

Cambridgeshire County Council
Shire Hall
Castle Hill
Cambridge
CB3 0AP

12 February 2018

Dear Cllr

Re: Fairer Contributions Consultation

I am writing to you on behalf of carers and vulnerable people with care needs to urge you and your colleagues to reconsider the proposed changes within the Fairer Contributions Consultation based on their broader implications. As an organisation representing the voice of carers, we are greatly concerned about the impact on unpaid family carers of all ages if the changes proposed in the consultation are implemented.

We believe that family carers should be acknowledged for the incredible work they do, including saving the economy £132billion a year (*Carers UK, Age UK*). Without them, the entire Health & Social Care system would collapse (*NHS England, Carers UK, 2015*). There are more unpaid family carers (7 million, *Census 2011*) than people employed by the NHS (1.4 million, *King's Fund*) and Social Care (1.6 million, *King's Fund*) put together. This includes 200,000 children taking on caring responsibilities, who will also be impacted by the changes proposed. For both family carers and their loved ones, the cumulative effect of the recent range of local and national government changes is significant.

We ask that the proposed changes in the Fairer Contributions Consultation are not considered in isolation, but that the health and financial pressures carers and their families already face are also considered. 1 in 7 workers are combining work with caring; 8 in 10 of these report ill health as a result (*Carers UK*); there is therefore personal cost to themselves as well as the economy. A London School of Economics study calculated the public cost of carers leaving work at £1.3bn a year, due in part to lost tax revenues. 1 in 5 family carers give up work to care. "When they do stop working the financial loss they incur is huge and often has consequences for the rest of their lives. It is morally wrong that people who do the right thing by becoming a carer should so seriously undermine their own financial security as a result." (*Daily Express, 14 July 2016*).

For many, the income of the person, or people, they are looking after has also been significantly reduced or removed, as a result of their illness or disability. This, along with national and local government changes (e.g. Universal Credit; reductions in Personal Budgets), creates huge financial burden for the family, which impacts heavily on the health and wellbeing of some of the most vulnerable in society – the ones who need our help and support the most.

Having read the consultation documents and listened to the concerns raised, we would like to respond as follows:

Head & Registered office: Unit 4 Meadow Park, Meadow Lane, St Ives, Cambridgeshire, PE27 4LG

T: 01480 499090 or T: 0345 241 0954

E: hello@carerstrustcpn.org W: www.carerstrustcpn.org

Charity registration Number 1091522.

West Anglia Crossroads Caring for Carers (known as Carers Trust Cambridgeshire, Peterborough & Norfolk) is a company limited by guarantee.
Registered in England Number 4379948.



Change One: Treating the enhanced Personal Independence Payment (PIP) as income.

PIP is gradually replacing Disability Living Allowance and it has not yet been rolled out to everyone. Our concern is that this is discriminating against those where PIP has been rolled out. If this proposal is implemented, we urge the council to wait until PIP has been rolled out to everyone in order for it to be implemented fairly (which is the objective of the Fairer Contributions Policy).

Change Two: Changing the non-residential charging rules to residential charging rules.

This proposed change would be unfair for unpaid family carers who are often desperate for a break and the resultant increased costs prohibit this. It is vital for carers to have a break from their caring role in order to maintain their health and wellbeing. Carole Cochrane from The Princess Royal Trust for Carers highlighted the absolute importance of respite care, saying "Without these vital breaks, carers can often reach breaking point where they can no longer continue, and their own physical and mental health deteriorates as a result" (article by HomeTouch founder and dementia physician, Dr Jamie Wilson).

It is particularly unfair for carers where the person with care needs lives with the carer and the assumption of reduced utility costs is taken into account from the person going into respite; yet in reality there are no reduced costs as the family still reside in the property (i.e. the house is not empty as a result of the person with care needs not being in the family home during this period).

Change Three: The Council charging for the Appointee service for vulnerable adults unable to manage their own money and who have £1000 or more in their bank account.

This non-statutory service is vital for those individuals struggling due to vulnerable circumstances. The cut off amount of £1000 is extremely low. Most people will need much more than that for their daily living expenses. If a charge has to be made, we recommend the cut-off amount is raised significantly.

Change Four: To make Direct Debit the default method of making payments to the Council.

We do not object to this proposal on the basis it is not compulsory, and would financially benefit the Council through a reduction in back office costs, provided this means less cuts elsewhere as a result.

We fully appreciate the Council needs to make savings, but we ask that any changes do not further impact unpaid family carers, who are already facing significant financial hardship despite giving so much to society. If family carers decided they no longer wished and/or could no longer afford to carry on caring, the whole health and social care system would collapse. It is on this basis we urge you to reconsider these proposals.

Yours sincerely,



Miriam Martin
Chief Executive