NORTHAMPTONSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Paying for Care and Support
When Eligible for Adult Social Care
Consultation Analysis Report

December 2016 – February 2017

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1. Introduction and Overview

Northamptonshire County Council (NCC) want to ensure that they have in place policies and procedures which clearly outline the Council’s position in regard to the payment of care and support.

NCC has a requirement to ensure that those who are both vulnerable and eligible for social care have their needs met, within the financial resources available. Equally, NCC also needs to ensure that, after a full assessment, there is an ability for the customers to make a contribution to their needs; that they and their family fully understand this and commits to making the agreed payments. The reason for this is that NCC needs to ensure that people who receive services have clarity about their responsibility and that NCC has in place procedures which enable a more robust approach to reducing this element of client debt.

Background

In November 2016, the Council’s Cabinet agreed that the updated document called “Paying for Your Care and Support in Your Own Home” would be subject to consultation. The Council wished to seek views and comments on the document including the clarity of the information presented.

The new updated document stated the role of Council’s adult social care. It outlined the expectations for the service user if they were deemed both eligible and able to make a financial contribution towards the cost of their care. In particular, Section 4 of this document – What if I am unable to meet my agreed contributions – had been added.

This report is the analysis of the consultation results received.
2. Consultation Methodology

The consultation sought to ascertain the views and comments from all interested parties in order to help seek clarity on the information contained within the revised and updated document. It wanted to check on the clarity of the document as well the readability and understanding on the information contained with it. The consultation drew attention to a newly added section 4.

Due to the specific nature of the consultation key audiences were identified as prime stakeholders to promote the consultation too. These included:

- Members of Northamptonshire County Council’s Consultation Register.
- Customers of adult social care services.
- Learning Disability Partnership Board.
- Members of the county’s Residents’ Panel.
- Local community and voluntary sector organisations and faith groups.
- Healthwatch Northamptonshire.
- Northants 50+ Network.
- Carers Partnership.
- County, Borough and District Councillors.
- Health and Wellbeing groups and organisations.
- Other interested parties.

The following outlines the method used to generate the material/data for analysis.

The consultation was carried out in compliance with NCC’s Consultation and Engagement Policy and Standard of Required Practice.

Due to the breadth of potential stakeholders an online questionnaire was devised and actively promoted. Opportunity to submit written responses was also provided.

A copy of the questionnaire and details of the consultation was made available on a dedicated internet web page on NCC’s consultation register, which is where all of the
Council’s consultations are published.
www.northamptonshire.gov.uk/consultationregister

The online questionnaire was open to all.

The questionnaire sought to gain a qualitative and quantitative understanding of respondent’s views on the “Paying for Your Care and Support in Your Own Home” document.

Respondents were also supplied with postal and email addresses for written responses to be submitted too.

Through stakeholder analysis, key organisations were asked to help promote the consultation amongst their members and other distribution channels.

As well as being promoted via various partners’ communication channels, this consultation was also posted and publicised via the Council’s and OCS’s Facebook, Twitter and other social media accounts.

The consultation began on 21st December 2016 and ended on 1st February 2017, giving six weeks of consultation.

During the consultation period a number of other consultations were being undertaken by the Council. This included the draft Council Budget, consultation on Utilising Block Residential Care Contracts - to Facilitate Greater Choice, and the consultation on the development of Northamptonshire Adult Social Services.

This consultation did attract media attention due to the content of the consultation referencing an administration charge for social care assessments.
3. Summary of Feedback

Questionnaire Feedback

The following is a summary of the findings from the responses of the online questionnaire. It is recommended this summary is read in conjunction with the full results which can be found in appendix 1. Copy of the questionnaire is at appendix 3 and the copy of the text of consultation register text is at appendix 4.

A total of 46 people responded to the questionnaire. When asked if they were responding as an individual or from an organisation 91.4% of respondents were individuals, with 8.6% of respondents were from organisations. (19 respondents did not answer this question).

Responses were received from all district and borough areas of Northamptonshire except for Corby borough. 36.7% of individuals responding from the area of Northampton. 30.0% responding from East Northamptonshire, Kettering and Wellingborough. 26.7% responded as Daventry and South Northamptonshire. 6.7% said they came from areas not stated i.e. Leicestershire. 18 respondents chose not to answer the question.

Respondents were asked to identify in what respect they were answering the question for example were they a customer, carer, employee of NCC etc. A number of options

![Graph showing what district/borough respondents live in. Northampton has the highest percentage with 36.7%, followed by Daventry and East Northamptonshire with 16.7% and 13.3% respectively. Other areas have lower percentages.]

Respondents were asked to identify in what respect they were answering the question for example were they a customer, carer, employee of NCC etc. A number of options
were provided and respondents were allowed to select more than one answer as it is recognised some people have multiple roles and responsibilities.

A total of 31 respondents answered with 15 respondents skipping the question. The majority of respondents said they were members of the public, with 35.5% of respondents identifying themselves as a current customer, or a relative/ carer or a friend of someone using NCC adult social services. Those that chose other mainly expressed that there were from the voluntary and or charity sector.

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<td>I am a Councillor</td>
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<tr>
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<td>6.5%</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am a professional e.g. GP, district nurse, etc</td>
<td>19.4%</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other please state:</td>
<td>12.9%</td>
<td>4</td>
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Respondents were asked to rate how well they understood the document “Paying for Care and Support in Your Own Home”, including the language being used. The rating scale was 1 to 5 where, where 1 was stating that it was a “Very Unclear Understanding” and 5 stating that it was a “Very Clear Understanding”. Respondents were then asked to state why they had given that rating.

