

## DECISION NOTICE OF AN INDIVIDUAL MEMBER OF GWYNEDD COUNCIL CABINET

**DATE OF DECISION 18 March 2019**

**DATE DECISION PUBLISHED 20 March 2019**

**DATE DECISION WILL COME INTO FORCE** and implemented,  
unless the decision is called in, in accordance with section 7.25 of  
the Gwynedd Council Constitution 27 March 2019

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Cabinet Member: Councillor William Gareth Roberts Cabinet Member for Adults, Health  
and Wellbeing

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**Subject :** Increasing the weekly payment for a basic Telecare package

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### DECISION

Approval to increase the weekly payment for a basic Telecare package from £3.30 to  
£4.50 a week from April 2019 onwards to ensure that the service is maintained on a cost  
neutral basis.

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### REASON WHY THE DECISION IS NEEDED

Please see attached officer report

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### DECLARATIONS OF PERSONAL INTEREST AND ANY RELEVANT DISPENSATIONS APPROVED BY THE COUNCIL'S STANDARDS COMMITTEE

None

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### ANY CONSULTATIONS UNDERTAKEN PRIOR TO MAKING THE DECISION

Consultation with  
Gwynedd Council Statutory Officers

The results of the consultations are reported upon in the attached report

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**DECISION NOTICE OF AN INDIVIDUAL MEMBER OF GWYNEDD COUNCIL  
CABINET – OFFICER REPORT**

Name and title of Cabinet Member/s:	Councillor William Gareth Roberts Cabinet Member for Adults, Health and Wellbeing
Name and title of Report Author :	Rhion Glyn, Senior Business Manager
Date of Decision :	18-03-2019
Signature of Cabinet Member/s :	

**Subject :** Increasing the weekly payment for a basic Telecare package

**Recommendation for the Decision :** Approval to increase the weekly payment for a basic Telecare package from £3.30 to £4.50 a week from April 2019 onwards to ensure that the service is maintained on a cost neutral basis.

**Reason and justification behind the Decision :**

Following public consultation in January 2017, Gwynedd Council's Cabinet resolved to approve changes to the Charging Policy for the Care Services of the Gwynedd Adults, Health and Well-being Department. One of these changes allowed the Council to charge all who receive a basic Telecare package.

The charge for a basic package is currently £3.50 a week and this sum has not changed since 2013. Please note that approximately 29% of persons who receive the basic Telecare package currently pay this weekly with the remaining receiving the service without cost.

As part of the information submitted to the Cabinet in January 2017, it was noted that the Department was in the midst of reviewing the weekly fee for the basic package. Based on the information at the time, the likelihood that the fee would increase to between £3.80 and £4.00 per week from April 2017 onwards was highlighted.

Rather than increasing the fee as noted in January 2017 and act on the Cabinet's resolution from April 2017 onwards, it was decided that it was necessary to firstly take a step back and fully review the arrangements that are in place. It was concluded that the arrangements in place were not fit for purpose, and that operational arrangements needed to be re-structured and to also invest in additional jobs if we wanted to maintain a quality sustainable service in the future.

One of the principal ways of measuring the performance of this service is the number of days it takes to install new equipment, and the number of days it takes to respond to defective equipment already installed. Not being able to respond in time to defects causes an obvious risk to people who are dependent on the service, and then a delay with installing new equipment may lead to situations whereby people cannot return to their homes following a period in hospital. In January 2018, there was an attempt to measure the average time it took to install new equipment and to respond to defective equipment. At the time it was estimated that customers had to wait an average of 54 days.

Therefore, during last year the Adults, Health and Well-being Department has worked through a process of restructuring operational and managerial arrangements of the Telecare service and have also invested in more front-line posts. The changes have been successful and one obvious example of this is the significant reduction in the average time it takes to install new equipment and to respond to defective equipment. The average waiting time for customers has now fallen from 54 days to 4.5 days.

This work has now been completed and we are in a much better position to weigh up what can be considered to be a reasonable and fair charge to pay, that also addresses the need for the Council to pay for service maintenance costs.

