



Cyngor Bwrdeistref Sirol
MERTHYR TUDFUL
MERTHYR TYDFIL
County Borough Council

DELEGATED DECISIONS **MADE DURING COVID-19** **LOCKDOWN MEETING**

WEDNESDAY, 22ND APRIL, 2020

AGENDA

- | | | |
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| 1. | Children's Services - Covid-19 | 3 - 8 |
| 2. | Payment of Care Home Fees 2020-2021 | 9 - 16 |

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CABINET - INFORMATION REPORT

Date Written	April 2020
Report Author	Annabel Lloyd
Service Area	Children's Services
Exempt/Non Exempt	Non Exempt
Committee Date	

To: Chair, Ladies and Gentlemen

Children's Services: COVID-19

1.0 SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 This report provides information to Cabinet about the adjustments required by Children's Services under the 'Stay At Home Rules'. The report also provides an update in relation to emerging information about the impact of the Stay At Home Rules. The report supplements the briefings and responses to Cabinet Member's questions.

2.0 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

- 2.1 On 23rd March 2020 the Prime Minister and First Minister made announcements outlining the Stay At Home Rules which increased the emphasis on working from home and social distancing in a bid to stop the spread of coronavirus.
(<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/full-guidance-on-staying-at-home-and-away-from-others/full-guidance-on-staying-at-home-and-away-from-others>)
- 2.2 The virus has not altered our duties to vulnerable children, although Children's Services have been required to make a range of adjustments in line with Stay At Home Rules. Managers and staff have worked closely together to look at ways in which we can ensure we discharge our duties to the public, whilst promoting both public and staff safety.

3.0 CHILDRENS SERVICES OPERATIONAL ARRANGEMENTS UNDER THE STAY AT HOME RULES

3.1 Table 1 below provides a summary of our continuing services to the public:

Table 1

Early Help Hub	Business as usual - operating by phone, video call and IT. Staff will be operating a mixed system of working from home and being office based to ensure essential duties are covered.
Multi-agency Safeguarding Hub	Business as usual - staff will be operating a mixed system of working and being home based to ensure essential duties are covered.
Intake	Cases have been assessed and RAG (Red, Amber, Green) rated. A duty system is in operation with other staff working from home. Work is being carried out by telephone and video call. Visits in line with Telephone Triage 1 Minute Guide which outlines the assessment process to inform decision about whether PPE should be used.
Supporting Change	<p>Manager and consultant social worker are coordinating essential work with families wherever possible. Work is being carried out by telephone and video call with visits in line with Telephone Triage 1 Minute Guide.</p> <p>Number of the staff group are working across the service to cover business.</p> <p>Contact is in line with the Interim 1 Minute Guide.</p>
Children With Disabilities Team	Cases have been assessed and RAG rated. A duty system is in operation with other staff working from home. Work is being carried out by telephone and video call. Visits in line with Telephone Triage 1 Minute Guide.
Child and Family Support Team	Cases have been assessed and RAG rated. A duty system is in operation with other staff working from home. Work is being carried out by telephone and video call with visits in line with Telephone Triage 1 Minute Guide.
Children Looked After Team	Cases have been assessed and RAG rated. A duty system is in operation with other staff working from home. Work is being carried out by telephone and video call with visits in line with Telephone Triage 1 Minute Guide.
Fostering	A duty system is in operation with other staff working from home. Work is being carried out by telephone and video call. Staff prioritising support to foster carers and placement searches.
Care Leaver's PA Service	Cases have been assessed RAG rated. A duty system is in operation with other staff working from home. Work is being carried out by telephone and video call with visits in line with Telephone Triage 1 Minute Guide.

3.2 When the Stay At Home Rules were announced, children’s services management team (CSMT) developed the following in response to Corporate direction and in pursuit of maintaining essential statutory services:

- CSMT daily dial in to note new information about staff capacity in the service, agree, prioritise, manage risks and share information.
- Held staff briefings prior to 23.3.20 to support, inform and involve staff.
- Consultation with foster carers.
- Develop 1-minute Guides for staff in relation to:
 - Telephone Triage and PPE
 - CP Conferences and Core Group Meetings
 - Keeping in touch with CLA and Contact
 - Working from Home
- Contribute to Silver and Bronze command to coordinate work with partners in relation to safeguarding children.
- Develop and distribute resource packs for CLA, foster carers and families with care and support plans.
- Develop a process for providing urgent support to families where a parent requires in-patient treatment.
- Maintained Resource Panel on a weekly basis to ensure families and staff can access the resources required to support families.
- RAG rated cases and dip samples at week 4 to provide independent assurance that children and families are being seen appropriately.
- CMT agreed the Outline Business Case for additional resources including social worker, support workers and foster care placements for cases where a parent or parents are in hospital.

