

Appendix A

Fairer Contribution Consultation Report

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Barnet Council opened a consultation to receive feedback from residents about changes to our fairer contribution policy.
- 1.2 The first proposal was to increase the hourly cost of social care from £15.28 to £17.00 to more closely reflect the actual cost of care, which is on average costs the council £18.05 an hour.
- 1.3 The second proposal was that from 1 April 2020 individuals who are above the capital / savings threshold (£23,250) and could otherwise afford to self-fund their own care will be charged a one-off fee of £300 for arrangement of the care.
- 1.4 As part of this process, a consultation period of 4 weeks was held to seek residents' feedback on the changes to our fairer contribution policy in order to include in a committee report to be discussed at the Adults and Safeguarding Committee on 17 February 2020.

2. Methodology

- 2.1 The questionnaires asked respondents how much they supported or opposed the two proposals and how much these policies would affect them.
- 2.2 There were also open-ended, free text boxes which allowed respondents to add in what they thought about the priorities and our fees and charges policy in general.
- 2.3 The Fairer Contribution policy was consulted on over a month period from 13 January until 10 February 2020.
- 2.4 The questionnaire was uploaded onto Engage Barnet and 269 paper questionnaires were sent out to a random selection of residents that are part of the People Bank to ensure a greater number and diversity of respondents.
- 2.5 A total of 55 responses were received during the period of consultation; 12 responses were filled in on Engage Barnet and 43 paper copies of the questionnaire were filled in and sent back.

3. Demographics of respondents

- 3.1 The majority of responses were almost evenly split between respondents who use council funded social care (34.8%) or respondents who fund their own social care (30.4%). There were also responses from carers of someone who funds their own social care (15.2%), health or social care professionals (6.5%) or a carer of someone who uses council funded social care (4.4%).
- 3.2 The council is also required by the Equality Act 2010 to have due regard to ensuring people are treated fairly and particularly in relation to those with

protected characteristics- age, disability, ethnicity, gender, gender reassignment, marriage/civil partnership, pregnancy, maternity, religion/belief and sexual orientation.

- 3.3 The largest group of respondents by age were 75+ year olds (34.6%) and the second largest group 65-74-year olds (19.2%).
- 3.4 There were slightly more male respondents (56.9%) than females (43.1%).
- 3.5 Most respondents were heterosexual (70.5%), 4.6% were bisexual and 25.0% preferred not to say.
- 3.6 83.7% of respondents identified as having a disability.
- 3.7 The main ethnicity that responded was White British (59.6%), with strong representation from Black British (15.4%) and Asian Indian (11.5%) groups as well.
- 3.8 Moreover, the main religious group of respondents was Christian (46.0%), whilst many respondents selected no religion (14.0%), Jewish (16.0%), Hindu (14.0%), Muslim (2.0%) or preferred not to say (6.0%).
- 3.9 There was an even spread of respondents according to marital status as 46.0% of respondents were single, 22.0% were married, 18.0% widowed, 8.0% were divorced, and 6.0% preferred not to say.

4. Results

- 4.1 Proposal 1: to increase the hourly cost of social care from £15.28 to £17.00 to more closely reflect the actual cost of care, which is on average costs the council £18.05 an hour.
 - 4.1.1 A total of 55 respondents answered the first question: 'To what extent do you support or oppose the proposal?', the results of which are below:

To what extent do you support or oppose the proposal?	Percentage of respondents	Number of respondents
Strongly support	12.7%	7
Tend to support	27.3%	15
Neither support nor oppose	18.2%	10
Tend to oppose	7.3%	4
Strongly oppose	27.3%	15
Don't know/Not sure	7.3%	4

4.1.2 A total of 49 respondents answered the second question: ‘What impact do you think this proposal would have on you or your family?’, the results of which are below:

What impact do you think this proposal would have on you or your family?	Percentage of respondents	Number of respondents
Very positive	4.1%	2
Quite positive	4.1%	2
No change	34.7%	17
Quite negative	26.5%	13
Very negative	28.6%	14
Don't know/ Not sure	2.0%	1

4.1.3 Additionally, those who supported the proposal tended to think the impact would have no change or a positive impact on them or their families' circumstances (76.5%).

4.1.4 Whereas, 100.0% of those who opposed the first proposal thought it would have a quite negative or very negative impact on their circumstances which suggests there is a correlation between support for the proposal and impact on circumstances.

4.1.5 The additional responses to the free-text option of why people responded the way they did included:

- Social care costs are already too expensive.
- The time care workers charge for are not always accurate.
- It will mean better wages for care workers.
- Money is already collected towards this from the raising of council tax.
- Once the concept of a small increase has been consulted and agreed, future increases will inevitably be longer.
- Increase is more than national living wage so shouldn't be increased.
- Homecare is important and to ensure that people accept the job they should be given a fair wage.
- I understand what the problem is, but I don't feel that individuals with disabilities should be charged extra. I have a strong sense of justice.
- Money saved in one department can go to help another.
- Realistic prices need to be charged. However, the correct rules on capital/saving penalises self-sufficient families and is unfair and divisive
- I realise that costs are going up, so it is fair to increase hourly rate. However, there is no mention of the amount of money someone can keep going up to compensate for increased costs.
- It is greedy to ask for more money.