Charging a weekly payment of £4.50 will mean that the Council can maintain a quality service in the future and that there will be no risks attached in terms of cuts to this valuable service. By using the payment to maintain the Telecare service on a cost neutral basis this will save the Council from having to consider cuts or do away with the service as a whole, or impair on other services the Council provides. Therefore, in addition to maintaining the day-to-day service, charging a weekly standard payment will enable the service to invest in modern technology, and ensure that the equipment we offer the County's residents is of the highest possible standard.

Although everyone who receives the service is required to pay the standard weekly fee, the following situations and exceptions should be explained.

- All who receive Non-residential Services (e.g. Home Care, Direct Payments) will be required to pay in addition for their Telecare service. However, if the individual requests a means test to determine how much they will need to pay for their non-residential service, payment for the Telecare service will then be considered as essential expenditure. This means that any expenditure on Telecare will be added to the weekly sum of money that is allowed to be retained before the individual has to start

paying for Non-residential Care. This may mean that the individual then contributes less for their Non-residential care.

- If the individual has already received a means test and the result entails that they do not have to pay for their services, as part of this decision we recommend that it would not be suitable either to charge them for the Telecare service. Having said this, if the result of the individual's means test changes in the future it may be necessary for them to then pay for the Telecare service.

Between the 12th of November and the 21st of December 2018, a letter and information pack were sent to all who receive the basic Telecare package. It was explained that we as a Council are now in a position to implement the decision of the Cabinet in January 2017, and we were therefore contacting them to obtain their views on increasing the weekly sum. It was noted in the letter that we were considering increasing the sum up to £4.50 a week.

A letter and information pack were sent to 1695 residents and a total of 361 responses were received. It was possible for people to contact us and share their observations on the telephone or by completing a form and return this in the post.

With so many responses we are of the opinion that the views collected is representative of service users. Of the 361, 183 of the responses received were of a positive nature such as noting how valuable the service was for them, or that they were happy to pay the sum in question. In comparison a total of 109 negative responses were received and 66 of those stated that the sum of £4.50 a week was expensive or too excessive. Some were also of the opinion that no charge should be made for the service. 62 residents contacted us to let us know that they do not actually use the service or do not need it anymore. Three individuals have made a request for a financial assessment and four are awaiting to hear what will be the exact decision on the weekly sum before coming to any future decision.

It is evident from the views collected that a number of residents see that the proposed sum of £4.50 is reasonable, however, at the same time a number of persons who use the service disagree. Although there is an obvious difference of opinion we believe that the sum should be increased to £4.50 but to ensure that suitable support is in place for residents that are concerned about the change.

We are of the opinion that the circumstances and exceptions explained above would alleviate the impact on our most vulnerable residents. However, in terms of those individuals who are concerned about the increase and who do not receive non-residential services, and are therefore not eligible for a means test, we will look to see what would be the best way for them to get support to discuss and consider their situations.

Following the implementation of this decision the Department will review the costs of running the service annually, adding annual inflation to the sum of

£4.50 if it is found that this is required to continue to maintain the service at a cost neutral basis.

**Declarations of personal interest by any Cabinet Member consulted with and any relevant dispensations approved by the Standards Committee**

Not applicable

**Any consultations undertaken prior to making the decision :**

See above

**Head of Finance –**

I am satisfied that an appropriate review has been carried out and I support the fees recommended here for 2019/20, while noting that the substantial increase this time is reasonable after remaining unchanged for some years. Consequently, it is reasonable to estimate that the proposed fee income will meet the Telecare service's required income target in the Adult, Health and Wellbeing Department's budget

**Monitoring Officer –**

The report sets out a detailed rationale regarding the increase in the current fee. The objective of bringing the level up to the cost of provision is appropriate. No further observations regarding propriety.

**Local Member/s –**

Not applicable

# Equality Impact Assessment

See the leaflet *How to make an Equality Impact Assessment* for help to complete this form. You are also welcome to contact Delyth Williams, Policy and Equality Officer on ext. 32708 or [DelythGadlysWilliams@gwynedd.llyw.cymru](mailto:DelythGadlysWilliams@gwynedd.llyw.cymru), for further assistance.

