

South Ayrshire Council

Report by Director of South Ayrshire Health and Social Care Partnership to Cabinet of 28th May 2026

**Subject: South Ayrshire Health and Social Care Partnership –
Social Care Day Care Charging Implementation**

1. Purpose

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to present a proposal to implement day care charges for attendance at Adult and Older People Day care services.

2. Recommendation

2.1 It is recommended that the Cabinet:

- 2.1.1 Note the consultation on day care charging and feedback received.
- 2.1.2 Note benchmarking information on day care charging.
- 2.1.3 Approve the implementation and proposed Day Care Charge of £10 with a maximum £20 weekly charge.
- 2.1.4 Approve the proposed Day Care Charge to other Local Authorities is set at the actual cost of delivering the service.
- 2.1.5 Note service users' entitlement to benefits will be maximised.
- 2.1.6 Note Social Care Charging Policy for Non-Residential and Residential includes guidance for waiving or abating non-residential charges in cases of financial hardship or in other exceptional circumstances.

3. Background

- 3.1 Since the introduction of Community Care and Health (Scotland) Act 2002, local authorities have been permitted to charge for non-residential social care support with the exception of personal care. The Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (COSLA) issue annual guidance which defines a set of principles to underpin the development of local charging policies for social care support for people at home.

It is managed by the COSLA Charging Guidance Working Group and any change to guidance requires approval by the political leadership of COSLA.

- 3.2 Income generated through charges represents an important revenue stream for the Council. All income from social care service charges is reinvested through the Health and Social Care Partnership to sustain and develop services, thereby supporting the Council in delivering services within available financial resources.
- 3.3 South Ayrshire Integrated Joint Board (IJB) approved the implementation of Day Care Charging on the 9th of October 2019, with a plan to implemented in March 2020. However, this was never acted upon due to the Covid pandemic in March 2020 and the closure of day care for infection prevention measures. In February 2021 an Independent Review of Adult Care in Scotland was published this included a recommendation to remove non-residential social care charging. To date this recommendation has not been implemented or funded by the Scottish Government.
- 3.4 As part of the budget setting process for 2026-27, the IJB Budget Working Group recommended that day care charging should be implemented to address the existing income budget of £0.204m, which has remained a budget pressure since 2020, and to generate an additional £0.100m in 2026-27.
- 3.5 South Ayrshire Council charges are set in line with statutory requirements and National Guidance and are subject to approval by elected members.

4. Detail

- 4.1 Day Care provision within South Ayrshire offers a safe and inclusive environment for older vulnerable adults and younger adults with disabilities. The service aims to reduce isolation, promote wellbeing, and support individuals to maintain independence by providing social opportunities, alongside mental, and physical stimulation, essential care, monitoring, and coordination with other services.
- 4.2 The total annual cost of delivering Day Services in 2025-26 was £2.420m. The cost of Older People's Day care costs ranges from £74.13 to £80.06 per person per day depending on location. Adult day care costs range from £97.69 to £110.95 per person per day also depending on location.
- 4.3 South Ayrshire Council are one of the few local authorities who do not charge for day care. A benchmarking exercise was conducted using data from COSLA non-residential care and support charging survey 2024-25, the most recent data available. This indicated 24 of Scotland's 32 Local Authorities charge for day care, with charges ranging from £2.08 to £76 per day, with an average daily charge of £29.27.
- 4.4 Within the social care budget, an income target of £0.204m was originally expected to be achieved from the implementation of day care charging in March 2020. As noted above, these charges were not introduced due to the Covid pandemic and closure of day care. The subsequent Independent Review of Adult Care in Scotland published in February 2021 recommended the removal of non-residential social care charging.
- 4.5 The removal of non-residential social care charging has not been mandated by the Scottish Government. Any such change would require additional Scottish Government funding to offset the resulting loss of charging income.

