

Equality Impact Assessment



Name of project/proposal

Adult Services Personal Budgets Policy

Contact name

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Department

Adult Services

Date to be published on Hantsweb

04 Jan 2016

Purpose for project/proposal

This Personal Budgets Policy sets out how Adult Services proposes to meet the needs of all people who are eligible for adult social care and support within the financial resources available to the Council. The Policy is required in order to manage the rising demand for services and the increased complexity of needs of many service users. The Policy sets out how the council will try to strike a balance between resources, preferences and different ways of meeting assessed needs. It forms part of Adult Services' strategy for delivering £43 million of savings by April 2017. The savings target allocated to the delivery of this proposed new Policy is £1.4m by April 2017. If approved, the Policy would be applied to all new service users (across all care groups) and also would be applied for existing service users at the point when they receive their next review/reassessment. The main impact of the Policy is to confirm the position that the council will provide 'cost-effective' care and support to people who meet the national eligibility criteria under the Care Act 2014. 'Cost effective care' means choosing the least expensive option that will meet assessed eligible needs in a sustainable way. However there should always be a check before confirming someone's personal budget to ensure that the person's outcomes can be met by the plan and that it supports their individual wellbeing.

Consultation

Has a consultation been carried out?

No

The County Council carried out a major public consultation, between 26 May and 6 July 2015, on a range of options for finding further budget savings, including increasing Council Tax, using reserves and making changes to the way in which services are delivered. The feedback from that consultation has been taken into account in developing the Adult Services savings programme (of which this Policy is a part), which was approved by the Executive Member on 17 September 2015.

This new Policy is operational guidance for staff in line with the Care Act 2014 principles, and corporate advice is that it was not necessary to undertake formal public consultation on the Policy. Staff have been involved in, and have contributed to, the drafting of the new Policy. Once the Policy has been approved by the Director of Adult Services, information for the public will be drafted to explain the Policy in an accessible way.

Statutory considerations

Impact

Age	High
Disability	High
Sexual orientation	Low
Race	Low
Religion and belief	Low
Gender reassignment	Low
Sex	Medium
Marriage and civil partnership	Low
Pregnancy and maternity	Low

Other policy considerations

Poverty	Low
Rurality	Low
Other factors	None
If other please describe	

Geographical impact

All Hampshire

Have you identified any medium or high impact?*

Yes

No

Equality statement

The new Personal Budgets Policy is an overarching document for staff who are carrying out personal planning activities with service users and carers. It does not introduce a radical new way of setting personal budgets but sets out the broad framework within which staff should be operating under the Care Act 2014. The proposal is that

it will be trialled for some clients receiving a reassessment/review from January 2016, with full roll out planned from around April 2016. Information about the Policy will be made available to the public when it is rolled out across the County.

The Policy confirms that HCC's general position is that it will offer the most cost-effective care and support option which delivers the outcomes desired. In the context of setting personal budgets, 'cost-effective' means choosing the least expensive option that will meet assessed eligible needs in a sustainable way, however there should always be a check before confirming the budget to ensure that the person's outcomes can be met by the plan and that it supports their individual wellbeing

Adult Services has to provide care and support for an increasing number of older people with complex care needs, and adults with physical and learning disabilities. The money that the council contributes to individuals' personal budgets for care and support is funded through the taxpayer, so every effort has to be made to spend this money wisely. The new Personal Budgets Policy is not a radical new way of setting personal budgets: it is in line with the Care Act 2014. However, it does encourage staff to explore the most cost-effective and creative solutions for meeting individuals' needs so that the council can support the increasingly complex needs of its population. This Policy is part of a significant savings programme for Adult Services, of £43 million, and it is not an option to do nothing.

The proposal is a pragmatic solution to balance the Council's statutory duties under the Care Act 2014 with the requirement to deliver appropriate services within a cash-limited budget. The strategic 'benefits' of the proposal would be to Hampshire taxpayers as a whole, and also ultimately to service users and carers, since the proposed policy is designed to enable the Council to make best use of its finite resources to provide care and support to meet the assessed needs of anyone who is eligible.

The Policy will affect adults aged 18 or over who use social care services arranged by the Council, or who may need services in the future. Currently, around 22,000 people receive care paid for by the Council, and there are around 4,000 new service users every year.

People who have their care delivered or arranged by Adult Services are mainly either elderly or have a disability, and there are more women than men in receipt of services. Any change in the Department's policies would impact upon these groups.

The service user cohort has a higher proportion of older people, people with disabilities, and women than is present in the general population. There is the potential for these groups to be affected by this Policy. All decisions will be based on looking at the individual needs of the person to whom the Policy would apply. This would enable any particular wellbeing issues linked to someone's protected characteristics to be addressed. However, the intention to fund only the most cost effective option that is available to meet a person's eligible needs may restrict someone's choice of the type of care they receive. People would not be forced to accept a particular type of care, such as residential care, when it is not their choice and every effort would be made to support someone in the community within their allocated budget. Costs may be reduced, for example by using assistive technology or sharing support, where appropriate.

People would be encouraged (if they wanted to do so) to receive their personal budget as a direct payment, so they can manage their own care, increasing their choice and control.

The Adult Services Scheme of Delegation will be followed for the authorisation of all personal budget expenditure. Practitioners will use their line management arrangements to discuss any particularly complex cases if additional guidance is needed, referring up to the relevant Service Manager or Head of Service if required to discuss exceptional cases. Any service user or carer unhappy with their personal budget will be able to use the existing Adult Services Complaints Process.

Another group who will be affected by the policy are carers. Carers may themselves receive a Personal Budget, and also they may be affected by decisions made under the proposed Policy relating to care for the person they care for.

The council has to fulfil its statutory duty to meet eligible needs, so people will continue to receive the care and support they require. Specific needs related to an individual's age, disability, cultural preferences and gender would be considered when discussing the outcomes they wanted to achieve and the type of support they required to meet their eligible needs, prior to making a decision about the money to be allocated in their personal budget.

Date to review actions 01 Apr 2016

Final decision date

Final decision date due 18 Dec 2015
Decision to be made by DMT