3.3 Work is under way to assess compliance and coordinate any resulting work linked to the Welsh Government <https://gov.wales/childrens-social-services-during-covid-19-pandemic-guidance>

4.0 COVID-19 IMPACT

4.1 The emerging information is revealing the following risks and issues which are summarised in Table 2 alongside the service’s response. It will take some considerable time to recover in full from the impact of this period, and whilst it is impossible to full quantify it, we are mindful about the possible long term impact of extremely low take up of early help services.

Table 2

Number	Risk Description	Action
1.	a) Rate of referral has dropped well below usual levels giving rise to concern about harm to children going unreported.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gather data to quantify and analyse. • Raise with partners via safeguarding silver command in the context of the duty to report under s.7 of the Social Services and Well-Being Act (Wales) 2014.

	<p>b) Changes to partners' operational business, especially in terms of schools, midwifery and health visiting mean that children at risk are being seen much less often in or out of the home.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue the communications work aimed at ensuring public and partners know that we are business as usual for safeguarding and encouraging families to take up early help and support services. • Continue our work with families, ensuring those most vulnerable children are seen and that we respond to increasing or new concerns. • Develop service resilience and recovery plan to ensure that the service can respond to increased demand and lag impact of business when Stay At Home Rule is altered or terminated.
2.	<p>Numbers of CLA have increased to 213 as at 21/04/20. The rate of becoming looked after has remained below the 2018-19 level but there has been a lag impact on exits from the looked after service due to the impact of the Stay At Home Rules on Court work and interventions aimed at safely expediting exits from the children looked after system.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain critical quality assurance process in reviewing case by case to ensure there are no missed opportunities to progress exits from the looked after system. • Develop service resilience and recovery plan to ensure that the service can pick up the pace of business to safely expedite exits for the looked after system when Stay At Home Rule is altered or terminated.

5.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 Children's Services have worked with the Service Accountant and have quantified the projected financial impact of this period as being £185k. The projection is indicative only given the uncertainty about the full impact of the surge

6.0 STAFFING IMPLICATIONS

6.1 Staff have been recognised for working well together, being also available during the evenings and at weekends and prioritising their response to those who are most at risk, using PPE if necessary. Some staff are naturally anxious about the implications of the virus and information and support has been provided on a case by case basis.

7.0 INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT

7.1

	Positive Impacts	Negative Impacts	Not Applicable
1. Merthyr Tydfil Well-being Objectives	0 of 4	0 of 4	4 of 4
2. Sustainable Development Principles - How have you considered the five ways of working: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Long term • Prevention • Integration • Collaboration • Involvement 	0 of 5	0 of 5	5 of 5
3. Protected Characteristics <i>(including Welsh Language)</i>	0 of 10	0 of 10	10 of 10
4. Biodiversity	0 of 1	0 of 1	1 of 1

Summary:

This is an information report. The impact of COVID-19 will require an IAA in the fullness of time.

The report outlines the operational adjustments in response to the Stay At Home Rules. Whilst negative impacts are anticipated and emerging, it is too soon to assess the likely impact of this.

LISA CURTIS JONES
CHIEF OFFICER (SOCIAL SERVICES)

COUNCILLOR CHRIS DAVIES
CABINET MEMBER FOR
SOCIAL SERVICES

BACKGROUND PAPERS		
Report Title	Document(s) Date	Document Location
Does the report contain any issue that may impact the Council's Constitution?		No

Consultation has been undertaken with the Corporate Management Team in respect of each proposal(s) and recommendation(s) set out in this report.

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CABINET REPORT

Date Written	5 th May 2020
Report Author	Lesley Gallent
Service Area	Financial Assessment & Charging
Committee Division	Portfolio
Exempt/Non Exempt	Non Exempt
Committee Date	

To: Chair, Ladies and Gentlemen

PAYMENT OF CARE HOME FEES 2020-2021

1.0 SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 Members will recall that Pembrokeshire County Council was taken to Judicial Review by Forest Care Home Limited in December 2010 over the care fees set by Pembroke for the 2010/2011 financial year.
- 1.2 As a result of this Local Authorities had to ensure that they had a methodology for setting care home fees that complied with “Fulfilled Lives, Supportive Communities Commissioning Framework Guidance and Good Practice”.
- 1.3 The payment of care fees for contracted placements in independent sector residential and nursing homes is an issue that is highly significant for all authorities in Wales. The Judicial Review gave and has continued to give a sharp focus to and identified a challenge for all local authorities to have a robust methodology in place to calculate fees paid to independent sector care home providers.
- 1.4 Rockhaven Healthcare who had significant experience in the area of developing fee toolkits, were commissioned to develop a bespoke care fee toolkit for the setting of care fees for 2016/2017 for independent sector residential and nursing care homes for use by Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council.
- 1.5 Rockhaven Healthcare’s report “Costs of Care Analysis in Merthyr Tydfil 2016/2017” recommended the appropriate level of fees for independent sector residential and nursing care homes in Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council for 2016/2017 and was accepted by Council and used to form the basis of the fees paid for placements in independent sector residential and nursing care homes.

