

## South Ayrshire Council

### Report by Director of South Ayrshire Health and Social Care Partnership to Cabinet of 17<sup>th</sup> March 2026

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**Subject: South Ayrshire Health and Social Care Partnership –  
Social Care Charges Proposals 2026-27**

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#### 1. Purpose

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to present the proposed social care charges for the financial year 2026-27 for approval.

#### 2. Recommendation

##### 2.1 It is recommended that the Cabinet:

- 2.1.1 Approve the increase in proposed social care charges for 2026-27.
- 2.1.2 Approve the implementation of previously approved charge for day care.

#### 3. Background

- 3.1 Since the introduction of Community Care and Health (Scotland) Act 2002, local authorities are able to charge for non-residential social care support with the exception of personal care. The Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (COSLA) produce annual guidance which defines a set of principles to underpin the development of local charging policies for social care support for people at home. It is managed by the COSLA Charging Guidance Working Group and any change to guidance requires approval by the political leadership of COSLA.
- 3.2 Charges are an important source of Council income and all income from social care service charges are reinvested through funding the Health and Social Care Partnership in order to maintain and develop services and in so doing are a means to help the Council deliver services within available resources.
- 3.3 South Ayrshire Council charges are set in line with statutory requirements and National Guidance and are subject to approval by elected members.

#### 4. Detail

- 4.1 The proposed rates have been shared and reviewed with South Ayrshire IJB's budget working, who have recommended the proposed rates for approval.
- 4.2 Meals at Home are commissioned from an external provider, the current cost of a hot meal is £8.33 delivered to the service user's home. The current charge is £5.64 per meal; therefore the meal is subsidised by £2.69 (32%) per meal. It is proposed that the subsidy is removed, and service users can purchase the meal directly from the external provider.
- 4.3 Day care services are provided to older people and adults and delivered by inhouse Council Services. Charging for day care was previously approved in 2019; however, this has never been implemented. Implementation was paused during the Covid pandemic due to social isolation restrictions, then paused due to Scottish Governments commitment to remove non-residential charging. The HSCP are now in a position where raising charges is necessary to continue to deliver services.
- 4.4 A benchmarking exercise was conducted as part of the budget process for 2025-26, this highlighted 24 out of 32 Local Authorities charge for day care, with charges ranging from £2.08 per day to £76 per day.
- 4.5 The cost of delivering Older People's Day care ranges from £74.13 to £80.06 per day dependent on location. Adult's day care ranges from £97.69 to £110.95 per day dependent on location. It is proposed to implement a flat rate day care charge of £15 per day, up to a maximum of £30 per week, equivalent to 2 days day care.
- 4.6 Day care services can also be provided to other Local Authorities, where the service user may reside in close proximity to the border or be in receipt of care within South Ayrshire funded by another local authority. In this instance Local Authorities will be charged the daily cost of delivering the service.
- 4.7 Community Alarms are charged as a flat rate per week and not means tested, the current charge is £5.10 per week. Community Alarms are now digital, following the transfer from analogue to digital over the last couple of years. The cost of providing a community alarm including the responder service is £11.76 per alarm per week. An increase of 5% is proposed for 2026-27 to increase the charge to £5.35 per week.
- 4.8 Community Care (Non-Personal Care) is provided to individuals to support them with preparing food, shopping, accessing the community and socialising. The charge for non-personal care is means tested and a financial contribution is based on [COSLA non-residential charging financial assessment guidance](#). The cost of purchasing this service from providers is £24.44 per hour. An increase of 5% is proposed for 2026-27 to increase the charge from £14.39 per hour to £15.15 per hour.
- 4.9 South Ayrshire Council Finance Team manage Corporate Appointees/Access to Funds for service users who lack capacity to act and make financial decisions for themselves. The service provided includes all aspects of financial management, payment of utilities, rent, council tax, insurance as well as day to day living expenses and budget management in conjunction with the Care Manager. A weekly charge for these services was implemented last year.

