

PE1466/A

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**The Scottish
Government**
Riaghaltas na h-Alba

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LEGACY 2014
XX COMMONWEALTH GAMES
SCOTLAND

Your ref: PE01466
Our ref: A5540638
22 March 2013

Dear Andrew,

Petition PE1466 – Calling on the Scottish Government to urge the Scottish Government to review the implementation and regulation of local authority charges for non-residential services

Thank you for your letter of 27 February 2013 seeking a response to two questions raised by the Public Petitions Committee in their consideration of the above petition.

The Scottish Government's position on the issues raised by the petition is that we want to ensure fair, consistent and transparent charging policies for community care services. In order to improve transparency, the charging policies of all local authorities are now published on the CoSLA website at:

<http://www.cosla.gov.uk/local-authority-non-residential-social-care-0>

It is important that local authorities have the autonomy to set their own charges to take account of local priorities and needs, and we believe that legislating for consistent charging across all local authorities could lead to higher charges for all. The costs of providing services will naturally vary by local authority.

Less than 3% of the total expenditure by local authorities on social care services was recovered through charging in 2010-11. The charges set by local authorities rarely cover the costs of providing the services, and must not exceed the cost of providing the service.

To respond to the Committee's second question, CoSLA is in the process of taking forward work on a fundamental review of the Charging Guidance for Non-residential Social Care Services. This is being done in co-production with a wide range of stakeholder

organisations, including Age Scotland, Capability Scotland, Alzheimers Scotland, Independent Living in Scotland, Coalition of Carers, Scottish Consortium for Learning Disabilities, Scottish local authorities and the Scottish Government.

CoSLA is committed to greater consistency in the development of charging policies and council leaders have agreed a policy to reduce unwarranted or inexplicable variation, while protecting some local differences where these are justified and appropriate.

A number of improvements have already been made to the charging guidance, including the establishment of a national benchmarking group, the publication of all councils' charging policies on the CoSLA website and the development of a rights-based approach to charging policies. In addition, the working group is exploring standard financial assessment processes and policies to assist with portability of care.

The Scottish Government would suggest that this group is the appropriate vehicle to continue to address charging for non-residential services, rather than the Short Life Working Group on Social Work Complaints and Appeals, which has a narrower focus, and a membership more closely related to the issues of complaints and appeals.

I hope this response proves helpful to the Committee in their consideration of the petition.

Yours sincerely,

MIKE LIDDLE
Team Leader, Reshaping Care for Older People