



COSLA

NATIONAL STRATEGY & GUIDANCE

Charges Applying to Social Care Support for people at home

2026/2027

DRAFT

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Section 1 – Purpose and High-Level Principles

- 1.1 The Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (COSLA) is a membership organisation for Local Government in Scotland. Since the introduction of the Community Care & Health (Scotland) Act 2002, COSLA has produced annual guidance which defines a set of principles to underpin the development of local charging policies for social care support for people at home. The Guidance is subject to ongoing revision as appropriate, on an annual basis or as policy develops. It is managed by the COSLA Charging Guidance Working Group. Any change to the guidance requires approval by the political leadership of COSLA.
- 1.2 The National Guidance is intended to assist Local Authorities and Integration Authorities to determine whether to charge a person for social care support at home, and in calculating how much - which is usually done through a financial assessment process. The Guidance describes a number of best practice steps which should be taken when developing local charging policy, taking into consideration the full range of legal, financial and policy drivers. Charging policies at both a national and local level should be accessible, transparent, fair and equitable, and developed from a human rights perspective.
- 1.3 The Scottish Government has committed to continue to work with COSLA to identify options for the removal of non-residential social care charges as part of wider work with partners on social care improvement. COSLA and Scottish Government have committed to this through the joint statement of intent¹ and will continue to work together alongside relevant stakeholders, including the COSLA Charging Working Group, to develop options for implementation. Local Authorities and Health and Social Care Partnerships, where charging is delegated to the Integration Authority, are involved with this process through the COSLA Non-Residential Charging Group. This will be subject to the relevant political agreement from COSLA Leaders and the Parliamentary and Budget process.
- 1.4 There is no legal 'duty' placed on Local Authorities and Integration Authorities to charge for non-residential social care. If local areas choose to develop and administer a charging policy this guidance has seven over-arching objectives to support local areas to:
 - Determine whether to charge a person for non-residential social care at home or in community, taking into consideration the full range of legal, financial and policy drivers;
 - Develop a policy that is fair, equitable, accessible and transparent for people who use support, their families and carers, and staff applying it;
 - Support local areas to work together to generate greater consistency across Scotland;
 - Ensure the personal, social and economic circumstances of individuals are given due regard in determining whether charges should apply, and the level of charges to prevent financial hardship;
 - Ensure that people who use services understand the reasons for charging and its contribution to supporting their social care;

¹ <https://www.gov.scot/publications/adult-social-care---independent-review-joint-statement-of-intent/>

- Ensure that charging policies at a national and local level are developed together with people who use services; and
- Ensure that the human rights of supported people and the financial implications of charging on the supported person's quality of life, in terms of both their standard of living and their social and economic participation within the community, are considered in the development of charging policy and its application in practice.

1.5 At the heart of this guidance lies a recognition that social care support is essential for many people to fulfil their human rights. The role of the Local Authority and Integration Authority is to create an enabling environment so that people who use social care support and their carers can fulfil their right to participate in society and are supported to live independently, with control, freedom, choice, and dignity. Self-directed Support (SDS), people's right to direct their own social care support, is the mechanism to deliver social care support in Scotland.

1.6 In developing this guidance, we promote a human rights-based approach, drawing on the PANEL² principles:

- **Participation** in the development of charging policies by the people who will be affected by them, using co-production methods in order to develop an honest dialogue about the rationale for charging and how it is implemented.
- **Accountability** for the charging policy – including decisions around whether or not to charge, public reporting, transparency, the contribution of income from charging to the range and quality of social care and support available to the local population, and the financial impact to existing users. Accountability also includes access to a process to appeal the charges.
- **Non-discrimination and equality** in the way that charges are determined and applied. This includes ensuring that charging policies have been subject to an Equality Impact Assessment. Charging policies should demonstrate that they have taken account of the circumstances of the people who are subject to it, including where a person may experience financial hardship or disability related expenditure.
- **Empowerment** of individuals to ensure that they are able to engage in the development of local charging policies and fulfil their human rights. To ensure individuals are fully aware of, and understand the rationale, for charges being applied and how they are calculated.
- **Legality** to ensure the full range of legally protected human rights are respected, protected and fulfilled in all decisions made. Where the person disagrees with the decision, they have the right to seek remedy through an effective complaint and appeal procedure.

² UN endorsed approach to human rights

Section 2 – Financial, Legislative and Policy Context

Financial Context

2.1 The Accounts Commission project a Local Government budget gap of £647 million in 2025/26, £528m for 2026/27 and £496m for 2027/28. This financial gap is in addition to the gap reported by Integration Authorities, which Health and Social Care Scotland have projected at £497.5m for 2025/26 across both partner organisations. Local Authorities and Health and Social Care Partnerships decide whether to use their legal powers to charge for social care support at home within an overall context of financial and demographic pressures. Local Government savings programmes have been complex and have become increasingly difficult as budgets have become more strained year-on-year. In 2025/26, agreed recurring savings across all Local Authorities totalled £192m. Nationally, since 2011, Local Government is estimated to have made savings in the region of £5bn. Income generation from charging is used to reinvest in non-residential social care support so people with an assessed need have access to the high quality and sustainable services they require.

Legislative Context for Charging

Social Work (Scotland) Act 1968 Section 87

2.2 The current legislative framework for charging includes services provided under the Social Work (Scotland) Act 1968 Section 87.

2.3 In terms of the guidance on charging set out in the Scottish Office Circular SWSG1/1997 and with regard to subsequent development of this COSLA guidance, councils have the power to charge for a range of social care support at home.

2.4 The Circular, together with the further Scottish Government Circular CCD3/2018³ amended for the extension of free personal and nursing care to those under 65 also sets out what cannot be charged for – this includes:

- Support for people who are subject to Compulsion Orders under the Criminal Procedure (Scotland) Act 2003
- Nursing Care and Personal Care. Annex B of the updated statutory guidance⁴ sets out the definition of personal care or support as defined by the Community Care and Health (Scotland) Act 2002 and amendment number 2 in 2018.
- Support for unpaid carers (e.g. a short break for the carer or for the supported person which benefits the carer)

2.5 Previous versions of the guidance have indicated that people who were subject to Community Care Orders should not be charged for the care they receive. Community Care Orders are no longer in use but a similar mechanism called Compulsory Treatment Orders introduced under the Mental Health (Care and Treatment) (Scotland) Act 2003 are in use.

The Social Care (Self-directed Support) (Scotland) Act 2013

³ https://www.sehd.scot.nhs.uk/publications/CC2018_03.pdf

⁴ https://www.sehd.scot.nhs.uk/publications/CC2018_03.pdf

- a specific adult carer support plan or a young carer statement to identify carers' needs and personal outcomes and set out how the carer will be supported including in a preventative way
- a requirement for Local Authorities to have an information and advice service for carers which provides information and advice on, amongst other things, emergency and future care planning, advocacy, income maximisation and carers' rights

2.13 The Carers (Waiving of Charges for Support) (Scotland) Regulations 2014 and the Self-directed Support (Direct Payments) (Scotland) Regulations 2014 require Local Authorities to waive charges in relation to support provided to carers. There are challenges where support may meet both the needs of the carer and the supported person. The Local Authority must decide whether it will provide:

- support to the cared-for person to meet their assessed needs, the indirect consequence of which is not so much that the carer's identified needs are met, but that the carer no longer has those needs; or
- support to the carer to meet the carer's identified needs, which could be through care or support to the cared-for person.

2.14 Statutory Guidance relating to this is at Chapter 3, Part 3 of the Scottish Government guidance on the Carers (Scotland) Act 2016⁸. The Scottish Government, COSLA and social care practitioners have worked together to develop a series of examples to help with interpretation of these rules⁹. Share Care Scotland have also produced examples to support this.¹⁰

The Care Reform (Scotland) Act

2.15 The Care Reform (Scotland) Bill became an Act on 22 July 2025. The Act will introduce several reforms to social care, social work and community health, including:

- Right to breaks for unpaid carers.
- Anne's law, enhanced care home visitation rights.
- An integrated health & social care record, information sharing and information standards.
- New procurement routes for the third sector.
- National Chief Social Work Adviser & National Social Work Agency.
- Continuity of care for persons with a disability.
- Timescales for assessments for persons with a terminal illness.
- Duty on relevant bodies to promote financial or other support take-up available to unpaid carers.
- Enable Scottish Ministers to amend Integration Principles in the Public Bodies (Joint Working) Act 2014.
- Report on projected care needs and the social care market.
- Ethical commissioning guidance, procurement strategies, and social care bargaining guidance.
- Independent advocacy standards, reporting and access.