- 4.10 It is proposed to increase the Corporate Appointee charge by 5%. For community-based services this will be an increase from £8.00 to £8.40 per week and for care home-based residents an increase from £3.00 to £3.15 per week. No charge will be made for the first 8 weeks from commencement of Appointeeship. This will allow a sufficient period to identify and budget income and expenditure on behalf of the individual.
- 4.11 Maximum Weekly Charge is the maximum a service user can be charged to contribute to their social care services. This is currently £102 per week the proposal is to increase this by 3% to £105 per week. Currently one service user pays the maximum weekly charge.
- 4.12 The Council operates two residential care nursing homes, South Lodge in Ayr and Hillcrest in Girvan, it is proposed to increase the weekly charges for the care homes in line with the National Care Home Contract (NCHC) increase for residential care. The NCHC rate is still subject to approval.
- 4.13 The contribution a person makes to their care home fees is determined by a financial assessment following the [Scottish Government's Charging for Residential Accommodation Guidance rules](#).
- 4.14 Where respite in a care home is required for the persons care needs and not for carers respite there is a weekly charge that is not means tested and based on Department for Work and Pensions benefits for employment support allowance, disability premium less personal expenses allowance. The personal expenses allowance has still to be published by Scottish Government for 2026-27.
- 4.15 Where respite is provided to give a carer a break from their caring duties. The charge for respite is waived.
- 4.16 Appendix one provides a summary of the proposed increases for approval.

## **5. Legal and Procurement Implications**

- 5.1 There are no legal implications arising from this report.
- 5.2 There are no procurement implications arising from this report.

## **6. Financial Implications**

- 6.1 The proposals in this report will provide £0.260m of additional funding to assist the HSCP in balancing the budget for 2026-27 and ensure sustainability of service delivery.

## **7. Human Resources Implications**

- 7.1 There are no human resource implications.

## **8. Risk**

- 8.1 ***Risk Implications of Adopting the Recommendations***

- 8.1.1 There is a risk that service users may stop using services due to an inability to pay, this risk will be mitigated by ensuring service users benefits are maximised and they are in receipt of all benefits they are entitled to.

## 8.2 **Risk Implications of Rejecting the Recommendations**

*Insert one of the following statements:*

- 8.2.1 Rejection of the recommendations will increase the financial burden to the Health and Social Care Partnership.

## 9. **Integrated Impact Assessment (incorporating Equalities)**

- 9.1 An Integrated Impact Assessment has been carried out on the proposals contained in this report, which identifies potential negative impacts. The IIA Summary Report is attached as Appendix 2 which includes information on any mitigating or follow-up action required. Details of consultation that has taken place can be found in section 13 of the report.

A copy of the fully completed IIA can be [IIA Social Care Charging Proposals 2026-27](#).

## 10. **Sustainable Development Implications**

- 10.1 **Considering Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)** - This report does not propose or seek approval for a plan, policy, programme or strategy or document otherwise described which could be considered to constitute a plan, programme, policy or strategy.

## 11. **Options Appraisal**

- 11.1 An options appraisal has not been carried out in relation to the subject matter of this report.

The proposals are annual increases to charges and implementation of a previously approved day care charge. The proposals are in line with COSLA Non-Residential Charging Guidance.

## 12. **Link to Council Plan**

- 12.1 The matters referred to in this report contribute to Priority 4 of the Council Plan: Efficient and effective enabling services and the report aligns with the IJB Strategic Priority "We are an ambitious and effective partnership".

## 13. **Link to Shaping Our Future Council** Yes No

- 13.1 Increasing of charges and implementation of day care charging will contribute to £0.260m of funding to Health and Social Care Partnerships budget, this contribution will help sustain delivery of social care provision in day care, community alarms, non-personal care and provision of meals services.