The Council is required (under the Equality Act 2010) to consider the impact any changes in any policy or procedures (or the creation of a new policy or procedure) will have on people with protected equality characteristics. The Council also has additional general duties to ensure fairness and to foster good relationships. Therefore, a timely Equality Impact Assessment should be made before any decision is taken on any relevant change (i.e. that affects people with protected equality characteristics).

## I Details

### I.1. What is the name of the policy / service in question?

Approval to increase the weekly payment for a basic Telecare package from £3.30 to £4.50 a week from April 2019 onwards to ensure that the service is maintained on a cost neutral basis.

### I.2 What is the purpose of the policy / service that is being created or amended? What changes are being considered?

Following public consultation in January 2017, Gwynedd Council's Cabinet resolved to approve changes to the Charging Policy for the Care Services of the Gwynedd Adults, Health and Well-being Department. One of these changes allowed the Council to charge all who receive a basic Telecare package.

Soon afterwards, it was gathered that the arrangements in place were not fit for purpose, and that operational arrangements needed to be re-structured and to also invest in additional jobs to maintain a quality sustainable service in the future.

This work has now been completed and we are in a much better position to weigh up what can be considered to be a reasonable and fair charge to pay, that also addresses the need for the Council to pay for service maintenance costs.

### I.3 Who is responsible for this assessment?

Rhion Glyn, Senior Business Manager (Adults, Health and Well-being Department)

#### **1.4 When did you commence the assessment? Which version is this?**

The original assessment was undertaken in January 2017 on changes to the Charging Policy.

The assessment in question is the first version that specifically assesses the impact of increasing the weekly payment for a basic Telecare package.

## **2) Action**

### **2.1 Who are the partners it will be necessary to work with to undertake this assessment?**

Service Users  
Service User Representatives  
Carers  
Social Work Teams  
Elected Members

### **2.2. What steps have you taken to engage with people with protected characteristics?**

Between the 12th of November and the 21st of December 2018, a letter and information pack were sent to all who receive the basic Telecare package. It was explained that we as a Council are now in a position to implement the decision of the Cabinet in January 2017 and we were therefore contacting them to obtain their views on increasing the weekly sum. It was noted in the letter that we were considering increasing the sum up to £4.50 a week.

The assurance of advocacy support was given to those who wished. The information was also offered in an easy to read format as required.

### **2.3 What was the outcome of the engagement?**

In January 2017, an equality assessment was prepared and this included information about the result of the general engagement on the Charging Policy, and the decision to charge a weekly payment on all with a basic Telecare package.

<https://democratiaeth.cyngor.gwynedd.gov.uk/ielistdocuments.aspx?cid=133&mid=2009&ver=4&>

Between the 12th of November and the 21st of December 2018, a letter and information pack were sent to all who receive the basic Telecare package. A total of 361 responses were received - on the telephone or as response forms.

Of the 361, 183 of the responses received were of a positive nature such as noting how valuable the service was for them, or that they were happy to pay the sum in question. In comparison, a total of 109 negative responses were received and 66 of those observations stated that the sum of £4.50 a week was expensive or too excessive. Some were also of the opinion that no charge should be made for the service. 62 residents contacted us to let us know that they do not actually use the service or do not require it anymore.

#### **2.4 On the basis of what other evidence do you operate?**

**Social Services and Well-being Act (Wales 2014)**

#### **2.5 Are there any gaps in the evidence that needs to be collected?**

No



### 3) Identifying the Impact

3.1 The Council must give due attention to the impact any changes will have on people with the following equality characteristics. What impact will the new policy/service or the changes in the policy or service have on people with equality characteristics? You are welcome to add other characteristics if you wish.