⁸ <https://www.gov.scot/publications/carers-scotland-act-2016-statutory-guidance/pages/0/>

⁹ <https://www2.gov.scot/Topics/Health/Support-Social-Care/Unpaid-Carers/Implementation/Guidance>

¹⁰ <https://www.sharedcarescotland.org.uk/resources/carers-act-overview/waiving-of-charges/>

2.16 This guidance will be updated as these reforms are introduced to reflect any impact to charging

The Service Renewal Framework for Health & Social Care (SRF)

2.17 The Service Renewal Framework provides a blueprint for health and social care service reform in Scotland. It sets out high-level strategic policy intent for the coming decade by shifting the balance of care towards more preventative, community-based and person-led services; reducing inequalities, making care more accessible, equitable and digitally enabled. It also complements the Population Health Framework (PHF), setting out how health and social care services can contribute to prevention and early intervention.

2.18 The SRF sets out six major areas for change, which will deliver on the intentions behind these principles so that they become a reality. These are:

- Major Change 1: Prevention - Enhancing services that prevent disease, enable early detection and effectively manage long-term conditions.
- Major Change 2: Person-led - Delivering health and social care that is people-led and 'Value Based'.
- Major Change 3: Integration - Strengthening integration across the system.
- Major Change 4: Access - Improving access to services and treatments in the community.
- Major Change 5: Hospital Redesign - Redesigning our hospitals as we deliver more care within communities.
- Major Change 6: Digital - Delivering services which are accessible through digital technologies, with people and our workforce able to access and make use of the right information.

2.19 The joint **Population Health Framework**, co-designed by COSLA and Scottish Government, takes a preventative approach to population health over the next 10 years. It is focused on tackling the root causes of poor health and inequalities through action on the wider determinants of health, including social, economic and environmental factors. The Framework articulates that these determinants together bear a greater influence on population health outcomes than access to health and care services and sets out upstream action to improve access to, and quality of these determinants, including in areas such as housing, employability and early childhood development.

Transition from Child to Adult Services

2.20 Currently, children are not charged for any social care up to the point they transition from children's social work services to adult social work services, this can be any

point between their 16th and 18th birthdays if they are not looked after by Local Authorities.

- 2.21 Young people who have been looked after until their 16th birthday are entitled to support in order to smooth the transition to adulthood, in terms of duties in the Children (Scotland) Act 1995, as extended by the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014.
- 2.22 Specifically, “continuing care” is the right to the same accommodation and assistance that the young person was being provided with immediately before ceasing to be looked after.¹¹ This applies until age 21 unless the young person chooses to leave the accommodation before then.
- 2.23 In 2020, Scotland made a significant commitment known as "The Promise" following the Independent Care Review. Scotland's Promise to care experienced children and young people is that they will grow up loved, safe, and respected. The Promise includes support for care experienced young people transitioning into adulthood. The Promise does not mention non-residential charging and care experienced young people are not financially assessed for non-residential charges until they move into adult services.

Human Rights

- 2.24 Social care support protects people’s human rights by ensuring they are connected with, and able to contribute to, society, and are supported to live as independently as they wish to. This includes the right to a family life and for carers to have a break and a life beyond caring.
- 2.25 The UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) strengthens and contextualises these rights and recognises the role of community care in meeting them. Article 19 of the UNCRPD indicates that “disabled people have a right to live in the community, with the support they need and can make choices like other people do”.
- 2.26 All of the human rights protected by the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR), and those included in the Human Rights Act and in subsequent ratified Conventions, should be considered in decisions on whether or not to charge a person for their social care support and the development of local charging policies.
- 2.27 Local Authorities and Integration Authorities must not act in ways which are incompatible with the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) under section 6 of the Human Rights Act 1998. Many of the Articles of the ECHR are relevant to this Guidance but in particular Article 8 (the right to private and family life, including autonomy in decision making, the right to work and the right to live with dignity) and Article 14 (non-discrimination on a number of grounds, including “any other status”). These articles speak directly to the issues that connect to local charging policies for social care support, including portability of care, equality within and across jurisdictions, and issues around income maximisation. Human rights compatible outcomes should therefore underpin the development of local charging policies.

¹¹ <https://www.gov.scot/policies/looked-after-children/children-leaving-care/>

Equality Act 2010

2.28 The Equality Act 2010 places both a general duty and a specific duty on Local Authorities, both of which are relevant to the development of charging policies. The general duty requires Local Authorities have due regard to the need to:

- eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation,
- advance equality of opportunity,
- promote good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it

2.29 This duty relates to disability, age, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

2.30 As a result of the general duty, Local Authorities must consider how to promote equality and ensure that no group are put at a disadvantage by their charging policy. This should involve taking steps to ensure policies minimise any disadvantage experienced by any people of a protected characteristic, ensuring their specific needs are met, rights are upheld and encouraging participation in the development of relevant policies. The Equality Act 2010 also gives Scottish Ministers the power to impose specific duties on Local Authorities.

2.31 Equality Impact Assessments (EQIA) can help to identify whether there is a disproportionate impact of a policy on people of a protected characteristic/group compared to those outwith that group. EQIAs should be reviewed after charging changes have been made to ensure that they act as a 'live', evolving document and monitor any unintended consequences as a result of charging changes.

Devolved Social Security

2.32 The Scotland Act 2016 devolved, from the UK Parliament to the Scottish Parliament, legislative competence over disability benefits, industrial injuries, carer's benefits, benefits for maternity, funeral and heating expenses and Discretionary Housing Payments. As well as this, the Scottish Parliament can now legislate to top up benefits which remain reserved to the UK Parliament, and to create new social security benefits in any area except old age pensions or where there is a connection to a matter reserved to the UK Parliament (such as child support maintenance or reserved aspects of employment support).

2.33 The Social Security (Scotland) Act 2018 set out the Scottish Government's powers to administer benefits in these areas in accordance with regulations. The Scottish Government currently administers the following benefits using these powers: Best Start Grants, Best Start Foods, Carer's Allowance Supplement, Funeral Support Payment, Job Start Payment, the Young Carer Grant, the Scottish Child Payment Child Winter Heating Assistance and the Child Disability Payment.

2.34 The Scottish Government has rolled out Child Disability Payment, (CDP) and Adult Disability Payment (ADP), this will be followed by Carer Support Payment, (CSP) and Pension Age Disability Payment (PADP). The two adult disability benefits replace Personal Independence Payment (PIP) / Adult DLA and Attendance Allowance (AA). The Scottish Government is aiming complete case transfer by 2025. In order to facilitate a safe and secure case transfer, the eligibility criteria for CDP, ADP and PADP, and the rates of entitlement, are substantially the same as the DWP disability benefits that they will each replace. Taking this approach has still allowed for a

number of changes to be made to improve people's experience of applying for disability benefits. With each new form of Disability Assistance, the Scottish Government will legislate to ensure individuals in receipt of CDP, ADP or PADP will have access the same passported entitlements and income disregards as individuals with an equivalent award of DLA, PIP or AA.

- 2.35 The Scottish Government's Adult Disability Payment was rolled out nationally for new applications from 29th August 2022.
- 2.36 Carer Support Payment replaced Carer's Allowance in Scotland from autumn 2024. The Carer's Assistance (Carer Support Payment) (Scotland) Regulations 2023 ("the Carer's Support Payment Regulations") make consequential amendments to secondary legislation in connection with the introduction of Carer Support Payment. The amendments ensure that individuals who are entitled to Carer Support Payment have the same entitlements and disregards under that legislation as individuals who are entitled to Carer's Allowance payable under the Social Security Contributions and Benefits Act 1992.
- 2.37 Throughout this guidance the term 'Disability Assistance' is used to refer to CDP, ADP and PADP collectively.

Terminal Illness

- 2.38 The Scottish Government have introduced a definition of terminal illness for the purposes of determining entitlement to disability benefits¹². This means that for all devolved disability benefits (when Social Security Scotland begins delivery), whether a person is eligible will depend on the clinical judgement of a medical practitioner or registered nurse involved in the care or diagnosis of the individual (having paid regard to Chief Medical Officer [guidance](#) that the individual has a progressive disease that can be reasonably expected to cause the individual's death). Where this is the case, it is recommended that charges for social care are waived. This prognosis should be evidenced through a BASRiS form or a letter from the individual's General Practitioner or hospital consultant confirming the individual has already been awarded a BASRiS. This guidance should not change the way individuals are currently treated for the purpose of social care support charging and Local Authorities should continue to follow their internal processes to ensure individuals benefit.

