

PE1533/MM

Cabinet Secretary for Health and Sport submission of 20 November 2018

As you will be aware, the Scottish Government has been taking forward the extension of Free Personal Care to adults under the age of 65. This policy means that those under the age of 65 will be treated in the same way as those over the age of 65 in terms of the eligibility and receipt of free personal care.

We have legislated for this change, which will be implemented by 1st April 2019 across Scotland, ensuring that no-one who is assessed as requiring personal care has to pay for that element of their care.

As part of the work to implement the extension, Scottish Government officials and analysts have been working with partners to fully understand the costs involved in extending free personal care to adults under the age of 65.

Any changes that we make, as you will appreciate, have to be costed and fully budgeted for. When free personal care was introduced in 2002, the number of people who came forward was higher than forecast by the Scottish Government, and costs rose sharply in the early years following implementation. Estimation of the likely impact of additional demand is particularly difficult, but our Implementation Advisory Group has considered the effects of this in assessing the likely budget required for the extension.

In order to ensure that there is equality of treatment between adults under and over the age of 65, we will extend free personal care to those under the age of 65 on a consistent basis with the approach for adults over the age of 65. We will monitor the impact on both the charges for non-personal elements of care for adults under the age of 65, and also the costs to local authorities of the extension.

These changes build on the progress already made around adult social care, through the increase in charging thresholds in 2016/17 and the disregard of war pensions and Armed Forces Compensation Scheme payments from financial assessments in 2017 /18. We appreciate that the extension of Free Personal Care to adults under the age of 65 does not go as far as the petitioner would like. However, through the People-Led Policy group which I launched on Wednesday 31st October this year we are working with people who use social care support to determine priorities for a national programme of reform of adult social care. The cost of social care and how care is paid for could be explored as part of the broad scope of this programme.

In addition to the experience of people who use social care support, the evidence provided to the Committee by Mr Adamson will be of significant interest in our work to develop reforms of the adult social care system.