

Analysis of Data from Consultation on Proposed Changes to Charges for Adult Social Care Services

Report on consultation results

Summary Report

July 2026

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For:



Summary of consultation findings

This report sets out the results of a public consultation conducted by Oxfordshire County Council with the results processed and analysed by independent research agency Marketing Means.

Consultation Method

Oxfordshire County Council ran a consultation in May and June 2026 on proposed changes to how much it charges for some adult social care services provided to people at home. The council contacted service users directly as well other stakeholders and invited them to participate in the consultation. The consultation document was also available on the council's consultation portal.

By the close of the consultation on 21 June 2026, the council had received 131 responses to the online form, and 381 completed responses by post, giving a final total of 512 responses. The council provided the full online dataset and paper responses to Marketing Means, an independent research agency, who conducted the analysis that is reported in this document.

Profile of Consultation Respondents

- Almost 90% of responses were either from "Someone who receives care and support at home provided by ASC" or as "Someone who helps to care for a friend or relative who receives care and support from ASC", with a relatively even split between those two. Most others were from people in the less specific role of Oxfordshire residents.
- Well over half of all respondents were aged 65+.
- Nearly two-thirds of all responses were from females.
- More than nine in 10 responses were from people of White ethnicity.
- Nearly three-quarters of respondents felt that their day-to-day activities were limited due to a long-term health condition or disability.
- More than three-quarters receive care and support at home from ASC, more than a quarter receive telecare services from ASC, and one in seven use transport arranged by ASC.

DRE Allowance

- Just under half (46%) of those who gave an answer said that they or the person they support currently receive the DRE allowance. This rose to 52% among those who claimed to currently receive care/support at home via ASC.
- A slight majority (53%) felt that the proposed reduction would not be reasonable, though just over one in five felt that it would. Among those who currently receive the DRE Allowance, a significantly larger majority (63%) felt that the proposed reduction would not be reasonable.
- The leading reasons for considering the reduction to not be reasonable were the increasing cost of living, greater care expense, and the greater impact on vulnerable people, such as the elderly and those with disabilities.
- Suggested alternatives to reducing the DRE allowance included making savings elsewhere rather than to the ASC budget, conducting more in-depth and fairer assessments to better target resources, spending more on ASC, or making a smaller reduction.

Transport Arranged by ASC

- Just under one in five currently use ASC-provided transport, most of whom do so at least weekly.
- Among those who commented on the impact of a £10 daily charge for ASC-arranged transport, almost half (47%) felt that this would have a significant or moderate impact on their use. This rose to 68% among those who currently use such transport.

- The reasons for feeling a significant or moderate impact were mainly negative, including the need for the cost to be covered by people with very limited disposable income, that the costs would accumulate significantly for those needing transport several times a week, the lack of alternative options, and the increased potential for social isolation and stress as a consequence.
- Opinions of whether a £10 daily charge for ASC-arranged transport was reasonable were fairly evenly divided, but 37% did not think that charge would be reasonable, while 28% did. The proportion who considered the charge unreasonable rose to 52% among those who currently use ASC-provided transport.
- Reasons given for finding the charge to be reasonable related to the perception that ASC-provided transport costs are unaffordable for the council given the rising costs of transport more widely. Reasons given by those who did not find the charge reasonable related to the potential for unintended consequences such as stress and social isolation, the increase most affecting the most vulnerable, and the generally increased cost of living.
- Among other possible transport options that respondents could use, a lift in a car was most likely, for nearly half overall, though for only 21% among those who do not currently use ASC-provided transport. The other most likely options were by taxi, bus and mobility vehicles.

Telecare service

- Just over a third (35%) stated that they or the person they support currently use the telecare service, while a further 5% were not sure.
- Nearly half (47%) of those who could comment felt that the weekly charge of £9.87 proposed to be introduced for telecare would have a significant impact on them or the person they care for. This rose to 58% among those who currently use the telecare service.
- Reasons for feeling that the weekly charge would have an impact related to the charge being difficult to afford, possible cancelled use of the service, and its targeting of the most vulnerable people.
- More positive comments, from those expecting little or no impact, related to possible use of an alternative system and that they felt able to pay the charges.
- Nearly half (49%) did not consider the charge to be reasonable, while 20% felt it would be reasonable. Among those currently using the service, 63% felt that charges would not be reasonable.
- Reasons for feeling that the charge would be unreasonable included that it was simply too high, that it should be means-tested, that telecare should not be charged for and that the service saves money that would otherwise be needed for other services, such as from the NHS.
- Reasons for feeling the charge would be reasonable were that some respondents would be happy to contribute to the service costs, and that the charge is necessary to cover the council's costs.
- If the charge were introduced, one in three (36%) felt that they would still use the service, while 29% felt that they would not. Among those who currently use the service, almost half (46%) would use a paid-for version, but 21% would not.
- If a 6-week trial of the paid-for telecare service were introduced for those leaving hospital, just under half (48%) felt that this would be a reasonable proposal. This rose to 61% among those who currently use the telecare service.
- Reasons for considering the trial to be reasonable related mainly to improved safety and independence, the way it helps those discharged from hospital, and the opportunity for patients to see how well the service would work for them in practice.
- Reasons for considering the trial not to be reasonable related to the feeling that telecare should be free, especially for at-risk patients, and concerns over the nature of the trial itself (e.g. covering too short a period of time).
- Possible alternatives to telecare charging mentioned by respondents included means testing to target charges at those who can better afford, targeting the care itself to those who most need it, offering a

cheaper or more basic service, and making cuts elsewhere to spare budget for telecare.

Overall Reactions to the Proposed Changes

- Most respondents (52%) felt that the proposed changes would result in an overall negative impact for them or the person they support. Only 9% felt that the impact would be positive.
 - The proportion who expected an overall negative impact from the changes was significantly higher among current recipients of the DRE allowance (64%), and among current ASC-provided transport users (64%). Current telecare service users were no more or less likely than other respondents to expecting a negative impact from the changes.
- The most likely reasons for believing that the changes would have an overall negative impact were that greater financial pressure on ASC service users, increased stress and isolation for vulnerable people, and risks to people's safety.
- The most likely reasons for believing that the changes may have a positive impact were that the costs are not too high, and that the proposals seem reasonable.
- Final comments made by respondents for the council to consider included requests to focus on the needs of the most vulnerable residents when considering such ASC service changes, considering individuals' needs and ages, and the potential negative impact on day-to-day life and budgeting for those receiving support and care.
- Some also suggested that council should look elsewhere for savings, look for efficiency savings in ASC services, or increase the budget for ASC services.