

Consultation on reviewing Adults Social Care Services' fees

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Contents

| | Page |
|---------------------------------|-------------|
| Introduction | 3 |
| Methodology | 4 |
| Responses to the questionnaires | 5 |
| Appendix 1 | |

List of Tables

| | Page |
|-----------|-------------|
| Table 001 | 5 |
| Table 002 | 6 |
| Table 003 | 6 |
| Table 004 | 7 |
| Table 005 | 7 |
| Table 006 | 8 |
| Table 007 | 9 |
| Table 008 | 10 |
| Table 009 | 10 |
| Table 010 | 11 |
| Table 011 | 12 |
| Table 012 | 13 |

List of graphs

| | Page |
|-----------|-------------|
| Graph 001 | 5 |
| Graph 002 | 8 |
| Graph 003 | 8 |
| Graph 004 | 9 |
| Graph 005 | 10 |
| Graph 006 | 11 |
| Graph 007 | 12 |

1. Introduction

The Social Services and Well-being Act (Wales) (2014) sets new guidelines on the way Local Authorities can charge a fee for Social Care Services in Wales.

In response to the requirements of the Act, Gwynedd Council has prepared a series of recommendations involving the way it will charge fees on individuals who receive Non-residential Care Services.

It is recognised that these recommendations could affect a great number of people. This is why Gwynedd Council was eager to consult on the proposals in order to hear the opinion of the people, and give them an opportunity to present their comments.

This consultation will assist to create a picture of the opinion of the residents of Gwynedd on the proposals before they are submitted to the Gwynedd Council Cabinet for a further decision. This report analyses the results of the consultation.

2. Methodology

In order to seek the opinion of the residents of Gwynedd on reviewing the fees of Adults Social Care Services, a questionnaire was used to capture information during the consultation. (See Appendix 1)

The consultation period was open between 14 October and 11 November 2016.

A digital questionnaire was placed on the 'Have your say' page, the consultations site on the Council's website, in order to collect the opinion of the public in general.

Paper questionnaires were distributed by post directly to 2,112 non-residential service users and a further 600 letters were sent by post to residential service users directing them to the website. Easy-read versions were also prepared.

The consultation was promoted via the 'Have your say' page as well as via the Council's social media, namely Facebook and Twitter.

Responses were received by post, via the on-line questionnaires and via e-mail.

3. Responses to the questionnaires

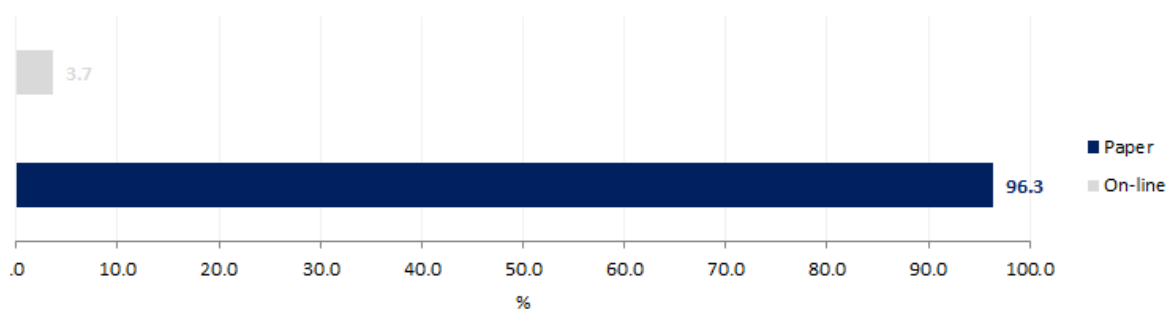
This part of the report will analyse the responses to the questionnaires.

3.01 How were responses received?

A total of 520 responses were received. With 347 of those being complete responses, that is, that every question on the questions trail had been answered (with the exception of question 10 and 11, which ask for comments). And with 173 being incomplete, that is, that some but not all the questions on the questions trail had been answered.

Graph 001 shows the split of how people responded to the questionnaires. It is seen that a vast number, namely 96.3% (Number=501) of the responses had been received on paper, which was a direct result of a mailshot to current service users. Whilst the on-line response figures, 3.7% (N=19) was very low in comparison.

