

Bath & North East Somerset Council

DECISION MAKER:	Cllr Paul Crossley, Leader of the Council Cllr Simon Allen, Cabinet Member for Wellbeing		
DECISION DATE:	On or after 9th April 2013	EXECUTIVE FORWARD PLAN REFERENCE:	
		E	2547
TITLE:	B&NES Fairer Contributions Policy: Policy Amendments for Financial Year 2013/14		
WARD:	All		
AN OPEN PUBLIC ITEM			
List of attachments to this report: B&NES Fairer Contributions Policy 2013/14			

1 THE ISSUE

The B&NES Fairer Contributions Policy is amended each year to reflect changes in statutory benefit entitlements and minor policy changes which may affect financial assessment.

2 RECOMMENDATION

The Cabinet members are asked to agree:

- 2.1 The change relating to the minimum income threshold buffer detailed on p5 of the attached policy document which brings the policy in line with national DH guidance, and
- 2.2 The changes relating to Disability Related Expenditure set out in Appendix 3, p14-15 of the attached policy document which provide greater clarity and flexibility for service users, carers and staff and are in line with national DH guidance.

3 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 The recommendations in 2.1 & 2.2 above relate to The Council's Financial Plan 2013/14 – 15/16 Appendix 2 Annex 5 which highlights the need to ensure the Council's policy is consistent with national DH guidance.

4 CORPORATE OBJECTIVES

- *Promoting independence and positive lives for everyone*

5 THE REPORT

- 5.1 The main report comprises the Fairer Contributions Policy 2013/14 (attached). The document is broadly the same as the policy document agreed in 2012/13 however a number of minor changes have been made to provide greater clarity and consistency with national DH guidance as set out below.
- 5.2 The minimum income threshold buffer applied during the financial assessment process has been changed from 30% to 25% as per national DH guidance and consistent with the Council's Financial Plan 2013/14 – 2015/16.
- 5.3 Guidance on Disability Related Expenditure has been expanded and enhanced to ensure that all eligible expenditure is routinely and consistently included in an individual's financial assessment therefore maximising the resources they have available to them to continue to live independently.
- 5.4 Minor changes have been made throughout the document to reflect the Council's new relationship with Sirona Care & Health CIC (who are responsible for requesting financial assessments for individual service users and for collating evidence in relation to appeals), and also to reflect forthcoming changes to the wider welfare benefits system that will be brought about by recent Government reforms.

6 RISK MANAGEMENT

- 6.1 The report author and Cabinet member have fully reviewed the risk assessment related to the issue and recommendations, in compliance with the Council's decision making risk management guidance.

7 EQUALITIES

- 7.1 An Equality Impact Assessment was completed when the policy was agreed and the changes highlighted in the report are unlikely to make material changes to this assessment.
- 7.2 Some positive impacts are likely to be seen by all service users subject to the policy with the improved application of Disability Related Expenditure criteria.

8 RATIONALE

8.1 The rationale for these changes relates to the Council’s need to be consistent with national DH guidance and to fulfil its Financial Plan 2013/14 – 2015/16.

9 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

9.1 None

10 CONSULTATION

10.1 *Cabinet members; Section 151 Finance Officer; Chief Executive; Monitoring Officer*

10.2 Consultation has been carried out as part of the Council’s financial planning process during 2012/13 and via the Council’s Social Care Strategic Planning Group.

11 ISSUES TO CONSIDER IN REACHING THE DECISION

11.1 *Customer Focus; Sustainability; Corporate; Other Legal Considerations*

12 ADVICE SOUGHT

12.1 The Council's Monitoring Officer (Divisional Director – Legal and Democratic Services) and Section 151 Officer (Divisional Director - Finance) have had the opportunity to input to this report and have cleared it for publication.

Contact person	Sarah Shatwell 01225 477162
Background papers	B&NES Fairer Contributions Policy 2012/13
Please contact the report author if you need to access this report in an alternative format	