- 4.6 The IJB Budget Working Group recommended that day care charging should be implemented as part of the 2026-27 budget process to meet the existing income budget of £0.204m and generate an additional £0.100m in 2026-27. An initial proposal of a £15 daily charge, capped at £30 per week was put forward for public consultation, with final proposals to be presented to Cabinet for approval following consideration of consultation feedback.
- 4.7 A consultation was undertaken over a 7-week period, from 23rd February 2026 to 13th of April 2026. Participants were asked to respond to a set of questions on the proposed implementation of day care charges. The survey was available both online and in paper format.
- 4.8 The consultation survey included the following questions, with participants also given the opportunity to provide additional comments. Analysis of the feedback is provided in Appendix 1 Day Care Services Charging Consultation Results.
- We are proposing a charge of £15 per day for Day Services with a weekly maximum of £30. Do you agree or disagree with this proposal.
 - If these charges were introduced, would support from our Information and Advice Hub be helpful for you?
 - If charges were introduced, would this make you less able or unable to attend day services?
 - Would there be other groups or opportunities you could consider attending in place of day care?
 - Do you have any other comments you would like to share with us?
- 4.9 The survey received 121 responses; this includes one letter received with comments. Out of 244 people who receive day care support this represents a significant level of engagement and provides a meaningful indication of views on Day Care Charging.
- 4.10 Responses to the proposal to introduce a £15 daily charge, capped at £30 per week, reflected mixed opinions. Overall, 46% (55 respondents) agreed or strongly agreed. 36% (43 respondents) disagreed or strongly disagreed with the proposal. A further 18% (22 respondents) selected not sure.
- 4.11 The main concern was affordability of the £15 daily charge to a maximum of £30 per week was considered excessive.
- 4.12 In response to consultation, a revised proposal has been developed to introduce a charge of £10 per day, capped at £20 per week. This charge represents a contribution towards the overall cost of day care provision and incorporates charges for meals (where currently provided) as well as transport.
- 4.13 Day care services can also be provided to individuals funded by other Local Authorities, where the service user may reside near the border or be in receipt of care within South Ayrshire funded by another local authority. In this instance it is proposed that the relevant local authority will be charged the full daily cost of delivering the service
- 4.14 Day Care charges will be reviewed annually as part of the IJB budget process, with any proposed increases presented to Cabinet for approval.
- 4.15 Care Managers will ensure all service users receive appropriate benefits advice and their entitlement to benefits is fully maximised.

- 4.16 The Social Care Charging Policy (Non-Residential and Residential) provides guidance on waiving or abating non-residential charges in cases of financial hardship or in other exceptional circumstances. This will be assessed on a case-by-case basis and approved by the relevant Head of Service. COSLA national guidance states “Council’s should exercise local discretionary powers to apply flexibility in cases deemed appropriate. It is neither necessary or desirable to issue guidance on how these powers would be applied as such guidance would remove discretion and impose prescription.” COSLA advice is to keep records of decisions as good practice.

5. Legal and Procurement Implications

- 5.1 There are no legal implications arising from this report.
- 5.2 There are no procurement implications arising from this report.

6. Financial Implications

- 6.1 The proposals in this report will provide £0.058m of additional funding to assist the HSCP in balancing the budget for 2026-27 and ensure sustainability of service delivery.

7. Human Resources Implications

- 7.1 There are no human resource implications.

8. Risk

8.1 *Risk Implications of Adopting the Recommendations*

- 8.1.1 There is a risk that service users may stop using services due to an inability to pay, this risk will be mitigated by ensuring service users benefits are maximised and they are in receipt of all benefits they are entitled to.

8.2 *Risk Implications of Rejecting the Recommendations*

Insert one of the following statements:

- 8.2.1 Rejection of the recommendations will increase the financial burden to the Health and Social Care Partnership.

9. Integrated Impact Assessment (incorporating Equalities)

- 9.1 An Integrated Impact Assessment has been carried out on the proposals contained in this report, which identifies potential negative impacts. The IIA Summary Report is attached as Appendix 2 which includes information on any mitigation or follow-up action required.

A copy of the fully completed IIA can be accessed here <https://southayrshiregovuk.sharepoint.com/x:/r/sites/IntegratedImpactAssessment>

10. Sustainable Development Implications

- 10.1 **Considering Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)** - This report does not propose or seek approval for a plan, policy, programme or strategy or document otherwise described which could be considered to constitute a plan, programme, policy or strategy.

11. Options Appraisal

- 11.1 An options appraisal has not been carried out in relation to the subject matter of this report.

Consultation and engagement were carried out on the initial proposals with the final proposal reflecting feedback from responses received.

12. Link to Council Plan

- 12.1 The matters referred to in this report contribute to Priority 4 of the Council Plan: Efficient and effective enabling services and the report aligns with the IJB Strategic Priority “We are an ambitious and effective partnership”.

13. Link to Shaping Our Future Council **Yes** ✓ **No** ☐

- 13.1 The implementation of day care charging will contribute to £0.058m of funding to Health and Social Care Partnerships budget, this contribution will help sustain delivery of social care provision in day care.

14. Results of Consultation

- 14.1 There has been a consultation on the implementation of day care charges.
- 14.2 Appendix 1 – Day Care Services Charging Consultation.
- 14.3 Consultation has taken place with Councillor Hugh Hunter, Portfolio Lead for Health and Social Care Partnership, and IJB Budget Working Group includes all SAC voting members. The contents of this report reflect any feedback provided.

15. Next Steps for Decision Tracking

- 15.1 If the recommendations above are approved by Members, the Director of South Ayrshire Health and Social Care Partnership will ensure that all necessary steps are taken to ensure full implementation of the decision within the following timescales, with the completion status reported to the Cabinet in the ‘Council and Cabinet Decision Log’ at each of its meetings until such time as the decision is fully implemented:

<i>Implementation</i>	<i>Due date</i>	<i>Managed by</i>
Implementation of Day Care Charges 15 th June 2026	June 2026	Service Lead - Revenue and Benefits

Background Papers **None**

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