Graph001



3.02 Question 1. On whose behalf are you completing the questionnaire?

Naturally, with 96.3% of the responses having arrived from the mailshot, there is a very high number of 'service users' completing the questionnaire, 60.6% (N=315). And by adding responses from 'member of family or friend of a person receiving service', namely 28.5% (N=148), there is a significant number of the responses from this cohort, 89% (N=463).

The remaining numbers who have filled the questionnaire are very low in comparison, with the highest of these identifying themselves as 'Carers' 2.5% (N=13), see *Table001*.

Table001

| | Number | Percentage |
|--|------------|-------------|
| Did not answer | 36 | 6.9% |
| Service user | 315 | 60.6% |
| Member of family or friend of a person receiving service | 148 | 28.5% |
| Carer | 13 | 2.5% |
| Member of agency, local groups, societies etc. | 3 | 0.6% |
| Other | 5 | 1.0% |
| Total | 520 | 100% |

Usually, it would be good practice to offer an interpretation of the responses to subsequent questions according to the cohorts in question 1, as opinion can be swayed dependent on which cohort is responding. However, the differences seen between the aforementioned cohorts were not adequately statistically significant to report upon in this report.

3.03 Question 2. Do you agree that those people who can afford to pay for adults care services should contribute to the cost of their social care in accordance with the financial assessment?

Of the 520 responses, 58.3% (N=303) said that they agreed that those people who can afford to pay for adults care service should contribute to the cost of their social care in accordance with the financial assessment. 21.7% (N=113) did not agree with this.

It is seen from Table002 that 4% (N=21) had not answered the question, and that 16% (N=83) had noted that they did not agree or disagree.

Table002

| | Number | Percentage |
|----------------|------------|-------------|
| Did not answer | 21 | 4.0% |
| Yes | 303 | 58.3% |
| No | 113 | 21.7% |
| Don't know | 83 | 16.0% |
| Total | 520 | 100% |

3.04 Question 3. Note with which service you, or the person for whom you are responding on their behalf, or the person for whom you care, have the most contact?

The service with which the respondents have the most contact, and which is much more than the rest, is 'Domiciliary Care' 60.2% (N=313). With 'Telecare', 16% (N=83) and 'Supporting People Service', 10.2% (N=53) following. See all the responses in Table003.

Table003

| | Number | Percentage |
|----------------------------|------------|-------------|
| Did not answer | 14 | 2.7% |
| Domiciliary Care | 313 | 60.2% |
| Residential Care | 10 | 1.9% |
| Nursing Care | 7 | 1.3% |
| Supporting People Services | 53 | 10.2% |
| Telecare | 83 | 16.0% |
| Other | 20 | 3.8% |
| Do not receive a service | 20 | 3.8% |
| Total | 520 | 100% |

For those who noted 'Other, namely 3.8% (N=20) they were given an opportunity to note the service, see a further analysis of these below in *Table004*.

Table004

| | Number | Percentage |
|--|--------|------------|
| <i>Did not answer</i> | 6 | 30% |
| <i>6 week after hospital home care</i> | 1 | 5% |
| <i>Age Concern/galw Cymru</i> | 1 | 5% |
| <i>Alarm Button</i> | 1 | 5% |
| <i>Breakfast and lunch prepared</i> | 1 | 5% |
| <i>Day centre</i> | 1 | 5% |
| <i>Direct Payments</i> | 2 | 10% |
| <i>Emergency response alarm connected to telephone</i> | 1 | 5% |
| <i>Care</i> | 1 | 5% |
| <i>Maesincla Day Care</i> | 1 | 5% |
| <i>My full time care is done by my wife</i> | 1 | 5% |
| <i>Other domiciliary</i> | 1 | 5% |
| <i>Respite</i> | 1 | 5% |
| <i>Telecare and temporary domiciliary care</i> | 1 | 5% |
| Total | 20 | 100% |

If responding as person 'not receiving a service', the questions trail directed them to question 6, therefore 3.8% (N=20) will not be included in the figures for questions 4 and 5.

