

Assessing the Impact on Equality Characteristics, the Welsh language and Socio-Economic Disadvantage

Please see the *How to Make an Equality Impact Assessment* sheet for support to complete this form. You are also welcome to contact Delyth Williams, Policy and Equality Officer on ext. 32708, or DelythGadlysWilliams@gwynedd.llyw.cymru, for further assistance.

The Council is required (under the Equality Act 2010) to consider the impact that any changes in any policy or procedure (or the creation of a new policy or procedure), will have on people with protected equality characteristics. The Council also has additional general duties to ensure fairness and to foster good relationships. Therefore, a timely assessment must be made before a decision is taken on any relevant change (i.e., that affects people with protected equality characteristics).

The Council is also required, under the requirements of the Welsh Language Standards (Section 44 of the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011), to consider the impact that any change in policy or procedure (or creation of a new policy or procedure), will have on opportunities for people to use the Welsh language and to ensure that the Welsh language is not treated less favourably than English. This document therefore ensures that these decisions safeguard and promote the use made of the Welsh language.

From 1 April 2021 onwards, the Council has a duty to give due attention to addressing socio-economic disadvantage in strategic decisions.

1) Details

1.1 What is the name of the policy / service in question?

Ensuring consistency of fees for adults care in Gwynedd

1.2 What is the purpose of the policy/service that is being created or amended? What changes are being considered?

To update Cyngor Gwynedd's care charging policy, which determines under what circumstances people will financially contribute towards their care and/or support from the Social Services.

The current charging policy has been in place since 2017, and updates are being considered in order to maintain sustainable services, but also to ensure fairness across the Adults Department's various services.

The Council has a right to charge individuals for care or support services (with some exemptions) in accordance with the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014, and

Cyngor Gwynedd already charges individuals for most of the care and/or support services, depending on a financial assessment. Nobody will pay more than they are able to afford following an assessment.

1.3 Who is responsible for this assessment?

Alun Gwilym Williams – Assistant Head of Care Business and Commissioning

1.4 When did you commence the assessment? Which version is this?

01/11/24

2) Implementation

2.1 Who are the stakeholders or partners with whom we will have to work to carry out this assessment?

- Individuals receiving care services
- Families and unpaid carers of individuals receiving care services
- Care and support service providers
- The Council's income and welfare team.
- Gwynedd residents

2.2 What steps have you taken to engage with people with protected characteristics, regarding the Welsh language or with communities (either due to location or due to need), who are living with a socio-economic disadvantage?

A consultation was held between November 2024 and January 2025 to present and explain the charging policy to the public, partners and local organisations and to raise awareness of the opportunity for them to take part in the exercise by completing a short online questionnaire on www.gwynedd.llyw.cymru/ymgyngori.

Paper copies were also available in local libraries and local Siopau Gwynedd. We encouraged as many as possible of Gwynedd's residents to complete and return the questionnaire by using the Council's website, the local press, spreading the message through our partners, social websites and elected members' e-newsletter and through Council staff.

We contacted organisations that represent or work with Adults receiving care or support to inform them of the engagement and to ask them to notify their users of the questionnaire. This included third sector organisations representing or working with unpaid carers, individuals with learning disabilities and others.

2.3 What was the outcome of the engagement?

See the full report in appendix I of the main report.

2.4 On the basis of what other evidence are you acting?

It has emerged that there are inconsistencies between which care and support services are subject to a charge, and which do not. The development of the policy and the attempt to ensure consistency therefore tries to come to a fairer and more balanced situation across all our care and support services. The code of practice in Part 4 and 5 of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 specifically notes that councils must:

- be consistent, in order to remove variations in the way people are financially assessed and are charged;
- apply fees equally so that those with similar care and support needs are treated in the same manner and minimise inconsistencies between charging for different types of care and support;

2.5 Are there any gaps in the evidence that needs to be gathered?

We will monitor the impact of the policy continually. If the recommendation is implemented, there will be a need to gather evidence again after a specific period (e.g. a year) to monitor the impact.

3) Identifying the Impact

3.1 The Council must duly address the impact that any changes will have on people with the following equality characteristics. What impact will the new policy/service or the proposed changes in the policy or service have on people with these characteristics? It is also necessary to consider the impact on Socio-Economic disadvantage and on the Welsh Language.

Characteristics	What type of impact? *	In what way? What is the evidence?
Race (including nationality)	None	A detailed financial assessment is undertaken with every individual before they contribute to their care and support. This will safeguard those people with the equality characteristics that are most vulnerable to living in poverty.
Disability	None	Individuals with disabilities are more likely to use the care and support services. However, although the policy is likely to impact more individuals with disabilities than individuals without disabilities, there is a procedure in place to conduct a financial assessment with every individual before they contribute to their care and/or support. Consequently, no individual will contribute if they are unable to afford it. Support will also be available to ensure that individuals receive the benefits that they are eligible for.
Gender	None	A detailed financial assessment is undertaken with every individual before they contribute to their care and support. This will safeguard those people with the equality characteristics that are most vulnerable to living in poverty.
Age	None	Older individuals are more likely to use the care and support services. However, although the policy is likely to impact more older individuals than younger individuals, there is a procedure in place to conduct a financial assessment with every individual before they contribute to their care and/or support. Consequently, no individual will contribute if they are unable to afford it. Support will also be available to ensure that individuals receive the benefits that they are eligible for.
Sexual orientation	None	A detailed financial assessment is undertaken with every individual before they contribute to their care and support. This will safeguard those people with the equality characteristics that are most vulnerable to living in poverty.
Religion or belief (or non-belief)	None	A detailed financial assessment is undertaken with every individual before they contribute to their care and support. This will safeguard those people with the equality characteristics that are most vulnerable to living in poverty.
Gender reassignment	None	A detailed financial assessment is undertaken with every individual before they contribute to their care and support. This will safeguard those people with the equality characteristics that are most vulnerable to living in poverty.
Pregnancy and maternity	None	A detailed financial assessment is undertaken with every individual before they contribute to their care and support. This will safeguard those people with the equality characteristics that are most vulnerable to living in poverty.

