

---

**To:** Audit, Risk & Scrutiny Board

**On:** 22 May 2023

---

**Report by:** Lead Officer

---

**Heading:** Charges for Bulk Items Uplift for the Elderly

---

**1. Summary**

- 1.1. At its meeting on 22 August 2022, members of the Audit, Risk and Scrutiny Board agreed an annual programme of activity for the Board for 2022/23. This included a review of charges for bulk items uplifts for the elderly as part of the programme of activity.

**2. Recommendations**

The Board is asked to:

- 2.1. Note the progress contained within the report.

**3. Background**

- 3.1. Residents of Renfrewshire can request special uplifts if they need any bulky general waste collected from their home. This can be for between 1 and 20 items but cannot include hazardous, clinical, or toxic waste. Loose waste must be bagged or tied in manageable bundles where necessary. In addition, appliances such as washing machines, freezers, cookers etc are all charged individually and cannot form part of the 1 to 20 items.
- 3.2. Ground clearances are when residents have more than 20 items and the charge quoted is for a maximum of one hour's work. However, if officers visit and assess that it will take longer than this, they will contact the resident about the additional costs before commencing any work. Again, domestic appliances are charged individually and do not form part of a ground clearance.
- 3.3. Renfrewshire Council aims to collect item(s) as soon as possible within 14 days. Residents must ensure any white goods have their doors removed or place in

a position where no one can access it. Special uplift requests for white goods and general goods can be made at the same time, however white goods are charged separately.

- 3.4. The charges for 2023/24 are £37.15 for a domestic uplift (1-20 items) and £37.15 for each domestic white good. The ground clearance charges are £88.00 covering a driver, a waste collector, and a vehicle, for a maximum of one hour's work.
- 3.5. Residents who are council tenants are entitled to two special uplifts per year as part of their rent charge, this is paid for from within the overall Housing Revenue Account (HRA). This is achieved by providing their rent reference number when making their booking.
- 3.6. The current scheme provides no free, discounted or exemptions for this service for any other residents.
- 3.7. The board approved, the age of 65 to be assumed in relation to the term elderly for the duration of this review where this is practical. If an exception to this age is used, it will be clearly noted within the review.

#### **4. Purpose of the Review**

- 4.1. The key purpose of this review will be to:
  1. Set out the current position in relation to bulk uplifts within Renfrewshire Council;
  2. Consider the impact of offering a free bulk uplift service for the elderly; and
  3. Identify any other mitigations that could be recommended for the elderly that the council could pursue within available resources.

#### **5. Scope of the Review and Timescales**

- 5.1. In relation to 4.1(1) above, the focus of the review will be on research into demographics within Renfrewshire; in particular, the elderly population and current trends for existing service demand.
- 5.2. In relation to 4.1(2) above, the focus of the review will be on assessing the financial and non-financial implications in relation to the provision of free bulk uplifts for the elderly.
- 5.3. In relation to 4.1(3) above, the focus on the review will be exploring existing or potential options available to the elderly within Renfrewshire through partner organisations such as the third sector.
- 5.4. In relation to 4.1(3) above, consideration will be given to the existing services provided within neighbouring local authorities in relation to free bulk uplifts for the elderly to consider any benefits for Renfrewshire.

- 5.5. For clarity, the level of charges applied to bulk uplifts within Renfrewshire is outwith the scope of this review.
- 5.6. It is proposed that the review is progressed through 2023, with a conclusive report being submitted for approval to the Audit, Risk and Scrutiny Board on 18 September 2023, and a final report to Council 14 December 2023. The table below provides an outline of the proposed timetable.

#### **Timetable for Bulk Uplift for the Elderly Review**

<b>Date of Board Meeting</b>	<b>Stage of Review</b>
23 January 2023 - <b>Complete</b>	Commencement of review
18 March 2023 - <b>Complete</b>	Continuation of review
22 May 2023 - <b>Current</b>	Continuation of review
21 August 2023	Continuation of review
18 September 2023	Report to Board
14 December 2023	Final Report to Council

## **6. Progress Update**

- 6.1. The review has been progressing well and research has continued across all areas within scope. This section will provide an update on the findings since the 18 March 2023 report that have reached a conclusion or a relevant point of interest to the review, with particular focus on the objectives within 5.2.
- 6.2. In this report, we explore financial and non-financial implications in relation to the provision of free bulk uplifts for the elderly within Renfrewshire; this is in relation to scope objective 5.2.
- 6.2.1 This section looks at the trends in income for special uplifts from 2020/21 to 2022/23. The information has been analysed by recharges to the HRA and for charges direct to Renfrewshire residents.

