



aebal Leisure is a small and independent Social Support Service. Our service is currently accessed by people who are in receipt of a Direct Payment from their local authority or are in a position to self-fund (refer to page 7 of our Info Pack for further details).

We have 3 different service options to define the type of session being delivered; **Support, Connect and Groups**. To gain the full benefit of aebal Leisure support we encourage people to use their session time flexibly with a combination of all 3 service options.

**It should be noted that the following support rates cover daytime, evening and weekend sessions and we do not increase our hourly rates for 'unsociable hours'.**

## Hourly support rates |

### aebal Leisure **Support**:

aebal Leisure **Support** refers to an individual working **one to one** with an aebal Leisure staff member. These sessions are typically **2hrs - 3hrs in duration**. The hourly rate is as follows:

Group size	Staff required	Support rate per hour
1	1	£14.50/hr per individual
1	2 (Intensive support)	£29/hr per individual

### aebal Leisure **Connect**:

aebal Leisure **Connect** supports in small friendship groups of **2 to 4 individuals**. These sessions are typically **3hrs - 4hrs in duration**. The hourly rate is as follows:

Group size	Staff required	Support rate per hour
2 - 4	1 - 2	£14.50/hr per individual



## aebal Leisure Groups:

aebal Leisure **Groups** refers to occasional large group activities. These typically involve weekend **full day sessions** or evening socials involving **5 or more individuals**.

Group size	Staff required	Flat rate
5 - 10	2 - 4	Dependent on group size/activity/duration/travel

## Activity costs |

### Service users:

As is standard practice with all types of community social care, whether it be a large agency or a personal assistant, the costs incurred relate to the hours of support. **The above hourly rates are to cover the cost of staff support time only and do not include the costs of the various activities we provide.**

aebal Leisure activities are typically self-funded by service users using their DLA (Disability Living Allowance) PIP (Personal Independence Payment) or ESA (Employment Support Allowance).

aebal Leisure will always discuss activity budgets and price appropriate sessions from the outset, and this is recorded and agreed on in the aebal Leisure Support Programme.

We also always prioritise cost effective activities and nearly all the activity venues we access have concessionary rates for both service users and staff. Typically we request between £2 and £7 per session to cover the cost of the activity.

The aebal Leisure 'Groups' service option is a slight exception to the above and does not involve a set hourly support rate. We provide 'Groups' activities approximately once every 2 months in addition to service user's regular weekly 'Support' and 'Connect' sessions. Due to the larger sized group and the typical full day duration, there is a flat rate charge which takes into consideration the number in the group, the staff required and the distance to the activity. This amount is significantly lower than the 'Support' and 'Connect' session hourly rates.

With 'Groups' sessions the cost of the activity is also often shared. We will request a contribution from the service user towards the venue admission (Alton Towers, Harry Potter Studios, West Midlands Safari Park etc) and we will contribute the remainder to make these trips more financially accessible for families. (It should be noted that the aebal Leisure contribution comes from the service's profits and we are not including this cost within the amount charged on the monthly invoice. Direct Payments are to be used to cover the cost of support time only).

**'Groups' sessions will only be offered to individuals who have sufficient funding to cover the activity and it will be made clear to all service users that this is an optional additional session.**



## **aebal staff members:**

As mentioned, the majority of the activity venues we utilise provide concessionary rates or free admission for support workers. It is very uncommon for our service users to be expected to cover any additional costs for a staff member's involvement in an activity.

With all 'Connect' and 'Groups' activities, if there happens to be an additional charge for the staff member's involvement, aebal Leisure will cover this cost.

For 'Support' sessions (one to one support) we do not cover the cost if there happens to be an additional charge for the staff member's participation in the activity. The service user is expected to cover the full cost of the 'Support' session activities.

However, even with one to one support, we still ensure that the cost of combined participation in an activity remains around the £5 mark. Typically, 'Support' sessions will involve, for example, the hire of a badminton court (£5 concessionary rate), a game of snooker (£5 concessionary rate), swimming (£4.50 with a free carer) so the charge covers the cost of both the service user and support worker's combined participation.

## **Food and drink costs |**

Session activities often fall around meal times so we recommend to both service users and staff members alike to bring food along to activities to avoid the unnecessary expense of purchasing food and drink.

However, if purchasing food is a necessity during a session, for instance if the activity is a meal social at a restaurant, then service users will be expected to cover the full cost of their own meal if it's a 'Connect' session or contribute towards the cost if it's a 'Groups' session.

aebal Leisure will always cover the cost of staff members' food and drink on 'Connect' or 'Groups' meal socials.