Marriage and civil partnership	None	A detailed financial assessment is undertaken with every individual before they contribute to their care and support. This will safeguard those people with the equality characteristics that are most vulnerable to living in poverty.
The Welsh Language	None	There is no evidence to suggest that the change would have more impact on Welsh speakers than others in the county.
Socio-Economic Disadvantage	None	The policy means that everyone eligible for care and support services receives a full assessment of their financial situation before having to contribute to their care and support. This will ensure that anyone who is unable to afford to contribute will not do so. Support will also be available to ensure that individuals receive the benefits that they are eligible for.

* Delete as required

3.2 The Council has a duty under the Equality Act, 2010 to contribute positively to a fairer society through advancing equality and good relations in its activities in the fields of age, gender, sexual orientation, religion, race, transgender, disability, pregnancy and maternity. The Council must duly address the way any change impacts on these duties.

General Duties of the Equality Act	Does it have an impact?*	In what way? What is the evidence?
Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation	No	
Promote equal opportunities	Yes	By ensuring that everyone is eligible for an assessment of their financial situation before having to contribute, and making this known, the policy promotes an equal opportunity for everyone to have access to care and/or support. Currently, some care and/or support services are free, whilst a fee is charged for other services. Whilst it is at the Council's discretion to determine which care services are charged, by reconciling the policy across the services, it will ensure that there is no discrimination. It will therefore have a positive impact.
Building good relationships	No	

* Delete as required

3.3 How does your proposal ensure that you work in accordance with the Welsh Language Standards (Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011), to ensure that the Welsh language is not treated less favourably than English, and that every opportunity to promote the Welsh language is taken (beyond providing bilingual services) and increase opportunities to use and learn the language in the community?

The policy has no direct impact on the Welsh language as there is no change to the provision and the services available, only the way people financially contribute to them.

However, it must be noted that anyone has the right to a care assessment or a service in Welsh without having to ask – the active offer. This is also true for a financial assessment. The Council has a team of staff who conduct assessments in Welsh or English.

3.4 What other measures or changes could you include to strengthen or change the policy / practice so as to have a positive impact on people's opportunities to use the Welsh language, and to reduce or prevent any detrimental impacts that the policy/practice could have on the Welsh language?

3.5 How does the proposal show that you have given due regard to the need to address inequality due to socio-economic disadvantage? (Please note that this relates to closing the inequality gap, rather than just improving outcomes for everyone).

The policy means that everyone eligible for care and support services receives a full assessment of their financial situation before having to contribute to their care and support. This will ensure that anyone who is unable to afford to contribute will not do so, but that those individuals who are able to will contribute financially to ensure sustainable services for everyone. In addition, every individual who will be required to contribute will receive support to ensure that they receive all the benefits that they are eligible for.

3.6 What other measures or changes can you include to strengthen or change the policy / practice to demonstrate that you have given due regard to the need to reduce disproportionate outcomes as a result of socio-economic disadvantage, in accordance with the Socio-Economic Act?

4) Analysing the results

4.1 Is the policy therefore likely to have a significant, positive impact on any of the above? What is the reason for this?

No

4.2 Is the policy therefore likely to have a significant, negative impact on any of the above? What is the reason for this?

No

4.3 What should be done?

Please select one of the following:

Continue with the policy / service as it is robust	Yes
Revise the policy to remove any barriers	
Suspend and abolish the policy as the harmful impacts are too great	
Continue with the policy as any harmful impact can be justified	
No further steps at present, it is premature to decide, or there is insufficient evidence	

4.4 If you continue with the plan, what steps will you take to reduce or mitigate any negative impacts?

We will continue to ensure that everyone eligible for care or support services who are likely to have to be charged will receive a comprehensive financial assessment, and we will actively go out to offer assessments.

In addition, there is a team of officers within the Care Business and Commissioning Service available to support individuals to ensure that they receive those benefits that they are eligible to receive to contribute towards any fee that they owe following an assessment.

4.5 If you are not taking any further action to remove or reduce the negative impacts, please explain why here.

5) Monitoring

5.1 What steps will you take to monitor the impact and effectiveness of the policy or service (action plan)?

We will continue to monitor the impact of the policy consistently. If the recommendation is implemented, there will be a need to gather evidence again after a specific period (e.g. a year) to monitor the impact. This will include monitoring how many people receive the different types of care or support services, to ensure that the new policy does not lead to unexpected results.