



Appendix A

Annual Review of Swansea Council's Charging Policy (Social Services)

2022/23

Summary report based on work carried out on behalf of the Council
by the Social Services Finance and Charging Policy Working Group

January 2023 v8.2

1. Introduction

1.1 **Annual Review report**- sets out the finding and recommendation arising from Swansea Council's sixth annual review of social services charges to inform council policy and a revised list of charges, **due to come into effect from 1st April 2023**. This report builds on work undertaken in previous years to keep Swansea's charging fair and equal, and in line with the rest of Wales.

1.2 **Purpose and Scope of review** - the annual review is part of a programme of work undertaken during the year by the Social Services Finance and Charging group.

The annual review considers the following:

- how current arrangements are working
- whether there have been any changes in the policy context,
- operational issues in applying council policy,
- whether charges impacting on demand for social care
- what people are telling us,
- whether there are equalities impacts linked to the proposals.

The scope for the review is:

- To consider the level of inflationary uplift and minimum charging levels that should be applied to non- residential care charges in the 2023/24
- To consider whether any changes are needed to Council Policy
- To identify any next steps for year ahead

1.3 Social Services Finance & Charging Group

The Social Services Finance and Charging group is chaired by the Director of Social services to oversee how the Council's social services manages financial process and income generation, in our work with partners and citizens. This leadership group ensures effective implementation of the Council's charging (social services) policy, taking any decisions on changes to policy and through implementing the list of charges, agreed by Cabinet. This group also monitors the impact of the Charging

Policy on citizens and carers, as well as on managing the resources available to the Council.

1.4 **Swansea’s approach to the Annual Review of Social Services Charges** is based on Audit Wales best practice for reviewing charging, to help ensure that Swansea’s charging policy continues to be based on strong principles of fairness and equality, to support Council’s approach to achieve full cost recovery and transparency in how it is being implemented. Also, the “Five Ways of working” and set out by the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2016:

