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ensioners Forum Wales

National Old Age
Pensioners Association
of Wales

Amicus Unite

PARITY

T&G Unite

Unison Retired Members
Wales

PCS Retired Members
Group

PROSPECT

National Ass. Of Retired
Firefighters

National Ass. Of Retired
Police Officers

National Fed. Of Post
Office and BT Pensioners

NUT Retired Members
Section

BAFUNCS

Civil Service Pensioners
Alliance

Wales Pensioners

*A forum of
independent national
pensioner and retired
member
organisations
working together for
the benefit of all
pensioners in Wales*

*Supported by Age
Concern Cymru*

Legislation Committee No 5
National Assembly for Wales
Cardiff Bay
Cardiff
CF99 1Na

Your refer: 1/62527/2009

18 August 2009

Dear Sirs,

Consultation on proposed Social Care Charges (Wales) Measure

Please find enclosed a response from Pensioners Forum Wales
with regard to the above consultation.

Yours faithfully

Pensioners Forum Wales,

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Civil Service Pensioners Alliance

A forum of independent national pensioner and retired member organisations working together for the benefit of all pensioners in Wales

Supported by Age Concern Cymru and Help the Aged in Wales

Pensioners Forum Wales is pleased to respond to the National Assembly for Wales's consultation on proposed Social Care Charges (Wales) Measure. We are very pleased to see this important issue being addressed by the National Assembly for Wales

Pensioners' Forum Wales is a forum bringing together representatives of national pensioner organisations in Wales, which includes the following organisations:

- Civil Service Pensioners Alliance
- National Association of Retired Fire-fighters
- National Association of Retired Police Officers
- National Federation of Post Office & BT Pensioners
- National Old Age Pensioners' Association of Wales
- National Union of Teachers Retired Members Section
- PROSPECT
- Public & Commercial Services Retired Members Group
- Unison Retired Members Association –
- Unite the Union RMA

Consultation of Proposed Social Care Charges (Wales) and Measure

- There were two opinions on question 1 (annex 1)

The first agreed that there was a need for legislation in the best interests of a fairer and more consistent system of social care charging throughout Wales.

The second view, queried whether there was any need to resort to the lengthy process of passing a law to remove these anomalies, when there is already a moral obligation to rectify this situation in Wales. Where you live should not determine how much you pay for services you need.

- If the proposed maximum payment of £50 per week is introduced there will be winners and losers. It will be fairer to those currently paying more, but it will become unfair to those council tax payers who receive no benefits. Over time there has been a noticeable reduction in the UK Government's funding for Wales, resulting in the proportion of care costs paid by Council tax payers increasing from 13% to 20%. Overall council tax increases are becoming unsustainable for many older people on diminishing incomes.
- It is not clear who determines care charges WAG or Local Authorities. Local authorities would obviously benefit from better guidance from WAG to enable them to set a fairer system of charging.
- Pensioners Forum Wales felt that means testing is used far too freely as an exclusion tool to prevent those with needs from receiving care services. These people have already been means tested by the Inland Revenue and many have had their state pensions removed in tax. It would seem that only a very small minority, such as older people receiving pension credit are having their care needs adequately met.
- It is important that any future measure introduced includes a precaution to ensure that those people who have worked hard and provided themselves with occupational pensions are not worse off than those persons living on long term benefits.

Finally, we found most of the seven questions set, very difficult to decode, a public consultation needs to be written in the language which people speak.