

## **Fairer Charging changes and annual reassessment information**

Following a formal public consultation, a number of changes have been agreed to Hertfordshire's local Fairer Charging Policy for non-residential services. The attached letters and fact sheets will be sent out to affected service users over the next week. The main changes are:

- Removal of the maximum non-residential charge of £346.50 per week
- A new assumption that all people have £20 per week of disability related expenses unless evidence is produced to make a greater allowance
- All disposable income will be taken into account when calculating the charge as opposed to 75% of disposable income at present
- Short breaks / respite will be charged for through non-residential fairer charging rather than via CRAG

More information is available in the Cabinet papers at the link below. Copies of the attached documents have been sent to elected members and to local voluntary organisations. Service users will start receiving letters notifying them of their new charge within the next week so please make staff aware of this.

We have simultaneously carried out the annual reassessment in line with the benefit changes due in April 2011 in order for service users to see how these changes will affect them. This means people will only receive one letter notifying them of an increase. **Please note these changes do not come into force until 10th April 2011.**

I have included a list of the full cost service users who are affected by the lift of a cap on charging from £346.50, as these may generate direct complaints to your teams.

The income team will be recording all phone calls, types of responses and where necessary will refer to RMTs directly if someone is stating they will cease service if the new charge is applied. You may wish to risk assess such cases and take a view.

You will notice that there is an appeals process leaflet, which has been included in the packs. This is not new - but has now been formally included in the financial assessment process. The appeals will be reviewed by a senior operational manager with the support of senior finance staff to guide them on policy. Initially following the letters being sent out these meetings will take place weekly, as we are preparing for a high volume of appeals, but the intention is for them to be run on a monthly basis from April 2011.

If you have any queries following this e-mail please direct them to the Income Team by either sending an e-mail to : [acsfinance.income@hertscc.gov.uk](mailto:acsfinance.income@hertscc.gov.uk) or contacting them direct on 01438-843434

To look at the charging paper/policy please use the following link:  
[http://www.hertsdirect.org/yrccouncil/civic\\_calendar/cabinet/15930965/](http://www.hertsdirect.org/yrccouncil/civic_calendar/cabinet/15930965/)