



have
your
say...

...on the proposal for the **Money Management Service**

Find out more about the consultation process and how you can have your say on the Councils Money Management Service

Find Central Bedfordshire Council online at



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**Central
Bedfordshire**

Consultation on proposed changes to Money Management Service

Introduction

Most councils provide a Money Management Service for customers who are not able to manage their own finances and do not have another suitable person to support them. Money Management is a service offered by Central Bedfordshire Council in which they act as either Appointee or Deputy on behalf of a person to manage their finances on a day to day basis. (see Appendix A for their responsibilities) The service is only available to a person who receives social care funded by the Council, who either does not have the capacity to manage their financial affairs or is vulnerable to financial abuse.

The Money Management team maintains a bank account and monitors income (from pensions, Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) etc.) and outgoings for each customer. The team also make sure that all outgoings, like rent, are paid promptly and that the customer does not fall into arrears.

The service currently provides money management support to 160 customers. These customers include people with learning disabilities, mental health, physical disabilities and older people. The service supports customers to continue to live in the community or they may be in residential care. The service has been delivered free of charge by less than two full-time officers.

Whilst the Council has been providing this service for many years, it is not obliged to do so. The Council does not have a statutory duty to provide this service, it is a service the council chooses to provide because it recognises the importance of supporting vulnerable people to manage their finances and safeguard against any financial abuse.

Reasons for changing the service

Both the demand for the Money Management Service is increasing at the same time as the cost for providing the service is also rising. The service is currently at full capacity and no longer able to take on anymore more new customers. Approximately 100 customers a year are being turned away from accessing the service.

With an ageing population, there is an increasing demand for adult social care and therefore naturally an increase in demand for money management support.

More recently other providers of money management services, for example, supported living providers, are deciding to stop providing this service. Given there are few other providers to choose from and they can be very expensive, more customers are turning to the council Money Management Service for help.

The cost of providing the service is also increasing. Each customer has a separate bank account and the bank charges for transactions is changing and this cost is currently being covered by the Council.

Changes in the administration process for Universal Credit and Personal Independent Payments (PIP) means the processing of these benefits is much more involved and takes more time, for example, the PIP requires Appointeeship to be present at meetings. This means the time it takes to process each customers' benefits takes longer and so effectively costs the council more.

Proposed changes

When considering the proposals for the Money Management service the Council has considered and evaluated the following options.

The outcome of our consideration to date is set out below.

1. Staying as we are

What would this mean in practice?	The Council would need to reduce the number of existing customers they support to meet the demands and administrative tasks required by the DWP.
Cost	From 1 st April 2018, any bank charges incurred by the council will be passed on to remaining customers.
Approximate timescales	New customers will continue to be signposted to alternative providers.
Assumptions	There will be alternative providers who are able to meet the demand and complexity of the customers.
Advantages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Remaining customers will continue to receive the service free of charge, however, the incurred bank charges will be forwarded to the individuals.
Disadvantages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Council would need to reduce the number of customers they support to meet the demands and administrative tasks required by the DWP. The Council will not be able to accept new referrals and meet the demand for new customers. If the service cannot take on new referrals, customers who are unable to manage their finances may need support by care management to access external providers to support or recorded as an unmet need. Both models could be more costly than the proposal of introducing a charge for the service.

Initial assessment of option 1:

Staying as we are is not considered to be an acceptable option as it does not meet the demand or deliver an improved service for existing and future customers.

2. To introduce a charge for the Money Management Service

What would this mean in practice?	The team will be able to accept new referrals. The team will be able to meet the requirements of the administration tasks set by DWP. Money Management will continue to be able to offer a customer-focused service.
Cost	See preferred option on p5 below for further details. This will include bank charges and charge for the service.
Approximate timescales	Dependent on the outcome of the consultation, charges will commence for new customers from 1 st April 2018. For existing customers, the charge will be pro rata for the first year, from the date all engagement with current customers has taken place.
Assumptions	The Council will be able to continue to offer a quality service and meet the demand.
Advantages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The charge proposed will enable the Council to extend its Money Management offer to meet the growing demand. • The charges made by the Council are likely to be lower than other service providers as we will only be covering the cost of extending the service. • The charge proposed will enable the service to be more customer focused and to respond to the increased burden of administration imposed by the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) and the rollout of Universal Credit. • The charge proposed will mean the service will not have to reduce the current number of customers it supports. • The charge proposed will continue to ensure customers are supported to manage their finances effectively and minimise the risk of financial abuse. • The charge proposed will support an increase in the value of the service provided by enabling the Money Management team to work closely with the Council's social work team and with customers in financial budgeting and planning. • The additional charges recently placed on customers' Money Management bank accounts by their Bank will also be charged to the customer. (see table on p5 & p6)
Disadvantages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Current customers will have to pay for a service which they have currently received free of charge

Initial assessment of option 2:

Introducing a small charge appears to be the most favourable option to ensure the service is offered to meet the advantages described above. This option represents good value for money and meets the needs of the most vulnerable customers, promoting and protecting their financial and social wellbeing.