## 14. **Results of Consultation**

- 14.1 There has been public consultation on the Council’s Budget for 2026-27 this gathered input on financial priorities, service charges and potential cost-saving measures.
- 14.2 Feedback on fees and charges showed a strong preference for flexibility in fees and charges. Nearly half (48%) selected a ‘varying rates’ approach (between 2.5% and 10%), compared with 30% favouring a flat 2.5% increase and 22% favouring a flat 5% increase. This suggests a preference for differentiated fees, not uniform uplifts.
- 14.3 Consultation has taken place with Councillor Hugh Hunter, Portfolio Lead for Health and Social Care Partnership, and the contents of this report reflect any feedback provided.

**15. Next Steps for Decision Tracking**

- 15.1 If the recommendations above are approved by Members, the Director of South Ayrshire Health and Social Care Partnership will ensure that all necessary steps are taken to ensure full implementation of the decision within the following timescales, with the completion status reported to the Cabinet in the ‘Council and Cabinet Decision Log’ at each of its meetings until such time as the decision is fully implemented:

<i><b>Implementation</b></i>	<i><b>Due date</b></i>	<i><b>Managed by</b></i>
Increase in Charges Implementation of Day Care Charges by 1 <sup>st</sup> April 2026	1 <sup>st</sup> April 2026	Service Lead - Revenue and Benefits

**Background Papers    None**

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**Date:    13<sup>th</sup> February 2026**

## HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE PARTNERSHIP

APPENDIX 1

## 2026-27 CHARGING INCREASED FOR SOCIAL CARE

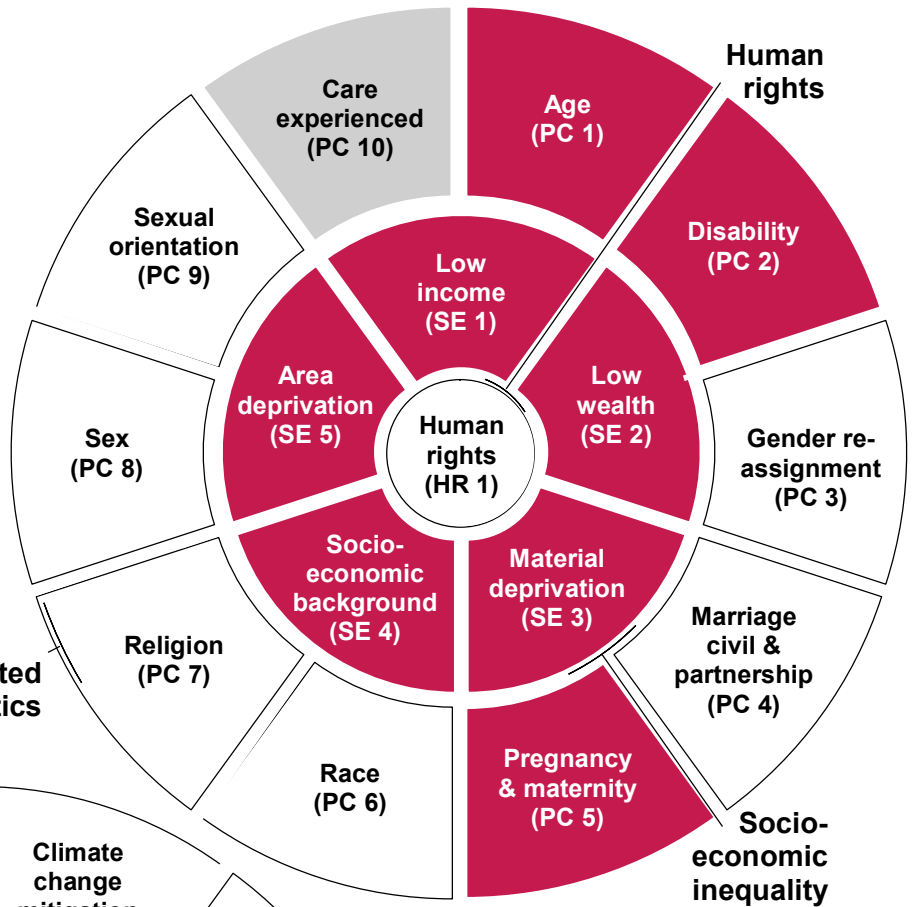
Non - Residential Charge	Current Charge	Increase	26-27 Proposed Charge	25-26 Cost	Per	Date of Implementation	Means tested?	Comments
Meals at Home	£5.64	32%	£8.33	£8.33	Meal	01/04/2026	N	Charge to service user will be at cost from the external provider, current cost £8.33 per meal
Day Care			£15.00	£74.13 to £110.95	Day	01/04/2026	N	Charged per day to a maximum of £30 or 2 days per week
Day Care - Other LA's based on Actual Cost			£74.13 to £110.95	£74.13 to £110.95	Day	01/04/2026	N	Other LA's charged based on actual cost of delivering service
Community Alarms	£5.10	5%	£5.35	£11.76	Week	01/04/2026	N	Increase to meet additional costs of transfer to digital
Homecare - Non Personal Care	£14.39	5%	£15.15	£24.44	Hour	01/04/2026	Y	Increase following benchmarking with other Local Authorities
Corporate Appointee Charge - (admin fee Community based service users)	£8.00	5%	£8.40		Week	01/04/2026	N	Charge to support management of individuals finances
Corporate Appointee Charge - (admin fee care home service users)	£3.00	5%	£3.15		Week	01/04/2026	N	
Max Weekly Charge	£102.00	3%	£105.00		Week	01/04/2026	Y	Increase in line with inflation
Residential and Respite	Current Charge	Increase	26-27 Proposed Charge	25-26 Cost	Per	Date of Implementation	Means tested?	Means tested?
Local authority care home charges (in line with NCHC Residential Base Rate)	£815.13	TBC		25/26 NCHC Residential Rate	Week	06/04/2026	Y	Financial assessment carried out in line with Charging for Residential Accommodation Guidance (CRAG)
Respite in care home charges - Age 18-24	£106.70	TBC	Based on DWP Benefits	25/26 NCHC Residential Rate	Week	06/04/2026	N	Charge related to benefits - charge waived if respite for Carer - Carers Assessment is completed
Respite in care home charges - Age 25 to Pension Age	£125.85	TBC	Based on DWP Benefits	25/26 NCHC Residential Rate	Week	06/04/2026		
Respite in care home charges - Pension Age and Over	£191.20	TBC	Based on DWP Benefits	25/26 NCHC Residential Rate	Week	06/04/2026		

