



## Results of consultation on proposed changes to the Adult Social Care Charging Policy

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# 1. Introduction

On 3 October 2016, Kirklees Council Cabinet were presented with a new version of the Council's Adult Social Care Charging Policy.

This policy governs how adult social care service users and their families are charged for services received.

The Cabinet report highlighted the proposed changes and the expected impact on our service users.

The recommendation that was agreed at Cabinet was to put the proposals out to public consultation to ensure the views of service users, families, partner organisations and members of the community were able to present their views and opinions on the proposals.

This consultation took place between 11 October and 12 December 2016.

## Headline Results

The consultation questionnaire consisted of 7 specific questions focused on different aspects of the Charging Policy and represented all of the key changes from the previous version.

The consultation also included an additional question that allowed the responder to make comments on any aspect of the policy or associated policies.

Finally the consultation asked the responder to state in which capacity they had completed the survey.

## Overall Statistics

550 forms were completed within the survey period. This was comprised mainly of completed web forms but also included completed paper copies that were sent in by post and a number of Easy Read documents created

to assist people with Learning Disabilities to understand the consultation.

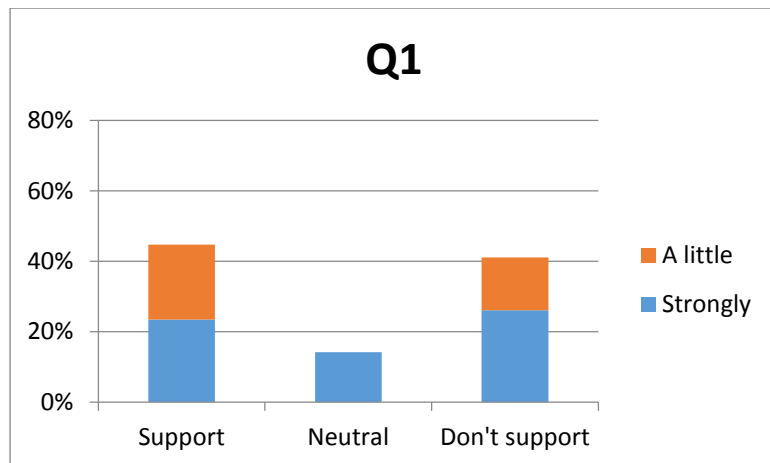
Of these 550 responses, not every question was completed.

Just over half of the responses (230) contained a comment for question 8. These are detailed in Appendix A.

The next section analyses the findings per question/proposal

## Detailed Analysis

### Proposal 1. Removal of a discounted rate for respite stays



Strongly support	124	23%
Support a little	112	21%
Neutral	75	14%
Don't really support	79	15%
Don't support at all	138	26%
Total	528	

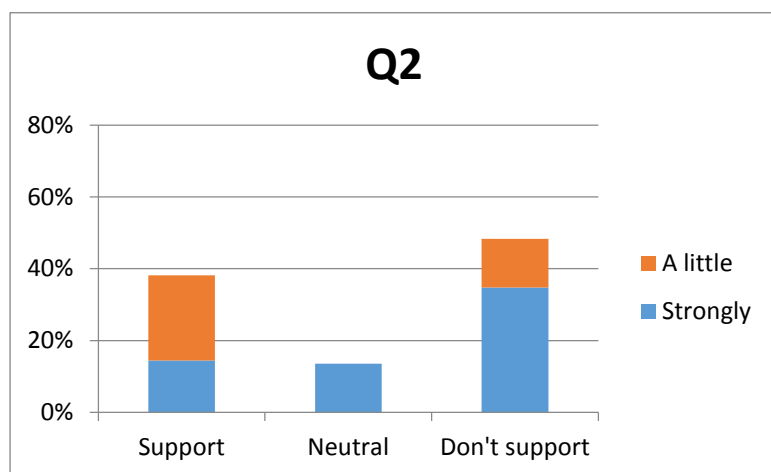
The feedback for this proposal is broadly 50/50.

The impact on a number of current service users will be significant and this was bound to provoke a negative reaction. However, there is a large amount of support for this based on the rationale of paying what each person can afford, up to the cost of the service.

A typical comment against this proposal was – “The life of a carer is tough while I appreciate the ever rising costs allocated respite nights are a way of keeping families together and therefore less pressure on the system if things go wrong the 57 nights of respite I have been allocated for my mum with dementia are invaluable but if we were asked to pay full cost we would possibly not use them the same but at what cost to my own health and wellbeing which may result in me needing support too.”

The proposal is clear in that it will only affect those with enough disposable income to afford to pay either some money towards the full cost, or the full amount of the cost of the respite stays.