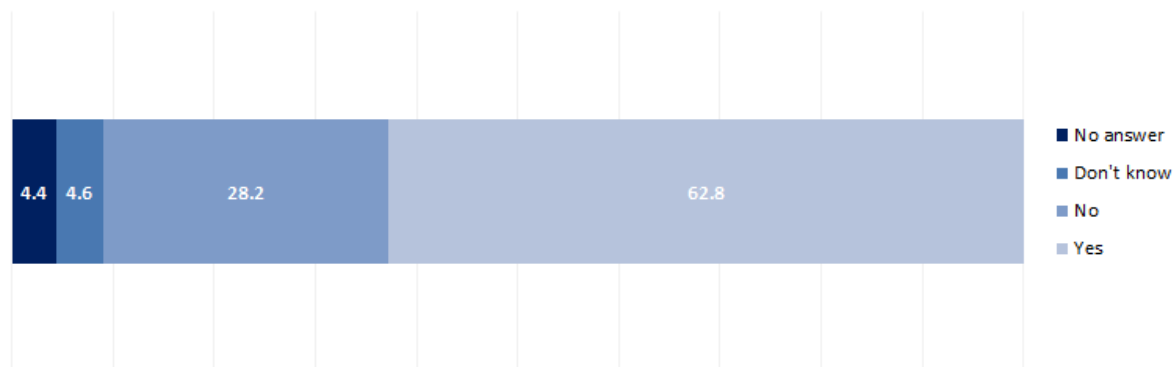
3.05 Question 4. Does Gwynedd Council currently charge you a fee for the adults care services that you receive?

Of the 500 who responded that they do receive services in question 3, 28.2% (N=141) noted that Gwynedd Council did not charge them a fee, and 62.8% (N=314) noted that they paid. See *Table005* and *Graph002* for an analysis of all the responses.

Table005

| | Number | Percentage |
|----------------|--------|------------|
| Did not answer | 22 | 4.4% |
| Yes | 314 | 62.8% |
| No | 141 | 28.2% |
| Don't know | 23 | 4.6% |
| Total | 500 | 100% |

Graph002



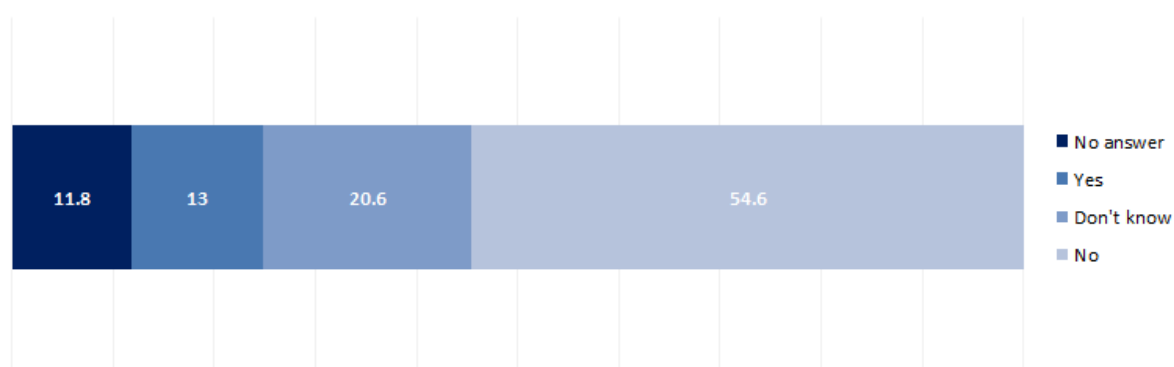
3.06 Question 5. Would you consider ending your service if you had to contribute financially towards paying for it?

Of the 500 who noted that they do receive services in question 3, 13% (N=65) noted that they would consider ending the service if they were forced to contribute financially towards it. 54.6% (N=273) noted that they would be willing not to end their service and contribute financially. See *Table006* and *Graph003* for an analysis of all the responses.

Table006

| | Number | Percentage |
|----------------|------------|-------------|
| Did not answer | 59 | 11.8% |
| Yes | 65 | 13% |
| No | 273 | 54.6% |
| Don't know | 103 | 20.6% |
| Total | 500 | 100% |

Graph003



3.07 Question 6. Do you agree with the following statement?

I understand why the Adults, Health and Well-being Department of Gwynedd Council is proposing a new charging policy which will mean that people will contribute financially in line with what they can afford towards their care'.

