

Walsall Council Scrutiny and Performance Panel Work Group  
Initiation Document

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| <b>Work Group Name:</b> | Benefits based charging for social care services |
| <b>Panel:</b>           | Social Care & Inclusion and Performance Panel    |
| <b>Municipal Year:</b>  | 2011/12  |
| <b>Lead Member:</b>     | Councillor Oliver                                |
| <b>Lead Officer:</b>    | Paul Davies                                      |
| <b>Support Officer:</b> | Matt Underhill                                   |
| <b>Membership:</b>      | Cllr Oliver; Cllr D. Coughlan, Cllr Burley       |

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| <b>1.</b> | <b>Context</b>  |
|           | <p>The working group has been established to review the initial implementation of benefits-based charging for social care services in 2011.</p> <p>The principles of the new arrangements are that a person's disability-related benefits are paid to an individual to fund the costs of meeting their support needs. Under the benefits-based charging system, the amount people are being asked to pay is based on the level of relevant disability-related benefits they receive. An Individual's benefits-based charge will remain the same irrespective of how their needs change or the level of service they require.</p> <p>Previously, Fairer Charging as a charging system for community based care was implemented in Walsall in 2004. This system was viewed as inequitable, complex and costly to administer and there is an income receivable shortfall against budget.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2,392 users of community based care services have been assessed under the current 'Fairer Charging' system</li> <li>• Of these 1,191 were assessed as having to pay a NIL contribution</li> <li>• The range of charges for the 1,201 people make a contribution varies from a minimal charge i.e. less than £5 per week, up to £559 per week</li> <li>• The average charge is £20.26 per week, but there is no maximum charge</li> </ul> |
| <b>2.</b> | <b>Objectives</b>   |
|           | <p>To review how the new arrangements and seek to understand the implications for service users.</p> <p>The working group will consider the objective of benefits-based charging which was to develop a more equitable charging model, which is a benefits based. Drivers for a benefits based charging model:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A system based on everyone paying something</li> <li>• The recognition by people in receipt of disability benefits that this benefit will be utilised to fund / contribute toward the costs of meeting their disability needs</li> </ul>  |

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|           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• For example the mobility element of Disability Living Allowance is given to fund Transport needs.</li> </ul>   |
| <b>3.</b> | <b>Scope</b>  |
|           | All adults in receipt of community based social care services.  |
| <b>4.</b> | <b>Equalities Implications</b>  |
|           | An equalities impact assessment is underway<br>There is a statutory requirement to undertake extensive consultation on proposed charging model. This consultation will be across community and voluntary groups, welfare rights groups and citizens across the borough in a planned way.                              |
| <b>5.</b> | <b>Who else will you want to take part?</b>   |
|           | Local stakeholders, care recipients, carers and representative groups   |
| <b>6.</b> | <b>Timescales &amp; Reporting Schedule</b>  |
|           | The working group's final report will be presented to the Panel 6 October 2011.   |
| <b>7.</b> | <b>Risk factors</b>   |
|           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Undertaking timely consultation;</li> <li>• Not progress with benefits based charging model would mean:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ need to seek £3million saving through other means;</li> <li>○ continued income shortfall</li> </ul> </li> </ul> |