- Long Term
- Collaborative
- Preventative
- Integrated
- Involvement

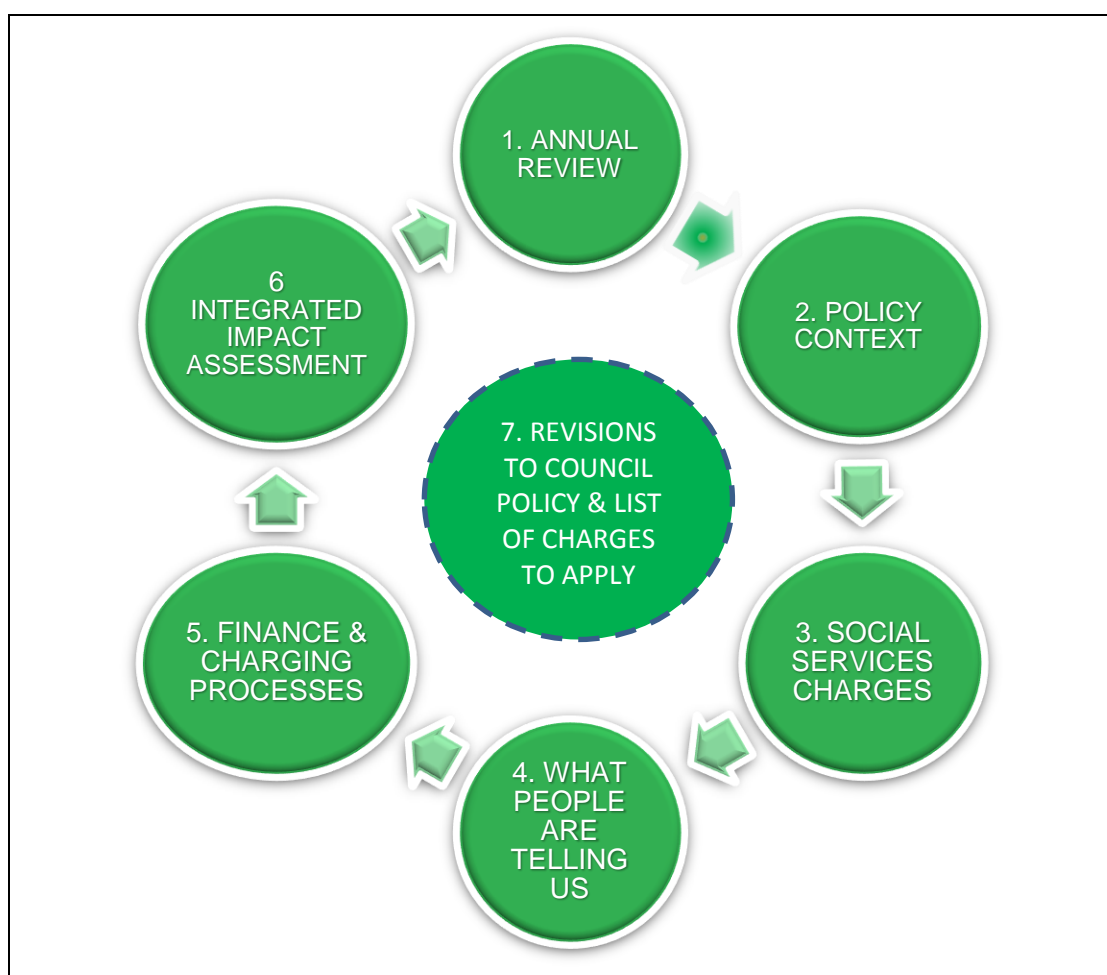


Figure 1 Swansea’s approach to annual review of social services charging

1.5 **Integrated Impact Assessment** -his review also uses the integrated impact assessment with this approach, to ensure that the list of charges as proposed by the Social Services Finance and Charging group, chaired by David Howes, Corporate Director of Social Services, taking into account the broader range of impacts on the people we serve, including groups with protected characteristics.

1.6 **Proposed List of Charges** - This annual review carried out on behalf of the Social Services Finance and Charging Group proposes a revised List of Charges to come into effect in 2023/24 and which are then to be appended to the Swansea Council's Charging Policy (Social Services) on the public website.

2. Policy Context

2.1 Part five of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014

Local authorities are empowered to charge for the care and support they provide / arrange to be provided (under sections 35 – 45 of the 2014 Act) to meet a person's needs. The charge can only relate to the 'cost that the local authority incurs in meeting the needs to which the charge applies' (s59(2)).

('the Act'), determines that a local authority can only charge individuals:

- Up to the cost of providing the service
- What the person can afford to pay for an assessed for service

These conditions are designed to ensure that local authorities do not charge for the actual assessment process – even if the person in need is a 'self-funder'.

2.2 **Statutory requirements.** Under section 59 of the Act, there are recently (amended) Care and Support (Charging) (Wales) Regulations 2015 [2], version 5 of the Part 4 and 5 Code of Practice (Charging and Financial Assessment, updated April 2020). These all determine that Welsh Local Authorities must publish their own interpretation of the relevant Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act Code of Practice, how any discretionary powers conferred by the Welsh Government will be exercised in the year ahead and a list of charges to apply.

2.3 **Local Authority Discretionary powers-** Where a council decides to charge for the care a person receives, it must do so in accordance with the regulations and codes of practice, as above. Welsh Councils retain considerable discretion on which social services are charged for, and the level of charge. The Welsh Government's social services charging policy framework requires Councils to show citizens how they intend to apply discretionary powers on charges for social services, within a charging policy.

2.4 **Statutory limits and thresholds.** The Act also states that any charges for social care cannot be set at a level higher than the cost of providing the service. That charges can only relate to the 'cost that the local authority incurs in meeting the assessed, eligible needs for managed care and support, to which the charges may apply (section 59-2).

Any changes to allowances that may apply in 2023/24, are not yet confirmed by Welsh Government, here is link to current guidance:

[Charging for social care | GOV.WALES](https://gov.wales/guidance/charging-for-social-care)

2.5 Recent changes in Wales

Health and Social Care are devolved in Wales, so how the Welsh Government intends to respond to any cuts to funding, or whether there are to be any changes to the statutory arrangements, remains uncertain.

Welsh Government's White Paper, Rebalancing care and support (February 2021), set out a series of proposals to "reduce complexity, increase sustainability, and strengthen integration". It proposed focussing on three areas for improvement:

- refocussing the fundamentals of the care market,
- reorientation of commissioning practices; and
- evolution of integration mechanisms.

Also, the Welsh Government's Programme for Government 2021-26, published in June 2021, committed to pursuing "a sustainable UK solution so that care is free for all at the point of need and/or consult on a potential Wales-only solution to meet our long-term care needs". Clearly there will be impact from public sector funding cuts. There has also been a recent Welsh Government policy consultation on eliminating profit out of placements for children in care, though charges do not extend into this area.

A Senedd Committee report: "Paying for care and support services (adult social care) - a guide for constituents" has been published in January 2022.

[paying-for-care-a-guide-for-constituents-english.pdf \(senedd.wales\)](#)

In February the Minister for Social Services in Wales announced the establishment of an expert group, which would produce a report and recommendations about the steps towards creating a National Care Service.

[Written Statement: National Care Service – Expert Group Report \(10 November 2022\) | GOV.WALES](#)

A report of the expert group on establishing a National Care & Support Service was published in September 2022.