<b>Financial Year</b>	<b>HRA Tenants</b>	<b>Residents</b>	<b>Total</b>
2020/2021	£159,440.30	£55,866.00	<b>£215,306.30</b>
2021/2022	£111,655.35	£62,308.80	<b>£173,964.15</b>
2022/2023	£109,928.10	£71,079.98	<b>£181,008.08</b>
Average	<b>£127,007.92</b>	<b>£63,084.93</b>	<b>£190,092.84</b>

The service is managed through the deployment of a driver, waste collector and a specialised vehicle. The demand fluctuates within the table, and a major influence on this was due to COVID-19 and the post-pandemic recovery.

- 6.2.2 In order to assess the current demand for the service, a sample analysis of 12 weeks of requests from the period 9 January 2023 to 2 April 2023 has been reviewed. The analysis below shows that based on total orders we are averaging 15.3 orders daily and 74.5 items per day.

Week	Special Uplifts	Ground Clears	Total Uplifts	Daily Average Uplifts	Total Items	Daily Average Items
1	98	13	111	15.9	544	77.7
2	85	11	96	13.7	407	58.1
3	88	9	97	13.9	472	67.4
4	85	8	93	13.3	425	60.7
5	84	5	89	12.7	479	68.4
6	107	13	120	17.1	520	74.3
7	114	7	121	17.3	692	98.9
8	123	18	141	20.1	637	91.0
9	113	14	127	18.1	656	93.7
10	77	6	83	11.9	418	59.7
11	102	17	119	17.0	551	78.7
12	81	3	84	12.0	455	65.0
Total	<b>1,157</b>	<b>124</b>	<b>1,281</b>	<b>15.3</b>	<b>6,256</b>	<b>74.5</b>

Operational managers have confirmed that any significant recurring increase in demand due to a free or discounted service could not be managed without either an additional team or by using an external partner to manage the increased demand.

- 6.2.3 The impact of creating a free bulk uplift service for the Elderly is likely to increase demand. This increase could be managed in two ways: by increasing capacity either internally or externally, both of which bring additional costs.
- 6.2.4 If we assume that demand increases beyond the current levels and an additional team consisting of a driver, waste collector, and specialised vehicle is required, then an additional cost of around £116,500 per year is estimated. This equates to around £320 per day in extra costs for Renfrewshire Council. In the past, external contractors have been used to aid in reducing the post-pandemic backlog, and this was at a cost of around £40 per uplift; however, costs are likely to have increased since then due to inflation.
- 6.2.5 If a policy of free uplifts for the Elderly was introduced, what sort of impact could this have based on demand levels, and how would this impact the service? Currently, we do not require the age of the requestor; therefore, we do not hold this information to analyse our existing data. Therefore, to gauge current demand, if we utilise the age profile we have already identified in the report dated 13 March 2023, and assume that 19.22% of our current demand is for the Elderly, then we can assume a drop in income of £34,789.75 before any demand increases or further assumptions are made, as detailed in the table below.

<b>Impact on income 2022/23 levels</b>	<b>HRA Tenants</b>	<b>Residents</b>	<b>Total</b>
2022/23 Near Actual	£109,928.10	£71,079.98	<b>£181,008.08</b>
<b>19.22% Reduction</b>	<b>£21,128.18</b>	<b>£13,661.57</b>	<b>£34,789.75</b>
2022/23 Revised	£88,799.92	£57,418.41	<b>£146,218.33</b>

It is, however, possible that the actual percentage of current service recipients could be higher than the demographic average due to the type of service provided and that this loss could be higher.

6.2.6 In summary, the impact of introducing a policy for free bulk uplifts for the Elderly could result in a reduction in income (minimum £0.035m) and an increased demand for the service resulting in a requirement to increase capacity at an additional cost (which could rise initially to £0.117m), bringing the total additional annual cost to potentially £0.152m

6.3 Although not within the initial scope of this review it was identified, during the investigation, that two Scottish Local Authorities provide a discounted Bulk Uplift service. This is not just for the Elderly but for any resident who is in receipt of Housing benefit or Council Tax Reduction.

