

Potential effects of DHS imposing an increase in accommodation charges on the residents of the supported accommodation group homes where it is the direct service provider

Background: It has never been government policy to charge those with disabilities for their support services. The residents of group homes pay just their living (accommodation) costs, as do regular pensioners in the community.

Current CERS has been running for many years, is very transparent and accountable. And, residents pay the actual cost.

1. The department claims they are wanting higher fees from their residents, to allow them to provide services for more people.

We question the morality of vulnerable people being asked by the department to contribute towards more services, when the department is so wasteful in its total failure to properly, pro-actively, efficiently and economically manage the business of providing services within its care policies, standards and values.

2. The department has always failed to provide non-government group home service providers with a similar service fee to that provided to their own direct-care services.

If a resident moved from a DHS group home to a CSO group home, the CSO service provider would get a lower service fee, thereby having to charge the resident a higher accommodation fee, or provide less support staff.

3. Raising the DHS 'accommodation fee' puts the DHS 'in-line' with CSOs, thereby allowing the department to continue to be a service provider under the NDIS, or to stop being a direct service provider.

4. If the increase from 50% to 75% of the DSP, to be called B&L, is to be an unitemised charge-block, similar to aged-care, this will, (a) remove the potential for residents to have proper residential tenancy rights, (b) reduce paperwork for DHS but, (c) reduce accountability for residents. A block charge will define the accommodation more as a 'hostel' than a real home.

5. The present system has been in place for a considerable time, and has paid its way. Residents have paid their accommodation costs, and should not have to pay what amounts to a tax.

6. A health care factor not provided for many residents now, and will be but impossible under the proposed new charges, is proper dental care – A check and clean every six months!

7. The department, including the then Minister, refused to take the 'mobility allowance' from those residents they were transporting to and from their day services. Yet the department is suggesting residents keep the 'mobility allowance' to off-set the new B&L.

This is fraudulent use of federal money, as the mobility allowance is specifically to off-set the cost of travel to and from day services . If not used for that, then it should not be claimed.

If the department is not wanting residents to contribute towards their service fee, there is no justification for such a large increase, as accommodation is fully and fairly funded by the residents. Therefore, any increase, of the magnitude of 50%, must be a tax on the residents.

- DHS residents are allocated a level of support funding to provide for their assessed level of support. If a DHS resident were to move to a similar non-government service, the level of support funding would be significantly less. Hence the reason non-government services frequently charge the resident more, or provide less support staff.
- There is concern for those DHS residents who have no family or similar support stake holders, and those who have State Trustees as their administrators. As there will be no one to lobby for them to receive a good quality of life in face of the increased charges.
- Compared with aged-care residents who, in general, have had the intellectual capacity to have had a good life, those with intellectual or multiple disabilities have not. Therefore, to compare the two is quite incorrect.
- Not only should we be challenging the DHS cost hike, but that non-government services are not fully funded. Whether a resident is in a DHS support service, or a similar non-government support service, the service fee should be identical.
- The original intention of the NDIS was that support services should be fully funded to the needs of the person. Not that existing clients should be taxed to support other clients

Extra 1: [Q &A on the increased cost of care by DHS Victoria](#)

Extra 2: [Outrageous fee increases by DHS Victoria - Media Release](#)

Note 1: We are seeking views on this very controversial subject, and any inside information on this shocking cost hike.

Note 2: LISA 'Limited Distribution' is due only to resource limitations. Please help spread the word of these. And, keep us informed of happenings both in Australia and overseas which have the potential to help the cause.

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