59.5% of respondents who answered this question rated the document either 4 or 5 for its clear and understandable language. The total overall average score for its clarity is 3.7 out of 5. Just under half provided comments which mostly focused on the negative aspects of the document.
Some felt there was too much jargon with suggestions for more explanation regarding capital assets, invoice contributions, with too many 'ifs' within the text making it confusing. A respondent also felt uninformed about the topic even after reading the easy read version.

A respondent felt the document implies that a person may only receive support if details of finances are fully revealed. It was suggested that they would rather it focused on the needs of the customer first before ascertaining how costs will be met. Reference was made by respondents of the legal boundaries that the Council must adhere to prior to charging for financial assessments.

A couple of respondents felt there were gaps in information around carers, households, pooling of household finance and the value of the applicants home being discounted in financial assessment for home care.

Those respondents who felt the document read well thought that the language was written in plain English and in simple terms. They felt that it set out things clearly and was straightforward. One respondent mentioned that it was heavy going but all the information was contained within it.

Consultation asked respondents whether, in their opinion there was anything missing from the document Paying for Care and Support in Your Own Home. 35 respondents
answered this question, 11 chose to skip the question. From those that responded 13 said “Yes”, 9 said “No” and 13 answered “Don’t Know”

A total of 15 respondents, however, submitted suggestions as to what else should be included. The main issues are summarised as follows:

- Reminder about CHC (Continuing Health Care)
- Case studies
- Examples of capital assets
- Offer of advocacy support and assurance of support during process
- Details of governing legislation
- Details of transport
- Clarity required if financial assessment takes into account value of own home
- Details of how to appeal the assessment outcome

A few respondents specifically mentioned the charging for assessments. Stating that the assessment should not be charged for and that if they were then it should be made clear that the charge is only for those who have been financially assessed as requiring to pay. A respondent also questioned the quality of assessments, stating they would have to be of a high standard if there were a charge levied.

A respondent stated there were some inconsistency in language between the standard version and the easy read version for example in some places the standard version uses words such as ‘will’ whereas the easy read uses ‘might’.

A respondent also suggested having the document checked independently.

Respondents were then provided with an opportunity to make any further comments. This open text question resulted in 19 respondents providing comments with 27 respondents choosing to skip this question.

A large majority of the comments received strongly centred around the £50 administrative charge for assessments. They questioned the legality of the Council making the charge for an assessment. They also questioned the quality of the
assessment against the quality of the services provided by the Council, and the financial affordability of the assessment. One respondent felt imposing such a charge may also lead to safeguarding issues with customers not willing to be assessed to avoid such a charge.

A respondent suggested that the document be in easy read version. Also that a flow-chart presentation be made available i.e. a decision tree so that it is easier for people to understand and navigate themselves. They commented that clear responsibilities should be defined and the process should be about assisting people not deterring people. Another commented that more individual contact time be considered for those people that need the help.

**Written Responses**

A total of 5 written responses were submitted. 2 were from individual respondents. 2 were from voluntary sector organisations. 1 was from members of the county’s Learning Disability Partnership Board. (Redacted written responses are detailed in appendix 2).

Individual respondents commented on:

- The methods of how to make payment to the Council. They said that direct debit was not always an acceptable method to make a payment and that it was unacceptable for the Council to tell people that they *must* use this method of payment. They expanded on the concerns of vulnerable people being pressurised to use this method; the practicalities of the Council taking large sums of money without affording time for people to transfer monies into appropriate accounts; and the effect it has on those people who have joint accounts. They referred to the duties of the employee of the Council when giving advice on methods of payment. They say that forcing vulnerable customers to sign direct mandates could be an example of financial abuse.

- Questioned the legality of charging for assessments and that should the charge become practice within the county they felt the Council would be open and subject to a legal challenge.
Organisations who responded commented were Healthwatch Northamptonshire and Age UK Northamptonshire.

Healthwatch Northamptonshire commented:

- That the language used in the document is clear and understandable but that there is a lot of information within it.
- On the omission of the reference to the Department of Health’s Care Act Statutory Guidance (update 2016) which gives the basis on which local authorities can make administration charges.
- Importance, if an administration change is introduced, for clear information about accessing and paying for social care support as well as the assessment and review processes, advocacy support and ensuring people are signposted to specialist agencies.
- How crucial it is to involve users, carers and others in the local community in the planning and development of information.

Age UK Northamptonshire commented extensively on the administration charge of £50.00. They expressed:

- The Council having no legal power to make a charge for assessments, citing that the powers for making a charge occur after assessment has been completed and a determination has been made that the person is eligible for services. They commented that the Council would still have a duty to carry out the assessment if the person refused to pay or to disclose financial assets.
- That they were not aware that the proposed change has ever been levied in the past and suggested that no other authority in the country imposes it.
- Concern, again as they had in the past made comment, about using the enquiry of capital as the first question in the financial assessment. This discourages enquires for people. They commented that they have advised people that they should insist on a care management assessment as their right, whether or not they are deemed self-funders. They are concerned that people will miss out on appropriate assessment and guidance.
- If the intention is to share the costs of the coordination and delivery of services with people who have sufficient funds to meet those costs, it will be necessary for
the Council to impose such charges at the point of commissioning and not at the point of assessment.

- Concern on the impact to people when services are put in place before the financial assessment is completed and any contribution is determined and that the provisional charge of £20 per week is made. They say the impact will be on people who are already reserved about getting assistance with their social care needs.
- Commented on the reduction to social care provision and services having an impact on all services including hospital discharge and the requirement to ensure best possible access for older people to services they need comes from all working together to help people to help themselves.