# Integrated Impact Assessment Summary Report

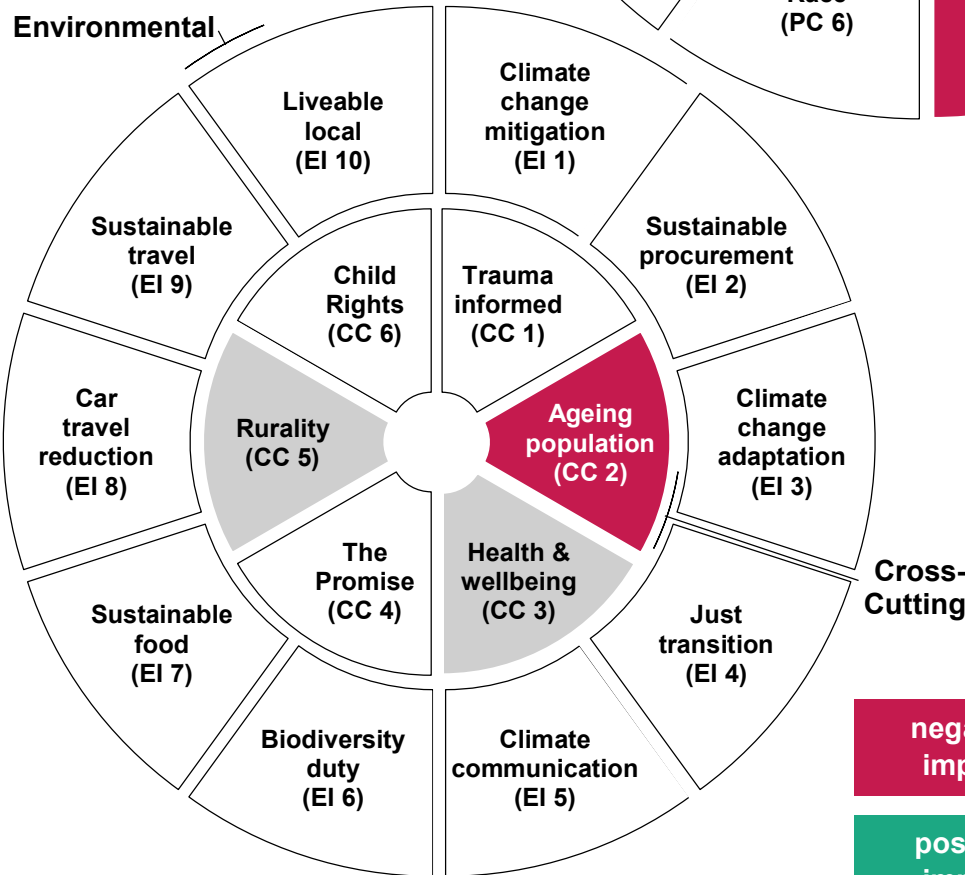
Soical Care Charges for 2026-27 for Non Residential Services provided by the HSCP.

