



# Have your say about the Community Support Service

## Frequently Asked Questions

Thank you to everyone who came to our Community Support Service (CSS) consultation events. We wanted to let you know about the questions that were raised during the meetings and share the answers that were provided. This information has also been shared with staff, and will be included in the consultation feedback.

If you have any further questions about the consultation please contact us on:

**Phone: 01273 481 565**

**Email: [ASCLDDPSconsultation@eastsussex.gov.uk](mailto:ASCLDDPSconsultation@eastsussex.gov.uk)**

**1) What is the £23,250 threshold, above which a person will have to pay for all care themselves, based on?**

Financial assessments are carried out in line with 'The Care and Support (Charging and Assessment of Resources) Regulations 2014'.

This legislation states 'In assessing what a person can afford to contribute a local authority must apply the upper and lower capital limits.'

The Department for Health sets the upper capital limit annually and this is currently set at £23,250. A person with assets above the upper capital limit is deemed to be able to afford the full cost of their care.

**2) Various other services are paid for. Why have changes to this service been left until so late in the day?**

CSS was originally set up using different funding streams and grants. It was offered as a time-limited service.

However, CSS is now core funded (paid from the Council budget). CSS has evolved over time and now provides both ongoing and time limited services, in the same way as other Learning Disability (LD) services like Day services and Respite Services, which are chargeable.

**3) How is the £20.00\* {£18.30} cost per hour for Community Support justified when Personal Assistant (PA) services cost around £12 per hour?**

The CSS hourly cost has been calculated by taking into account staffing, service and management costs. We recognise that this rate is higher than the PA, however the CSS provide a different scope of services to a PA support worker.

**\* 25.11.15 Update about the CSS hourly cost**

Unfortunately the information sent out about the cost of the service (£18.30 per hours) was wrong. The correct cost of the service is £20.00 per hour. This information is being explained to all clients and amended within the online consultation information.

**4) This proposal affects no more than 150 people across East Sussex. Is it therefore justified?**

The council has to find savings of £70 to £90 million pounds over the next three years. Services have been asked to review all possible areas where savings could be achieved.

Initial calculations indicate that introducing charging could generate up to £50,000 a year which would be put towards the savings target.

East Sussex County Council (ESCC) provides a range of support for vulnerable people but is reliant on income from charges to help pay for them.

**5) Are there not large financial implications for ESCC in implementing Financial Assessment?**

The council have a dedicated team who complete Financial Assessments and have the capacity to undertake these as part of their role. Nearly half of the clients who receive CSS have already had a Financial Assessment.

**6) The projection is that this proposal would raise £50,000. Some may see this as low and ask whether it justifies the proposed change?**

If CSS are able to find £50,000 in savings, this would be a significant contribution to the overall savings target for Learning Disability Directly Provided Services. If we are not able to find savings from implementing a charge for services, savings would need to be found elsewhere.

**7) To achieve the £50,000 estimate, this appears to work out as £10 per week per person. So why not just ask for a £10 contribution from everyone?**

ESCC have a "Charging for Care and Support Policy" which outlines government legislation and guidance about how care charges should be determined.

The financial assessment looks at how much service the person receives and ensures that people are not charged more than it is reasonably practicable for them to pay, therefore charging rules are applied equally to each individual.

This charge will vary, based on the individual's personal circumstances. People will pay either part of the cost, none of the cost or all of the cost of their service.

**8) In Park Lane we were told when the residency began that we had to have CSS. Legally what happens if charging begins?**

Park Lane has two elements of service:

- 1) The night time support is a core service which is attached to the supported living scheme at Park Lane, and is provided by CSS. Tenants living at Park Lane would need to contribute towards this core service.
- 2) Day time support hours are provided from the CSS main team. These hours are allocated to individual support needs and do not have to be provided by the CSS.

**9) How often would money be taken?**

ESCC would send invoices every 4 weeks in arrears.