### Proposal 2. Charging for the administration of Appointeeships



Strongly support	77	14%
Support a little	126	24%
Neutral	72	14%
Don't really support	72	14%
Don't support at all	185	35%
Total	532	

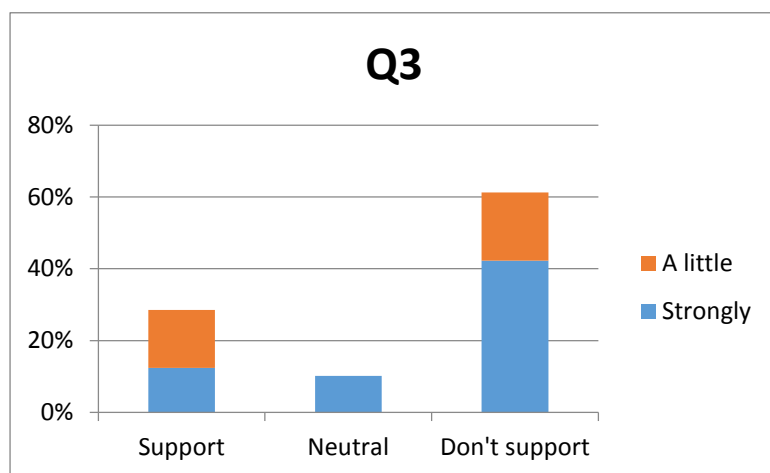
The feedback from this question was generally against the proposal. From the comments received, the opinions expressed were concerned for people who could not make decisions for themselves who would then be charged for a service they did not request and perhaps did not understand.

A typical comment was – “It isn't the service users fault if there is no one else who can support them with their money, it would be wrong to penalise someone further by charging them for a service when there is no alternative for them.”

The reason for this proposal was to attempt to recoup some of the costs of providing a service that is not a statutory requirement. These decisions are mainly based on advice following a social work assessment as there are concerns about the wellbeing of the individual.

The proposal is based on a desire to continue to provide this service at low cost that provides invaluable support and protection for the individuals concerned.

### Proposal 3. Charging for setting up Deferred Payment Agreements



Strongly support	66	12%
Support a little	86	16%
Neutral	54	10%
Don't really support	101	19%
Don't support at all	225	42%
Total	532	

The feedback from this question was generally against the proposal. However, it is perhaps not clear based on the comments received whether

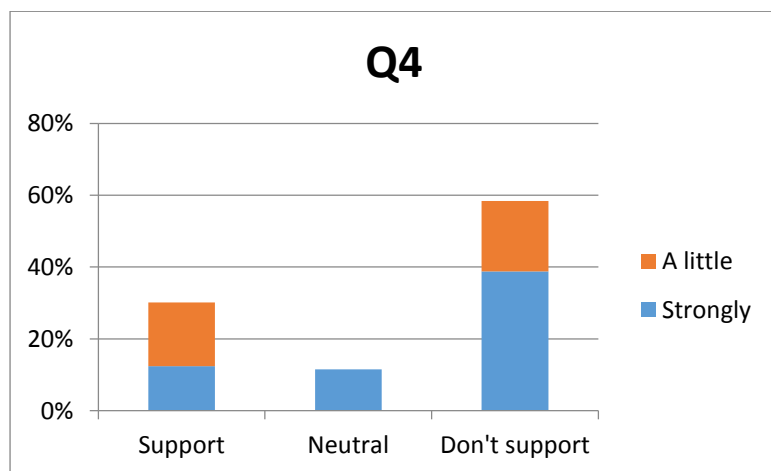
a large proportion of the respondents are against the proposal to charge interest and a service charge, or whether it was the overall concept of using the value of a house to fund a person’s social care.

A number of people who commented on the proposal did show agreement for it.

A typical comment against the proposal was – “Forcing additional charges on people who cannot pay at the moment but may be able to do so later once a property is sold is placing additional burden on the carer and family of that person, who are stressed enough at the necessity of their loved one being in a home. The value of the property involved may be quite small anyway and the family usually has plenty of additional costs at this time - extra petrol, visits, driving round to do all sorts of jobs, loss of own income to support the loved one, hospital parking charges to visit the loved one to name but the first ones that come to mind.”

As with the previous proposal, the focus is to continue to be able to provide a service and to recoup the associate costs. The concept of using deferred payments to pay for social care is a national scheme and is very much in keeping with current planning for the future sustainability of social care.

