observed during the financial assessment that a service user has when they have asked for care and support from Adult Social Care.

The financial assessment works out how much someone should pay (if any) towards the cost of their care services. The council may pay for some or all of the support, dependent on the financial circumstances of the service user.

The financial assessment looks at a person’s income and regular outgoings. The council has a fairer charging policy which explains what to expect from the financial assessment and the questions that could be asked. This is available at:

<http://www.leicester.gov.uk/financial-assessment>

For some people, their regular outgoings will be different because they have to pay for something that assists in living with an illness or disability. The council takes these costs into account as DRE.

Currently the Council allows a minimum disregard of £20 per week as DRE for a single person, or £15 per week, if one of a couple.

If a service user can show that their disability related expenses are higher than £20, the council may allow this higher figure to be disregarded as part of the financial assessment.

There was a single proposal under consideration:

**To reduce the amount allowed for Disability Related Expenditure to a minimum of £10 per week (whether single or one of a couple).**

Currently, the Council allows a disregard of £20 per week to cover these costs and £15 per week if they are part of a couple. If evidence can be provided, the council may allow more than the standard rate.

Why does the council want to change this amount?

The Council looked at the costs of service users in Leicester and found that the average disability related expenses were around £7.50 per week.

Reducing the minimum amount to £10 per week is closer to what people actually spend. The Council think this proposal is fairer as everyone is treated the same. The Council will continue to consider disability related expenses that are higher than £10 per week with evidence provided.

Should it be implemented, this proposal would help the Council spend its money more wisely so that as many people as possible can get the help that they need.

The consultation was led by a small consulting team within the commissioning sector of Social Care and Education.

1. **Methodology**
	1. **Letters**

Letters were sent out at the start of the consultation to all service users (or their carers), who are in receipt of non-residential care as they would be entitled to DRE if they had a form of disability. The letter explained that the Council were proposing to make changes to the financial assessment and that the recipient’s opinion was important. The letter detailed all of the ways to contact the Council about the consultation and details of the public meetings to be held. A paper copy of the survey accompanied the letter.

The following were sent with the letter:

* A survey for people to complete and return using the freepost envelope provided
* Details of the three public-held meetings, where people could attend and talk about the proposal
* The web address for the consultation website where more information about the proposal could be found, as well as an online version of the survey
* The postal address and email address to contact the consultation team with any queries
* The consultation helpline telephone number and e-mail address to contact the consultation team with any queries

A downloadable copy of the survey, the Adult Social Care Financial Assessment and Charging Policy, and Disability Related Case Studies were made available online via the [consultations.leicester.gov.uk](file:///%5C%5CVS-DATA1%5CSSER%5CSser%5CShared%5CTownHall%5CSpecial%5CPNC%5CProjects%5CProject%20Work%5CDRE%20Consultation%20Relaunch%5CReports%5CFindings%20Report%5Cconsultations.leicester.gov.uk) website.

An easy read version of the survey was made available for people who were identified through social care records as having learning disabilities. There were no requests for paper copies of this document. The easy read survey was available online via the [consultations.leicester.gov.uk](file:///%5C%5CVS-DATA1%5CSSER%5CSser%5CShared%5CTownHall%5CSpecial%5CPNC%5CProjects%5CProject%20Work%5CDRE%20Consultation%20Relaunch%5CReports%5CFindings%20Report%5Cconsultations.leicester.gov.uk) website.

The survey was also available to complete online on the council website at <https://consultations.leicester.gov.uk/adult-social-care-health-and-housing/dre2018/>

Attempts were made to channel shift respondents to online where appropriate, in line with corporate vision.

* 1. **Organisations and other stakeholders**

E-mails were sent to various board/group members and organisations to inform about the consultation and help where enquiries may be made about the proposals. These organisations represent the interests of people who receive Adult Social Care services:

Voluntary and Community Groups

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| --- | --- |
| Organisation Name | Stakeholder Group |
| Learning Disability Partnership Board | Learning Disability |
| Mental Health Partnership Board | Mental Health |
| Leicester Ageing Together Board | Older People |
| Dementia Programme Board | Dementia |
| Carers Reference Group | Carers |

