

INTRODUCTION

- These **Questions & Answers** cover the main issues about the changes to the charging policy.
- Details of how you will be affected personally will depend on your financial circumstances.
- You will be notified of any change to your charge before it comes into effect.

Further information

- Further details of the existing financial assessment and how it is changing are given in the green leaflet.
- Information about the outcomes of the consultation on the proposed changes is given in the red leaflet.

WHAT ARE THE CHANGES?

The County Council has made two changes to its charging policy for care at home services.

Change 1

Under the current charging policy people have a financial assessment which determines how much weekly 'disposable income' they have. 'Disposable income' is what is left when all living expenses have been met.

Details of what income and outgoings are taken into account in the financial assessment are given in the separate green leaflet.

As a result of their assessment people with no weekly disposable income get free services from the County Council, while people with some disposable income pay a weekly charge currently based on a maximum of 75% of their weekly disposable income.

From 31 July 2006 weekly charges will be based on a maximum of 95% of weekly disposable income (rather than a maximum of 75%).

Change 2

Under the existing charging policy only actual interest from savings, capital and/or investments is counted as income.

From 1 January 2007 there is a change to how we take savings, capital and/or investments into account.

- We will ignore savings, capital and/or investments under £12,750.
- If you have over £21,000 in savings, capital and/or investments you will be expected to pay your assessed weekly charge in full (calculated at £13.32 for each hour of care you receive).

If you are assessed as paying the full weekly charge, it does not mean that you have to arrange your care yourself. Care is still arranged by the County Council.

- The weekly income from savings, capital and/or investments between £12,750 and £21,000 will be calculated as a notional (tariff) income of £1 per £250, rather than as the actual income received.

IS EVERYONE AFFECTED BY THE CHANGES?

NO – some people will NOT be affected.

- If you have already been assessed as having no ‘disposable income’ ([see green information leaflet for more explanation](#)) **AND** do not have savings, capital and/or investments over £12,750, you will not be affected by either change.
- However, if you are currently not paying a charge, but were assessed as having a weekly disposable income under £3 (which was ignored) you **MAY** now be affected.
- If you currently pay a weekly charge but it is less than 75% of your assessed disposable income, **AND** you do not have savings, capital and/or investments over £12,750, you will **NOT** be affected by either change.

WHEN WILL THE CHANGES HAPPEN?

31 July 2006

The change to taking up to a maximum of 95% of disposable income into account will come into effect on 31 July.

If you are affected, the change will be based on your existing financial assessment and you will be notified by post in July.

Some people will **NOT** be affected by this change

(see [‘IS EVERYONE AFFECTED BY THE CHANGES?’](#))

Unless there are changes to your care package, any new charge will remain your weekly charge until 1 January 2007.

1 January 2007

The change to the new way of taking savings, capital and/or investments into account will come into effect on 1 January 2007.

- If you do not have savings, capital and/or investments over £12,750, there will be no further change to your weekly charge on 1 January 2007.
- If you have savings, capital and/or investments over £12,750 the FAB Team will contact you about any re-assessment necessary. If your charge is revised as a result of this re-assessment, the new charge will come into effect on 1 January 2007.

If you are affected you will know well in advance of 1 January 2007.

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

- You will get a letter in July telling you whether or not your weekly charge will increase as a result of the decision to base a charge on a maximum of 95% of disposable income.

If you have a new weekly charge, it will be used in the invoice you get for care received in August.

This charge will remain in effect unless there is a change to your care package.

- If you are potentially affected by the change to the way savings, capital and/or investments are taken into account, you will be contacted by the Financial Assessments & Benefits (FAB) Team. Any change to your charge resulting from this change will take effect from 1 January 2007.

