

Cabinet Secretary for Health, Wellbeing and Sport  
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*Dear John,*

**PE 1533 BY JEFF ADAMSON ON SOCIAL CARE CHARGING**

Thank you for your letter of 10 June, in connection with Petition PE 1533 by Jeff Adamson.

Scottish Government officials have been engaged with COSLA on the issue of charging for social care, and recently discussions took place at COSLA's Charging Guidance Working Group around the issue of anti-poverty measures and increasing the fairness and consistency of charging for social care.

Further to your point about the thresholds for charging, COSLA have made proposals around raising the thresholds at which charging is applied, in order to raise those least able to afford to make a contribution towards the cost of their care out of charging altogether. These proposals were discussed on the basis of a paper prepared by Scottish Government at the most recent meeting of the COSLA Charging Guidance working group, which was broadly supportive of these proposals.

This approach has a number of potential advantages in that it focuses on helping those with the lowest incomes first and so supports an anti-poverty approach; it would not focus support on those with specific conditions only and so avoids potentially discriminating against those with other conditions; and this approach is scalable, in that, subject to resources, thresholds could be increased further in future years.

We have been undertaking detailed work over the course of the summer to determine the costs of this and the benefits to individuals, with an aim to making an announcement on this matter in due course.

In relation to the considerations being weighed during the Scottish Government's work on the petition's proposals, we are determined that any changes to the system for charging for social care must be affordable, sustainable, and, above all, fair.

This includes ensuring that resources are in place so we have the quantity and quality of social care that our people require.

I think it is also important to ensure that the Committee is aware of the nature of the COSLA Charging Guidance working group. The group is an ongoing group, rather than a time-limited one, which produces an annual revision of the charging guidance to take into account legislative changes, changes in Scottish Government policy and developments in local authorities' own charging policies.

The group's remit is to improve the consistency of charging across Scotland's local authorities, rather than to eliminate charging altogether and has already made a range of improvements in this regard. The COSLA Charging Guidance working group remains the most appropriate forum for considering issues related to charging for non-residential social care, including discussion of options to raise thresholds or otherwise improve the fairness of the system.

**SHONA ROBISON**