Members of the county’s Learning Disability Partnership Board commented on:

- Although easy read paper is available there will be people who will need help to complete the forms.
- The need for examples of type of care and support that can be paid for is given.
- Further clarity should be given in the document to understand the following:
  - **Page 2**
    - para 1: does the capital amount include the value of your house if you own it? If not, will payments have to be made back to the Council if you die and your house is sold?
    - para 2: The £50 charge seems to be a lot for some people. Also at what point do you have to pay for the financial assessment?
  - **Page 3, para 3**: can you easily look at and understand the ‘standard national criteria’?
  - The information about the provisional charge is very confusing and seems to contradict itself. It seems to say that the full amount has to be paid then is says it is £20.
  - **Page 5**: the link to the Fair Contributions Policy needs to be to the Easy read version.
  - **Page 6**: People’s experience of direct payments suggest that a separate bank account is required and that you have to pay your contribution into it but this is not mentioned.
  - **Page 8, last para**: there should be a link to the Easy Read leaflet about DRE (Disability Related Expenditure).
  - **Page 9, para 2**: does the Personal Independence Payment refer to the standard or enhanced payment or both?
4. Conclusion

This consultation was designed to gather information specifically on the updated document called “Paying for Your Care and Support in Your Own Home”. Views and comments were sought on the document including the clarity of the information presented within it. An updated Section 4 – What if I am unable to meet my agreed contributions – had been added.

In conclusion, the majority of respondents, 59.5% found the document clear to read and understand, despite it containing a lot of information. However, some respondents offered comments on how to make it even more clear, simple, transparent and relevant.

Respondents made various comment but most specifically on charges and language, in some areas asking questions of what was being said.

Respondents wanted to ensure that the document be available in an easy read format; be simple to navigate; with links to other information contained being relevant.

Furthermore respondents wanted, consistency of information, less jargon and examples to be provided especially when relating to technical words. The ordering of questions asked within the assessment process was mentioned. It was important for people to have their assessment regardless of their ability to make a contribution to care or not. Some felt that the assessment process and the manner in which the question logic was set closed down this vital interaction.

The confusion on the national and local social care landscape was mentioned. Respondents mentioned that people often did not know when health care became assessed social care i.e. when contribution or full payment of social care was activated or assessed for.

Gaps within the document were centred on information, the lack of mention of carers, wider understanding required for household finance, and appreciation of the wider needs of the person needing care and the whole family and or the support structures that may surround them. Links to advocacy support and assurance of support whilst assessment process was being undertaken were identified as needed.
Respondents felt the financial figures contained with the document were confusing. The consultation responses cited that more clarity on the financial figures quoted was required. They felt currently it was easy to mix up i.e. £50, £20. This, they suggested, could be solved with providing case studies and links to governing legislation. Comments on methods and mechanism of payment where also made with real choice being offered and ensuring that the Council did not create difficulties through setting up automated financial systems i.e. direct debit.

Respondents generally commented that it was imperative that all information and internet links within the document were current and relevant.

The consultation was featured on external social media networks, local and national press outside of the Council’s official consultation submissions. Many of these postings and articles related specifically to the document containing the £50 administrative charge to conduct an assessment. No separate analysis of the media content has been undertaken for this report as this is open media coverage discussions and not officially submitted to the consultation. However, this reports notes reference to this activity and similar feedback appears in the official responses received.

5. Equalities Statistics Summary

Equalities monitoring questions were included within the questionnaire for all those that responded as individuals. Not all respondents chose to complete this section of the questionnaire.

From the available completed responses, it can be ascertained that there were more female (69.0%) respondents than male (20.7%). There were no respondents aged 29 years or under. All of the individual respondents who specified their aged were aged between 30 to 74 years.

20.7% of respondents identified themselves as disabled, with physical disability and mental health being highlighted as disabilities. The most common religion identified was Christian at 31.0% with 37.9% of participants choosing ‘None’. 20.7% preferred not to comment on their religion or belief.
Predominantly respondents were White at 76.7%, with 10.0% of respondents identifying themselves being from “other ethnic” backgrounds, and 13.3% preferring not to say. There were no respondents who identified themselves as Asian or Asian British, Black or Black British or Mixed/Multiple Ethnic background.

Most respondents were heterosexual (65.5%) with 3.4% saying they were “bisexual or gay man”, another 3.4% who identified themselves as “gay woman/ lesbian”. 27.6% of respondents answered “prefer not to say”.

Most respondents were married (41.4%) with 6.9% saying that they were single. 3.4% were in a civil partnership. No one identified themselves as a widow/ widower. 17.2% of respondents “prefer not to say”.

Full statistics of the responses that was captured can be found in appendix 1.
A) Appendix 1 Questionnaire Results

Question 1

We are interested to know about how well you understand the document Paying for Care and Support in Your Own Home, and that the language used is understandable.

Can you help us by rating your understanding by using a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 is “Very Unclear Understanding” and 5 is “Very Clear Understanding”?

Question 1a

Please tell us why you gave it this rating?