[Establishing a national care and support service | GOV.WALES](#)

2.6 Discretionary powers

Councils by exercising their discretionary powers in charging for services to meet needs, are expected to act with a general requirement of 'reasonableness'. Citizens are protected by nationally determined capital limits, weekly charging caps and personal income allowances, which are set by Welsh Government every year by ministerial statement. In most circumstances, the council must also offer a financial assessment to citizens to ensure any charge made for care and support is reasonable compared to the person's financial means. Although charges are applied under a single policy framework, there are still some differences between calculating a charge for non-residential care (a maximum weekly charge may apply, and a

capital threshold limit may apply) and calculating a charge for residential care (capital threshold may apply).

2.7 Changes in UK

In some ways the England direction of travel is mirroring that which is already in place in Wales. In September 2021, the Prime Minister confirmed the government will be providing funding to support local authorities move towards paying providers a fair rate of care. The UK government also announced in their White Paper 'People at the Heart of Care' Adult Social Care Reform White Paper that from 2022 to 2025, ministers would provide £3.6 billion to reform the social care charging system, enable all local authorities to move towards paying providers a fair rate for care and prepare local care markets for implementing reform. Also, the UK government policy would go a step further by proposing a new £86,000 cap on the amount anyone in England will need to spend on their personal care over their lifetime. More recently it has been announced that social care charges reforms in England are delayed for two years until 2025. Social Care is devolved to the Welsh Government, and yet dependent on the UK Government for any additional funding to sustain the current charging and funding model.

2.8 Legal Challenges

If a person believes that the charge is 'more than reasonably practicable' for them to pay, they have the right to complain to the Council or to the Public Ombudsman and they are entitled to ask the Council for charges to be reconsidered. In Wales the charges for non-residential, community-based care and support are part of the national charging framework as outlined approve and a person's contribution is capped nationally at £100 per week. There have not been any successful legal challenges of social care charging policy reported in Wales this year.

3. Social Services Charges

3.1 Swansea **Council's Charging (social services) policy**. All charges relating to social care are covered by Swansea Council's Charging Policy (Social Services) – version 3. [Charging Policy \(Social Services\) - Swansea](#)

An updated draft version 4 is expected be published by April 2023.

3.2 **Key Principles** Swansea Council aims to be clear, fair and transparent in what we charge for, and we do this by publishing an annual schedule/ list of charges, as set out in a Swansea Council Charging Policy. There are some 'fairness' issues in applying this national charging policy, which in effect imposes a charging ceiling, which can mean everyone may be charged the same regardless of wealth or amount of service received, over a certain amount. The financial assessment is carried out, to means test this approach, though still this will clearly have greatest impact on those people with less income.

3.3 Swansea Council's financial strategy and spending rules is that officers work within the principle of full cost recovery, and we are continually working to improve our understanding of the costs of delivering services to the public, and the factors which cause variations in costs over a period of time, such as occupancy rates, staffing costs and inflationary pressures. Through the work of the Finance and Charging group, the most recently available 'unit costs', across the accepted categories of social services, are used as the basis for current charges, and to reflect full cost recovery.

3.4 Opportunities for Potential Charges - Welsh Government's current charging framework allows for discretion in charging adults for Care and Support services. In exercising this discretion, the Council must consider carefully whether any additional care and support services should to be added to the list of charges; whether within the community-based category, or by applying a flat rate, and the cost/ benefits of doing so.

The following table summarises potentially new services areas which have been actively considered during the past two years, and the current position of the Social Services Finance & Charging group.

Council service subject to discretion	Latest position:
Commissioning support – partners including administration cost	Within overall approach to re-charging
Carers support services	Not expected to apply under national framework
Community Alarm Service Charges	Installation fee and replacement pendant charges as flat rate charges are being considered, as part of annual service review- in year changes to charges, following IAA, may apply – see List of Charges.
Deferred Payments- administration	Not currently applied- see paragraph 3.6
Self-funders - administration	Not currently applied
Local Area Coordination	Not currently applied
Occupational Therapy –assessment for provision of equipment & assistance	Not currently applied
Employment related services	Not currently applied
Other- Preventative	Not currently applied
Services to Children, Young People & Families	Not expected to apply under national framework

3.5 Areas -charged not currently applied

Some areas are not suitable for local charges as they would act as a disincentive to people who are seeking to improve their own wellbeing. For example - employment, prevention and carers support.

Other areas such as administration costs have been actively considered, but the likely income to the Council that could be raised has to be balanced against the costs of collection.

3.6 Deferred Payments

The following table shows the current position in respect of deferred payments, and that resolution is expected in these areas, though the timetable for a sale of property to offset the bill of charges for social care is complicated by factors such as probate, housing and the housing market. It has been the view that charging additional administration or interest costs adds more financial cost, more work for the Council and additional complications in a relatively small number of cases, for what would be limited revenue source.