Completed by:  
Lisa Duncan,  
Chief Finance Officer. ,  
HSCP DIRECTORATE

Date started: 15/10/2025



Protected characteristics



Environmental

Cross-Cutting

To be implemented on:  
04/01/26  
Review date:  
setting process.  
Oversight Panel:  
South Ayrshire Council  
Cabinet.

negative impact	uncertain / not clear
positive impact	no impact / not applicable

**Public sector equality duty**

Eliminating unlawful discrimination, harassment, and victimisation?

This charge will ensure a consistent approach regardless of any protected characteristic.

Advancing equality of opportunity?

This charge will ensure a consistent approach regardless of any protected characteristic.

Fostering good relations?

This charge will ensure a consistent approach regardless of any protected characteristic.

**Consultation declaration**

We confirm consultation has been carried out as part of this process.

**Mitigating Actions Required (re **negative** / unclear impacts)**

**EQUALITIES: impact on protected characteristics**

<b>PC 1</b>	Age	All service users will have their benefits maximised. People who are experiencing financial hardship will be reviewed on a case by case basis. Some charges may be waived.
<b>PC 2</b>	Disability	All service users will have their benefits maximised. People who are experiencing financial hardship will be reviewed on a case by case basis. Some charges may be waived.

**Mitigating Actions Required (re **negative** / unclear impacts)**

<b>PC 5</b>	Pregnancy and Maternity	All service users will have their benefits maximised. People who are experiencing financial hardship will be reviewed on a case by case basis. Some charges may be waived.
<b>PC 10</b>	Care Experienced (SAC-specific)	All service users will have their benefits maximised. People who are experiencing financial hardship will be reviewed on a case by case basis. Some charges may be waived.

**EQUALITIES: impact on socio-economic inequality**

<b>SE 1</b>	Low Income / Income Poverty	All service users will have their benefits maximised. People who are experiencing financial hardship will be reviewed on a case by case basis. Some charges may be waived.
<b>SE 2</b>	Low and / or no wealth	All service users will have their benefits maximised. People who are experiencing financial hardship will be reviewed on a case by case basis. Some charges may be waived.
<b>SE 3</b>	Material Deprivation	All service users will have their benefits maximised. People who are experiencing financial hardship will be reviewed on a case by case basis. Some charges may be waived.
<b>SE 4</b>	Socio-Economic Background	All service users will have their benefits maximised. People who are experiencing financial hardship will be reviewed on a case by case basis. Some charges may be waived.
<b>SE 5</b>	Area Deprivation	All service users will have their benefits maximised. People who are experiencing financial hardship will be reviewed on a case by case basis. Some charges may be waived.

Does this proposal require a Child Rights and Wellbeing Impact Assessment (CRWIA)? no