- Simple terms
- Not everyone may understand what is included in capital assets - homes, cars etc. Also, what if the capital assets are shared, this needs clarification. Also, more plain speaking could be used. E.g. on invoice contributions, it could simply say: Where you qualify for financial help from the council, the council will pay your provider (unless you receive Direct Payments) and then bill you for your contribution......etc.
- I have previously worked as a social services team manager and have read this consultation document.
- I read the ‘easy read’ version and was still very little better informed. This put me off even trying the full version.
- No issues in understanding the document.
- Having downloaded the document and upon reading the information it all amounts to Care Managers...Budgets available...income, benefit’s etc. there is so many if’s it is very confusing.
- I am clear that there is a legal duty for local authorities to assess the care needs of people and that Northamptonshire is seeking to charge an admin fee for those with disposable assets over a certain level
- Too much jargon
- Easily readable and written in plain english.
- I understand these issues, but I am not sure this would be true of everyone.
- I understand the issues - this may not be the same for everyone
- Implies help but then goes on to define may only get help if details of finances fully revealed. Should be needs based FIRST, then look at who/how the cost will be met.
- NCC’s aim is to produce a document that is explicitly clear, we do not believe it is.
- Clear but doesn’t say anything about charging for assessments
- I can see what you’re trying to do. It is not easy to read though. You have lacunae around carers, households, pooling.
- No idea
- The document is quite heavy reading, but most of the information is there.
- I am good at interpreting documents of this nature, seems pretty straightforward to me.
- No reference is made to the value of the applicant’s home being discounted in financial assessment for home care.
- Not read it.

Question 2

In your opinion is there anything missing from the document Paying for Care and Support in Your Own Home?

Question 2a.

If you answered ‘Yes’ above, what would you like to see included?

- Reminding about chc
- Political justification for the shocking state of care
- Examples of capital assets
- The views and contributions of the people it will affect.
- That it is wrong to undertake financial assessment prior to needs assessment. Current legislation clearly states people with care and support needs are ALL entitled to an assessment, at no point does it state the assessment must be paid for if you have savings/capital above the threshold.
- A couple of case studies might help as examples.
- clarification that the charge will only be for those who earn over the amount specified and that this is a new charge.
• The sentence.....".Don’t worry if you find this hard to understand, somebody will always be available to talk you through it in your own language, in your own time, so that we can help you to understand what is happening better. Plus you won’t be held on hold for ages it's our promise to help you ".....!!!!!!

• I would like you to address the standard of assessment that one could reasonably expect, should one be paying for this. My experience of having my mother assessed was that the assessment was of an exceptionally poor standard, it was inaccurate and the SW failed to share the final version with family. If I were paying for this service I would be taking the matter further

• How would someone know what may be missing if the council is putting across their policy? Has this document been checked independently? Is there an easy read version? This document has a likely audience whose capabilities and/or time is lacking... make it easier for them to understand, less wordy and less threatening. It is not at all end user friendly - perhaps that's the aim - and is very 'corporate' and thus offputting to many.

• In some instances more clarity, also consistency between the full document and easy read version.

Examples: (1) not clear if financial assessment takes account of the value of your home, should you own your own home (2) silent on issue of whether or not you can appeal any assessment outcome and, if so, how (3) Easy Guide says 'an allowance is made to cover DRE' whilst full document states 'allowance may be made' if in receipt of the stated benefits and then gives examples of 'items that will be considered'. Both the latter statements are not explicit. Is the Easy Guide version correct in that 'allowance is made' or the full version in that 'allowance may be made' etc? (4) clarity over ability to have a home visit to help fill in assessment forms e.g. should you have a sensory impairment, in the main document it states 'on request Financial Assessment Team will visit and complete' yet in Easy Read version it says 'some people might be able to get face to face help to fill in the form' - the word 'might' should be replaced with 'will' or another word to make it clear that if required you will be able to get face to face help....’ (5) one Q&A in the Easy Read guide is unclear and appears to be missing at least one word, namely the following Q 'what if I don't get the benefits from DWP that you say I should pay towards care' - as written it does not make sense.

• Use of independent advocates to help people the issues of safeguarding implications
• Legality.
• See my earlier comment
• Transport to Day centre or respite centre

Question 3.

Any other comments?

• I utterly condemn the charging for such services
• This proposal will significantly disadvantage people with long term disabilities and people who could be supported to independence through assessment and short
term therapeutic interventions/equipment/minor adaptations - without this early intervention their care needs would be more significant further down the line. The proposal to charge for assessments is despicable, shame on the council.

- What about the £50 charge? How will you demonstrate that it won't cost more than £50 in your overheads to: identify someone who needs to pay it, to collect the payment, to handle the payment, to process the payment and chase those who do not pay?
- The charge for assessment to self-funders is new to me, and alarming!
- Statute is in place which ensures that people have access to assessment free in order to identify eligible needs. This seems like a back door to charging - as many people will not have or will not allow an assessment if they have to pay £50 up front - and then will decline further.

Current legislation clearly states people with care and support needs are ALL entitled to an assessment, at no point does it state the assessment must be paid for if you have savings/capital above the threshold.

- No
- The proposed 'administration' fee of £50 for self-funders is atrocious. This is discriminatory and everyone should have the right to an assessment regardless of funds. What does this 'administration' fee pay for?

How is this even achieved? Is a financial assessment completed prior to a social care assessment? Surely this is superfluous? This resource led way of working is completely against the grain of the true ethos of Social Work. How about those who have no family or friends and lack capacity?

I disagree with this proposal.

- I am very concerned about the proposal to charge self-funding adults for an assessment of their needs under the Care Act. I believe that this will act as a deterrent for many of the most vulnerable members of our community to seek support with very real social care needs. Therefore I urge you to reconsider this measure.