Deferred Payment	Number @ Nov. 2022
DPA's offered & accepted	35
DPA's offered	23 (awaiting paperwork)
S71 charge placed	15

3.6 **Benchmarking** - this annual review of charges has also looked at the 2022/23 charging schedules of some other Welsh Local Authorities and there are examples of Welsh Council's discretionary approaches to social services charging summarised at the end of the table in **Appendix 2**.

4. What people are telling us

4.1 **Public consultation**- there has been no formal public consultation undertaken this year in relation to charges, as the Council's charging (social services) policy has not changed.

4.2 Complaints/ Compliments

Social Services and Adult Services received a higher number of compliments in 2021/22 compared to previous year.

Some complaints are coming from individuals, their carers or relatives, in relation to the costs of their care. Annual Reports summarising the Complaints and Compliments received relating to Adult and Child and Family Services, are reported to Governance & Audit Committee. Work is currently underway on the latest reports.

Complaints received by Corporate Complaints Team relating specifically to social services charging (e.g. unhappy with charges levied) in year			
Outcome/ Year	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22
Stage One - Justified	-	7	4
Stage One -Partially Justified	-	2	1
Stage One - Not Justified/	1	1	-
Stage One - Local Resolution /Other	3	1	-
Stage One - Not Pursued/ Informal	-	-	-

Stage Two - Partially Justified	-	1	-
Stage Two - Not Pursued/ On-going	-	1	2
Totals	Stage 1 = 4 15, in total relating to Financial Issues	Stage 1 = 11 Stage 2 = 2	Stage 1 = 4 Stage 2 = 3 (relating to financial assessment)

There are also a high number of compliments praising the professional support provided, and the skills of the help given to people in accessing a range of social services. [Social Services Compliments 2021 to 2022](#)

4.3 Public Ombudsman

The Public Ombudsman cannot assess an individual's ability to pay for the cost of their care and support services, they sometimes receive complaints about related matters, which are summarised in a casebook (most recent case book 2021). <https://www.ombudsman.wales/case-books/>

5. Finance & Charging Processes

5.1 Financial Assessment

It is important that the financial assessment is offered to the person being charged for the care and support they actually receive, and that this assessment is carried out fairly, and accurately, based on the information provided. The financial assessment takes full account of a person's income and personal expenses, and it is also important that this assessment is reviewed as the person's circumstances change, and annually.

5.2 Social Care Income and Finance Team

The Social Care Finance Team is part of the Revenues and Benefits Service within the Financial Services Department and is responsible for:

- Undertaking financial assessments of clients' contributions towards the cost of their care
- Collection of those client contributions
- Scrutiny of claims for re-imburement from care providers
- Payments to care providers for residential and non-residential care
- Payments of Fostering and Adoption allowances including the means test that determines the allowance paid to an adopting parent
- Payment of Special Guardianship Allowances
- Payment of Direct Payments

This important section currently deals with expenditure on behalf of Social Services of approximately £50 million per year and last year generated £14 million of income

to the Council. Overall, the Revenues and Benefits service manages transactions of approximately £300m a year. Staff have generously been working overtime over the last 18 months, so to avoid any significant work delays impacting on citizens, providers and partners. The SCIF team continues to provide a high standard of service on behalf of the Council's social services.

In 2021/22, the SCIF team carried out **5,011** financial assessments of social care clients (6,830 financial assessments were undertaken in 2020/21)

Of this number, there were:

- **1,625** assessments of new clients (2,477)
- **3,386** reviews of existing clients (4,353)

The overall number of assessments has reduced slightly during the last financial year. This can be attributed to the continued presence of covid, and the immense pressures facing the care industry with a reduction in available beds and the increasing fragility of the health and social care sector, for example in domiciliary care provision.

In response to the pandemic, there has been considerable additional work carried out by the SCIF team in relation to:

- Residential Care:** As a result of the Covid responses between the Council and Health, the SCIF team dealt with a variety of different placements as a result of new pathways aimed at rapid discharge to help Health in releasing beds. New placement types were set up at short notice to facilitate easier reporting for Social Services. To ease pressures on residential care providers and allow them to focus on the covid crisis, payments for new residents were changed from net to gross. This means that the providers would not have to collect client contribution for new residents thereby reducing their administrative burdens. Gross payments have provided the residential social care sector with additional stability needed during this uncertain period. Many residents are moving through the cycle of community-based services and into residential / nursing care so are more used to receiving invoices from the Council towards the cost of their care. This innovative process has worked well, and the Social Services Finance & Charging groups has agreed to the arrangement at this time.
- Domiciliary Care:** The section worked closely with Commissioning to put into place block payments for residential providers during the first lockdown. Following the RAG status of all Packages Of Care (POCs) by Adult Services, a number were amended or cancelled, following collaboration between the council, provider and families. To stabilise the market during uncertain times, block payments were arranged which guaranteed payments to providers at a time when they were in a critical position. The SCIF team also been involved in other commissioning changes including the calculation and issuing of invoice templates at short notice due to a mid-year uplift in provider rates and are shortly due to redo this exercise following a further change to commissioning practices for payment of short calls.