**10) Would payment be just by direct debit?**

In addition to paying by direct debit there are several other ways clients can pay. This includes:

- debit card
- online
- at the bank
- at a post office or
- by standing order

All the options are shown on the back of your invoice. You may have to pay a charge for making the payment at a bank or post office.

**11) Some day services charge, whether or not the client is in the service. How would the rate be affected if the client were**

- i) on holiday**
- ii) did not want to attend something or**
- iii) cancelled something?**

All chargeable services have a cancellations policy. At present CSS do not have a cancellations policy, therefore this is in development and will be shared with clients and carers if the outcome of the consultation is that charging will be implemented.

The CSS will ask clients to provide notice if they want to cancel a support session. If less than 24 hours notice is given the client will still be charged for the support. This is how cancellations work in other charged for services.

The way clients are charged depends on the amount they are assessed to pay compared with the cost of their care and support.

If a person pays a contribution to support, this figure is calculated as an average over 12 months, therefore if a service is cancelled it might not change the amount that you pay.

If the amount you have paid at the end of the year is more than the cost of your care/support the Financial Assessment team will adjust your contribution and refund the difference.

**12) If support is received as part of a group, how does this affect costing?**

As CSS have not charged for services before, this question has not arisen previously. As this question has been raised we will be looking at the charge for support provided as part of a group and will provide further information on this if the decision to charge is taken forward.

**13) I had a Financial Assessment some while ago [2013]. It concluded that I should contribute, but I've seen no money towards the care go out. Does this mean I will need a reassessment?**

If you have not received any other services from ESCC since your financial assessment you would not have been charged as CSS has remained a free service.

Where someone has already been financially assessed we will consider whether we need to carry out another financial assessment visit. In some cases we may be able to review the assessment based on the information we already hold and any information we can gather from the Department for Work and Pensions.

If we don't need to visit you again we will write to inform you how much you are assessed to pay based on the information we hold. If you did not agree with this amount you could provide any additional information you wish us to consider or ask us to carry out a full review of your financial assessment.

**14) If a relative pays client contributions towards travel only, does that bypass the need for a Financial Assessment for the client?**

All clients accessing CSS will need to have a financial assessment. Where ESCC provides travel this is charged at a standard rate and is not subject to a financial assessment. Where travel is normally part of a support provision, for example with a day service, it is charged and this would be included in the financial assessment.

**15) The assessment is completed on current income. This may fluctuate. Do we let Financial Assessment staff know each time this alters?**

If income fluctuates the financial assessment will be based on an average income. However, if there is any change in financial circumstances, clients will need to let the financial assessment team know so that the contribution can be reviewed.

Financial assessments are automatically reviewed each April in line with benefit changes and the Financial Assessments team will write to clients to let them know how much they have been assessed to pay. If the information used to calculate your contribution is not accurate clients should send in up to date figures so it can be adjusted.

**16) If a financial charge is decided, and relatives decide they cannot afford to pay, can they assess the different kinds of care they could afford?**

Clients and carers can contact the Community Learning Disability Assessment team (CLDT) who will be able to review the client's needs and discuss the alternative support options that might be available. Most alternative services are chargeable.

**17) What can be done to combat possible increase in vulnerability of those clients whose family may decide to fund their care independently?**

ESCC have a statutory obligation to oversee clients support and safeguarding needs. The CLDT will be involved in any changes to client care provision and will continue to review clients care provision to ensure the client's needs are being met.

**18) The NHS has an interest in these clients. Will the burden pass to it from ASC (e.g. more visits to GPs)?**

Clients may seek support from other services if they choose not to have CSS. Support needs will be overseen by CLDT to ensure clients are aware of all the support resources available to them.

CSS is a Social Care service. Clients are able to access the NHS for any health related needs.

**19) If the desired revenue is not achieved, what happens then?**

We have to find savings from between £70 to £90 million, across the Council over the next three years. Some gaps in funding can be covered by generating more income. If this is not possible then other means of finding savings will need to be considered.