- More individual contact for those that need the help.....there are plenty of people out there in despair who need a little extra time and care to be helped

- Whilst local authorities are under pressure with reduced funding and increasing demand - Northamptonshire might like to look at the quality of their services - including assessment services, before they seek to gain more funding from individuals to perpetuate their inadequate service

- I strongly disagree with the proposal for charging a fee for carrying out a care assessment. I suggest NCC would save a great deal of money if they stopped paying such extortionate fees to agencies who provide temporary staff such as social workers.

Also individuals pay more than enough in tax as it is. you are also discriminating against some people who budget carefully throughout their lives and they would be best spending all their hard earned savings before they need to be assessed for care.

- I find it quite unacceptable that you charge a £50 Administrative Charge for a Financial Assessment to Full Cost Service Users. You state that this is a small charge, since when has £50 been a small amount. If a Service User has more than £23,250 they are full cost and get no support towards their care. My understanding is that every Service User is entitled to an assessment of their needs
and a Financial Assessment. I see this as being unfair and inequitable as full cost Service Users are being treated differently to funded Service Users and my understanding is that the County Council had a policy of treating us all the same.

- The proposal to charge £50 for an assessment is appalling. I assume you have taken legal advice, but it is totally against the spirit of the Care Act. People have a right to an assessment, and whether or not they subsequently need to pay for their care, this charge will put people off.

- The document should have an easy read version. It should also have a flow-chart presentation to make decision tree easier for people to understand. There should be clear responsibilities defined and it should be about HELPING not deterring people who need assistance!

- Whilst I agree with the overall requirement for people to pay for care in line with their resources I feel this does not completely reflect government guidance. For example Section four states "If the Council determines that you have deprived yourself of assets in order to avoid paying care fees, you will be required to pay your care provider directly for the cost of your support." This appears to be at odds with "Care and Support Statutory Guidance Issued under the Care Act 2014" which states "5. The overall principle should be that when a person has tried to deprive themselves of assets, this should not affect the amount of local authority support they receive."

- We disagree with the decision to make a £50 charge for the initial assessment of need/eligibility. We believe that this will deter people from seeking help at an early stage, especially the vulnerable. If you ask a plumber for a quote they do not charge you for the quote, likewise you do not pay to visit a GP. Council Tax should fund assessments to ensure no barrier placed on people seeking advice and support. You should not have to pay to see if you qualify for assistance.

- People will be more at risk less safe, ill less independent and isolated with these ontop of the continued cuts in support

- Your proposed £50 charge for a needs assessment is contrary to the Care Act 2014. Your proposal to conduct a financial assessment prior to indicative budget for eligible needs is contrary to Guidance on the Care Act 2014.

- Even though financial support will not always be available to those who need care, practical support and advice should be offered easily and quickly to all.
Question 4

In what respect are you answering this questionnaire.

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</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am a professional e.g. GP, district nurse, etc</td>
<td>19.4%</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other please state:</td>
<td>12.9%</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

answered question 31
skipped question 15

Others stated:

- Work in the voluntary sector.
- I am Chair of Carers Voice.
- Charity supporting people with a visual/sensory impairment
- I am angry

The following question was asked on the online questionnaire. Those respondents who identified themselves as being an organisation finished completing the questionnaire. Those who identified themselves as individual respondents were directed to the equality monitoring demographic questions.
Question 5.
Are you responding as an individual or an organisation?

![Bar Chart showing responses to Question 5](chart.png)

There were 35 responses to this question. 91.4% answered Individual, and 8.6% answered Organisation.

1 organisation stated their name and role as below:
- Northamptonshire Association for the Blind, CEO

Equality Monitoring Demographic Questions

1 Which borough or district of Northamptonshire do you live in?

![Bar Chart showing responses to Demographic Question 1](chart.png)

There were 28 responses to this question, 18 respondents skipped this question. From those who responded 0.0% answered Corby, 16.7% answered Daventry, 13.3% answered East Northamptonshire, 10.0% answered Kettering, 36.7% answered Northampton, 10.0% answered South Northamptonshire, 6.7% answered Wellingborough, and 6.7% answered other. Other stated:
- Leicestershire
- My family live in Northampton.
2) What gender are you?

There were 29 responses to this question. 20.7% answered Male, 69.4% answered Female, and 10.3% answered Prefer not to say. 17 respondents skipped the question.

3) Are you currently Pregnant or have you had a baby in the last 6 months?

There were 28 responses to this question. 0.0% answered Yes, 89.3% answered No, and 10.7% answered Preferred not to say. 18 respondents skipped the question.
4) How old are you?

There were 29 responses to this question. 0.0% answered 0 to 9, 0.0% answered 10 to 19, 0.0% answered 20 to 29, 44.8% answered 30 to 49, 27.6% answered 50 to 64, 17.2% answered 65 to 74, 0.0% answered 75+, and 10.3% answered Prefer not to say. 17 respondents skipped the question.

5) Do you have a disability?

There were 29 responses to this question. 20.7% answered Yes, 58.6% answered No, and 20.7% answered Prefer not to say. 17 respondents skipped the question.
5a) If Yes, please tick the appropriate box(es) which best describes your disability?

There were 8 responses to this question. 4 answered Mental Health, 3 answered Physical Disability, 0 answered Hearing Impairment, 0 answered Learning Disability, 0 answered Sight Impairment, and 2 answered Other. 38 respondents skipped the question.

6) What is your religion or belief?