- c) **Direct Payments:** Work has taken place in the area of Direct Payments to ensure that there are robust systems for managing and reviewing how individuals are using funds to achieve their agreed outcomes, and where there is outstanding funds, these are recovered to the Council. Our small Direct Payments section have processed 582 care worker payments, and then paid out £429,500 for eligible personal assistants under the Welsh Government scheme.

5.3 Income Generation - Table showing Income Generated by year to date.

Service Category	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	Totals
Community Alarms	487,686	450,380	395,850	494,843	1,828,760
Day Services	433,814	559,804	241,030	272,057	1,506,705
Direct Payments	886,157	1,371,828	1,341,393	1,173,909	4,773,287
Domiciliary Care	2,790,267	2,803,476	2,823,830	2,738,092	11,155,664
Other/Admin.	392,490	545,833	378,394	300,569	1,617,285
Residential Care	11,579,594	12,845,876	11,628,620	11,007,404	47,061,495
Grand Total	16,570,008	18,577,197	16,809,117	15,986,874	67,943,196

Table 3. Adult Services Yearly Analysis of income/ income related to charging by type - figures based on information within the Council's financial ledger

Main Points from previous table:

- Significant income is generated by charging for Adult Social Care
- Overall the figure continues to be impacted by the pandemic, as the Council's, adult community-based and residential care services have modified their offer in response to the emerging situation, and workforce pressures.
- In last year's report when considering income projections for Adult Services in Swansea in 2021/22, we estimated the net loss of income within Adult Services to be in the order of £1.46m
- The above table shows a £800k fall in income generated to Swansea Council related to adult social care, in comparison to last year.
- The table shows a £0.6m fall in income relating to residential care
- Income from community alarms has risen by £99k. This is a 25% increase and takes the service above the income peaks achieved in 2018/19.
- Domiciliary Care income is 3% lower than the previous year and income in this sector has proven relatively consistent in value over the last four years
- Income from day service charges has risen by £31k
- Income from direct payment recovery has fallen, though this will not be considered as income in future reports.
- The reduction in other/administration is caused by a 9% drop in the income generated through the Client Finances Teams and the fall out of £45k of one-off income generated within Suresprung in 20/21

5.4 Any projection of income expected in 2022/23 is not an exact science due to the number of variables involved, for example demand for service, changes in household incomes, and the impact on thresholds. The Social Service Performance

and Financial Monitoring meeting continue monitor internal and external income as part of the budget reporting, and action taken is accordingly.

5.5 Debt Recovery / Invoicing

Considerable work has been undertaken through the year to reduce outstanding debt in social services. As at 31/03/22, the residential care related debt outstanding for more than 90 days stood at £4.1m. Of this, £1.4m related to just 16 debts over £50,000 which we are recovering and are in hand. Non-residential debt over 90 days to year end was reported at £512k. Of which £104k relates to 7 debts.

We are currently working with citizens, representatives and social services colleagues to recover these debts and make appropriate resolutions.

Debt recovery is still impacted by Covid as property sales are taking longer to complete and probate is taking longer to be granted. We are also seeing an increased number of cases where people who owe money have lost capacity. Court of Protection applications are currently taking over 9 months to register from the date of application during which time debts to the authority increase whilst a person is waiting to be appointed. The current cost of living crisis is also undoubtedly having an impact; however, this is not quantifiable at the current time.

Local authorities are not permitted to withdraw care and support services, due to a person failing to pay for them– but are expected to act reasonably and they are permitted to take debt recovery action. A Corporate Debt recovery policy is being developed to set out Swansea Council's approach, and expected to ready for publication, subject to approval, next year.

Alongside the work above, it is vital that we are consistent in our work with partners, in ensuring that invoices for services or work we provide on their behalf are raised in a timely, reliable and realistic way. We notify partners of any changes to social care fees and charges, based on the work on Finance & Charging group, reflecting the actual costs of the commissioned services, which in turn, are based on accurate figures for service usage, and estimates of all the costs are applied.

Effective joint working between SCIFT, Corporate Commercial and Procurement teams and the Social Services Finance officers continues to ensure that all our invoicing and debt recovery processes are working effectively.

5.7 Grant Schemes

For the past two years, Revenues and Benefits Section (which includes Social Care Income and Finance) has been administering a number of grants schemes on behalf of Welsh Government. These schemes include:

- Self Isolation Payments
- Winter Fuel Support (21/22 scheme)
- Unpaid Carer's Grant
- Cost of Living Grant
- Fuel Support (22/23 scheme) – this scheme is currently ongoing until 28/02/23 where thousands of citizens are able to receive a one-off payment of £200 towards their fuel costs.