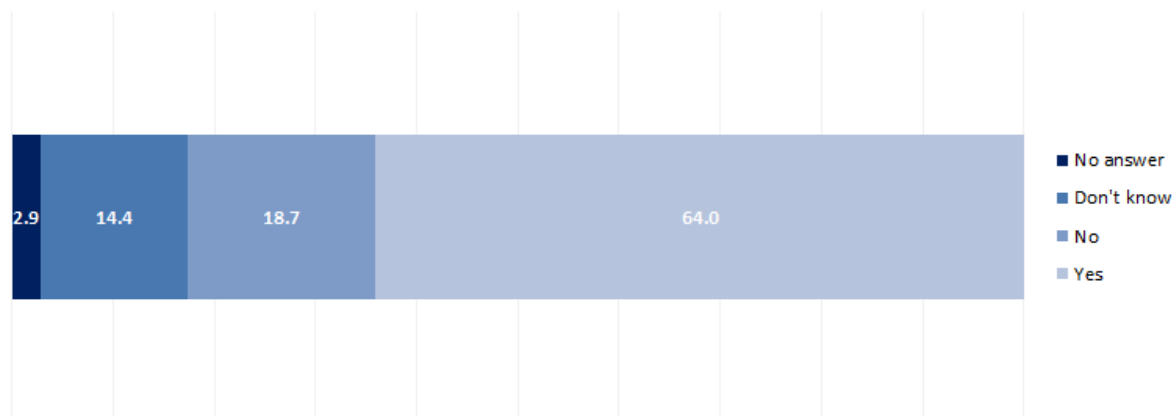
The 3.8% (N=20) come back to the question trail here, therefore, all the respondents (N=520) can respond from this question to the end of the questionnaire.

64% (N=333) noted that they agreed with the statement, while 18.7% (N=97) noted that they did not agree with the statement. 14.4% (N=75) did not know either way. See *Table007* and *Graph004* for an analysis of all the responses.

Table007

| | Number | Percentage |
|----------------|------------|-------------|
| Did not answer | 15 | 2.9% |
| Yes | 333 | 64.0% |
| No | 97 | 18.7% |
| Don't know | 75 | 14.4% |
| Total | 520 | 100% |

Graph004



3.08 Question 7. For those people who satisfy the criteria and choose to commit to a Deferred Payments Contract to pay for their care, do you agree with the proposal to charge administrative fees to pay for the costs accumulated when setting up and maintaining the contract?

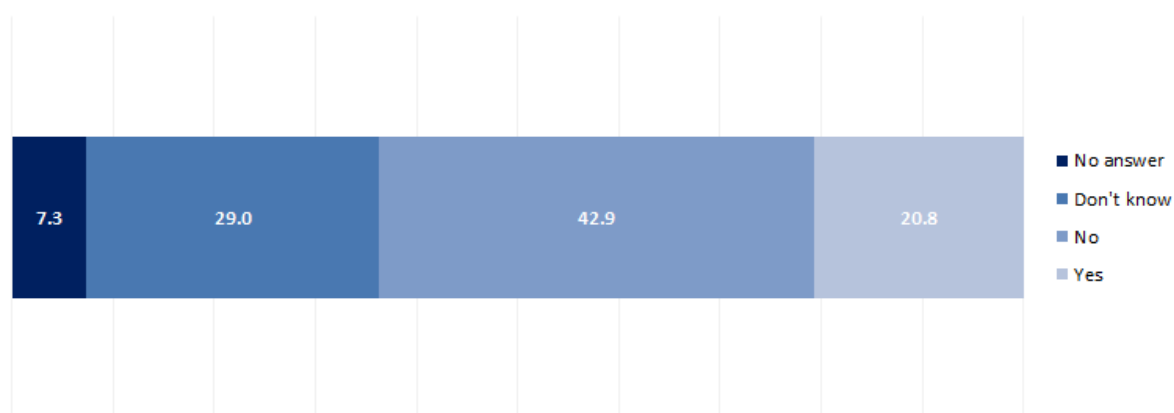
Only 20.8% (N=108) noted that they agreed with the proposal to charge the administrative fees, while 42.9% (N=223) noted that they did not agree with the statement.