There were 26 responses to this question. 20 respondents skipped the question. Of those who responded 37.9% answered None, 31.0% answered Christian, 0.0% answered Hindu, 0.0% answered Jewish, 0.0% answered Muslim, 0.0% answered Sikh, 0.0% answered Buddhist, and 20.7% answered Prefer not to say. 10.3% answered Other. Other responses:

- Agnostic Humanist
- Pagan
- Atheist

7) How would you describe your ethnic origin?
27 responses answered this question. 10 respondents skipped the question. From those that responded 66.7% answered English, 7.40% answered Scottish, 7.6% answered Irish, 0.0% answered Welsh, 0.0% answered Northern Irish, 0.0% answered Gypsy or Traveller, 11.1% answered Other White Background, 0.0% answered Indian, 0.0% answered Bangladeshi, 0.0% answered Pakistani, 0.0% answered Chinese, 0.0% answered Other Asian Background, 0.0% answered White & Black Caribbean, 0.0% answered White & Asian, 0.0% answered White & Black African, 0.0% answered Other mixed/multiple background, 0.0% answered Caribbean, 0.0% answered African, 0.0% answered Other Black Background, 10.0% answered Other Ethnic Group, and 14.8% answered Prefer not to say. Other responses were White British European, [redacted], British.

8) If you are 16 or over which of the following options best describes how you think of yourself?

There were 29 responses to this question. 0.0% answered Bisexual, 3.4% answered Gay Man, 3.4% answered Gay Woman/ Lesbian, 65.5% answered Heterosexual, and 27.6% answered Prefer not to say. 17 respondents skipped the question.
9) Is your gender identity the same as the gender you were assigned at birth?

There were 29 responses to this question. 72.4% answered Yes, 0.0% answered No, and 27.6% answered Prefer not to say. 17 respondents skipped the question.

10) What would you describe your marital status as?

There were 29 responses to this question. 41.4% answered Married, 6.9% answered Single, 3.4% answered Civil Partnership, 0.0% answered Widow/ Widower, 31.0% answered Other, and 17.2% answered Prefer not to say. 17 respondents skipped the question.
Response 1  Healthwatch

Dear Sir or Madam,

Response to Consultation on: Paying for Care and Support in Your Own Home
In response to the above mentioned consultation Healthwatch Northamptonshire submits the following response.

How Understandable is the Language Used in the Document?
Whilst the language used is relatively clear and understandable, there is a lot of information to digest and potentially, quite a number of questions and queries people may have. We feel it would be appropriate and beneficial to have organized some locality based consultation sessions open to both current users and carers, as well as general members of the public.

Is there anything missing from the document
There is no reference to the Department of Health’s Care Act Statutory Guidance document (updated 2016), which gives the basis on which local authorities can make decisions to make administration charges. Therefore, people are not aware that Section 8 - Care and Support, states the following:

8.60 Local authorities must not charge people for a financial assessment, a needs assessment or the preparation of a care and support plan.
8.61 It may be appropriate for local authorities to charge a flat fee for arranging care. This can help ensure people have clarity about the costs they will face if they ask the local authority to arrange their care. However, such flat rate costs must be set at a level where they do not exceed the costs the local authority actually incurs.

As a result, Healthwatch Northamptonshire would like to challenge the consultation process on two grounds:

a. Lack of accurate information prevents people from being able to make an informed decision
b. Charging for assessments is not legal, as shown in the above extract from the Statutory Guidance document

Any Other Comments
In general, the vast majority of people have little knowledge or understanding of social care and how it works until there is a need. Often there is confusion after an initial post hospital period of free reablement/enablement support, when people needing ongoing domiciliary care support are advised social care support is needs assessed and means tested, so they will be required to partly or fully fund their support services.

Healthwatch Northamptonshire feels it is important, particularly if the decision is taken to introduce an administration fee for arranging care, for there to be clear information about accessing and paying for social care support, as well as the assessment and review processes, advocacy support and ensuring people are signposted to specialist agencies such as Northants Carers, Alzheimers Society, Age UK, etc.
Finally, we feel it is crucial to involve users, carers and others in the community in the planning and development of such information, and would welcome the opportunity of working with the County council to promote the process and encourage involvement from the diverse communities across the county.

Response 2  Age UK Northamptonshire

Dear Sir/Madam

I am grateful for this opportunity to respond to your consultation on Paying for Care and Support.

The consultation document refers to the imposition of “a small administration charge of £50.00” for a social care assessment. It is our view that the council has no powers to charge for assessment. Powers to charge for services only arise after the assessment has been completed and a determination of whether the person is eligible for services has been made. The authority would still have a duty to carry out the assessment if the person refused to pay or to tell the local authority what their financial assets were.

The Care Act guidance says:
8.12. The legal framework for charging is set out in Sections 14 and 17 of the Care Act 2014. When choosing to charge, a local authority must not charge more than the cost that it incurs in meeting the assessed needs of the person. It cannot recover any administration fee relating to arranging that care and support.

We accept that a charge may be levied in the case of a person with eligible needs and assets above the upper capital limit who has asked the local authority to arrange their care and support on their behalf, but this must of course occur after the eligible need has been established.

We are not aware that this proposed charge has ever been levied in the past and it has been suggested to us that no other authority in the country imposes it.

We have expressed concern in the past about using the enquiry about capital, as a first question of the financial assessment, to weed out self-funders and deny them access to support – or even help with understanding their needs so that they can seek appropriate services. We have consequently advised people that they should insist on a Care Management Assessment as their right, whether or not they are deemed to be self-funders. This proposed measure is intended to pass the cost of the assessment on to the enquirer but will also discourage enquiries. Naturally we are concerned about those people who would be self-funders but who will miss out on appropriate assessment and guidance and those who might well turn out to be funded but who dare not risk a £50 bill.

