

Telecare Charging Proposal

In light of the Cabinet's review on 11 June 2025, the following sections provide a detailed assessment of the principal risks and anticipated impacts, together with the comprehensive mitigation framework we will deploy upon approval.

<i>Risk</i>	<i>Possible impact and Mitigations</i>
a) Cancellation of service: Individuals may cancel their service due to the introduction of charging.	<p><i>The processes described below serve as control measures, outlining the actions to be taken to manage the risk if an individual cancels their service due to charging.</i></p> <p>Telecare Charging: Service Cancellation and Continuity Protocol</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Cancellation Notification When a user elects to cancel Telecare following the introduction of charges, the Telecare Team must notify the individual's allocated social care worker—or the Duty Social Work Team if no worker is assigned—within two working days.2. Risk and Charging Assessment The allocated officer will complete a risk assessment to identify any safety or wellbeing concerns arising from unmet needs and implement appropriate mitigation. Simultaneously, they will verify whether a charging assessment has already been carried out or needs to be arranged. Follow up phone call after 3 months. Where required a home visit will be considered.3. Financial and Welfare Review To minimise adverse financial impact, the officer will: Conduct a benefits check and take steps to maximise the individual's entitled income. – Refer to advocacy or other support services as needed. They will ensure that the decision to discontinue Telecare is made on a fully informed basis, not driven solely by cost.4. Council Funding Commitments Shropshire Council will continue to fund Telecare for anyone who, following financial assessment, is deemed unable to meet the charges—consistent with our responsibilities under the Care Act. This includes:<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Recipients of existing Council-funded social care packages➤ Individuals entitled to free services under Section 117 of the Mental Health Act 1983➤ Those receiving a time-limited reablement package after hospital discharge.➤ Crucially, the proposed charge is at a subsidised rate.

5. Financial Assessment and Charging Policy
Telecare users will undergo a **financial assessment** to establish their capacity to contribute.
Self-funders will be charged in accordance with the Adult Social Care Charging and Financial Assessment Policy for Non-Residential Care 2024-25, applying the Minimum Income Guarantee where applicable.

6. Informed Choice and Personal Autonomy
This mitigation framework ensures users understand **all available options** and can make an **informed decision**. It also recognises the right—provided the individual has capacity—to make an “unwise” choice, including service cancellation.

Mental Capacity to Manage Finances

Where a person lacks the mental capacity to manage their finances, they may still be assessed as able to contribute towards the cost of their care. The Council will need to work with someone who has the appropriate authority (e.g Power of Attorney or appointee for benefits) to make financial decisions on behalf of the person.

People who lack the mental capacity to give consent to a financial assessment and who do not have an authorised representative will require the appointment of a deputy for property and financial affairs. Family members can apply for this to the Court of Protection or the Council will consider applying if there is no-one else suitable. The application process can take several months to complete but contributions towards the cost of care will still apply from the date the support commenced. Debt collection procedures will be suspended during this period until such time as a deputy has been appointed, subject to proof of application. The Council will then expect payment of any outstanding charges in full and if necessary, take steps to recover any arrears of charges.

7. Service Uptake and Data Management
During our recent data-cleansing exercise, 241 telecare clients (or their representatives) confirmed either that the user had passed away or that the device was unused or unnecessary. As a free service, some clients saw no urgency in returning inactive equipment or notifying us of this. To improve oversight, we will onboard a new Telecare Officer at the end of June—filling a six-month vacancy—who will monitor inactive users and manage device returns.