Preferred Option

Having considered different options for the Money Management Service, the Council's preferred approach is Option 2 – to introduce a small charge for the Money Management Service provided for existing and new customers by the council.

The charge will cover the costs of providing the service and enable the council to meet the increasing demand.

There are three different charges being proposed;

1. charges to cover the cost of bank transactions
2. charges to cover Deputyship services (these are set by the Office of Public Guardian) (See table for Deputyship on p5 below)
3. charges to cover Appointeeship services (these are set by the council which the DWP state must be fair and reasonable). (see table for Appointeeship on p6)

We recognise that some of the most vulnerable people access this service and therefore we are not planning to charge anyone who has less than a £1,000.

The table below shows the proposed charging scheme which has been devised with reference to the guidelines from the Court of Protection (for Deputies) and DWP (for Appointees).

Deputyship Charge, set by the Court of Protection	Annual bank transaction charge	Annual Deputyship charge
If customer has under £1,000 capital	No charge	No charge
Living in a residential placement, with less than £16,000 capital	£26	3.5% of balance of person's capital
Living in a residential placement, with more than £16,000 capital	£26	£650
Living in the community, with less than £16,000 capital	£60	3.5% of balance of person's capital
Living in the community, with more than £16,000 capital	£60	£650

Appointeeship Charge, set by the Council	Annual bank transaction charge	Annual Appointeeship charge
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If customer has under £1,000 capital	No charge	No charge
Living in a residential placement	£26	3.5% of balance of person's capital, maximum of £495
Living in the community	£60	3.5% of balance of person's capital, maximum of £495

Have your say

We want to know the views of current customers, their relatives and others who have an interest in the Money Management service. We also want to understand what the positive and negative impacts will be on individuals and how we might best manage these issues.

There could be options we have not explored or you would like us to explore in more detail. We would also like to hear your views on alternative ways of charging could be considered.

We are really keen to hear from as many people as possible before 12th March 2018.

You can have your say by completing a questionnaire online at www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/consultations

Write to us at FREEPOST RSJS GBBZ SRZT (you do not need a stamp)
The Money Management Consultation
Central Bedfordshire Council
Priory House, Monks Walk
Chicksands, Shefford
SG17 5TQ

We will also facilitate some workshops where we will be available to discuss the proposal or other options that may not have been considered.

- Priory House, Shefford – 15.30 – 17.30hrs on 23rd January 2018
- Watling House, Dunstable – 13.30 – 16.30hrs on 26th January 2018

please email Partnershipteam@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk to express your interest

If you have any questions please contact Elaine Quantick on 0300 300 6150 or Elaine.Quantick@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk to discuss further

Support for service users

For current customers of the service, staff will organise meetings and will tailor these to meet the individuals needs to support participation in the consultation.

We will take special care to ensure that our current customers are consulted, without causing distress to those who may have difficulty understanding what is happening. We will discuss this with the people who know them best – their relatives and/or the residential care staff.

What happens next?

The consultation is open until 12th March 2018. We will then analyse all the responses and make a decision on the proposals.

Key Dates	Activity
15 th January 2018	Consultation opens
12 th March 2018	Consultation closes
26 th March 2018	Report to delegated powers for decision
3 rd April 2018	Implementation of decision, if agreed

If the service is changed following this consultation, the policy will be updated and we will contact all current customers to discuss the outcome and what this means for them individually.

Appendix A

Appointeeship

Responsibilities of an appointee include:

- finding out what benefits or allowances the client is entitled to
- completing any necessary claim forms on their behalf
- ensuring payments are applied for the benefit of the client
- informing the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) immediately of any change in the client's circumstances and dealing with any resulting queries or correspondence
- carrying out instructions received about benefits
- if the benefit is paid directly in to a bank, building society or Post Office card account, informing the relevant office of any changes to the account details
- repaying overpayments of benefits when legally required to do so;

The DWP or Central Bedfordshire Council may terminate the Appointeeship at any time. The client may end the arrangement if they regain the capacity to manage the benefits payments themselves. An instruction must be submitted in writing to the relevant office.

Deputyship for Property and Financial Affairs – By Order of the Court of Protection

In addition to the responsibilities above, where the client has capital or income from sources other than benefits, the council may make an application to the Court of Protection for an order authorising it to deal with those funds on behalf of the client.

The form of the order sought will depend on the levels of capacity of the client and on his/her financial and other circumstances. It may include, for example, authority to receive pensions or trust income, or some or all of the client's money held in bank or building society accounts; to pay nursing home fees or other charges, bills, debts, expenses and any solicitor's costs; and to make sure documents, valuables and any other items are safely looked after.