A high percentage, 29.0% (N=151) noted that they did not know either way. See *Table008* and *Graph005* for an analysis of all the responses.

Table008

| | Number | Percentage |
|----------------|------------|-------------|
| Did not answer | 38 | 7.3% |
| Yes | 108 | 20.8% |
| No | 223 | 42.9% |
| Don't know | 151 | 29.0% |
| Total | 520 | 100% |

Graph005



3.09 Question 8. For those people who satisfy the criteria and choose to commit to a Deferred Payments Contract to pay for their care, do you agree with the proposal to charge interest in accordance with the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 (i.e. from the beginning of the contract when the costs start to be deferred)?

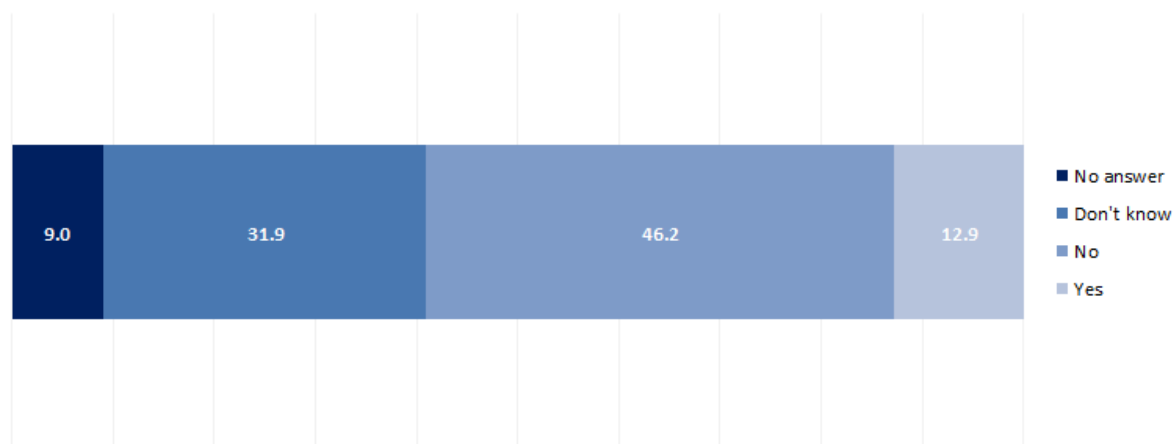
Only 12.9% (N=67) noted that they agreed with the proposal to charge interest. While 46.2% (N=240) noted that they did not agree with the statement.

Again, a high percentage, 31.9% (N=166) noted that they did not know either way, which could suggest that the respondents didn't understand the question and/or the context. See *Table009* and *Graph006* for an analysis of all the responses.

Table009

| | Number | Percentage |
|----------------|------------|-------------|
| Did not answer | 47 | 9.0% |
| Yes | 67 | 12.9% |
| No | 240 | 46.2% |
| Don't know | 166 | 31.9% |
| Total | 520 | 100% |

Graph006



3.10 Question 9. Do you think that the changes proposed to the charging policy will affect you?

The response which gained the highest percentage in question 9 was 37.3% (N=194) noting that they did not know if the changes would affect them.

Again, this could suggest that the respondents didn't understand the question and/or the context. Or, as suggested in one of the comments in question 11 later or in the report, that respondents find it difficult to understand the change to their individual situation -

“This leaflet and questionnaire are not helpful. It does not illustrate how individuals are affected”