As worded, we believe that the proposal is unlawful. The right to charge for arranging care only arises after a request is made following assessment of need, determination of eligibility and financial assessment and if it is the Council’s intention to share the costs of the coordination and delivery of services with people who have sufficient funds to meet those costs, it will be necessary for the Council to impose such charges at the point of commissioning and not at the point of assessment.
We are also concerned about the proposal that where services are put in place before the Financial Assessment is completed and any contribution is determined, people will be expected to pay a provisional charge of £20 per week. We believe that this may have an impact on people who are already reticent about seeking help with their care needs.

More than 1 million older people in Britain and thousands in Northamptonshire are left to struggle without any support. Cuts to funding for care at home mean that many older people are sacrificing their dignity because they can’t get the support they need. Cuts to council budgets mean that spending on services like home carers, meals on wheels, and day care has dropped by more than £1 billion in the last five years across the country. This is having a huge knock-on effect on the NHS, where each year more and more older people are finding themselves trapped in hospital, despite being well enough to leave, simply because there isn’t support available for them in their community.

We believe that it is important that, wherever we are in the health and social care system, we ensure the best possible access for older people to the services they need, working together to help people to help themselves.

**Response 3 Members of Northamptonshire Learning Disability Partnership Board**

**Overall**
1. The group was not happy that no-one was present who is responsible for the policy and is in a position to answer questions about it.
2. There was a query about what effort is made to consult with any other people with learning disabilities as the LDPB is only a small representation.
3. The Easy Read paper is on the web site and the LDPB notifies as many people as possible through its newsletter but there are many other people who need to know about the changes and who may need help to fill in the form.
4. The consultation questionnaire is not in Easy Read and therefore denies some people a voice.
5. It would help understanding if some examples of the type of care and support that can be paid for is given in an introduction.
6. There are some suggested changes to words/text to make it easier to understand and these will be done and forwarded separately.

**Specific comments and queries**
1. Page 2, para 1: does the capital amount include the value of your house if you own it? If not, will payments have to be made back to the council if you die and your house is sold?
2. Page 2, para 2: The £50 charge seems to be a lot for some people. Also at what point do you have to pay for the financial assessment?
3. Page 3, para 3: can you easily look at and understand the ‘standard national criteria’?
4. The information about the provisional charge is very confusing and seems to contradict itself. It seems to say that the full amount has to be paid then is says it is £20.
5. Page 5: the link to the Fair Contributions Policy needs to be to the Easy read version.
6. Page 6: People’s experience of direct payments suggest that a separate bank account is required and that you have to pay your contribution into it but this is not mentioned.
7. Page 8, last para: there should be a link to the Easy Read leaflet about DRE.
8. Page 9, para 2: does the Personal Independence Payment refer to the standard or enhanced payment or both?

**Response 4  Individual Respondent**

I would like to make the following comments as part of the consultation on *Paying for Care and Support When Eligible for Adult Social Care*:

Traditionally customers have paid for their contributions via a range of methods, including standing orders, cheques, online, ringing the office, and direct debits. For various reasons the Council would prefer people to pay by direct debit, but this is not always an acceptable method for people.

To compel people to sign a direct debit mandate is, I believe, both illegal and immoral. It effectively enables the Council to deduct at will from the signatory's private bank account. This is fine if they choose to give the Council that right: but it is completely unacceptable to tell people that they must do it.

A large proportion of the customers concerned are, what may be described as, "vulnerable" people, and the Council has a duty of care towards them, and it is inappropriate to be pressurising them into accepting something which violates their basic rights;

Because of the way the Council's system of assessing and billing takes place, it sometimes happens that a customer who moves into residential care receives a very large bill indeed before the regular four-weekly ones take effect. Not only can this be a nasty shock to them, but it could also have a catastrophic effect if the Council suddenly attempts to take this money from their account (by direct debit) without their having a reasonable opportunity to arrange for the funds to be made available. Where the bank account is a joint one this can indeed leave the spouse who remains at home in dire straits.

[I] personally have had bad experiences with direct debits in the past (from other agencies) and would not be willing to authorise the Council to be able to do this to me.

Employees have been told that they should be promoting direct debits as if this method were compulsory. Undue pressure was also applied to an employee in at least one case. Employees as well as customers also have rights. When exercising their duty to point out errors and pitfalls they should not be threatened with disciplinary action. Also they are not, as was asserted to the employee in question, immune from prosecution for carrying out orders which are illegal.

One of the duties of employees in this area of work is to report examples of where it is suspected that a customer may be the victim of financial abuse. It could in fact be argued that trying to force vulnerable customers to sign direct debit mandates is in fact an example of financial abuse.
Response 5 Individual Respondent

I am contacting in response to the consultation about ‘Paying for Care and Support When Eligible for Adult Social Care’.

I would like to object to this as I believe charging for assessments (even only those whom the LA believe have the finances) would be unlawful for the following reasons:

The Care Act (2014) places a duty on LA’s to assess an adults needs [where it appears an adult has needs for care and support] and states the duty to carry out a needs assessment applies regardless of the authorities view of the level of the needs for care and support or the level of the adults finances- by implication the assessment must be carried out free of charge. It would seem sensible to also conclude the assessment should take place before any consideration of finances takes place. – see Care Act (2014) section 9.1 and 9.3 – Assessing needs.