The Verity House Agreement¹³

- 2.39 In June 2023 COSLA and the Scottish Government signed the Verity House Agreement, which outlines 3 shared priorities – tackling poverty, just transition to net zero and sustainable public services.
- 2.40 As referenced in Section 1 of this guidance the Scottish Government have committed to exploring an approach to ending charges for non-residential social care support within the lifetime of the current Parliament. Local Authorities and Health and Social Care Partnerships are engaged with this process through the relevant working groups and the COSLA Charging Working Group. This will be subject to the relevant political agreement from COSLA Leaders and the parliamentary and budget process.

¹² <https://www.gov.scot/publications/terminal-illness-disability-assistance-policy-position-paper/>

¹³ <https://www.gov.scot/news/a-new-deal-with-local-government/>

Section 3 – Developing Local Policies

3.1 Local Authorities and Integration Authorities should have regard to the following principles when developing and updating their local charging policies;

- Policies should be co-produced with the people who might be affected using the PANEL approach;
- Any additional charging income to improve the quality or scope of social care support services should be balanced against the impact on the quality of life for those who are charged;
- People who use social care support must understand the reasons for charging and its contribution to enabling the support they access;
- There should be transparency over how charges are calculated;
- Policies should define the financial decision-making processes that ensure the personal, social and economic circumstances of individuals are given due regard in determining whether charges should apply.

Co-production

3.2 The involvement of people in the planning of the support they use is a core principle in promoting equality and is at the heart of co-production. Being involved is not the same as being asked or consulted. It means people who use support and policy makers working in partnership right from the start. It allows for the trading of skills, information and expertise and assists in achieving mutual objectives.

3.3 Co-production engages people who use support as equal citizens: to help create or improve systems and structures, to better inform planning and decision-making processes, and to deliver better outcomes. In recognition of their role as 'equal and expert partners' local charging policies should also be developed in co-production with unpaid carers and their representative organisations.

3.4 Charging Policies should be reviewed on an annual basis by Local Authorities and Integration Authorities in line with changes to this this guidance and local good practice. The '[Planning With People: community engagement and participation guidance](#)'¹⁴ sets out further support to enable effective community engagement and co-production.

Transparency and Communication

3.5 It is important that people are given accurate and clear information about the charges that may apply for social care support, why they are being asked to pay and the financial assessment process. This information should be provided upfront to allow people to come to an informed view about their support. Local Authorities should also have robust and transparent appeals processes in place to enable people to challenge decisions.

3.6 Where the supported person has difficulty in paying the contribution due to their financial circumstances, it is recommended that Local Authorities use their powers to abate or waive charges on a case-by-case basis. It is important, within this context,

¹⁴ <https://www.gov.scot/publications/planning-people/>

that councils take a holistic approach and consider the full impact of all prospective combined charges on the well-being and independence of the supported person. Care should be taken to ensure that where charging still relates to services that those who use more than one type of service are not unduly disadvantaged i.e., they are not being asked to contribute an unreasonable amount in total.

- 3.7 Aligned to this, it is recommended that all Local Authorities and Integration Authorities should be proactive in promoting benefit take up for people who use social care support. Doing this would not only be beneficial to the individual but could contribute to their revenue and their local economy. Where possible, dedicated staff should be employed to promote and assist with Income Maximisation processes for people who use support. Local Authorities should ensure that the benefit entitlement of supported people is reviewed on a regular basis.
- 3.8 To ensure transparency and accessibility, it will be incumbent on Local Authorities and Integration Authorities to provide plain English explanations of the charges for social care support, both in policy terms and for billing purposes. Such information should be readily available and provided in a variety of accessible formats, including translations into minority languages, where appropriate. It would be good practice to secure a Crystal Mark for this information.

A standard format for charging information is seen as an essential element to a consistent and transparent approach to charging for social care support and there is broad agreement that formats should be accessible to the person requiring the information.

- 3.9 As an aid to greater consistency, templates for the presentation of charging information and other elements are included at Appendix 1. Councils should use a variety of media to promote this information, including the council website. In addition, links to the relevant parts will be made from the COSLA website.

Councils should ensure that full information on all non-residential charges and charging policies, including providing information in accessible formats are easily available on their website or on request.

Review of charging policy

- 3.10 When making significant changes to local policy and charges it is important to consider the impact on people who are being supported. The following checklist was included in previous charging guidance to ensure any transition is fair and transparent:

- A desktop analysis should be undertaken to determine the impact of changes to the policy on both individuals and income to the authority as a whole;
- Any new policy should be co-produced with citizens and communities of interest;
- Equality impact assessments should be reviewed annually to ensure equality legislation is met. Eg if there is a plan to change a charge the EQIA should be reviewed.
- Consideration should be given to transitional arrangements if the amount an individual is charged changes significantly. Any transitional protection should

compare the amount that an individual paid under the previous charging policy against the amount he or she is required to pay under the new arrangements.

- Transitional protection should have a clear timeframe which should apply equally to all, be transparent and recorded in a policy.

3.11 Consultation with stakeholders on any policy change is essential. Any consultation document would need to help people to understand why these changes are being introduced and how it will impact them.

Balancing Income against Impact

3.12 In coming to a view about the quantum of resource to be raised through charges, it is important to have a sense of the opportunity cost associated with different policy options. For example, a decision to completely eliminate charges would deliver maximum relief to those who would otherwise have been charged but will restrict the quality or range of social care support that might have been provided to the general population in need of social care. On the other hand, a charging regime that focuses solely on raising additional income could place at risk the overall well-being of those who are asked to pay the charges and their families and carers. This can, in turn, place an additional burden on other public sector services such as health services, social work and the police.

Section 4 – Consistency

- 4.1 As set out in section 1 of this guidance, the purpose of developing a national guidance document is to improve the consistency of local charging policies across Scotland. However, legitimate variation according to local need and democratically determined priorities are important levers to ensure income can be reinvested into providing high quality social care support.
- 4.2 This does mean that there are variations which may impact the outcome of a financial assessment. Local Authorities and Integration Authorities should seek to embed accountability for their charging policy in local democratic decision making and in taking a human rights-based approach, recognising that tensions will have to be managed within this context. Ensuring that local charging policies are **accessible, transparent** and **publicly available** is vital to ensure people can understand these local variations.

Portability of Care

- 4.3 Portability of care is a principle that has been strongly advocated by a number of stakeholders, including Independent Living in Scotland. Submissions to the Reform of Adult Social Care discussion paper¹⁵ also highlighted that this can be an issue in some areas. A human rights-based approach requires that Local Authorities engage with this matter. This guidance therefore recommends that any person using social care support who is looking to move between areas in Scotland should be entitled to a description of any charges which would apply to them *as an individual* in advance of the move and any material differences in the nature of the support provided by the relevant authorities. The current and receiving Local Authority should work together to facilitate this, using the Ordinary Residence Guidance¹⁶ to support this process.

COSLA Charging Guidance Surveys and Local Financial Returns (LFR) 3

- 4.4 COSLA endeavours to undertake an annual survey of councils, which collects information on charging for social care support at home to support local areas when they are updating their charging policy.
- 4.5 The Scottish Government Local Financial Returns (LFR) 3 is another key source of information on income from charging. The LFR information is used to monitor Local Authority expenditure for policy purposes and of specific interests is LFR3 which leads with social work expenditure.
- 4.6 The survey was significantly updated for 2025/26. Improvements to the survey have focused on greater clarity, usability and consistency to support the dual aims of more robust benchmarking and helping to quantify the income raised through charging for non-residential care. Service definitions in the survey are now aligned with those used for the Scottish Government's Local Financial Return 03 (LFR03). A Self-Assessment module has been included in the survey to enable councils to assess their alignment with this guidance. We intend for the improvement of this survey to be an iterative

¹⁵ <https://www.gov.scot/publications/summary-report-discussion-paper-responses-analysis-responses-joint-discussion-paper-scottish-government-cosla-building-national-programme-support-adult-social-care-reform/pages/4/>

¹⁶ <https://www2.gov.scot/Topics/Health/Support-Social-Care/Financial-Help/OrdinaryResidence>

process and anticipate a reduced administrative burden in future years as the survey will work on changes rather than requiring a full re-submission

Section 5 – Paying towards Care and Support

Paying towards an individual budget

- 5.1 Self-directed Support (SDS) is the mainstream approach to social care in Scotland. It allows people who are eligible for social care support, their families and carers to make informed choices about what their support looks like and how it is delivered. Further information can be found in the Statutory Guidance to accompany the Social Care (Self-directed Support) (Scotland) Act 2013.¹⁷
- 5.2 Where a person has been assessed as eligible for social care support and their Individual Budget has been calculated, the Local Authority or Integration Authority may apply a charge for some of the elements of the support provision. This would not include any elements of the support which would be non-chargeable as set out in section 2.4 of the guidance.
- 5.3 Currently across Local Authorities there are 2 different methods used for financially assessing a person's contribution to the overall cost of the service they are receiving. The first is based on the cost and time the services are delivered, known as hourly rate model. While the other is based on the overall cost of the chargeable services, contribution-based charging policy, people are now contributing towards their individual budget as opposed to paying a charge per service. A standard approach across the 4 self-directed support options is usually applied, although there may be services that sit out with this policy, for example, telecare equipment or community alarms.
- 5.4 The Chartered Institute of Public Finance & Accountancy (CIPFA) have produced guidance¹⁸ intended for use by any staff with responsibility for the financial management of SDS. The guidance relates principally to council objectives and seeks to support and inform staff undertaking financial management duties so that social care outcomes, both at a personal and a local population level, are achieved.