To support residents during the Covid pandemic and the current cost of living crisis, staff have processed a staggering 157,757 applications to date from the citizens of Swansea and have paid out over £28 million in support during the Covid pandemic and cost of living crisis. This is not the final number of applications as two schemes are currently ongoing.

It is as a result of staff generously working a substantial number of overtime hours over the last 2.5 years that the section has not suffered significant work delays and continues to provide a high standard of service on behalf of Social Services.

The current cost of living crisis poses a risk to income collection undertaken by the department on behalf of Social Services as citizens face higher living costs. Also, if further additional work is given to the service (e.g. more Welsh Government grants) or we are unable to maintain staffing resources at current level, then performance may not be as expected.

5.8 Other process Improvements made during year

WCCIS - the introduction of the Wales Community Care Information System (WCCIS) to Swansea Council has been seen as an opportunity to review our business processes. As well as a more outcomes focused social work assessment and case management review, WCCIS holds information on people receiving a range of services, including:

- Internal Home Care
- Domiciliary Care
- Day Care
- Direct Payments
- Residential and Nursing Care

Swansea's WCCIS system went live in April 2021, supported by skilled business support to ensure that decisions are being made with the most accurate up to date information possible, and early signs are promising. Previously details of which services a person is receiving were held across a number of different systems, with no easy means of collating the information for reporting. We are developing interfaces between Swansea's CCIS and Corporate Abacus systems to streamline a new end to end process, that puts the citizen firmly at the centre and involves closer working between social workers and business support.

Work has continued on strengthening links between social work practitioners and the Social Care Finance Team, to make sure that any changes in care and support plans triggers a new or revised financial assessment and fair charging. This work aims to make sure that Charging policy is fairly applied to all people receiving social services in Swansea, and that there are no individuals in receipt of services without a financial assessment or subject to charging.

The Council has developed a 'provider portal' which care providers can use to provide details of the care they have supplied which ensures payments are made to them rapidly. The portal also supports early scrutiny of payment requests to ensure they are within the required parameters. Work will continue to roll this out to all providers in the city of the coming year.

6. Integrated Impact Assessment

6.1 The current economic situation, as the world continues to respond to the pandemic, remains one of uncertainty, stories of personal and family struggle and public facing agencies responding quickly to each set of circumstances as they arise. This period, with the additional challenges of changes to welfare benefits, universal credit, inflation rises, specifically food, energy and fuel prices, and the costs of Brexit are having a devastating impact on some individuals, families, communities and businesses. Government support to ease these impacts during the pandemic has largely tailed off for businesses, and the fiscal priority again seems to be on reducing the public sector borrowing requirement. Additional investment in Health and Social Care was due to be funded by increases in national insurance, and these changes have been put back. Overall, the financial outlook for all public services in Wales is likely to be extremely challenging over the next decade.

A more detailed analysis is set out in the Council's Medium Term Financial Plan.

6.2 Deprivation is an important consideration when looking at imposing charges on the care and support of our most vulnerable citizens and in support of their carers. The Wales Index of Multiple Deprivation (WIMD) is updated every 4 to 5 years. The most recent index was published in 2019, **17 (11.5%)** of Swansea's 148 LSOAs are in the most deprived 10 per cent in Wales (similar to the overall proportion in 2014). Swansea also has 8 Lower-layer Super Output Areas (LSOAs) in what is termed Deep-Rooted Deprivation; those that have remained within the top 50 most deprived – roughly equal to the top 2.6% – small areas in Wales for the last five publications of WIMD ranks. The current economic situation is likely to have greatest impact in these areas.

6.3 Overall the financial outlook coupled with high demand for social care and population changes mean that the Council continues to apply the Welsh Government's framework for local authority social services charging to ensuring the continued sustainability of our services. Swansea's corporate financial policy on setting charges still sets out an expectation on all services to aim for Full Cost recovery where possible, and to operate within the key principles set out in the Sustainable Swansea programme, and through objectives in the Corporate Plan 2022-23.

Actions to be taken:

- A Full Integrated Impact Assessment to be completed following Council's public consultation on the budget 2023/24, taking place in January.

7. Revisions to Council Charging Policy and the List of Charges to apply in 2022/23

7.1 Swansea Council Charging Policy (Social Services)

The Council's policy and this annual review process, as reflected in this report, aims to ensure that charging, where it occurs, is consistent, fair and clearly understood. Individuals when asked to pay a charge will only be required to pay what they can afford.

The current policy takes into account the principles set out in the charging and financial assessment framework introduced by the Act, and the relevant codes of practice.

Public Information and advice about charging is available on the council website, and leaflet, taking account of individual communication needs, on request. Swansea Council are committed to giving people a stronger voice and real control over the care and support they need, to achieve their own well-being outcomes

Actions to be taken:

- Social Services Finance and Charging group ensures that up to date public information is available on the new corporate website
- The Charging (social services) policy is reviewed and updated regularly by the Social Services Finance and Charging group to reflect national policy and local guidance.