**Proposal 4. Charging for arranging services for people who are above the financial threshold (self-funders)**



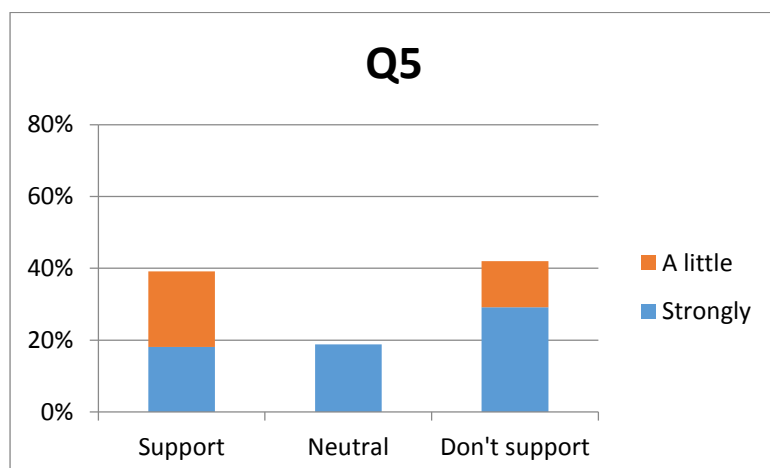
Strongly support	66	12%
Support a little	94	18%
Neutral	61	11%
Don't really support	104	20%
Don't support at all	206	39%
Total	531	

The feedback from this question was generally against the proposal.

The small number of comments received that focused on this proposal were concerned with the apparent lack of choice that people had and believed they should not be charged for this service, on top of the costs they would already pay.

An example of this is – “1. Doesn't seem fair. They may have the money, but not choice other than to have the council arrange this for them (they may have no one else who is able to help them with this). Could end up charging people who have the money but no other option, but people below the threshold could access this service for free - even though they may have a whole network of people who could support with this (family, friends, carers etc.). People shouldn't be penalised when they have no choice but to ask the council for help.”

#### Proposal 5. Charging for missed services



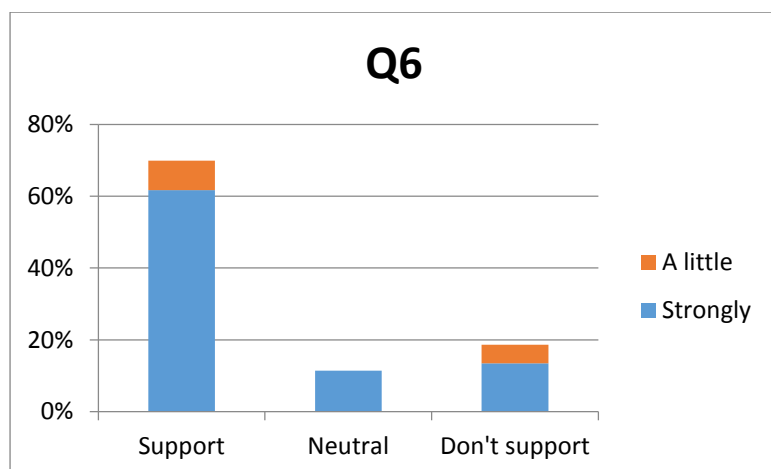


Strongly support	96	18%
Support a little	112	21%
Neutral	100	19%
Don't really support	68	13%
Don't support at all	155	29%
Total	531	

The feedback from this question was quite even. However, the comments received primarily focused on the details and in particular some of the reasons why services would be missed, or cancelled at short notice.

A typical comment on this theme was – “Charging for unused support. It depends on the circumstances. If there is a genuine unforeseen reason I.e. bereavement, hospital admission etc. then there should be no charge made.”

## Proposal 6. No charge for services for carers



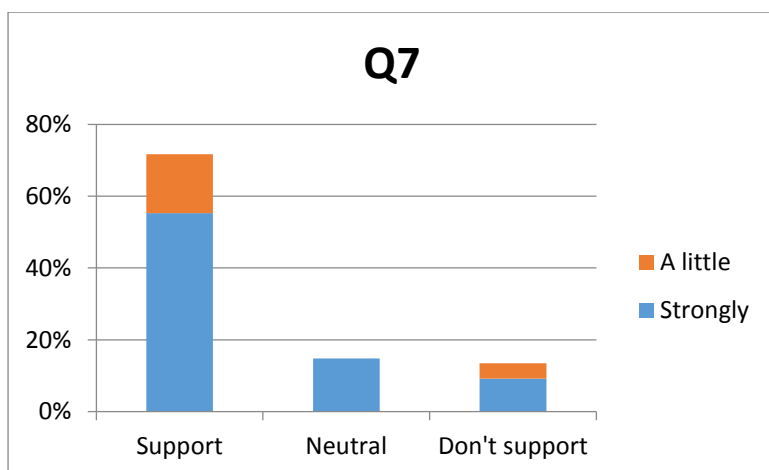
Strongly support	330	62%
Support a little	44	8%
Neutral	61	11%
Don't really support	28	5%
Don't support at all	72	13%
Total	535	

The feedback from this question is very supportive in favour of not charging for services for carers.