8. Service Re-commissioning Before year-end
We will re-commission the Telecare service. The new contract will: proposes to introduce a credit-back loan model, managed-service provision including an automated testing for inactive

	<p>devices. Enable referrals to a private Telecare offering for non-eligible self-funders, broadening choice and supporting workload management.</p>
<p>b) Affordability and cost of Living crisis: Charging for telecare service may affected individuals negatively, in ways that include difficulties meeting basic needs such as heating their homes, eating a balanced diet, increased social isolation, and mental health impacts such as loss of sleep.</p>	<p>Telecare Charging: Equity, Assessment and Contribution Framework</p> <p>At present, our Telecare service is offered universally at no cost, regardless of individual financial circumstances. While well-intentioned, this approach places an undue burden on public resources and overlooks the principle of ability to pay.</p> <p>When a person has eligible care needs, a financial assessment must be carried out. An officer from the Financial Assessment Team will contact the person or their representative to arrange the completion of a Financial Declaration through the Online Financial Assessment Calculator – Link to the calculator: Calculate your contribution. Completion of the assessment is required to determine the financial contribution a person should contribute towards their personal budget.</p> <p>Under the proposed model, individuals will undergo a comprehensive financial assessment—aligned with the Adult Social Care Charging and Financial Assessment Policy for Non-Residential Care 2024-25—which examines household income, outgoings and savings. During this process, officers will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide tailored advice on welfare benefits and entitlements; • Refer or signpost to relevant support agencies (e.g., Citizens Advice, Welfare Rights Service, debt-advice charities); • Identify eligibility for discretionary hardship or crisis-support funds. <p>Charging will be applied according to need and means:</p> <p>Telecare as sole support:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individuals whose only assessed requirement is Telecare will be charged at the full contributory rate, subject to their assessed ability to pay. <p>Telecare within a wider care package:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Those receiving Council-funded care services will pay not pay for telecare. <p>To ensure fairness, transparency and ongoing support, we will also</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Re-assess financial contributions annually (or upon significant change in circumstances) to capture income shifts, benefit awards or expense variations;

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Publish straightforward guidance materials—print and digital—to explain the charging process, and avenues for additional support; • Assign a dedicated Telecare officer to monitor uptake, manage inactive devices, working closely with the financial assessment team and coordinate benefit-advice outreach; • Review of financial assessments. A financial assessment will be undertaken at the earliest opportunity to assist with decision making as part of the care and support planning process. The assessment will be subject to regular review to take account of any changes to a person's finances. The person's contribution will be re-assessed whenever any of the following apply: - <p>Annually in April following the changes in annual benefit rates.</p> <p>Following any relevant changes in the person's circumstances or changes in the person's income and capital, It is the person's responsibility, or that of their financial representative, to inform the Financial Assessment Team of any changes in their circumstances that will affect the amount that they contribute to their Personal budget, specifically:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Changes in income ➤ Changes to their capital ➤ Changes in membership of the household ➤ Moving to other accommodation ➤ Changes are required to be reported to the Team within a month of the date of change. ➤ Any change will be effective on the Monday of the week in which the change occurred. <p>By linking charges to ability to pay, enhancing benefit-support pathways and introducing hardship safeguards, we will move from an inequitable “all-free” model to one that balances financial sustainability with our commitment to deliver safe, affordable care for all Shropshire residents.</p>
c) Increase in complaints	<p>If someone disagrees with their financial assessment outcome, they can request a review by explaining why they believe the decision is incorrect. If additional information needs to be considered, people will be advised that they should contact the Financial Assessment team. In some cases, this may involve completing a new financial assessment form. If the person remains dissatisfied, they will be advised that they can file a complaint via the Shropshire Council website Provide Feedback or, can:</p>