Paying towards a non-residential care service

- 5.5 Not all Local Authority and Integration Authorities have changed their charging policy to calculate the charges based on the individual budget. Many areas will apply a charge for a particular service and not an individual budget. Continuing to apply a charge per service rather than transitioning to a contributions model may be limiting in relation to creative Self-Directed Support options as it is predicated on retrospectively applying traditional charging methods. The COSLA Charging Group recommend that Authorities consider this in the development of their local charging policy to ensure they are compatible with Self Directed Support principles and ethos

Calculating the charge

- 5.6 Regardless of the mechanism to calculate the charge, the amount that a person pays towards their social care support should be determined by completing a financial assessment to determine available income as set out in section 6 of this guidance

¹⁷ <https://www.sdsscotland.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/Statutory-Guidance.pdf>

¹⁸ <http://www.cipfa.org/members/regions/scotland/news/guidance-notes-on-self-directed-support>

unless it is a flat rate charge for the service (which is not covered by the financial assessment).

Collecting the Care and Support Charge for Option 1 and 2

- 5.7 The current position set out in the *Statutory Guidance to Accompany the Social Care (Self-directed Support) (Scotland) Act 2013*¹⁹ states that the authority can arrange for the direct payment to be paid in instalments or in a lump sum payment. Where a person is eligible for a charge towards their support, the direct payment can be made on a “net” or a “gross” basis, i.e. the charge can be removed prior to the provision of the monthly direct payment or following the provision of the monthly payment. The supported person may request the payment be made gross. In this circumstance, the request should be given full consideration, taking into account the direct payment user’s reasons and circumstances behind this request prior to a decision being made. If the authority decides to pay the direct payment gross it will pay the relevant amount to the direct payment user and the direct payment user will pay the required contribution. If the authority refuses to pay direct payments on a gross basis they should inform the supported person as to the reasons why.
- 5.8 Local Authorities report benefits from applying a net personal budget approach because it supports clearer communication with the adult about their contribution, strengthens the role of the care agency in collecting agreed charges, and reduces later reconciliation activity. This aligns with the principles within the National Care Home Contract, where client contributions are integrated into the overall funding arrangement. Updating COSLA charging guidance to mirror this model would help create a more consistent and predictable process for adults, providers, and partnerships, and would support a once-for-Scotland approach rather than a series of local variations.

¹⁹ <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/0044/00446933.pdf>

Section 6 – Financial Assessment Guidance

6.1 This section details guidance on how the amount a person pays towards their social care support at home should be calculated. It should be used to develop local charging policies and aims to improve consistency across Scotland. This will also be of significant interest to a wider audience of stakeholder organisations and the general public who may wish to contact a local independent advocacy service for support.

Charging Thresholds

6.2 A person who has income below the charging threshold will not pay towards their social care support if they have been assessed as eligible. This threshold ensures a person retains a level of income to meet their daily living expenses.

DWP Rates

6.3 At the moment, and in the absence of any other suitable national index, the **charging threshold** is linked to rates set by the UK Government Department for Work and Pensions. These are rates of benefit which provide a top up of weekly income to a **guaranteed minimum amount** and are set out below

Income Support - Personal Allowance	2026/2027 (weekly)
Single Person	95.55
Couple	150.15

Disability Premium	2026/2027 (weekly)
Single Person	44.85
Couple	64.00

Pension Credit - Guarantee Credit	2026/2027 (weekly)
Single Person	238.00
Couple	363.25

Figures from [Benefit and pension rates 2026 to 2027 Gov.uk](#)

Buffer

6.4 A buffer, endorsed by the Scottish Government is applied to these rates to recognise that not all of a persons income should be taken into account when calculating charges for people on low incomes or who may incur additional living costs due to their impairment or to support frailty. This buffer is currently set at **25%** (see fig 6.2 for an illustration of how the maximum charge is reached).

6.5 The **charging threshold** is worked out by adding the buffer (25%) to the appropriate DWP rate(s) for groups of people as set out in the following tables (*all thresholds are rounded up).

6.6 For people below state pension qualifying age, the **Income Support Personal Allowance** and the **Disability Premium** are added together with the buffer added to the sum of these two rates as shown below.

	Income Support - Personal Allowance	Disability Premium	Buffer 25%	Charging Threshold* (weekly)
Single Person	95.55	44.85	35.10	176
Couple	150.15	64.00	53.54	268

6.7 For people of state pension qualifying age or above, the **Pension Credit Guarantee** is used as the basis for the charging threshold calculation with the buffer added as shown below (whilst at this time there is no change to the charging guidance on these age thresholds councils may wish to be aware of the information on the DWP alignment of pension ages set out at Annex B).

	Pension Credit - Guarantee Credit	Buffer 25%	Charging Threshold* (weekly)
Single Person	238.00	59.5	298
Couple	363.25	90.81	455

6.8 It is recommended that the charge thresholds be updated on an annual basis, using the approach outlined in the above paragraphs.

6.9 Earlier guidance recommended that Local Authorities should specify different rates for persons under and over 60; this was based on previous DWP Guidance. However, councils may now wish to give consideration to this in the context of the Equality Act 2010²⁰ and the on-going DWP alignment of state pension qualifying age for men and women (Annex B).

Income

6.10 This describes all income which needs to be taken into account to establish the income level for comparison with the charging threshold. Local Authorities and Integration Authorities should consider adopting a common approach to the treatment of income (see fig 6.1. for an illustration of the calculation process).

Income from all sources should be considered including net earnings and all social security benefits with the exception of the mobility component of the Disability Living Allowance/Personal Independence Payment or Disability Assistance²¹.

6.11 War Disablement Pension and compensation payments made through the Armed Forces Compensation Scheme should be disregarded from the financial assessment

²⁰ The Equality Act (2010) includes powers to ban discrimination against older people in the provision of goods, facilities, and services. However, provisions that benefit older people, such as free bus passes, are still allowed. Within this context, it may be that preferential thresholds for people over 60 will continue to be lawful.

²¹ <https://www.gov.scot/policies/social-security/benefits-disabled-people-ill-health/>

for social care support at home. In addition, there may also be local circumstances, where individual Local Authorities want to make local policy decisions to exclude or disregard other sources of income to reflect local needs. Examples include disregarding gallantry awards and disability premiums. **The use of such discretion is not limited by this guidance.**

- 6.12 The threshold figures should be **net** of housing and council tax costs (if applicable). Housing costs will include rent and mortgage interest payments and costs for Council Tax should also be deducted. Local Authorities and Integration Authorities may wish to consider including in the disregard water and sewerage costs and household insurance premiums as other housing costs.

Case law suggests that where a Local Authority does not provide 'night time' support, it is inappropriate to have regard to the higher rate of Disability Living Allowance (DLA) or Attendance Allowance (AA) in the financial assessment (R v. Coventry City Council, November 2000). In these circumstances only the middle rate for DLA and the lower rate for AA should be taken into account.

Similarly, for people who receive the enhanced rate of Personal Independence Payment or Disability Assistance and who do not receive 'night time' support, it is recommended that in these circumstances only the standard rate should be taken into account.

Earnings

- 6.13 Where a supported person or their partner is in receipt of earned income when assessing chargeable income, Local Authorities and Integration Authorities should only take account of net earnings. In addition, they should also apply minimum earnings disregard of at least £20.