A typical comment was – “3. I feel that supporting unpaid carers contributes to the overall saving of money throughout all councils, without these people the councils would cripple under the pressure of 24hr services required. Enabling the support and continued support for unpaid carers is imperative; remember they save the country billions!!! They are the unsung heroes!!”

This does reinforce our commitment and desire to continue to support unpaid carers across the district.

**Proposal 7. Longer period between bills for low cost services like Carephones, and promotion of Direct Debit**



Strongly support	295	55%
Support a little	88	16%
Neutral	79	15%
Don't really support	23	4%
Don't support at all	49	9%
Total	534	

The feedback from this question is very supportive in favour of using more cost effective methods of invoicing service users. The push towards using Direct Debit was seen as a positive move.

However, there is a note of caution in the number of comments that were submitted linked to this proposal.

The theme of these comments were about how amounts of money are considered to be small by the Council but not perhaps to the service users.

A typical comment about this was – “I think £5 a week is a lot of money as it is £20 a month. It is probably okay to reduce invoicing but it may impact on some people's ability to pay”.

Moving forward with this proposal would require special attention given to the information and guidance given to service users and their families and support with arranging and understanding Direct Debit as a means of making regular payments and minimising the risk of debt.

Other Themes from the last question - Is there anything else you like to say about the proposed changes to payment and recovery of charges for Adult Social Care services?

In addition to the specific proposals and questions that were posed, a large number of comments provided concerned more general issues. Some of these are relevant to the ongoing work and support that the Council provides. Some were more an acceptance that some of the decisions are made at a national level.

The main topics covered in these comments are as follows:

**General theme 1: Penalising people who have worked and saved all of their lives**

25 comments were made that fell into this category. A typical comment about this was – “It really feels inequitable that those who have worked or saved all their life should be penalised in terms of payment for services, whilst others on benefits get these provided. The system does not encourage people to save for retirement.”

We can appreciate the sentiment of these comments but we have to operate within the framework and guidance implemented by Government.

**General theme 2: Problems come from central Government**

9 comments appeared to focus on decisions made at a national level.

A typical comment was – “I think more emphasis should be made on putting more pressure on government as councils as a whole across the country to provide adequate budgets and stop squeezing local councils and local health services dry. It’s another case of those with money win out and those without get hit harder again.”

**General theme 3: General positive**

25 comments appeared to be generally in favour of the proposals and current service the Council provides. This generally involved the premise

that those who can afford to pay more towards their care should do that.

A typical comment was – “I am all in favour for those who have the ability to pay to be charged for the services outlined. However there must be protection for those who are less able to pay.”

#### **General theme 4: Unhappy with charging and/or increases for social care**

33 comments appeared to be generally against the principle of charging for social care in the way that we currently do.

A typical comment was “Charging people for these kinds of services makes them less likely to ask for help. They try to cope on their own for longer, putting themselves at risk.”

#### **Other general themes**

In addition to these more prominent themes, there are other patterns that were shown in the responses. The topics that were mentioned were:

- Unhappy with the use of social care money
- Comments about Service quality
- General unhappiness
- Other Social Care related comments
- General Council comments
- Comments about the survey itself

To view the comments in their entirety, arranged in the themes as described above, please go to Appendix XX.

#### **Next steps**

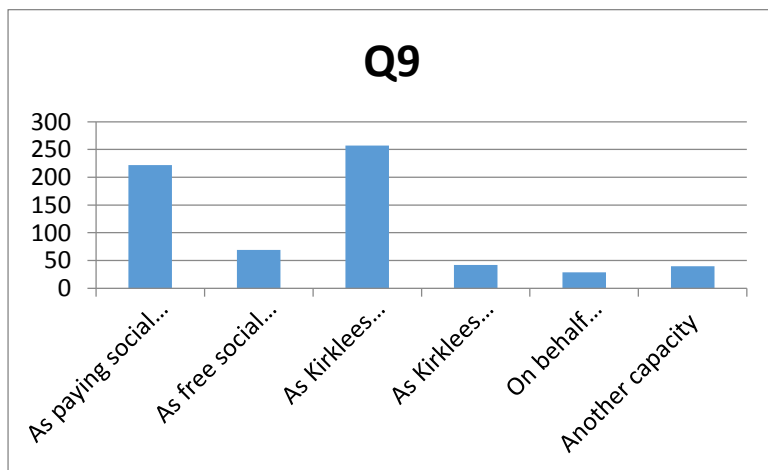
Thank you to everyone who took the time to complete the survey and submit their concerns. These have been very useful to gauge the general thinking of our service users, families and other members of our community.

This report will next be presented to the members of the Cabinet to make

final decisions on the proposals within the revised charging policy.

## Who completed the survey?

The following breakdown shows the reason people applied to themselves in completing the survey.



The question allowed people to select more than one box on this question so some people checked “Kirklees Resident” in addition to another box, such as “paying social care service user”.