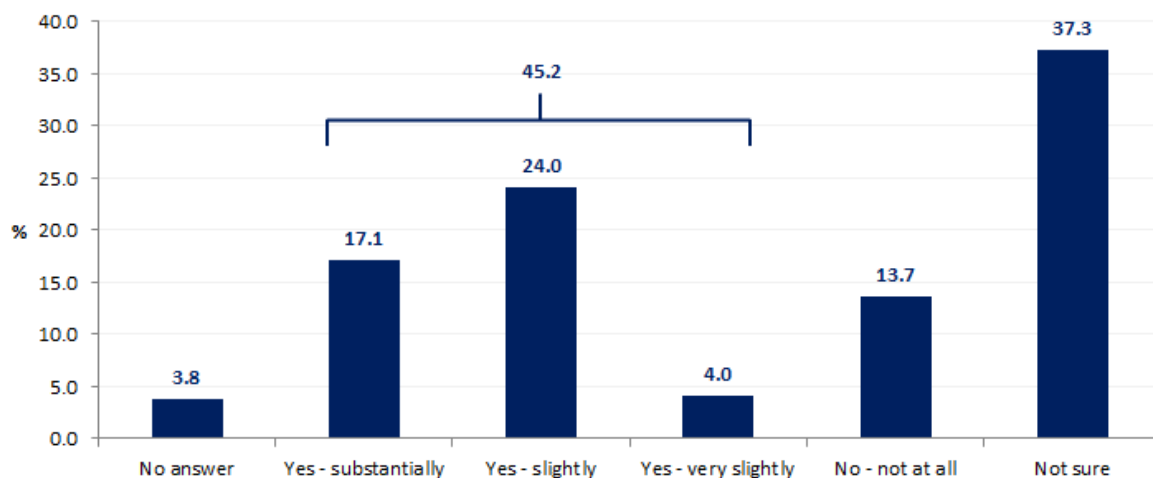
If we combine the three responses which note that respondents think that the changes would affect them at all (Yes - very much, Yes - a little, Yes - very little) we get 45.2% (N=235). 13.7% (N=71) noted that they did not believe that the changes would affect them at all.

See *Table010* and *Graph007* for an analysis of all the responses.

Table010

| | Number | Percentage |
|-------------------|------------|-------------|
| Did not answer | 20 | 3.8% |
| Yes - very much | 89 | 17.1% |
| Yes - a little | 125 | 24.0% |
| Yes - very little | 21 | 4.0% |
| No - not at all | 71 | 13.7% |
| I'm not certain. | 194 | 37.3% |
| Total | 520 | 100% |

Graph007



3.11 Question 10. If you don't agree with the changes to the charging fee, can you suggest any other ways that the Adults, Health and Well-being Department in the Council could make financial savings?

These are the main themes which arose in the suggestions of other ways of making savings:

Table011

| Theme | Number |
|--|--------|
| Reduce the number/salaries of Council managers | 19 |
| Reduce number of administrative staff/improve administrative process | 15 |
| Reduce costs of county members | 11 |
| This is the members' brief, not ours! | 6 |
| Improve efficiency of ways of working across the Council | 4 |
| Reduce number of staff doing nothing | 3 |
| Increase Council Tax | 3 |
| Reduce expenditure on external consultants/inspectors | 2 |
| Use voluntary / family carers | 2 |
| Improve care travel times and arrangements | 1 |
| Use other income e.g. car tax | 1 |
| Those visiting residential homes for the day should pay a daily fee | 1 |

The following is a selection to give a flavour of what was noted by the respondents:

“ . . . less people in administration ”

“It is NOT the responsibility of self funders to suggest strategies to help local authorities to be more efficient in their budgeting for Care for the Elderly.”

"Reduce salaries payed to executives and other overpaid members of staff"

". . . spend 'reserves' and increase the Council Tax on the higher bands and properties."

3.12 Question 11. Any other comments you would like to note?

These are the main themes which arose from the offer to make further comments:

Table012

| Theme | Number |
|---|--------|
| Have paid taxes/saved throughout my life and I don't agree | 38 |
| Changes are unclear / costs not clear for cases | 25 |
| Cannot cope without this level of care, but anxious about higher costs | 17 |
| Need a closer eye on the people who haven't contributed/saved and who are not helping themselves/contributing | 7 |
| Prioritise care over other services that are less important ("non-urgent") | 4 |
| Happy with an administrative fee | 4 |
| Consultation is a waste of time and resource as the decision has already been made | 2 |
| Pay enough already | 2 |
| Assessments should be carried out based on life earnings, not an assessment of current asset situation. | 1 |
| Care should be a part of BIC, and therefore free for everyone | 1 |
| Need to invest more in the carers' service | 1 |

The following is a selection to give a flavour of what was noted by the respondents:

"I feel strongly that people who have saved carefully throughout their lives are penalised heavily if there was a financial assessment while others who haven't saved get an advantage"

"Difficult to comment as no financial figures given in this questionnaire!"

". . . some people have chosen not to work and haven't saved. It's these people who get more than anyone"

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