I suspect if this passes the consultation stage it would not be long before a legal challenge is mounted. Especially considering those whom this is levied at are likely to have the financial resources to challenge this. I will be watching this with much interest as I am sure will many others.
Northamptonshire County Council (NCC) want to ensure that they have in place policies and procedures which clearly outline the Council’s position in regard to payment of care and support.

The Council has a requirement to ensure that those who are both vulnerable and eligible for social care have their needs met, within the financial resources available.

Equally however, the Council also need to ensure that, after a full financial assessment, there is an ability for the customer to make a contribution to their care needs; that they and their family fully understand this and commits to making the agreed regular payments.

The reason for this is that the County Council need to ensure people who receive services have clarity about their responsibility and the Council have in place a procedures which enable a more robust approach to reducing this element of client debt.

The Council have a document called Paying for Your Care and Support in Your Own Home which has been updated to ensure it is explicitly clear of what the Council’s adult social care role is and the expectations of the service user if deemed both eligible and able to make a final financial contribution towards the cost of their care. In particular, Section 4 of this document – What if I am unable to meet my agreed contributions – has been added.

The Council now wish to seek views and comments on this document including the clarity of the information presented.

Please give us your feedback by completing this questionnaire. Please email us at epit@northamptonshire.gov.uk if you would like a copy of this questionnaire in another version, including a paper copy or in an easy read format.

The consultation findings will be considered and presented to Councillors at a meeting of its Cabinet in early 2017.

Question 1

We are interested to know about how well you understand the document Paying for Care and Support in Your Own Home, and that the language used is understandable.

Can you help us by rating your understanding by using a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 is “Very Unclear Understanding” and 5 is “Very Clear Understanding”?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Very Unclear</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>Don’t Know</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Question 1a

Please tell us why you gave it this rating?


Question 2

In your opinion is there anything missing from the document Paying for Care and Support in Your Own Home?

Please tick (v) relevant answer

Yes
No
Don’t know

Question 2a.
If you answered ‘Yes’ above, what would you like to see included?


Question 3.

Any other comments?


Question 4.

In what respect are you answering this questionnaire.

- I am a current customer of NCC Adult Social Care
- I am a relative/ carer of someone using NCC Adult Social Care
- I am a friend of someone using NCC Adult Social Care
- I am a member of the public
- I am a member of staff employed by Olympus Care Services
I am a member of staff employed by Northamptonshire County Council

I am a Councillor

I am a provider of adult social care services

I am a professional e.g. GP, district nurse, etc

Other please state: 

Question 5.

Are you responding as an individual or an organisation?

Individual

Organisation

Question 5a is only available to those who identified themselves as an organisation – all individuals redirected to equality monitoring questions 6 onwards instead.

If you are replying on behalf of an organisation, please tell us the name of the organisation and your role?

Question 6

1) What district/borough do you live in? (Please tick the appropriate box)

Corby

Daventry

East Northamptonshire

Kettering

Northampton

South Northamptonshire

Wellingborough

Other (please state)

2) What gender are you? (Please tick the appropriate box)

Male

Female

Prefer not to say

3) Are you currently Pregnant or have you had a baby in the last 6 months? (Please tick the appropriate box)

Yes

No

Prefer not to say

4) How old are you? (Please tick the appropriate box)

0 to 9

10 to 19

20 to 29

30 to 49

50 to 64

65 to 74

75+

Prefer not to say

5) Do you have a disability? (Please tick the appropriate box)

Yes

No

Prefer not to say

5a) If Yes, please tick the appropriate box(es) which best describes your disability?
6) **What is your religion?** (Please tick the appropriate box)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>None</th>
<th>Christian</th>
<th>Hindu</th>
<th>Jewish</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Muslim</td>
<td>Sikh</td>
<td>Buddhist</td>
<td>Prefer not to say</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Any other religion (please write in)

7) **How would you describe your ethnic origin?**

Tick one category within the option which best describes your background

- **White**
  - English
  - Scottish
  - Irish
  - Other White Background

- **Asian or Asian British**
  - Indian
  - Bangladeshi
  - Other Asian Background

- **Mixed / Multiple ethnic Background**
  - White & Black Caribbean
  - White & Asian
  - Other mixed / multiple background

- **Other Ethnic group (please state)**

- **Prefer not to say**

8) **If you are 16 or over which of the following options best describes how you think of yourself?** (Please tick the appropriate box)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Bisexual</th>
<th>Gay Man</th>
<th>Gay Woman/ Lesbian</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Heterosexual</td>
<td>Prefer not to say</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

9) **Is your gender identity the same as the gender you were assigned at birth?** (Please tick the appropriate box)

| Yes | No | Prefer not to say |

10) **What would you describe your marital status as?** (Please tick the appropriate box)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Married</th>
<th>Single</th>
<th>Civil Partnership</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Widow/Widower</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Prefer not to say</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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The Council now wish to seek views and comments on this document including the clarity of the information presented.

Areas: Countywide

Participation Instructions:
You can give us your feedback via the below online questionnaire. Please contact us if you would like a copy of this questionnaire in another version, including a paper copy or in an easy read format. Alternatively you can write to us at the below address or email us at epit@northamptonshire.gov.uk

Engagement, Participation and Involvement Team
Northamptonshire County Council
County Hall
PO Box 177
Northampton
NN1 1AY
The consultation findings will be considered and presented to Councillors at a meeting of its Cabinet in early 2017.

**Participation Links:**

- Web link to online questionnaire
- [Web link to PDF copy of Paying for Care and Support document]

**Contact Name:** Engagement, Participation and Involvement Team  
**Contact Email:** epit@northamptonshire.gov.uk