6.3.1 In order to assess the potential impact of a similar policy in Renfrewshire the latest Council Tax Reduction (CTR) information has been analysed for Renfrewshire, split between HRA and other residents who are in receipt of any amount of CTR. The table below shows that the percentage of HRA tenants claiming CTR is 51.55% and 12.31% of other tenancies.

<b>CTR Analysis</b>	<b>HRA Tenants</b>	<b>Residents</b>	<b>Total</b>
Number of Claims	6,297	9,671	15,968
Stock Number	12,216	78,566	90,782
% CTR	<b>51.55%</b>	<b>12.31%</b>	<b>17.59%</b>

6.3.2 The table below outlines a high-level assumption on the potential cost of implementing this type of policy. This is based purely on the CTR data from above and assumes only a potential loss of income of 51.55% for HRA tenants and 12.31% for other residents of Renfrewshire. This has been modelled on both 50% and 60% reductions, in line with the two schemes identified nationally.

<b>Impact on income 2022/23 levels</b>	<b>HRA Tenants</b>	<b>Residents</b>	<b>Total</b>
No discount 100% charge	£109,928.10	£71,079.98	£181,008.08
50% discount on CTR%	<b>£28,332.40</b>	<b>£4,374.76</b>	<b>£32,707.16</b>
60% discount on CTR%	<b>£33,998.88</b>	<b>£5,249.71</b>	<b>£39,248.59</b>

The table shows a potential loss of income of £32,707.16 to £39,248.59 assuming existing income levels and no change to demand assumptions for

uplifts. If this policy was implemented and demand exceeded the current operational capacity, then additional costs as highlighted in 6.2.5 could similarly be expected.

- 6.3.3 In summary the impact of introducing a policy for discounted bulk uplifts for CTR eligible could result in a reduction in income (minimum £0.033m) and an increased demand for the service resulting in a requirement to increase capacity at an additional cost (rising to £0.117m), bringing the total additional annual cost to potentially £0.150m.
- 6.4 The next report to Board will focus Scope 5.3 above, reviewing existing, or potential options available to the Elderly within Renfrewshire through partner organisations such as the third sector.

---

### Implications of this report

1. **Financial** - The outcome of this review could result in additional costs and loss of income to Renfrewshire Council as outlined in section 6.
2. **HR and Organisational Development** - None directly arising from this report.
3. **Community/Council Planning** - None directly arising from this report.
4. **Legal** - None directly arising from this report.
5. **Property/Assets** - None directly arising from this report.
6. **Information Technology** - None directly arising from this report.
7. **Equality and Human Rights** - The Recommendations contained within this report have not yet been assessed in relation to their impact on equalities and human rights because the paper sets out the scope for a review process rather than proposing any changes to services. Impact assessments will be undertaken as part of the review, and the results of the assessment will be published on the Council's website. Any policy changes arising from the review will also be fully assessed.
8. **Health and Safety** - None directly arising from this report.
9. **Procurement** - None directly arising from this report.

10. **Risk** - The potential risk that the Council will overspend its approved budgets for the year will be managed at a Council-wide level by the Chief Executive and Directors.
  11. **Privacy Impact** - None directly arising from this report.
  12. **Cosla Policy Position** - Not applicable.
  13. **Climate Risk** - None directly arising from this report.
- 

### **List of Background Papers**

Audit, Risk and Scrutiny Board Annual Programme approved 22 August 2022.

Audit, Risk and Scrutiny Board Charges for Bulk Items Uplift for the Elderly 23 January 2023.

Audit, Risk and Scrutiny Board Charges for Bulk Items Uplift for the Elderly 13 March 2023.

The foregoing background papers will be retained within Finance and Resources for inspection by the public for the prescribed period of four years from the date of the meeting. The contact officer within the service is Finance Business Partner John Kilpatrick who can be contacted at [john.kilpatrick@renfrewshire.gov.uk](mailto:john.kilpatrick@renfrewshire.gov.uk)

---

**Author:** John Kilpatrick, Finance Business Partner