- 1.6 It was agreed with the Independent Providers that instead of going through the process of collecting detailed financial and other statistical information every year; that this exercise would only be carried out every three years. In the interim years the care fees would be uplifted by an agreed inflationary increase to recognise the increasing costs of providing care. Due to the current Covid-19 situation and pressures faced by all it is decided that an inflationary uplift would continue to be used.
- 1.7 The cost of paying the revised fee levels uplifted by an agreed inflationary increase, for the current number of individuals in residential and nursing care, has been estimated as being £201,000 for 2020/2021.
- 1.8 Funding for this was identified in the Medium Term Financial Plan for the Authority and has been included in the People and Performance Directorate's budget for 2020/2021.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS that

- 2.1 The level of payments to independent sector residential and nursing care service providers are paid at the rates shown in Appendix 1 be approved.
- 2.2 The increase in fees for 2020/2021 be backdated and be effective from 1th April 2020 be approved.

3.0 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The payment of care fees for contracted placements in independent sector residential and nursing homes is an issue that is highly significant for all local authorities in Wales. The Judicial Review in Pembrokeshire in 2010 gave a sharp focus to and identified a challenge for all local authorities to have a robust methodology in place to calculate fees paid to independent sector care home providers.
- 3.2 All toolkits developed had to be in accordance with the "Fulfilled Lives, Supportive Communities Commissioning Framework Guidance and Good Practice" that was issued in August 2010 by the Welsh Assembly Government under Section 7 of the Local Authority Social Services Act 1970.
- 3.3 Section 7 Guidance means that Councils must "act under" the general guidance of the relevant minister or in respect of a devolved function the Welsh Ministers. While following guidance is not mandatory an authority can only depart from it for good reason. If a Council deviates from guidance without a considered and cogently reasoned decision it acts unlawfully and in a manner which is amenable to challenge and judicial review, as was the case with Pembrokeshire County Council and Forest Care Homes.
- 3.4 Fee setting toolkits therefore need to comply with "Fulfilled Lives, Supportive Communities Commissioning Framework Guidance and Good Practice" in particular they must take account of the providers costs and the factors that may affect them

on the basis of good local evidence. Fee setting must take into account the legitimate current and future costs faced by providers as well as factors that affect these costs, and the potential for improved performance and more cost effective ways of working. The fees set need to be adequate to enable providers to meet the specifications set by the commissioners together with regulatory requirements.

4.0 METHODOLOGY

- 4.1 The approach that was taken was that the bespoke toolkit previously developed for Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council that complied with “Fulfilled Lives, Supportive Communities Commissioning Framework Guidance and Good Practice” was re-populated and updated with current up-to-date financial information and costs.
- 4.2 Rockhaven Healthcare was re-commissioned to undertake this task again for the setting of care fees for residential and nursing care homes for 2016/2017. Rockhaven Healthcare was re-commissioned as they have detailed and specialised knowledge of the methodology used to develop the care fee toolkit in Merthyr Tydfil as well as significant experience in the area of developing fee toolkits for independent sector residential and nursing care homes.
- 4.3 Data was provided by the Independent Sector Care Home providers in Merthyr Tydfil for the 12-month period ending March 2016. This information was used as the base data for the calculation of the legitimate costs of providing care and from this data the rates of care fees was calculated for the 2016/2017 financial year.
- 4.4 When Rockhaven Healthcare presented their Cost of Care Analysis Report there was no challenge from the Independent Providers that it was not a true and accurate reflection of the actual costs of providing residential and nursing care in Merthyr Tydfil.
- 4.5 It was agreed with the Independent Providers that instead of going through the process of collecting detailed financial and other statistical information every year; that this exercise would only be carried out every three years. In the interim years the care fees would be uplifted by an agreed inflationary increase to recognise the increasing costs of providing care.
- 4.6 2019/2020 was the third year of the three year cycle; however given current pressures this has been extended and as such an inflationary increase has been added to the care fees rather than undertaking a detailed financial and statistical exercise.
- 4.7 Two potential options were identified as being available to calculate the increase for 2020/2021.
 - i. To uplift the total fee levels by a recognised inflationary indices such as the Consumer Price Index.
 - ii. To apply recognised inflationary indices such as the Consumer Price Index to the fee levels but to apply differing inflationary increases to the different elements that make up the constituent costs eg.