- The people pay tax, NI and others. Still disabled people need help from the government. We get NHS, medicine, GP, social security, free equipment and good care company. You need to collect some money from us. It's okay, but you need to contact care.
- Living in London in post-Brexit Britain will mean higher costs for goods and services. So many senior citizens already struggle with their finance. This proposal is a 10 per cent increase - way above the inflation rate and pension early state adjustment.
- It's too much money

4.2 Proposal 2: from 1 April 2020 individuals who are above the capital / savings threshold (£23,250) and could otherwise afford to self-fund their own care will be charged a one-off fee of £300 for arrangement of the care.

4.2.1 A total of 52 people answered the question: 'To what extent do you support or oppose the proposal?', the results of which are in the table below:

To what extent do you support or oppose the proposal?	Percentage of respondents	Number of respondents
Strongly support	5.8%	3
Tend to support	23.1%	12
Neither support nor oppose	15.4%	8
Tend to oppose	11.5%	6
Strongly oppose	36.5%	19
Don't know/Not sure	7.7%	4

4.2.2 A total of 48 respondents answered the second question: 'What impact do you think this proposal would have on you or your family?', the results of which are below:

What impact do you think this proposal would have on you or your family?	Percentage of respondents	Number of respondents
Very positive	2.1%	1
Quite positive	8.3%	4
No change	39.6%	19
Quite negative	27.1%	13
Very negative	12.5%	6
Don't know/ Not sure	10.4%	5

4.2.3 Overall, those who supported the proposal tended to think the impact would have no change or a positive impact on them or their families' circumstances (92.9%).

4.2.4 Whereas, 65.0% of those who opposed the first proposal thought it would have a quite negative or very negative impact on their circumstances which suggests there is a correlation between support for the proposal and impact on circumstances.

4.2.5 The additional responses to the free-text option of why people responded the way they did included:

- This will have a lesser impact on individual quality of life than an ongoing charge.
- Once a fee is introduced it is bound to increase by large amounts each year.
- Council doesn't do enough work to justify £300.
- If people have that much in savings, they should use it towards their care.
- Not everyone above the threshold can afford their own care.
- £23,000 is a reasonable threshold after which people should pay for their own care.
- £300 too much money to have to pay.
- It seems fair as a one-off fee.
- The fee will help people who do not have savings.
- Because they can afford it.
- I think this is unfair on people who saved for their retirement and always have paid their taxes.
- Not only do families actively relieve the costs to the council, you are now charging for the pleasure.
- It is the council that wants to charge people - they should not take extra money.
- I feel that the service users I support do not get enough benefits to pay the amount of fairer contributions that has been billed.
- Capital/savings above £23K should allow for contribution towards care although if residential care is required this amount will soon dissipate.
- Where does this figure come from? Why is it not £50 or £500? Once a fee is introduced, it's size is bound to increase by large amounts each year.
- I didn't have £23.250 so it won't affect me.
- My brother has private care and only his pension so private care has been better for him.
- We understand and appreciate that there are admin costs to keep everything in the office running smoothly.
- Our time is consumed with 24/7 support for family members who needs full time attention. This will bring additional stress and complications.
- The 23,250 threshold is a ridiculous figure in 2020 to determine affordability to self-fund. The £300, who paid for this previously?

4.3 The responses to a final free text option in which respondents were asked if they had any other suggestions for how the council charges its residents for care services can be summarised below:

- Treat each case as an individual. Do not pigeon hole individuals especially, as they require care, they are not always capable of managing their care.
- Sometimes there are exceptions.
- Enforce the private health care companies to fulfil their time allocations and charge accordingly. They can and do abuse the system.
- Do you mean we will pay £300 per year regardless of how many hours of care we have? If that is the case, I support your change
- Would be very careful about his care providers.
- Keep better control of care agencies. Improve administration and communication.
- Put up the council tax for working people. This system is going to suffer a lot for people on benefits, struggling to budget.
- In an ideal world they wouldn't be charged, but it's not ideal. The way charges are calculated is a lottery
- Do not have the knowledge to suggest how the council could better charge its residents. However, what is the point of this exercise? Changes clearly need to be increased at some time. The proposed figures will be adopted regardless of the result even if 100% oppose.
- I think people using the services should be properly assessed. Because sometimes the contributions do not correctly reflect the actual person's financial standing
- An increase of up to 20% in charges looks reasonable
- The adult UK population is aging. More thought is needed by central and local government to avoid increased hardship.
- Why do we have to give you more? If I didn't pay the council so much, I could give you tips.
- I feel this system is discriminating as it focuses on people who are more needy
- I suggest that the system be adjusted so people are charged regularly every 4 weeks for example & that the system knows when they have paid. People cannot afford to buy clothes or go to everyday activities as all money go to the council. Costs of food and utilities are increased by a lot, but amount council allows form benefits hasn't. Nothing seems fair about this contribution. It limits how well vulnerable adults live their lives, it restricts choices and does not promote inclusion.
- Low regular payments.
- They take too much money it stops me doing things.

5. Conclusion

- 5.1 Overall, respondents tended to slightly support the first proposal and opposed the second proposal.
- 5.2 Most respondents seem to think that the proposals will have no change or a quite negative impact on them or their families' circumstances.
- 5.3 Those who thought the proposals would have a negative effect on their circumstances were more likely to oppose them. Whereas those who thought the proposals would have a positive or no effect were more likely to support them.
- 5.4 There was almost an even split amongst respondents of those who fund their own social care and those who use council-funded social care.