Independent Living Fund

- 6.14 The Independent Living Fund Scotland administers funding for disabled people. This funding is additional to what statutory authorities (Local Authorities, Health and Social Care Partnerships (HSCPs), provide and ensures that disabled people can purchase additional social care support to enable them to live independently in their communities.
- 6.15 The original Fund established in 1988 (otherwise known as 'Group 1') was initially temporarily closed in 1993. Two successor Funds were established. The Independent Living (Extension) Fund continued to administer payments to the users of the original Fund. The Independent Living (1993) Fund (known as 'Group 2') was open to new applications, but on a very different basis. The UK ILF closed to new applications in 2010 and then closed completely in 2015.
- 6.16 Payments from the Independent Living Fund Scotland (ILF) should be disregarded in a financial assessment. ILF Scotland have produced guidance on how they calculate a person's contribution towards ILF.
- 6.17 The Independent Living Fund Scotland reviewed ILF Policy 4 which determines the level of financial contribution towards the cost of ILF. To ensure that ILF award holders

benefit from this change in policy it is recommended that social care support charges are not increased in response to any reduction from 1st June 2021 onwards.

6.18 In April 2024, the Independent Living Fund re-opened to new applicants in Scotland and a Co-Production Working Group has been working to develop the policies for the funds reopening. The Fund re-opened with a maximum award of £330 per week. ILF made a decision that no charging would be applied to new applicants.

Partners

6.19 Where one member of a couple is in receipt of social care support at home, most Scottish Local Authorities take account of the joint income and capital in the financial assessment. The basis for charging for non-residential care charges is S87 of the Social Work (Scotland) Act 1968.

6.20 COSLA has secured opinion from Senior Legal Counsel on this matter as follows; *"it is only the 'means' of the disabled person that can be taken into account. However, the means of the disabled person could include an estimate of the value of the benefit provided by the partner in supporting the disabled person; i.e. the amount that is paid in respect of the disabled person's food; share of housing costs; payment of normal bills etc. on behalf of the disabled person."*

6.21 To secure further clarification the Society of Local Authority Lawyers & Administrators in Scotland (SOLAR) agree that ". . . whilst it is right that the 'means' of the person receiving care services should be taken into account when determining their contribution toward the cost of those services, it is not right to *routinely include all* of a partners financial resources/income as part of those means; although it may be appropriate to include a proportion of that resource.

6.22 Local Authorities and Integration Authorities should determine what is a reasonable and proportionate value of any such benefit either on a case by case basis or by setting a reasonable flat rate for all. In light of the legal opinion referred to here, it is important that consideration is given to the proportion of a partner's income or capital that can be taken into account in the financial assessment. The table below sets out possible options for the treatment of income and capital.

Ownership of income/capital	Treatment of Income/capital
Solely owned by Individual	Taken into account subject to normal disregards
Solely owned by Partner	Should not routinely be considered as part of financial assessment. See paragraph 6.16 – 6.19 above. However, the Local Authority should look at this on a case-by-case basis.
Jointly owned	Normally the individual is considered to be in possession of an equal share of any joint financial resources.
Social security benefits paid to one member of a couple at couples'	It would be appropriate to consider and determine what proportion of such income

rates, for example, pension credit, income support etc.)

is “reasonable” to consider as part of the individual’s means.

Compensation Payments

6.23 Whilst Local Authorities’ charging policies may currently follow DWP guidance in relation to capital, for the purposes of compensation payments (including compensation payments held in Trust) it is recommended that Local Authorities should establish the breakdown of any compensation award and consider whether some elements of compensation payments should be included when assessing a supported person’s ability to pay a charge. This may include compensation paid to address future care needs. Whether compensation payments should be included in assessing a person’s ability to pay should be determined on a case-by-case basis, depending on the settlement information that relates to future care needs, and where necessary informed by relevant legal input.

Discretionary Payments

6.24 There are a number of discretionary capital payments that should be disregarded from the assessment of a person’s capital. Annex C contains a full list of Potential Disregarded Benefits/Income and this includes:

- Statutory Redress Scheme and Advance Payment Scheme– Survivors of Historical Child Abuse²²
- Future Pathways – Discretionary Fund
- Thalidomide Trust
- Child Disability Payment (CDP) and Short-Term Assistance (STA)
- Scottish Infected Blood Scheme (SIBSS) (and equivalent UK schemes e.g. England Infected Blood Support Scheme)
- Victims Payment Regulations 2020
- Redress Board (Northern Ireland)
- Payment Scheme for Former British Child Migrants
- Windrush Compensation Scheme²³
- UK Energy Bills Support Scheme
- Homes for Ukraine Payments
- Infected Blood Compensation

6.25 Disregarding these capital payments will ensure that the person receiving the payments receives the full benefit of the capital payments and they are not used to pay for social care support.

Dependent Children

6.26 It is recommended that income derived from all benefits paid for, or on behalf of, a dependent child should be disregarded.

Capital & Tariff Income

6.27 Capital can be considered as a source of income, as such, councils may choose to include income based on capital held by the supported person. In calculating the income a person receives from capital they own, it is recommended that councils

²² <https://www.gov.scot/policies/child-protection/supporting-child-abuse-survivors/>

²³ <https://www.gov.uk/apply-windrush-compensation-scheme>

adopt the same approach as that used by the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) for means testing income-based benefits (see table below). However, there can be no upper capital limit at which people would be refused support, as the provision of social care support at home will always be based legally on need rather than the ability to pay. If the adult has income/capital/resources above £16k then the DWP would assess this person as being ineligible for welfare payments. Local Authorities should align with this (as per the illustration below) and treat this adult as a self-funder/max charge case while taking account of agreed disregards.

	Disregard Capital Below	Weekly Tariff Income
Below state pension qualifying age	£6,000	£1 per £250 ⁽¹⁾
State pension qualifying age or above	£10,000	£1 per £500 ⁽¹⁾

⁽¹⁾Some councils may interpret this as 'part thereof'.

6.28 The approach set out above disregards income received against capital held up to a level of £6,000 for people below state pension qualifying age, or £10,000 for people of state pension qualifying age or above. For any capital held above those levels, a weekly income is assumed, and this is added as income in the financial assessment, as per the rates set out in the table.

6.29 It should be noted that where a supported person has capital in excess of the amount to be disregarded and is in receipt of Income Support, there will be no requirement to calculate the capital tariff contribution as this exercise will have been carried out by the Department of Work & Pensions (DWP) with an appropriate adjustment to the amount of Income Support paid to the supported person.

Only available capital shall be taken into account. This precludes taking into account the value of the supported person's home in charging for social care support at home.

6.30 Capital income tariff does not take into account the interest received on cash held in saving accounts. The savings themselves and any interest received are included in the overall total of capital assets held at the time that the financial assessment is carried out. Capital tariff rates seek to take all this into consideration by establishing a weekly income.

6.31 The value of a person's home that they occupy is not counted as capital; neither are any business assets or money held in aids and adaptations, but any weekly income received from them is counted. For example, if part of a person's home is rented out some of the rent received as weekly income is counted.

Capital Income: The cash increase in the value of a capital asset (investment or real estate) that gives it a higher worth than the purchase price. The gain is not realised until the asset is sold. A capital gain may be 'short term' (one year or less) or 'long term' (more than one year).

Tapers

6.32 The previous section deals with setting a level of income below which a person is not required to pay toward the cost of the support they receive. So essentially it determines whether or not a contribution is needed.

If a person's income is of sufficient level for a charge or contribution to be required, the amount the person pays will be determined by individual Local Authorities and Integration Authorities.

6.33 A percentage taper will be applied to the chargeable income to calculate how much a person will pay. A person's contribution should not exceed the cost of providing the support.

6.34 It is for each local area to agree the percentage of excess income which can be required as a maximum contribution. This could range from 0% up to any higher percentage of the excess income which can be justified by the Local Authority. Setting the percentage taper will be influenced by a number of factors, not least, the requirement to raise income to maintain good quality support.

Single Person - Below state pension qualifying age			Maximum Contribution (£) % determined by council							
Weekly Income (£)	Charging Threshold (£)	Excess Income (£)	30%	40%	50%	60%	70%	80%	90%	100%
100	176	-76	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
125	176	-51	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
150	176	--26	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
175	176	-1	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
200	176	24	7.20	9.60	12.00	14.40	16.80	19.20	21.60	24.00
225	176	49.00	14.70	19.60	24.50	29.40	34.30	39.20	44.10	49.00
250	176	74	22.20	29.60	37.00	44.40	51.80	59.20	66.60	74.00

Single Person - State pension qualifying age or above			Maximum Contribution (£) % determined by council							
Weekly Income (£)	Charging Threshold (£)	Excess Income (£)	30%	40%	50%	60%	70%	80%	90%	100%
175	298	-123	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
200	298	--98	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
250	298	-48	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
275	298	-23	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
300	298	2	00.60	00.80	1.00	1.20	1.40	1.60	1.80	2.00
325	298	27	8.10	10.80	13.50	16.20	18.90	21.60	24.30	27.00

It is recommended that authorities make a number of calculations based on alternative considerations of assessed income (known as a "better off" calculation) to ensure that those people who use support who have higher incomes, who require low levels of support, are not financially disadvantaged through the operation of an income-based charge.

