

Concessions Policy

Policy statement

Chesterfield Borough Council is committed to ensuring a consistent approach to how we charge for discretionary services while retaining the flexibility needed to achieve the Council's social and legal obligations, as well as its commercial needs. All concessions offered will support the

strategic aims and objectives of the Council in accordance with the approved Council Plan and Medium Term Financial plan.

1. Policy context

- 1.1 Legislation allows the Council to choose to provide certain services to the public in the interest of the council's area and its citizens. We refer to these services as discretionary services. The Council may choose to charge for these services and choose to provide a concession on that charge. The definition of concession in this policy means any reduction in price from the full service charge that has been agreed for social reasons.
- 1.2 This concessions policy sits alongside any agreed corporate Charging Policy that the Council adopts, and has regard to the principles of the Audit Commission's publication 'positively charged'.
- 1.3 The policy expects that decisions to vary the rate of concessions for discretionary services will be made in support of the council's priorities and strategic objectives. Objectives may include the need to influence public behaviour, address inequalities of access to services due to financial or other disadvantage, as well as to manage demand and competition to sustain and improve service offer.
- 1.4 In meeting the Council's priorities, this concessions policy therefore provides for both social and commercial considerations in the setting of concession rates. Whilst providing fair access to services for disadvantaged people, the policy aims to encourage a commercial approach to the use and application of concessions to help secure longer term service sustainability, improvement and choice where possible.
- 1.5 The policy promotes the funding of concessions from service user charges and away from the general tax payer - where that is possible to achieve without detrimental impact on the service. In line with the council's corporate Charging Policy a commercial approach will help support the council in its need to become self-sufficient by the year 2020.

2. Policy principles

- The cost and loss of income by providing concessions should be offset by income generated by services paid for at the full rate and surplus from higher demand services.
This principle is underpinned by the priority to maximise income to sustain and improve services where possible.
- All discretionary services have the freedom to vary the rate of concession offered in order to manage service delivery and demand, competition and improvement opportunities. The unit cost should form part of this consideration.

- Services should only grant concessions to customers after entitlement of eligibility has been confirmed.
- Information about concessions will be provided to service user on request.

3. Policy scope and exclusions

- 3.1 Chesterfield Borough Council offers a variety of discretionary services where concessions are available; these are detailed in section 6. The concession rate and type varies for different services depending on the outcome aimed for within the service e.g. to encourage participation, to address inequalities of access, to manage demand etc.
- 3.2 In setting concessions, this policy accepts that there will be a need to vary concession rates to help manage service delivery and demand, to cover discretionary service costs and for commercial reasons. Services will have the freedom to vary concessions in accordance with the requirements of this policy.
- 3.3 Discounts and other offers made for commercial reasons only (such as corporate memberships, promotional discounts, frequent user discounts and/or other group discounts, or to promote bulk purchase and early or pre-payments) are excluded from this policy. Such commercially driven concessions (discounts) will be guided by the council's corporate charging policy.
- 3.4 No concessions falling within this policy will apply to the customers of any organisations hiring use of the council's services or venues, for example to hold organised events, productions or classes, unless by prior negotiation and agreement with the service to ensure all costs to the council are covered.

4. Responsibilities and policy review

- 4.1 Service Managers will report to Cabinet at least annually on their proposed concessions as part of the council's budget setting process and the setting of fees and charges for services. This should include the reasons for the concession and their expected outcomes i.e. how they will contribute to the Council's priorities. The report should also include an impact assessment of any previous concessions offered in order to inform decision making. The policy expects Service Managers to be able to evidence their pricing approach through undertaking benchmarking with other comparable facilities and services, through service usage statistics, and service user surveys, as appropriate.
- 4.2 Responsibility for reviewing this Policy will be that of the Policy and Communications Manager in consultation with the responsible Cabinet Member(s) and Chief Financial Officer. In light of constantly changing financial pressures and other circumstances this policy will be reviewed on an ongoing basis as necessary, but at least every two years.

5.0 Concessions eligibility criteria

5.1 Services may offer a range of concessions to service users based on low income, age and other key categories. The table below shows the category and evidence requirements for obtaining concessions.

Concession category	Evidence required
Income based: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Income Support Income Based Job Seekers Allowance Council Tax Benefit Housing Benefit Universal Credit (with no earned income) Universal Credit (with housing element) Employment Support Allowance Severe Disablement Allowance Universal Credit (no work capability element) Full time students 	<p>Award letter within the last 12 months from the Department of Work and Pensions.</p> <p>An entitlement notice from Local Authority/ Council within the last 12 months highlighting a reduced charge owing to any of the benefit entitlements / criteria.</p> <p>A valid full time student ID card.</p>
Age: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> People at or over the national state retirement age and in receipt of state pension Children and young people under the age of 16 Care leavers under the age of 25. 	<p>Photographic ID, Pension book/ award letter within the last 12 months from the Department of Work and Pensions.</p> <p>Photographic ID.</p> <p>Letter / Entitlement Notice from the relevant Local Authority.</p>
Other: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Active armed forces members A carer in receipt of carers' allowance, carers credit or carers premium (when accompanying the person registered to care for). Essential companion - this concession exists to enable all patrons to equally participate, with dignity and respect at events and performances. The purpose of the concession is to ensure the safety and enjoyment of those customers who require a companion to assist them in accessing the facilities for events and performances. 	<p>Photographic armed forces ID card.</p> <p>Award letter within the last 12 months from the Department of Work and Pensions.</p> <p>Discussion with booking staff. The concession is not open to, or intended for, those who simply require a companion to assist with transportation to and from the venues, or to keep them company. The scheme is not offered to anyone who can cope independently in a public venue. The Essential Companion's primary role is to assist the customer with mobility or guidance, to enable them to safely attend</p>

	and enjoy the event or performance. The Essential Companion is expected to attend to the needs of the customer at all times whilst on the premises.
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6.0 Services where concessions are available

Service	Concession					
	Income based	State retirement age	Under 16	Care leavers under 25	Armed Forces	Carers
Queen's Park Sports Centre	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Healthy Living Centre	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Productions and events at sports centres.	Subject to negotiations made with promoters – please contact the sports centres for information on particular events. Essential companion concession may also apply.					
Productions and events at the Winding Wheel and Pomegranate Theatre.	Subject to negotiations made with promoters – please contact the venues booking office for information on particular events. Essential companion concession may also apply.					
Museum service chargeable events e.g. ghost walks	Subject to negotiations made with promoters – please contact the museum for information on particular events. Essential companion concession may also apply.					
Hire of Pomegranate Theatre, Winding Wheel, Assembly Rooms and Hasland Village Hall.	Concessionary hiring rates for community and voluntary sector organisations.					
Community Room hire	Concessionary hiring rates for community and voluntary sector organisations.					



Pest Control	✓	×	×	×	×	×
Bulky waste collection	✓	×	×	×	×	×
Cemeteries and cremation	×	×	✓ (under 17)	×	×	×