Service Providers

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Organisation Name | Stakeholder Group |
| Action Deafness | Hearing Impairment |
| Action on Hearing Loss | Hearing Impairment |
| Adhar | Mental Health, BME |
| Advance | Learning Disability and Mental Health |
| Age Alliance Network | Older People |
| Age UK | Older People |
| Alzheimer’s Society | Dementia |
| Ansaar | Learning Disability, BME |
| ASRA Housing Association | Housing Association |
| Asian Towers Club | Older People, BME |
| Belgrave Lunch Club | Older People |
| Citizens Advice Bureau | Catch-all |
| City & County Care Services (Care Watch) | Home Care Provider |
| City & County Care Services (Aspire) | Home Care Provider |
| Clasp | Carers |
| Community Integrated Care | Home Care Provider |
| Community Links Derby CIC | Learning Disability  |
| East West Community Project | Older People |
| Gura Tegh Bahadur Day Centre | Older People |
| Guru Nanak Community Centre | Older People, BME |
| Healthwatch Leicester Ltd | Care Reviewer  |
| Hindu Community Centre Lunch Club | Older People, BME |
| Ibc Quality Solutions | Learning Disability and Mental Health |
| ICare | Care Provider  |
| Leicester Action for Mental Health (LAMP) | Mental Health |
| LCPT | Vulnerable People |
| Leicester Aging Together  | Older People |
| Leicester Jamaica Community Service Group | Older People, BME |
| Leicester, Leicestershire & Rutland Headway  | Brain Injury |
| Leicester Quaker Housing | Older People, Housing Association  |
| Mosaic: Shaping Disability Services | Catch-all Disability |
| Network for Change | Catch-all Disability |
| Nottingham Community Housing Association (Leicester Quaker Housing) | Housing Association |
| Norton House | Learning Disability and Mental Health |
| Pathfinders | Catch-all Disability |
| POhWER | Catch-all Advocacy |
| Rawal Community Association | Catch-all Information |
| Royal Mencap Society | Learning Disability |
| Santan Manavta Society | Older People, BME |
| Santosh | Older People  |
| Signing Networks CIC | Hearing Impairment |
| Sikh Community Centre | Catch-all |
| St Peters Lunch Club | Older People  |
| The Centre Project | Vulnerable People  |
| The Monday Club | Autism |
| Vista (Royal Society for the Blind) | Visual Impairment  |

* 1. **Survey**

A survey was developed to find out what people’s views were about the proposal to change DRE. A paper copy was attached to the letter informing them about the consultation.

A total of 788 surveys were completed and returned[[1]](#footnote-1) – a response rate of 24.7% was achieved[[2]](#footnote-2). Approximately 5% of responses were made online.

Respondents were first asked to provide some information about themselves and how they interact with Adult Social Care – 54% of answers to this question were people who receive help and support from Leicester City Council. A few people identified as more than one of the options available, for example, where a respondent received services themselves but also cared for someone who receives care.

0 respondents chose to not answer this question.

The age of the respondents varied. Almost half of all who completed the survey identified as over 66 years.

 26 respondents chose to not answer this question.

 1 respondent identified as under 18 years of age.

A lot like the demographic of Leicester, the ethnicities of the respondents were diverse. 51% of the respondents identified as ‘White’ and 42% identified as ‘Asian or Asian British’.

10 respondents chose to not answer this question.

A complete breakdown of survey responses by ethnicity can be found in Question 4 of Appendix C1.

Nearly 60% of respondents identified as female.

There are more females in receipt of non-residential care (59%) and the below information correlates with the data, as more females responded to the survey.

14 respondents chose to not answer this question.

680 respondents (86%) identified as having a disability. 28% of those who answered this question, identified as having a physical impairment.

80 respondents chose to not answer this question.

Survey responses were received from all of the City Council’s wards. The most responses were received from service users in Belgrave ward, the least number of responses were received from service users in Aylestone.

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| --- | --- | --- |
| Ward Name | Number of Responses | Response Rate |
| Abbey | 54 | 28.57% |
| Aylestone | 10 | 10.30% |
| Beaumont Leys | 36 | 19.78% |
| Belgrave | 83 | 28.23% |
| Braunstone Park & Rowley Fields | 49 | 22.47% |
| Castle | 23 | 29.11% |
| Evington | 33 | 18.33% |
| Eyres Monsell | 29 | 24.57% |
| Fosse | 20 | 21.97% |
| Humberstone & Hamilton | 27 | 17.30% |
| Knighton | 12 | 10.61% |
| North Evington | 35 | 19.44% |
| Rushey Mead | 42 | 20.09% |
| Saffron | 25 | 20.66% |
| Spinney Hills | 17 | 15.88% |
| Stoneygate | 30 | 20.27% |
| Thurncourt | 30 | 22.90% |
| Troon | 29 | 21.32% |
| Westcotes | 22 | 34.92% |
| Western | 32 | 18.93% |
| Wycliffe | 38 | 23.89% |

 92 respondents chose to not provide their postcode

 20 respondents provided postcodes outside of city boundaries

* 1. **Public Meetings**

Three public meetings were held at different locations around the city, to inform service users about the proposals and to seek their views or concerns. Details of the meetings were included in the letters to all service users, carers, and stakeholder organisations.

**Peepul Centre**

01/08/2018 - 6.00pm

16 attendees

**Town Hall**

30/07/2018 - 10.30am

4 attendees

**The BRITE Centre**

02/08/2018 – 2.30pm

6 attendees

A total of 26 people attended the public meetings. Alternative language interpreters were present for all three meetings.