Disability Related Expenditure

6.35 The Social Work (Scotland) Act provides the legal basis for charging for social care support at home. Under s87 of the Act charges must be both “reasonable and practicable” for an individual to pay. Understanding the associated additional daily living costs of living with an illness or an impairment is essential to ensure charging levels meet this test.

6.36 Disability Related Expenditure (DRE) are extra costs that are required by disabled people compared to non-disabled people, to enable them to live as independently as possible.

6.37 Examples of DRE could include²⁴:

Equipment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Certain medication and health-related purchases (including creams, pressure relief pads, etc) • Incontinence pads/goods • Personal Protective Equipment costs • Chargeable aids and adaptations (which are not provided by local equipment services) • Equipment for monitoring and communication (including smartphone/tablets) • Accessible vehicle costs
Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Healthcare (massage/physio/osteopath/acupuncture/chiropractor treatments, etc) • Gardening, cleaning, online shopping delivery fees – if you cannot go to the shops because of a disability • Taxis if public transport is inaccessible • Internet connectivity – if needed for wellbeing, monitoring or for disability aids to connect • Subscriptions such as personal alarm, app subscriptions • Laundry collection and delivery/service washes.
Substitutions:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ready meals vs ingredients to cook with • Washed and chopped vegetables etc • Specially adapted clothing/shoes.
Additional Household Costs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Laundry (extra washes due to incontinence or specialist washing powder) • Heating – if someone’s condition requires an above average temperature maintained in the home for example.

6.38 Failure to take Disability Related Expenditure (DRE) into account as part of the financial assessment could result in charging levels which cause financial hardship

²⁴ Examples of DRE taken from <https://www.carersuk.org/help-and-advice/financial-support/benefits-if-you-are-disabled-ill-or-injured/disability-related-expenses/#DRE>

and undermine the right of people living with an illness or impairment to live independently.

- 6.39 To ensure the extra costs of being disabled are taken into account by charging policies, Local Authorities should be proactive in considering further disregard of income where additional expenditure is incurred by a supported person as a result of living as a disabled person.
- 6.40 While it is difficult to determine set costs that should be taken into account as these will vary on a person-by-person basis, financial assessments should include sufficient questions and space for people using services to provide evidence on DRE. Costs need to be identified within the social work assessment to be included in the later financial assessment.
- 6.41 An alternative to people being required to submit their DRE every year with their financial assessment is for Local Authorities to apply automatic disability-related expenditure disregards for Adult Disability Payment, Attendance Allowance or Pension Age Disability Payment. An example of a DRE factsheet is included in Annex E.

Every effort should be made to ensure that people completing financial assessments understand what Disability Related Expenditure is, what expenditure can be included, what is excluded and what evidence of this expenditure is required, thereby reducing the need for people using services to appeal charging decisions.

An alternative approach to requiring people to annually submit their DRE expenditure could be an automatic disability related disregard applied for people in receipt of Adult Disability Payment, Attendance Allowance or Pension Age Disability Payment.

Financial Hardship

- 6.42 Where a supported person has difficulty in meeting the approved charges due to their financial circumstances, it is recommended that Local Authorities and Integration Authorities use their powers to abate or waive charges on a case-by-case basis. This information should be publicly available.

It is unlikely that charging policies will be able to make provision for the full range of personal circumstances which may impact a person. This means that councils should exercise local discretionary powers to apply flexibility in cases deemed appropriate. It is neither necessary nor desirable to issue guidance on how these powers would be applied as such guidance would remove discretion and impose prescription. Keeping a record of these and whether they are accepted or rejected would be good practice.

- 6.43 In designing charging policies, councils should give consideration to the impact of such policies on the well-being of unpaid carers, many of whom may experience hardship.

6.44 Given the current cost of living crisis councils may also wish to give consideration to pressures facing people who use social care support within their consideration of financial hardship.

Flat Rate Charges

6.45 A number of local areas apply flat rate charges to services that do not require an assessment of eligibility such as community alarms or telecare. As highlighted above The Social Work (Scotland) Act provides the legal basis for charging for social care support at home. Under s87 of the Act charges must be both “reasonable and practicable” for an individual to pay. Consideration should be given to financial hardship caused by the application of flat rate charges and the process identified above should be followed.

6.46 The application of flat rate charges to meal costs would not routinely be considered under this process as meal costs would be covered by the application of the charging thresholds in a financial assessment process.

6.47 Flat rate charges applied to residential respite would normally follow Charging for Residential Accommodation Guidance (CRAG) section 3²⁵ if the respite has been assessed as being for the adult in need. However, if it has been assessed for carers’ needs, then it would be free.

Terminal Illness

6.48 The Scottish Government have introduced a new definition of terminal illness for the purposes of determining entitlement to disability benefits. This means that for all devolved disability benefits (when Social Security Scotland begins delivery) whether a person is eligible will depend on the clinical judgement of a medical practitioner (having paid regard to Chief Medical Officer [guidance](#) that the individual has a progressive disease that can be reasonable expected to cause the individual’s death). **See Section 2.30 of this document for further advice on the treatment of this guidance**

6.49 In addition, DWP have updated their ‘Special Rules for Terminal Illness’ for reserved benefits. These are now referred to as ‘Special Rules for End of Life’ with the rules now applying to individuals who are likely within the last 12 months of their life. The intent of this change is to align with the current NHS/GMC definition of ‘end of life’ which states that ‘patients are approaching the end of life when they are likely to die within the next 12 months. The Special Rules state that an individual with an estimated prognosis of less than 6 months to live should use the DS1500 form, and individuals with an estimated prognosis of 6 to 12 months to live use the new SR1 form. It is recommended that, where an individual presents with either a DS1500 or a SR1, charges should be waived.

Leaving Hospital

6.50 Older people leaving hospital who are assessed as requiring new, intermediate or additional reablement services at home should receive this free, for a period of up to 42 days; if they are aged 65 or over on the day of discharge and have been in NHS in-patient care for more than one day (24 hours) for treatment, assessment or rehabilitation, or had surgery as an NHS day case.

²⁵ https://www.sehd.scot.nhs.uk/publications/CC2019_03.pdf

6.51 Relief from charging should not apply to discharges following admission on a regular or frequent basis as part of the person's on-going care arrangements. This would cover, for example, admissions for respite care or for on-going but episodic treatment. After 42 days Local Authorities and Integration Authorities should revert to normal charging policy.

Only new, intermediate or additional support provided after a person comes out of hospital will be free for a limited period. Services that were in place pre-admission and continue after discharge will continue to be chargeable.

This recommendation was set within the context of the Scottish Executive Circular No. CCD 2/2001 "Free Home Care for Older People Leaving Hospital".

Collection of charges through third party suppliers

- 6.52 The collection of charges is the responsibility of Local Authorities. Some areas pay social care providers net of the individual's charge and ask the providers to collect any charge directly from the individual. It should be recognised that where this is the case an additional administrative burden and financial risk have been placed on the provider, and this should be reflected in the contract value by the Local Authority.
- 6.53 All potential risks to individuals who may be more vulnerable, because of their age, illness or impairment, must be considered before any such agreement is put in place. Clear, fair and proportionate processes should be in place for recovering the shortfall when a provider is unsuccessful in collecting charges from an individual. The person's capacity to consent to and manage such arrangements safely must also be taken into account.
- 6.54 Consideration should also be given to the impact for the social care provider collecting this charge on the care and support relationship. Any such arrangement should be considered on a case-by-case basis and should only be made with the agreement of the individual.
- 6.55 Similarly, Local Authorities which enter into contractual arrangements requiring a third party provider to collect payment of charges must carry out an effective risk assessment to ensure that all payment options offered by suppliers have sufficient safeguards to properly evidence payments made by individuals.