7.2 Changes within the List of Charges as published prior to the start of the financial year should reflect the many inflationary pressures impacting on the social care sector. The costs of providing social care services are subject to inflationary pressures. Significant changes have been made in previous years to ensure that Swansea's charging policy is consistent with most other local authorities in Wales, and that this policy is applied with fairness and equity. Unless Swansea keeps pace with inflationary increase put into place by other Welsh Local Authorities, then the gaps will reappear. Inflation (CPI) currently stands at close to 10%, and it stood at 11.2% in October 2022

The inflation currently stands at 9.2% (January 2023), and it is expected to remain close to 10% for a time. Even though inflation may fall during 2023, many of the household impact items will have already increased in price. The current inflation pressures will remain with their impact on households, providers and services through energy costs, food costs, travel cost, interest rates and higher taxation/national insurance.

These higher running costs added to higher wage bills will continue to impact on the delivery of public services in 2022/23, and disproportionately on adult social care: <https://obr.uk/overview-of-the-november-2022-economic-and-fiscal-outlook/>

Actions to be taken:

- Proposal to Cabinet, on behalf of the Social Services Finance & Charging group, is to increase all charges by **10%** to apply to all set out in the List of Charges to apply in 2023/23.
- An Integrated Impact Assessment screening has been undertaken, and this proposal is still considered to be low impact on the basis that everyone who is the subject of social services charges is offered a fair financial assessment, and then can expect to be charged within the protection of the thresholds set

under the Welsh Government national charging framework. However, the Council recognises that a 10% uplift to public charges is significant at this time, and a full Integrated Impact Assessment is needed before a decision is taken.

- The Council's public consultation linked to the budget 2023/24 asks the public for their views on the proposal of an inflationary increase to social services charges. The public consultation closes on 31st January 2023, and the set of responses will be considered within the full Integrated Impact Assessment.

8. Conclusions

In summary Swansea Council's annual review of social services has taken into account the following

- Policy Annual review approach
- Social Services charging framework
- What people are telling us
- Continuous process improvements
- Integrated Impact
- Comparisons with some other Welsh LAs
- Any revisions needed

Within the current context, it is not deemed necessary or appropriate to consult upon making any changes to the current charging policy.

9. Recommendations

Cabinet is asked to accept the findings of the annual review of changes, and that there are no new service charges **to apply in 2023/24**.

- A Full Integrated Impact Assessment to be completed following Council's public consultation on the budget 2023/24, taking place in January 2023.
- Subject to the outcome of the full Integrated Impact Assessment to agree that an inflationary increase of **10%** to be applied to all social services charges to come into effect on 1st April 2023.
- Cabinet to approve the list of social services charges to apply from 1st April 2023, for the year 2023/24.
- The revised List of social services charges 2023/24 (Appendix 1), once agreed, is appended to the Council's Charging (social services) policy.

Appendix 1 Swansea Council List of Charges (to apply in 2023/24) v3

These are the amount clients will be charged for social care services, subject to any limits on the maximum charge specified by Welsh Government.

1. Residential Care and Support Services (Local Authority)

Council's in-house residential care service delivers a high-quality service for individuals with complex needs, and also offer placements for residential reablement and respite care.

The charges shown below are for the council-run care homes only and are only indicative of the average weekly costs of care and support, as some individuals may have additional needs to be identified and charged accordingly.

All charges for residential care are means tested. Residents may only be required to pay a contribution towards the total weekly cost. In certain circumstances, residents may be required to pay the full cost of residential care.

a) Long Term Residential Care (Local Authority)

Charges for Services by category of care	Weekly 2022/23	charges	in	Weekly 2023/24	charges	in	% Increase/ Comment
Residential Care							
/ Council run only							
Elderly Care	£643.65			£708.02			10%
Dementia Care	£643.65			£708.02			10%
Mental Health	£1,686.58			£1,855.24			10%
Learning Disabilities	£1,686.58			£1,855.24			10%
Younger Adults	£1,686.58			£1,855.24			10%

As part of a planned response to the current crisis, Adult Services are currently offering nursing placements within In-House Services.

Charges for Services by category of care Nursing care/ Council run only	Weekly 2022/23	charges	in	Weekly 2023/24	charges	in	% Increase/ Comment
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Adults	£722			£794.20			10%
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The charge (fee) is set at a rate in line with external nursing placement

b) Short Term Residential Care (Local Authority)

Note: Within short term residential care placements, if the long-term destination of the client is known then residential care rates are applied, in circumstance where someone is due to go into long-term care, or community care rates from day 1, such as:

- if they are placed in a temporary bed pending the provision of Domiciliary Care;
- Or, where a social care assessment is required.