<b>Characteristics</b>	<b>What type of impact? *</b>	<b>In what way? What is the evidence?</b>
<b>Race (including ethnicity)</b>	negative	Statistics show that some people of ethnic minority are more likely to be poor e.g. refugees or Gypsy/Roma Gypsy people. This means that increasing the fee like this could have an impact on them.
<b>The Welsh language</b>	none	We will adhere to the Council's Language Policy
<b>Disability</b>	negative	Statistics show that disabled people are more likely to be poor than other families. This means that increasing the fee like this could have an impact on them e.g. it may mean that it will be harder for them to go out to socialise.
<b>Gender</b>	none	No impact identified
<b>Age</b>	negative	A significant portion of telecare users are older people and will therefore be affected by the increase.
<b>Sexual orientation</b>	none	No impact identified
<b>Religion or belief (or non-belief)</b>	none	No impact identified
<b>Gender reassignment</b>	none	No impact identified
<b>Pregnancy and maternity</b>	none	No impact identified
<b>Marriage and civil partnership</b>	none	No impact identified

\* Delete as required

**3.2 The Council has a duty under the Equalities Act 2010 to contribute positively to a fairer society through advancing equality and good relations in its activities in the fields of age, gender, sexual orientation, religion, race, transgender, disability and pregnancy and maternity. The Council must give due attention to the way any change affects these duties.**

<b>General Duties of the Equality Act</b>	<b>Does it have an impact?</b>	<b>In what way? What is the evidence?</b>
<b>Abolishing illegal discrimination, harassment and victimisation</b>	No	No impact identified
<b>Promoting equal opportunities</b>	No	No impact identified
<b>Encouraging good relationships</b>	No	No impact identified

\* Delete as required

**4) Analysing the results**

**4.1 Is the policy therefore likely to have a significant, positive impact on any of the equality characteristics or the General Duty? What is the reason for this?**

No

**4.2 Is the policy therefore likely to have a significant, negative impact on any of the equality characteristics or the General Duty? What is the reason for this?**

We have identified a negative impact in terms of the fact that the service will cost more for individuals who use the service. This will have more of an impact on certain groups than others.

Actions to alleviate this impact are noted below.

As a result of the alleviation measures that are in place we do not see that this change will have a significant negative impact.

**4.3 What should be done?**

Choose one of the following:

Continue with the policy / service since it is robust	X
Amend the policy to remove any barriers	
Suspend and delete the policy as the detrimental impacts are too great	
Continue with the policy as any detrimental impact can be justified	

**4.4 If you continue with the plan, what steps will you take to reduce or mitigate any negative impacts?**

Although everyone who receives the service is required to pay the standard weekly fee, the following situations and exceptions should be explained.

- All who receive Non-residential Services (e.g. Home Care, Direct Payments) will be required to pay in addition for their Telecare service. However, if the individual requests a means test to determine how much they will need to pay for their non-residential service, payment for the Telecare service will then be considered as essential expenditure. This means that any expenditure on Telecare will be added to the weekly sum of money that is allowed to be retained before the individual has to start paying for Non-residential care. This may mean that the individual then contributes less for their Non-residential care.
- If the individual has already received a means test and the result entails that they do not have to pay for their services, as part of this decision we recommend that it would not be suitable either to charge them for the Telecare service. Having said this, if the result of the individual's means test changes in the future it may be necessary for them to then pay for the Telecare service.

We are of the opinion that the circumstances and exceptions explained above will alleviate the impact on our most vulnerable residents. However, in terms of those individuals who are concerned about the increase and who do not receive non-residential services, and are therefore not eligible for a means test, we will look to see what would be the best way for them to get support to discuss and consider their situations. When we inform everyone of the final decision we will as an initial step encourage anyone who is considering giving up the service as a result of the cost to contact the Information, Advice and Support service to discuss their situation.

**4.5 If you are not taking any further action to delete or reduce the negative impacts, explain why here.**

Not relevant

**5) Monitoring**

**5.1 What steps will you take to monitor the impact and effectiveness of the policy or service (action plan)?**

Following the implementation of this decision the Department will review the costs of running the service annually, adding annual inflation to the sum of £4.50 if it is found that this is required to continue to maintain the service at a cost neutral basis.