Figure 6.1: Supported Person's Income / Contribution Calculation Process

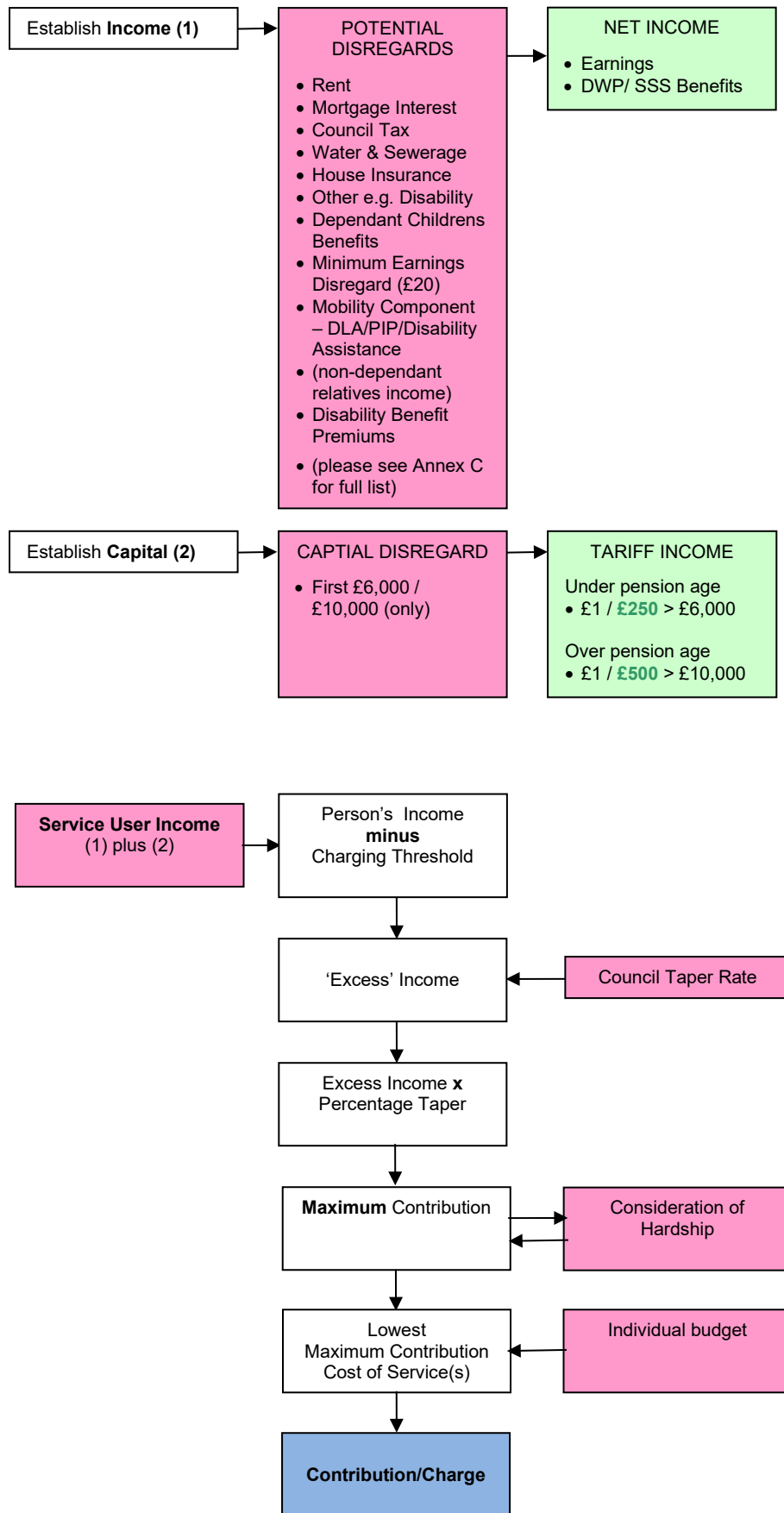
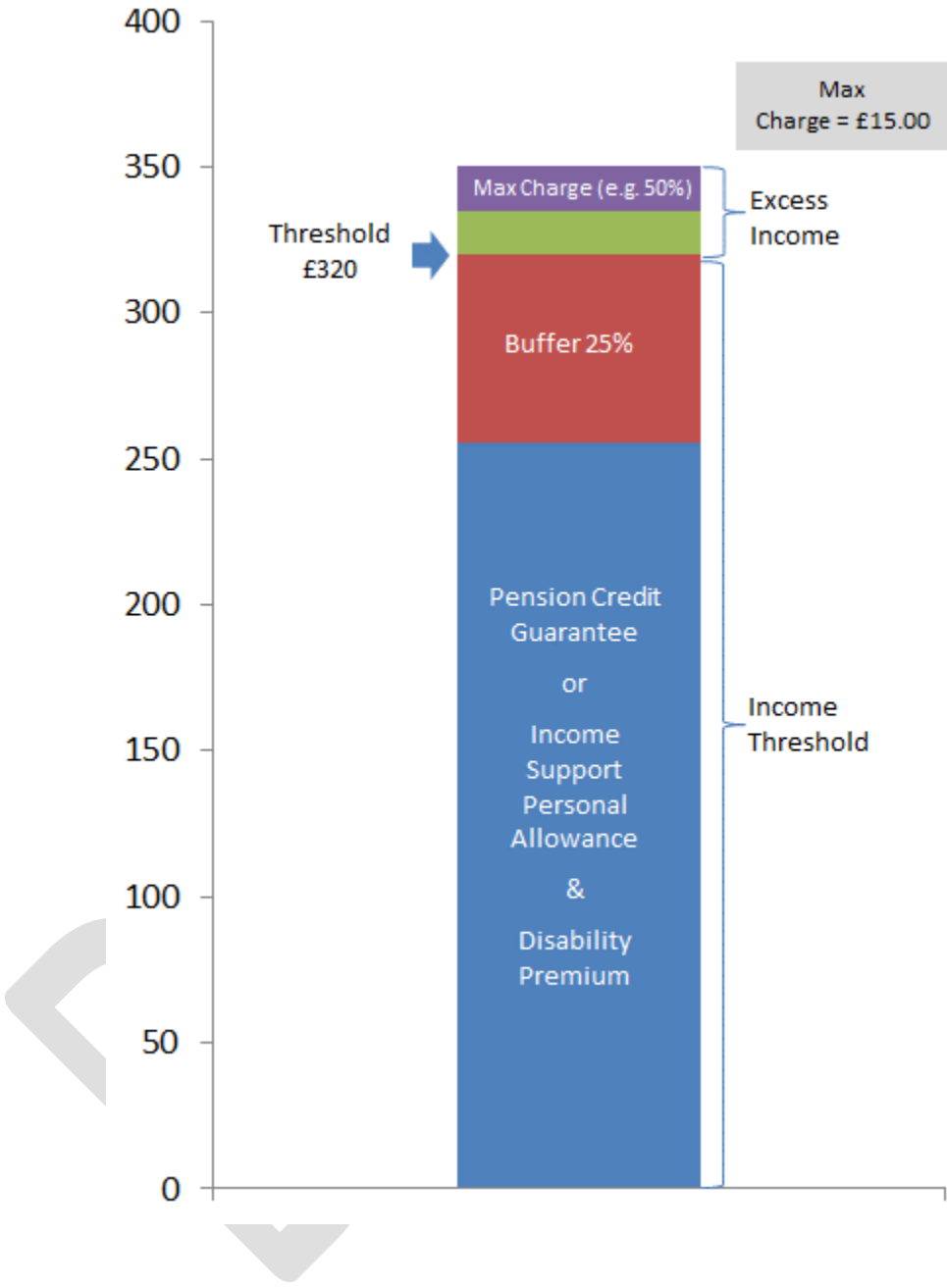


Figure 6.2 : Maximum Charge – Illustration
 (Example – Couple of state pension qualifying age or above)
 Based on weekly income of £350



Annex A – Local Charges Information Template

TEMPLATE FOR PUBLIC INFORMATION – CHARGING FOR SOCIAL CARE SUPPORT

(This template provides examples of the types of information local policies might include)

<p>Information on Charging for Social Care Support in your Home</p>	<p><area> wants to help people live at home independently, safely and for as long as possible. To help us to continue to provide support to people with a range of needs, we may need to charge you for some social care support.</p> <p>These charges might affect you if you are getting services from us at the moment or if you need them in the future. Charges apply whether the service is provided by <area> Council or is purchased from an external provider.</p> <p>The figures in this guide are correct for the financial year <date> to <date>.</p>
<p>Why is there a charge?</p>	<p>Local Authorities don't have to but are allowed by law to charge adult users of care and support services provided or arranged under the Social Work (Scotland) Act 1968 and the Mental Health (Care and Treatment) (Scotland) Act.</p> <p>These charges must be "reasonable" for people to pay having regard to the type of service provided and a person's ability to meet the cost. Any charges should not exceed the cost of providing the service.</p> <p>For means-tested services this charge will be determined by a financial assessment.</p> <p>You can find out more about financial assessments below.</p>

