

Policy

Service User Charge

Although money has never been the most important factor, it is a necessary one if we are to continue to provide the level of support and standard of meals that we would all wish for.

- 1 Service user charge includes a contribution to Food, Heating and Lighting and all additional support services, which are not covered by Housing Benefit. It is also sometimes called Service Charge.
- 2 Assistance will be given with Housing Benefit and universal credit welfare benefit claims however it is ultimately the service users' responsibility, and non-payment of service charge will lead to termination of the licence. Any changes in benefit or income must be notified to the staff as it will affect their claim.
- 3 Where a service user is in work, Housing Benefit may still be available at a reduced rate, depending on wage level, and this will require a new claim supported with wage slips. We will therefore expect a supplemented rent contribution however we will ensure that service users are always better off.
- 4 If proof of income is not provided, we will expect the total charge including Housing Benefit and service charge to be paid until the revised housing benefit is established.
- 5 We have an arrangement with the Benefits Agency that will allow service charge to be taken direct from those service users in receipt of benefits where requested by the service user.
- 6 Unless this is established, and for those on alternative income, service charge is due in advance at the beginning of the week.
- 7 For those people who are paid on Mon, Tue, or Wed, this will be acceptable. For those who are paid on Thurs. or later in the week, we will expect that after 4 weeks, an agreed amount extra is paid each time until the service user is 1 week in advance. For service users paid fortnightly, this should be for the current charge week and the following week.
- 8 In case of any failure or refusal to pay service charge, it will be expected that the arrears are made up within 4 weeks, unless a special arrangement is made with senior staff.
- 9 A second refusal before arrears are made up may lead to termination of the licence.
- 10 Refusal to pay service charge three times will mean that service users are no longer entitled to stay at the Sanctuary

- 11 Each service user will be treated individually with due regard for circumstances, and without reference to any other service user's situation.
- 12 Any service user leaving owing service charge is to be billed for that amount. A record needs to be kept of any future payments made. Any re-application for residency must involve making payment of agreed amount to be paid off before the person moves in and a payment plan for the remainder after the person moves in.
- 13 Since the start of the project it has been our custom and practice to give each service user a free week at Christmas. This will continue to be offered to those *service users who are up to date with their service charge (one week in credit)*