



TORBAY COUNCIL

CHARGING POLICY

FINAL

## **1. Introduction**

The purpose of this Policy is to provide a framework for how Torbay Council approaches the question of charging for specialised services that it deals with, such as, Access to Information requests, Land Charges and general concessions. The application of this policy is designed to bring greater clarity to the process of setting charges.

It is also intended to act as a guide in the process of reviewing charges for existing services and setting charges for any new services that maybe introduced in the future.

In general terms it is the policy of Torbay Council, which unless there is a good reason why an exception should be made, a charge should be levied for all discretionary services in accordance with this charging policy.

In regards to statutory services; where the Council has control over whether a charge should be levied, and there is no good reason why an exception applies, it is the Council's policy that a charge should be made.

Torbay council will review all charges within their control on at least an annual basis.

## **2. Key Principles – which services should the Council charge for?**

As previously stated, charges should be made for all discretionary services and when new services are introduced, consideration for charging should be taken into account.

There needs to be consideration when implementing charging as there may be some exceptions where charging would be considered inappropriate.

Examples of this could be circumstances where;

- the service in question is delivered to all households and residents equally and therefore could be considered to be funded from Council Tax.
- charging could be counter-productive that is it could potentially reduce the use of the service.
- the administrative costs of making the charge would outweigh any potential income.

## **3. How is the amount charged decided?**

When determining the cost of a service there are a number of factors that need to be taken into consideration. The Charge, in general, should cover the cost of providing the actual service.

#### **4. Which service users should receive a concession?**

In some circumstances it may be appropriate to consider offering an 'across the board' subsidy to all users of a particular service where it is deemed consistent with achieving objectives set by Torbay Council.

#### **5. Corporate strategy**

It is the policy of Torbay Council that when charges are reviewed, concessions are considered for the following groups:

- Young people aged 16 years or younger
- Full time students
- Senior citizens aged 60 or over
- Individuals on a low income in receipt of a means tested benefit.
- Individuals receiving 'carers allowance'
- Blue Badge holders.

There are no set guidelines on these charges, it will be judged on a case by case basis to how much concession is taken off the charges.