



Down's Syndrome Scotland

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A Consultation on a Proposal for a Bill to Abolish Charges for Non-Residential Social Care

Down's Syndrome Scotland welcomes the opportunity to respond to this consultation. As a charity, we work to improve the quality of life of people with Down's syndrome (Ds) and their families across Scotland.

1. Do you support the principle that non-residential social care services should be available free at the point of delivery to those who have been assessed by a relevant professional as requiring them (as is the case within health care)?

As an organisation, Down's Syndrome Scotland (DSS) is of the view that all social care services do not necessarily have to be free at the point of delivery. But we argue that, if charges apply, these need to be consistent across the country and proportionate to people's income. Consistency would also mean that it is easier for organisations like ours to support families throughout Scotland.

However one of our members who is a carer and has an interest in the consultation supports the principle that non-residential social care services should be available free at the point of delivery.

2. Do you agree that legislation is a necessary and appropriate means of addressing the issues identified?

Yes.

3. The current system has resulted in varying charges in different areas for the same level and quality of service. Do you agree that there should be consistency across Scotland? What do you think the advantages and disadvantages would be?

DSS agrees with one of our members who argues that 'yes, the charges should be consistent across Scotland as disability benefits are consistent, therefore a person in Aberdeen for example is receiving the same amount as someone in Glasgow. It would make sense that both of these people should be charged the same amount as each other. The only worry I would have about this is in some areas care staff etc may be paid more so this could have a knock on affect as to how many hours of care a person would receive.

Advantages of consistency in charges:

- a) If a person moves to a different area they will know in advance the price structure of services.

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- b) One certain area where things are "cheaper" will not have an influx of people moving to that area so that they can afford services.
- c) Any teams/professionals working with a disabled person will have a clear knowledge of pricing to hand.
- d) People will feel it is a fair system, less animosity/complaints.

Disadvantages of consistency in charges:

- a) In some areas staffing costs may be higher (care providers may charge more in certain areas), therefore some people may receive less hours of service for their money'.

4. Should all social care related services be free at the point of delivery? If you answered Yes, please explain your reasons. If you answered No, please explain which services should be excluded, and why. (Please refer to the services set out on page 7)

One of our members is of the view that all services should be free at the point of delivery. Her reasons for this are:

- a) Money/bills can be confusing and worrying for people who do not fully understand them.
- b) Being faced with having to pay first may put people off applying for help and leave them even more isolated.

Although DSS does not necessarily agree for all social care services to be free at the point of delivery, we strongly believe that the points raised above need to be carefully considered as there are likely to affect families across the country.

5. What are the likely financial implications (if any) of any proposed Bill to you or your organisation? What (if any) other significant financial implications are likely to arise?

6. What do you think the implications of the proposed Bill are for equality? (Positive/Negative/No significant implications/Undecided). Please explain your answer. If you answered Negative, please suggest any ways this impact could be minimised or avoided.





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One of our parent members argues that 'in some areas there may be a high volume of voluntary organisations that help to provide services therefore people in areas with little or no voluntary help may feel this is unfair to them'.

7. Are there any other comments you would wish to make that are relevant to this proposal?

One of our members was keen to 'thank Siobhan McMahon MSP for taking such an interest in this subject as it is something that is extremely worrying for parents of disabled children/adults, especially as more and more cutbacks are being introduced everywhere and benefits are being cut. People are genuinely worried about this subject.'