	<p>Email: customer.feedback@shropshire.gov.uk Write to: Feedback and Insight Team, Shropshire Council, PO Box 4826, Shrewsbury SY1 9LJ Telephone customer services: 0345 678 9000 via the first point of contact.</p>
<p>d) Impact on other services such as NHS and community and voluntary sector: The services affected by this proposal could impact both social and health-care sectors if people decide to not continue to receive the telecare service, or do not take up the offer of telecare due to the charge.</p>	<p>A risk assessment may be conducted to identify any risks due to unmet needs, and measures will be taken to mitigate these risks wherever possible. The proposed change aims to increase the accessibility of the service.</p>
<p>e) Impact on Internal teams: There is a risk that our internal teams may lack sufficient capacity to integrate the new charging functionality into existing systems. Throughout the consultation process, these teams have highlighted their current resource constraints.</p>	<p>Resource Reallocation and Team Prioritisation</p> <p>To support seamless integration of Telecare charging, we will conduct a rapid review of all current initiatives and reassign staff from lower-priority workstreams to the charging project. (please see accompanying implementation plan). This will involve close collaboration between the Project Management Office, Finance, ICT and Service Delivery teams to define clear roles and responsibilities, avoid duplicating effort, and ensure subject-matter experts are available when key decisions arise. By front-loading resource for configuration, testing and user-training activities, we safeguard against bottlenecks later in the rollout.</p> <p>Revised Implementation Timeline and Departmental</p> <p>Milestones recognising the pressure on operational teams, we will recalibrate our project schedule to align with each department's realistic capacity. This means extending certain milestones—such as financial-system integration and staff training—by up to two weeks, allowing Business Support, Customer Services and the Financial Assessment team to absorb charging-related tasks without compromising their core service commitments. All amended dates will be published in a consolidated roadmap, giving every team visibility and the ability to plan around critical deployment windows.</p> <p>Governance-Led Monitoring and Capacity Assurance</p>

	<p>We will institute fortnightly progress reviews via a Task and Finish group chaired by the project sponsor, bringing together representatives from Finance, ICT, Operations, Commissioning and the Project Management Office. These working-level checkpoints will monitor workload metrics, track outstanding actions and identify emerging resource constraints. If any team signals capacity overload, the governance group will trigger immediate support—either by mobilising additional temporary staff, reordering deliverables or adjusting timescales—to maintain momentum and protect overall project quality.</p>
f) Impact on carers and family members	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Those Care eligible individuals with packages of care already funded by the council (as described above) will not be charged • The proposed charge is at a subsidised rate • The proposed change aims to increase the accessibility of the service • Guidance will be provided to direct carers toward relevant support services they may benefit from via the Shropshire Carers team on 01743 341995 or can register using the online form Carers Register
g) Debt implications for people if they continue to use the service without paying for it	<p>Existing users may continue accessing the system without making payments, potentially leading to accumulated debt and the need for payment recovery procedures.</p> <p>Support will be provided to facilitate payment through the Council's debt management process, which will be aligned with the existing debtor framework within Adult Social Care. This process will follow the outlined financial assessment to determine the individual's ability to pay. If charging is introduced, the 'debtors' list for telecare services will be monitored on a monthly basis. The overarching principles of the debt policy (link to the debt recovery policy) adult-social-care-debt-recovery-policy.pdf are:</p> <p>Possible debts must be discussed with the person or their representative;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The local authority must act reasonably; • Arrangements for debt repayments should be agreed between the relevant parties; • Repayments must be affordable, within a reasonable repayment period and by Direct Debit. All repayment plans will be dependent on the customers individual circumstances; • Court Action should only be considered after all other reasonable avenues have been exhausted
h) Risk of challenge to the decision causing delays in implementation	<p>In the event that the Cabinet decision is formally called in, the implementation of the proposed charge will be unavoidably delayed—now not anticipated to proceed before 1 April 2026. This delay will, in turn, eliminate the Council's ability to realise approximately £120,000 of projected income during the remainder of the current financial year. It</p>

	<p>should be emphasised that the original go-live date of 1 October was established against a backdrop of significant financial constraint and was therefore highly ambitious; a call-in challenge will render that timetable unachievable. Furthermore, should the decision be called in, the matter is likely to require referral to the Scrutiny Panel scheduled for 2 July 2025. In response, officers will develop and submit a fully revised project timetable, setting out new milestones, critical path activities, and anticipated decision-points to ensure clarity of progress and accountability going forward. In addition, officers will undertake the necessary preparations for presentation to the Scrutiny Panel.</p>
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