'Support' sessions (one to one) are different and in this instance we would not contribute to the cost of either the service user's or staff member's meal costs. We encourage staff to avoid meals out for 'Support' sessions unless they are happy to cover the cost of their own food and drink.

Due to our approach to support and the social dynamics we promote, we do not expect service users to have to pay for staff members' food or drinks.

## **Travel costs |**

As our activity venues are located all over Nottinghamshire, the service incorporates car transportation to and from the activity within our support rate. Service users begin being charged from the point the staff member meets with them so the total session time often includes both the activity and the journey to the activity venue. This aspect of the service is hugely beneficial to those who are incapable of independent travel and it also enables us to offer a wider range of activities.

However, to reduce hours spent on travelling and to promote independence, we will always encourage service users to travel to venues on their own accord or request family members to assist. As we frequently run activities in the city centre we have also supported many service users to learn to catch buses/trams from their homes to a familiar meeting point in the city. This transport training enables individuals to then begin meeting at activity venues to commence sessions instead of relying on car transportation and being charged for the travel time.



Occasionally, dependent on the service user's location or if a certain activity required a significant amount of travel time, we may need to consider charging for mileage in addition to our support rate. This would be determined on a person to person basis and included in the individual's Support Programme after being agreed upon by all parties.

If a session requires car park costs, aebal Leisure will cover the full amount if on a 'Connect' or 'Groups' session. For 'Support' sessions the service user is expected to cover half of this cost.

## Billing |

### Flexible use of hours:

The duration of our sessions are always dependent on the type of activity we are providing and for that reason they vary from week to week. We monitor and manage activity hours very discretely so that our service users do not feel like they are being supported for a set amount of time. We feel that sustaining or ending a session simply because of rigid time constraints adds an unnecessary formality to the activities and would negatively impact on our support. aebal Leisure support is about providing short, activity-focussed sessions full of energy and positivity, therefore we encourage support time to be used flexibly.

For example, a service user may have been allocated 3hrs per week of aebal support, however, one week the activity arranged may only require a maximum of 2hrs. Potentially, we could pad out this session for the full 3hrs which would most likely lead to service users becoming bored and unstimulated and the staff member 'watching the clock'. We do not feel this is a good use of support time so instead we simply save this extra hour to be better utilised on an alternative session. Saved hours can be used for longer session activities on regular session days, or they can be used to enable an additional session one week or alternatively they can be saved towards a future weekend 'Groups' day trip.

This flexible use of hours leads to a much higher quality of support and is also a much better use of funding. Some weeks the session activities may be shorter and some weeks they may be longer and we manage the hours accordingly. We perceive variation as being a very normal occurrence in mainstream life and see no reason why it should be any different for the people we support. We of course also run regular weekly activities which finish at the exact time each week. These are often accessed by service users that utilise aebal Leisure for a combination of outreach and respite support.

It should be noted that although the duration of sessions can often vary, all our service users have detailed Support Programmes defining the type of sessions to be delivered and which days of the week the support hours will be used. We recognise the importance of structure and routine, so each service user has a session timetable (and Service Level Agreement) stating when their regular aebal sessions will take place. These details are discussed and agreed upon by all parties from the commencement of support but are also regularly updated as the support progresses and naturally evolves. Confirmation of precise session details for the week are also text out every Sunday evening to ensure the week's activities are always efficiently run.



## Rearranging / cancelling sessions:

The flexible use of hours approach is also of great benefit when a service user needs to cancel a regular session. We do not like to unnecessarily charge for a missed session so when possible we will always attempt to reallocate the hours to an alternative time or day. We obviously need to ensure that the rearranged session is at the convenience of the staff member and that it does not disrupt the support of other service users. However, if the missed hours can easily be moved then we will always do so and the service user will not be charged for the cancelled session.

