

Report to Health and Adult Social Care Scrutiny Board

10 March 2025

Subject:	Recommencement of Day Care Services Charges
Director:	Director of Adult Social Care Rashpal Bishop
Contact Officer:	Assistant Director – Commissioning, Integration and Adult Safeguarding Board Chris_anne_quest@sandwell.gov.uk

1 Recommendations

- 1.1 That the Board considers and comments upon the actions taken in relation to charging for Day Care Services post covid, and the proposal to recommence charges for Day Care Services from 7 April 2025.

2 Reasons for Recommendations

- 2.1 To support the achievement of the council's medium term financial plan for 2025/26.
- 2.2 To ensure we have a consistent approach to charging for all community based services as those in receipt of other community based services have continued to be charged whilst those in receipt of Day Care Services only had their charges paused.

3 How does this deliver objectives of the Council Plan?

Growing Up in Sandwell	
Living in Sandwell	Investment in care and support providers supports people to live well in Sandwell.
Thriving Economy in Sandwell	Investment in care and support providers supports local employment opportunities and a thriving economy in Sandwell.
Healthy in Sandwell	People live well and age well - Care and support services enable people to live independent lives in their own homes or close to home and facilitate access to community resources.
One Council One Team	

4 Context and Key Issues

- 4.1 During the COVID-19 pandemic, day care services ceased building-based support, and some shifted to an outreach model. Consequently, charging for those receiving Day Care Services only was paused as care and support plans were not representative of the support received.
- 4.2 Since Covid, some providers have continued to provide a blended service which includes building based and community based activities. To charge people accurately it was necessary to commence a programme of reviews for those people receiving Day Care Services only. There were 267 people who required a review to be completed to determine their current needs and ensure that their care and support plans reflected the service received.
- 4.3 This activity was initially funded through Covid monies to support addressing the backlog in reviews and to enable the council to get to a position where charges could be reintroduced. Those receiving Day Care Services only were prioritised as non- residential charges would be unlikely to increase for those receiving other social care support as a financial assessment is completed by Community Care Business Unit (CCBU) to link relevant charges to disposable income.
- 4.4 The review process to determine current needs for support is ongoing and focuses on both those receiving support from our largest independent sector provider and from in-house provision. This is process is on-going and is due to conclude by the end of March 2025 with a view to enabling charges to be reintroduced for day services for those people

who are currently not paying for their services from 7 April 2025. This will provide equity with other chargeable services.

- 4.5 Financial assessments for those currently not being charged for services have commenced and are on-going. The CCBU have plans in place to complete financial assessments for 144 people.
- 4.6 Sandwell MBC spends more on day care provision than any of its neighbouring authorities. We currently purchase 46,000 days of support per annum at a cost of £5.7 million, supporting 394 people. A review of service provision is currently underway with a view to moving towards a Day Opportunities model which provides greater opportunities for people to live 'ordinary lives' in their own communities with less reliance on building-based provision and increased access to outreach support and community activities including volunteering and work opportunities as part of a strength based approach. This will include the promotion of the use of Direct Payments to support people to have more choice and control over the support they receive from a vibrant mix of Day Opportunities.
- 4.7 To support this move we aim to agree a new charging model for all Day Care Services. Revised fees have been negotiated with Options for Life who are the largest provider of Day Care Services for people with disabilities and this is the first step towards rationalising fees across the market. The new rates are banded to reflect the level of support a person needs which may be one to one, where a support worker is allocated to work with one person, or up to one to four where the support worker oversees a group activity. This will ensure that fee rates reflect the actual level of support required by individuals. In-house Day Care Services fee rates are set to match market rates so these new fee rates will also be used to assess charges for those attending in-house services. It is planned that this approach will form the basis of a framework to be used to review and reset charges for Day Care Services across Sandwell.
- 4.8 It is expected that the income from recommencing Day Care charges will be in the region of £336,000 per annum and this will support the medium term financial plan for 2025/26.

5 Implications

Resources:	It is expected that the income from recommencing Day Care charges will be in the region of £336,000 per annum and this will support the medium term financial plan for 2025/26.
Legal and Governance:	This project has reported to Budget Scrutiny where a report to Health and Care Scrutiny Board was requested for consideration.
Risk:	Failure to complete the reviews and required financial assessments with the agreed timescales may delay the reintroduction of charges and have a negative impact on the income received which is supporting the medium term financial plan for 2025/26. Failure to include the in-house Day Care Services will also lead to a reduction in the proposed income from charges. Failure to agree a revised fee structure for the largest day services provider may also lead to delays in reintroducing charges.
Equality:	The reintroduction of fees for Day Care Services addresses the current inequity in charging for some services and not others. Those who are in receipt of additional community based services have continued to be charged – this paper relates to those receiving day care only.
Health and Wellbeing:	The provision of Day Care Services promotes the health and wellbeing of some of the most vulnerable members of our communities
Social Value:	This report supports local providers to employ local citizens to deliver valuable services
Climate Change:	There are no implications for climate change outcomes or any potential impact on the environment.
Corporate Parenting:	There are no implications for Corporate Parenting responsibilities

6 Appendices

None

7. Background Papers

None