



Date of Meeting	9 February 2021
Portfolio	Cabinet Member for Social Care and Ageing Well
Report Author	Steven Blezard
Public/Private Document	Public

Discretionary Fees & Charges 2020/21– Careline Service 2021/22– Careline Service

Executive Summary

- 1.1 Charges for the Careline service were not included within the main discretionary fees and charges report, as Careline is self-financing and being operated on a trading account basis. Therefore the service does not require any funding from the Council and needs to set its fees in line with its forecasted costs, rather than in line with inflation.
- 1.2 Analysis has been completed on the operating costs of the service and it is anticipated that the existing charges made to service users will cover all the costs for the service during 2021/22.
- 1.3 As the operating costs are covered by existing charges, it is not necessary to increase charges made to service user charges.

Recommendation

- 2.1 Cabinet approves the recommendation not to increase the charges for the Careline Service.
- 2.2 Cabinet note the introduction of a new additional charge for Sim card costs in units provided because the service user doesn't have a landline telephone, see section 5.2.

Reason for Recommendation

- 3.1 Careline is a discretionary service, but one which supports the Prevention offer within Adult Care and which national evidence suggests can prevent or delay the need for other care and support services.
- 3.2 Careline is a fully chargeable service which is not subsidised by the Council, yet provides a much needed and valued local service.

- 3.3 Careline charges to service users need to remain affordable and offer good value for money to encourage elderly and vulnerable people who would benefit from the service to choose to buy it. We know from experience that the level of charges are a prohibitive factor and when charges have been increased in the past, it has led to some service users deciding to terminate the service.
- 3.4 There are options for service users to buy Careline type services from the private sector, although none of these locally offer the option of a mobile responder, which the service we provide does, however, we need to ensure that our charges remain competitive.

Key Points for Consideration

- 4.1 Cabinet approved the annual review of discretionary fees and charges as part of the budget setting process on 29 September 2020, with the exception of the Careline Service as detailed above.

Alternatives Considered

The alternative is not to operate the service as a self-financing model and increase the fees and charges on an annual basis in line with inflation, however, this would not sustain the model and ultimately lead to the potential need to subsidise the service.

Costs and Budget Summary

- 5.1 The retained fee levels for the Careline service for the 2021/22 financial year, are as follows:

Service area	Current charge (£) 19/20
Careline	3.10 per week
Careline plus	5.10 per week
Careline (no landline)	4.60 per week
Careline plus (no landline)	5.60 per week

- 5.2 Increasingly, service users don't always have a telephone landline in place, which means that we need to provide a different type of Careline unit which is operated by an internal SIM card. There are monthly costs associated with the SIM cards, therefore, there is an additional charge of £1.50 per week added to the basic charges for service users buying the Careline service who don't have a telephone landline.

Risk and Policy Implications

6. The Service has reviewed its charges against relevant legislation to ensure that all transactions remain compliant with the relevant statutes governing Local Authority activities.

Consultation

7. No consultation is required as there are no changes proposed to the current charges, however, it should be noted that a separate consultation is currently ongoing as part of savings proposals, which includes a proposed charge for Careline installations in some cases. This would not affect the recommendations in this report and the outcome of that consultation is due to be reported to Cabinet on 25 February 2021.

Background Papers	Place of Inspection
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| 8. Background papers to this report can be obtained from Kathryn Andrew | Number 1 Riverside
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