### A summary of our terms for cancelled sessions:

- **During the 6 week trial period we do not charge for any missed sessions.**

Once the support has officially commenced:

- We request as much notice as possible for the cancellation of a regular session (as defined in the service user's Session Timetable).
- It is always at the Service Manager's discretion as to whether the cancelled session hours can be reallocated or whether they need to be charged.
- If a service user cancels on the day of their regular session we will still need to charge.
- Cancelled session hours can only be rearranged to another time the same week or the following week.
- A session can only be cancelled / rearranged once. If the rearranged session is consequently cancelled then the original missed session will be charged.
- Only a single session can be potentially rearranged. We cannot reallocate, for example, a full week of missed sessions at short notice.
- Missed sessions that are not defined in the Support Programme or Session Timetable will not be charged. These are considered as optional or additional sessions and are not part of the Service Level Agreement.
- As sessions activities often vary in length, a minimum session time is stated in the Service Level Agreement for each of the service user's regular sessions. This is the amount of hours that would be charged if the session could not be rearranged.
- **To permit for holidays and pre-planned trips, aebal Leisure will allow for a total of 2 weeks of non-payable sessions per 6 month Service Level Agreement. These missed sessions will only be non-payable providing that 4 weeks' notice is given.**
- If a session is cancelled by aebal Leisure, the session is non-payable and will not be charged. In these circumstances we will again attempt to rearrange the session if convenient for all parties. Alternatively the hours can be saved for future weekend 'Groups' daytrips.

## Adverse weather policy:

We endeavour to provide sessions in all weather conditions and aebal staff members will make every effort to reach our clients. However, if aebal management deem the weather to be too hazardous or that the bad weather may affect the safety of our clients / staff members then this will be classed as "circumstances beyond our control" and result in a cancelled on the day session (as stated above), which will typically be charged.



aebal management will continue to monitor all weather conditions and advise accordingly. Any questions should be referred to the Service Manager / Service Director.

We hope such instances will be rare.

## **Invoicing:**

Our invoices are generated on the 1<sup>st</sup> day of each month and sent out by email or post. They include the exact monthly total of hours delivered from the previous month. For example, June's support will be invoiced on the 1<sup>st</sup> of July. Due to our flexible use of hours and the variant of when the days of the month fall, the invoice amounts will differ each month. For example, a service user may have a regular Monday session, however, in certain months there may be four Mondays and other months there may be five. As stated, we carefully monitor and record these variations to ensure each service user has sufficient funding to cover the invoiced amount each month. Each invoice also contains a breakdown of every session delivered including the start time and end time and how many hours were charged. This is to ensure there is a transparency to all our charges and to reduce the likelihood of discrepancies. Invoices should be paid by the 15<sup>th</sup> of the month and automated reminders will be sent out periodically.

For service users in receipt of a Direct Payment it should be noted that there is a 4 week payment cycle for DPs and therefore 13 payments will be received each year to cover our 12 monthly invoices. This results in one additional payment being received each year which we will again use flexibly by either providing additional sessions at the time of payment or we can account for it in the service user's regular sessions as stated in the Service Level Agreement.

For example, a Direct Payment of 9hrs per week of aebal Leisure support is allocated. This means a payment will be received every 4 weeks to cover 36hrs of aebal support (9hrs x 4 weeks). Our monthly invoices will include this 36hrs of support plus the one additional 4 week payment split up over 12 months. So in this particular example ( $36 / 12 = 3$ ) the service user would have an additional 3hrs a month of aebal sessions, totalling 39hrs. In summary, approximately 39hrs of aebal sessions would be delivered each month for someone in receipt of 4 week Direct Payment of 36hrs.

**We will always monitor Direct Payment funding to confirm the additional 4 week Direct Payment has been received by the service user before distributing hours in this way.**

## **Querying invoices:**

We always encourage the recipients of our invoices to query any discrepancies they may notice. Although there are huge social advantages with implementing a flexible use of hours, it does make the task of recording hours and managing funding a little more challenging! The method we use for recording hours is very efficient but, when our staff are typically delivering around 150hrs of randomly-timed, short, activity-focussed sessions each week, there is obviously potential for the occasional mistake. This is the reason we always include a full breakdown of all the session times on our invoices so that recipients are able to verify all the entries are correct.

Communication between all parties is key and aebal Leisure management are extremely approachable should there be any queries or concerns around an invoice amount. So please, feel free to get in touch!



## **Working hours and Bank Holidays:**

aebal Leisure support is available in the mornings, afternoons, evenings and at weekends. The support is about being as inclusive and mainstream as possible so session times are always defined by the activity. If there is a gig on a Monday night we will run a session from 8pm until Midnight. If there is a Car boot sale on a Sunday morning we will run a session from 6:30am – 9:30am. We support people to enrich their lives and reshape their community and believe this cannot be achieved by only running sessions from 9am – 5pm weekdays. We also view Bank Holidays as being no different for our service users than other days and Monday sessions will typically run as usual. The service closes for a week over Christmas each year.