These meetings began with an overview of the consultation process, an explanation of DRE and details of the proposal.

The full meeting notes for all three public meetings can be found in Appendix C2.

* 1. **Submissions and Other Comments**

Approximately 60 people called the DRE helpline.

A system was established to swiftly respond to people who had specific questions or required help/translation to complete the survey.

The calls were wide ranging and common themes in the types of call received can be identified as follows:

*The Proposal*

* Discussing the process of consultation
* Requesting more information about the proposal
* Unsure of eligibility for Disability Related Expenditure

*The Public Meetings*

* Booking to attend a public meeting
* Requesting transport to a public meeting
* Requesting more information about the public meetings

*The Survey*

* Did not want to complete the survey/ unsure on whether to complete the survey
* Requesting a survey
* Requesting assistance to fill in the survey
* Requesting assistance to fill in the survey with language support
* Requesting more information about the survey

*Updating Leicester City Council Records*

* Informing that a service user had passed away
* Informing of a change in circumstances

*Off Topic/ Non-Related*

* Discussion about a service received
* Discussion about a different Leicester City Council department
* Discussion about personal expenses

Of the calls received from the helpline, nobody requested for the survey to be sent in an alternative format. Where language support was required, the delivery team and admin officers provided the service.

A generic email account was also set up to receive queries about the DRE proposal. No comments or observations were made about the proposal via e-mail. Five emails were received in total.

Of the emails received, all were requests to book on to the aforementioned public meetings.

Service users were provided with a postal address to write and submit comments, if they wished to. One postal submission was received.

One organisation wrote to the consultation team expressing the concerns of some people who care for those with support needs. In summary, the letter noted:

* The majority of carers represented by The Carers Centre do not agree with the proposal to reduce the minimum DRE to £10 per week. This is because of ‘financial hardship’
* There is a lack of understanding in the Council’s Charging Policy; what is income? What is a disability related expenditure? Is expenditure based on individual or ‘national assumptions’?
* There is difficulty in explaining expenses that could be disability related
* The changes to central and local government payments ‘increase the burden on some of the most vulnerable members of society’.

The consultation team responded appropriately to the above points, with information relating to the Council’s Charging Policy.

1. **Headline Findings**
	1. **Proposal:** *The council wants to reduce the amount allowed for disability related expenditure to a minimum of £10 per week (whether single of one of a couple). What do you think about this?*

A total of (788) surveys were completed and received.

Respondents were asked if they agreed with the proposal. 57% of respondents disagreed with the proposal.

0 respondents chose to not answer this question.

Respondents were also asked to provide some commentary on their choice to agree/disagree with the proposal. 302 comments were recorded.

Themes emerged from the comments provided, significantly around:

1. Funding
2. The lack of funds of service users
3. The need for more funding
4. Cutbacks and that they affect the support required

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| --- | --- | --- |
| **Q2 Comments: The council wants to reduce the amount allowed for disability related expenditure to a minimum of £10 per week (whether single or one of a couple)** | **Total** | **%** |
| I don’t have the funds / I have low income | 106 | 35% |
| I need more funding / support, not less  | 82 | 27% |
| These cutbacks affect the support I need. | 42 | 14% |
| Personal circumstances should be taken into account  | 34 | 11% |
| Agree with the proposal | 19 | 6% |
| Need more information  | 14 | 5% |
| No comment | 5 | 2% |
| **TOTAL** | **302** | **100%** |

Respondents were also asked to state how a change in personal contribution would affect their day-to-day affordability:

*If you were asked to pay £10 per week more towards your care due to the change in the amount for disability related expenditure, how would this affect you?*

25 respondents chose to not answer this question.

88% of respondents reported that paying more towards their care would have at least some effect on their personal finances. Just over half believe that the paying more would affect their personal finances ‘a lot’.

Public Meetings

A question and answer session with members of the public formed the public consultation meetings. The following themes emerged from the meeting discussions:

*The Consultation Process*

* The existence of a generic consultation policy
* How to contact the council about the proposal
* When consultation documents will be published
* Benchmarking with other local authorities on the proposal

*The Equalities Impact Assessment*

* Has an Equalities Impact Assessment been completed?
* When will the Equalities Impact Assessment be shared?
* The legal implications of Equalities Impact Assessments

*The Proposal*

* Not completely understanding the proposal specifics
* Confusing the proposal with the ‘cutting’ of services
* Reference to the 2016 Disability Related Expenditure proposals
* Questioning why the council is consulting

*The Financial Assessment*

* How does a financial assessment work?
* How to request a financial assessment
* Allowances

*Off Topic/ Non-Related*

* Time with personal assistants
* The role of the social worker
1. This is a 22% increase in responses from the previous Disability Related Expenditure (DRE) consultation in April 2016 (641 responses) [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. This is a 4% increase in response rate from the previous Disability Related Expenditure (DRE) consultation in April 2016 [↑](#footnote-ref-2)