- Staffing costs - increase in minimum wage
- Power - specific element of CPI relating to utilities
- Water - specific element of CPI relating to utilities
- Food - specific element of CPI relating to food and non-alcoholic beverages.

4.8 The Independent Care Home Providers were consulted on what their preferred option would be and the preferred option expressed by the majority of providers who responded to use when calculating the fee increase for 2020/2021 was Option 2 which is to apply a recognised inflationary indices such as the Consumer Price Index to the fee levels but to apply differing inflationary increases to the different elements that make up the constituent costs.

4.9 As this is an extended year after the three year cycle a further report will be submitted later in the year outlining options / recommendations for the care fee setting for 2021/2022 onwards.

5.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 Using the methodology that has been agreed with the Independent Providers the care fees for 2020/2021 would be as follows.

2020/2021 Fee Rate

PERSONAL CARE	2019/2020 weekly rate £	2020/2021 weekly rate £
Older Person	559	585
Dementia	623	650
Physical Disability, under 65	1,414	1,487
Learning Disability	924	924

NURSING CARE (excludes the health board FNC)	2019/2020 weekly rate £	2020/2021 weekly rate £
Older Person	636	657
Dementia	680	704

5.2 The cost of paying the revised fee levels uplifted by an agreed inflationary increase, for the current number of individuals in residential and nursing care, has been estimated as being £201,000 for 2020/2021.

5.3 Funding for this was identified in the Medium Term Financial Plan for the Authority and has been included in the People and Performance Directorate's budget for 2020/2021.

5.4 The work that has been undertaken by Rockhaven Healthcare in producing the Costs of Care Analysis in Merthyr Tydfil Report relates exclusively to the financial position of the care homes that sit within the geographical boundaries of Merthyr Tydfil.

5.5 It is therefore difficult to compare fee rates across different local authorities as the financial circumstances for the care homes in other local authorities will be different and will not bear comparison. This is because to comply with “Fulfilled Lives, Supportive Communities Commissioning Framework Guidance and Good Practice” fee setting toolkits must take account of the providers’ costs and the factors that may affect them on the basis of good local evidence

6.0 INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT

6.1

	Positive Impacts	Negative Impacts	Not Applicable
1. Merthyr Tydfil Well-being Objectives	2 of 4	0 of 4	2 of 4
2. Sustainable Development Principles - How have you considered the five ways of working: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Long term • Prevention • Integration • Collaboration • Involvement 	3 of 5	0 of 5	2 of 5
3. Protected Characteristics <i>(including Welsh Language)</i>	2 of 10	0 of 10	8 of 10
4. Biodiversity	0 of 1	0 of 1	1 of 1
<p><u>Summary:</u></p> <p>The main positive impact is setting fee levels to Independent Sector Care Homes will help ensure that the care provision is maintained and is available within Merthyr Tydfil for those individuals assessed as requiring the service.</p> <p>There are no negative impacts.</p>			

LISA CURTIS-JONES
CHIEF OFFICER (SOCIAL SERVICES)

COUNCILLOR CHRIS DAVIES
CABINET MEMBER FOR
SOCIAL SERVICES

BACKGROUND PAPERS		
Title of Document(s)	Document(s) Date	Document Location
Fulfilled Lives, Supportive Communities Commissioning Framework Guidance and Good Practice	August 2010	Unit 5
England and Wales High Court (Administrative Court) Decision Forest Care Home Limited v Pembrokeshire County Council	December 2010	Unit 5
Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council Cost of Care Analysis 2016/2017	September 2016	Unit 5
Does the report contain any issue that may impact the Council's Constitution?		No

Consultation has been undertaken with the Corporate Management Team in respect of each proposal(s) and recommendation(s) set out in this report.

MERTHYR TYDFIL COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

Independent Sector		
Proposed Payments for Residential and Nursing Care Services 2020/2021		
	Rates 8 April 2019	Rates 1 April 2020
<u>Residential Care Homes</u>	£	
Old Age	559	585
Elderly Mentally Infirm	623	650
Physical Disability		
a (under pensionable age)	1,414	1487
b (over pensionable age)	559	585
Mental Handicap (Learning Difficulty)	924	969
Others	559	585
<u>Nursing Homes</u>		
(Excludes the Local Health Board contribution)		
Old Age	636	657
Elderly Mentally Infirm	680	704
Drug Alcohol Dependency	636	657
Mental Illness	636	657
Others	636	657

Local Health Board Free Nursing Care Contribution (FNC) is £179.13 effective from 1st April 2020 and is not included in the above. The Local Authority element of FNC is £7.27 and is included in the above nursing rates.

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