Then a 2-week period free of charges are followed by the residential / or community care rates from week 3 onwards, pending a decision on their next placement.

Charges for Services by category of care	Weekly charges in 2022/23	Weekly charges in 2023/24	% Increase/ Comment
All adults short term residential care: Planned respite – non-residential community care rates	£100	TBC by Welsh Government	Continue to reflect Max. weekly charge set by Welsh Government
Residential Reablement - up to 6 weeks free	n/a	n/a	
Step-up / Step-down temporary beds -up to 2 weeks free	Non-residential community rate or residential rate	Non-residential community rate or residential rate	Fees charged based on longer-term care destination

2. Non-residential, community-based care and support Services

- Domiciliary Care – is care in the client’s home provided by a private sector provider
 - Home Care – is care in the client’s home provided by the Local Authority
- All charges are means tested up to the maximum standard charge as outlined below

Charges for Services per category of care	Weekly charges in 2022/23	Weekly charges in 2023/24	% Increase/ Comment
All adults Non-residential, community-based care and support Services			
Domiciliary Care or Home Care, including respite at home, supported living	£19.88 per hour	£21.87	10%
Older Persons Day Services	£46.20 per day	£50.82	10%
Day Services Younger Adults /Special Needs Day Services	£57.78 /day	£63.56	10%

3. Flat rate charges for other services provided by Swansea Council

These social care charges for Council run services are discretionary, and are **not** subject to a means test, or a maximum weekly charge.

Charges for Services per category of care	Weekly charges in 2022/23	Weekly charges in 2023/24	% Increase/ Comment
Adult social care charges for Council run services			
Community Alarms (Lifelines)	£150.80 exclusive VAT (four quarterly instalments of £37.70) £180.96 inclusive VAT (four quarterly instalments of £45.24)	£165.88 exclusive VAT £199 exclusive VAT	10% Fitting charges may be subject to charge, following review of service https://www.swansea.gov.uk/communityalarms
Meals (within community-based, day services)	£4.05	£4.46	10%
Court of Protection Deputyship	Court of Protection Deputyship charges as set in law by the Ministry of Justice	Court of Protection Deputyship charges as set in law by the Ministry of Justice	
Pre-Deputy support charge	£5 per week	£5 per week	No change proposed

APPENDIX 2: COMPARISON WITH OTHER WELSH LOCAL AUTHORITIES

- a) Table showing latest available information about how Swansea's social services charges compare to selected other Welsh Local Authorities. This year due to Covid, information has been collated and updated following a web search for the following service areas:

Local Authority Social Services Charges in 2022/23	Home Care (subject to weekly charge)	Day Care (subject to weekly charge)	Direct Payments	Residential Care Long Term /Temp Elderly/ week	Residential Care Short Term/ Respite (Telecare/ Lifeline (per week)	Other (per day)
Swansea (2022/23) <u>Updated</u>	£19.88 per hour	£46.20/ day- older people £57.78/ day- adults	Variable	£643.65- older people £1,686.58- learning disability £672.59- Nursing	£100 (Max weekly charge applies)	£45.24 per quarter, incl VAT	Meal £4.05
NPT <u>Updated but no figures available</u>	£16 per hour subject to 2% increase	£30 per attendance	Value of direct payment	£572.37 (standard res. Care) £767 (Pobl charges to new residents) subject to 2% increase	£100 (Max weekly charge applies)	£2.70 (T/c) £3.95 (LL) £5.70 (LL- Extra) subject to 2% increase	Meal £4.60
Bridgend <u>Updated</u>	£20.92	£37.29 / day £70.26/ day	Variable	Remodelling	£100 (Max weekly charge applies)	£6.55/ week (one person in household)	Meal - £5.66 Tea/snacks £1.69

Carmarthenshire <u>Updated</u>	£18.00 per hour (community support)	£17.60 per session	PA rates £13.40 per hour/£110.80 per night	N/a	£100 (Max weekly charge applies)	£48.75 ,per quarter	Meal £5.35
Powys <u>Updated</u>	£20.50 per hour	£15.00 per day	£11.41 per hour PA rate £14.47 per Hour agency rate	Residential £659 Dementia care £669 Nursing £660	£100 (Max weekly charge applies)		Meal £7.50
Pembs <u>Updated</u>	£18.27/ hour	Day Opportunities £43.45	£12.69	Residential £717.45	£100 (Max weekly charge applies)	£2.24- with Disablement Exemption Certificate £2.69 -without Disablement Exemption Certificate	Meal- TBC
RCT <u>Updated</u>	£17.00/ hour	£17 per day	£10.00 per hour	Determined on individual basis	£100 (Max weekly charge applies)	£143.98 p.a	Minimum weekly charge = £4.05 per week