

Free Personal Care for under 65's

Report by Alison White, Head of Adult Services

1 Purpose of Report

Free personal care is currently available for everyone aged over 65 who have been assessed as needing it. From the 1st April the Scottish Government has committed to extending this to people under 65 as well.

This means that where people have been assessed as needing help with tasks such as bathing, going to the toilet, incontinence laundry, help with preparing food, assistance with medication, dressing and getting up and going to bed they will no longer have to pay for the service.

This report is identifying the work undertaken to ensure implementation within Midlothian.

2 Background

- 2.1** Free Personal Care for those aged 65 or over was introduced in Scotland in 2002. A feasibility study was conducted by the Scottish Government into the extension of free personal care for under 65's, this was published in 2017.
- 2.2** Free personal care is available to all adults assessed by a Local Authority as needing this service by 1st April 2019. The local authority measure eligibility for those applying for personal care.
- 2.3** Important benefits include increased uptake of services and charging arrangements for personal care applying equitably regardless of age, condition or means. In addition some people who may have declined support due to concerns about costs can now receive services if eligible.

3 Report Implications

3.1 Resource

Nationally a figure of £30 million has been made available for the implementation of Frank's Law. The Midlothian share of this is £0.480 million. The financial impact of Frank's Law will be both in terms of a reduction in service user income, as personal care for people under 65 will no longer be a chargeable service, but also in terms of increased demand for a service which will be free.

Work is ongoing to assess the impact on service user income however, it should be noted that the future impact on demand is uncertain at the moment but is likely to increase over time.

- 3.2** Guidance has been provided which sets out key actions required by local authorities/Health and Social Care Partnerships to ensure measured, consistent and effective implementation across Scotland. The guidance does not prescribe how personal care should be calculated as it was found that each local authority's practices and procedures differ and it is intended to enable each local authority to follow and build on its own current local procedures and systems.

Local authorities/Health and Social Care Partnerships will wish to have clarity on:

- The definition of personal care;
- Funding of the extension of free personal care;
- How personal care should be calculated;
- How free personal care should work alongside the principle of enablement;
- Clear communication within local authorities providing information relating to the changes in the extension of free personal care and having the opportunity to raise these concerns at a local level.

Guidance is being provided for staff who complete assessments and staff within our finance team are already working to ensure that those who are already receiving free personal care have this applied to their financial assessment.

3.2 Risk

Whilst a positive introduction the key risk is around increased demand on services. There is already a shortfall in delivery of care at home and any increasing demand on this will be challenging.

Currently those under 65 receive a mixed level of provision, not all of which is personal care, therefore for individuals they may not notice any difference to their monthly charges as they may still require to pay for housing support and other non-personal care tasks.

An increase in demand may also increase challenges for accessing social work services generally, whilst positive work has been undertaken to address waiting times, any increase in demand will have an impact.

3.3 Single Midlothian Plan and Business Transformation

Themes addressed in this report:

- Community safety
- Adult health, care and housing
- Getting it right for every Midlothian child
- Improving opportunities in Midlothian
- Sustainable growth
- Business transformation and Best Value
- None of the above

3.4 Impact on Performance and Outcomes

None

3.5 Adopting a Preventative Approach

None

3.6 Involving Communities and Other Stakeholders

Through the feasibility work of the Scottish Government there has been significant work to ensure that the views of those who use services have been taken into account.

Public Information is being shared within our newsletters, planning groups and provider organisations.

3.7 Ensuring Equalities

The application of free personal care regardless of age addresses a long standing inequity of provision.

3.8 Supporting Sustainable Development

None

3.9 IT Issues

None

4 Summary

Free personal care is currently available for everyone aged over 65 who have been assessed as needing it .From the 1st April the Scottish Government has committed to extending this to people under 65 as well.

This means that where people have been assessed as needing help with tasks such as bathing, going to the toilet, incontinence laundry, help with preparing food, assistance with medication, dressing and getting up and going to bed they will no longer have to pay for the service.

This report is identifying the work undertaken to ensure implementation within Midlothian.

5 Recommendations

As a result of this report what are Members being asked to:-

- Note the work undertaken within Midlothian to ensure implementation of Free Personal Care for under 65's
- Note the risks associated with the implementation.
- Note the improved equity of application of free personal care, regardless of age, condition or means

Date 28 February 2019

Report Contact:

Name Alison White Tel No 0131 271 3402

Alison.white@midlothian.gov.uk

Background Papers: Circular CCD3/2018