Annex A – Local Charges Information Template

<p>What can I be charged for?</p>	<p>If you receive care and support at home from <area> Council's social work service you may be required to contribute towards the cost of the services you receive.</p>				
<p>Will all care and support be charged for?</p>	<p>Not all social care support provided to people at home are subject to charges.</p> <p>The following services are free and are NOT subject to a charge:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Criminal Justice Social Work Services • Information and Advice • Needs Assessment • Care Management • Personal Care and Nursing Care • Home Care services for 42 days on discharge from hospital 				
<p>Who is exempt from being asked to pay?</p>	<p>The following people cannot be charged for care services:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People who are terminally ill • People who are subject to a Compulsion Order • Unpaid carers 				
<p>Who will be asked to pay?</p>	<p>For all other users of care and support the Charging Guidance suggests a level of weekly income <i>below which</i> someone cannot be asked to pay care charges. These are known as minimum income thresholds and are:</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="1133 1326 1906 1402"> <tr> <td></td> <td style="text-align: right;">2026/27</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Single person under pension qualifying age</td> <td style="text-align: right;">£176</td> </tr> </table>		2026/27	Single person under pension qualifying age	£176
	2026/27				
Single person under pension qualifying age	£176				

Annex A – Local Charges Information Template

	<table border="1" data-bbox="1131 193 1906 300"> <tr> <td>Couple under pension qualifying age</td> <td>£268</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Single person over pension qualifying age</td> <td>£298</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Couples over pension qualifying age</td> <td>£455</td> </tr> </table> <p>If your assessable weekly income is less than your income threshold figure you should not be charged.</p> <p>If your assessable weekly income is more than your income threshold figure you may be charged for a service.</p> <p><% taper> of the difference between a person's (or couple's) assessed income and this threshold will be the maximum charge for the following services:</p> <p><insert relevant services></p>	Couple under pension qualifying age	£268	Single person over pension qualifying age	£298	Couples over pension qualifying age	£455
Couple under pension qualifying age	£268						
Single person over pension qualifying age	£298						
Couples over pension qualifying age	£455						
<p>How will charges be calculated?</p>	<p>The services you receive will always be based on your needs and the charge will be based on your ability to pay.</p> <p>When we assess your income to see how much you can pay, this is known as a financial assessment.</p> <p>A financial assessment will be carried out if you receive a chargeable service.</p>						
<p>What happens during a financial assessment?</p>	<p>An officer from the council will come and visit you at home to undertake a financial assessment.</p> <p>The officer is required to have proof of all income and capital held.</p>						

Annex A – Local Charges Information Template

	<p>You should therefore have available for inspection any Pension or Benefit statements, and bank or savings books relating to your financial affairs.</p>
<p>Q and As about financial assessments</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What information must I provide? • What if I refuse to provide this information? • What income and expenditure is taken into account in the Financial Assessment? • What income and expenditure are excluded? • What costs are to be deducted in arriving at the assessable income level? • Will my partner's information be included in the financial assessment? • I have children, will that affect my financial assessment? • Will my savings be taken into account? • How will my capital be calculated? • Will the capital value of my house be taken into account? • Will my Benefits be taken into account? • I get payment from the Independent Living Fund. Will this be counted in the income and expenditure assessment? • What happens if someone's finances are managed by another person? • Can I get a full benefits check at the same time? • Do I have to have a financial benefits check done? • Do I have to tell you if my income or savings change? • Do I have to pay if no care or support service is provided because I am in hospital or on holiday? • If my Home Carer is on holiday do I have to pay? 	

Annex A – Local Charges Information Template

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will I be charged for the full hour if only part of an hour of care or support is given? • If I need more than one home carer will I be charged for both? • Will my Self-Directed Support or Direct Payment be affected? • Will I have to contribute if I am 65 or over? • What happens if I can afford to pay but do not? • What should I do if I am finding it difficult to pay? • What happens to the information I give you? • When will the financial assessments begin? • What if I am unhappy with any part of the financial assessment? 	
<p>Financial assessment examples</p>	<p><insert three worked examples of financial assessments></p>
<p>What calculation is made to determine my care charge?</p>	<p>To determine the maximum amount you can afford to contribute towards your care package, the following calculation will be completed:</p> <p><u>Example A</u></p> <p>Total Assessed Income (A) Less Applicable Housing Costs (B) Less Applicable Disregards (C) Less Relevant Income Threshold (D) Equals residual income (E) Maximum charge (F) is equal to residual income (E) multiplied by a taper of <taper %>.</p>

Annex A – Local Charges Information Template

In what circumstances would charges be waived?	<i>Information about any capacity the council has to abate or waive charges under ‘Cases of Hardship’ and details of what types of issue are considered hardship for either client or carer which warrant abatement. This should include information about disability related expenditure.</i>
Further questions	If you have any further questions please phone us on <telephone number> or email us on <email address>. Information should be provided on the financial appeal process.

Annex B – DWP Alignment: Pension Credit & Women Pension Age / Men Pension Age

State Pension age for people affected by the equalisation of State Pension Age (the state pension age is under review and may change).

Check via: <https://www.gov.uk/state-pension-age>

Date of birth	Date of State Pension age
6 March 1952 to 5 April 1952	6 March 2014
6 April 1952 to 5 May 1952	6 May 2014
6 May 1952 to 5 June 1952	6 July 2014
6 June 1952 to 5 July 1952	6 September 2014
6 July 1952 to 5 August 1952	6 November 2014
6 August 1952 to 5 September 1952	6 January 2015
6 September 1952 to 5 October 1952	6 March 2015
6 October 1952 to 5 November 1952	6 May 2015
6 November 1952 to 5 December 1952	6 July 2015
6 December 1952 to 5 January 1953	6 September 2015
6 January 1953 to 5 February 1953	6 November 2015
6 February 1953 to 5 March 1953	6 January 2016
6 March 1953 to 5 April 1953	6 March 2016
6 April 1953 to 5 May 1953	6 May 2016
6 May 1953 to 5 June 1953	6 July 2016
6 June 1953 to 5 July 1953	6 September 2016
6 July 1953 to 5 August 1953	6 November 2016
6 August 1953 to 5 September 1953	6 January 2017
6 September 1953 to 5 October 1953	6 March 2017
6 October 1953 to 5 November 1953	6 May 2017
6 November 1953 to 5 December 1953	6 July 2017

Annex B – DWP Alignment: Pension Credit & Women Pension Age / Men Pension Age

6 December 1953 to 5 January 1954	6 September 2017
6 January 1954 to 5 February 1954	6 November 2017
6 February 1954 to 5 March 1954	6 January 2018
6 March 1954 to 5 April 1954	6 March 2018
6 April 1954 to 5 May 1954	6 May 2018
6 May 1954 to 5 June 1954	6 July 2018
6 June 1954 to 5 July 1954	6 September 2018
6 July 1954 to 5 August 1954	6 November 2018
6 August 1954 to 5 September 1954	6 January 2019
6 September 1954 to 5 October 1954	6 March 2019
6 October 1954 to 5 November 1954	6 May 2019
6 November 1954 to 5 December 1954	6 July 2019
6 December 1954 to 5 January 1955	6 September 2019
6 January 1955 to 5 February 1955	6 November 2019
6 February 1955 to 5 March 1955	6 January 2020
6 March 1955 to 5 April 1955	6 March 2020
6 April 1955 to 5 April 1959	65th birthday

Annex C – Potential Disregarded Benefits/Income List

Adoption (Scotland) Act 1978 (section 51A) Payments
Age-Related payments Act 2004 Payments
Backdated Benefits
Bereavement Payment
Budgeting Loan
Capital – various different levels of disregard
Carers Allowance (previously Invalid Care Allowance)
Carers Premium
Certain payments made to trainees
Charitable and special funds
Child Benefit
Child related premiums paid to pre April 2003 Income Support Claimant
Child Support Maintenance Payments
Child Tax Credits
Children's Benefits
Child Disability Payment (CDP) and Short-Term Assistance (STA)
Christmas bonus
Christmas Bonus paid with benefits
Cold Weather Payments
Concessionary Coal payments
Council Tax Benefit / Council Tax Reduction
Dependency increases paid with certain benefits
<p>As a general rule, £37.90 is disregarded for service users who receive the Attendance Allowance, DLA Care Component, Adult Disability Payment, Personal Independence Payment (Daily Living Component) unless their care includes nighttime services. The following information provides further detail in relation to individual benefit types</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • £84.30 is disregarded for service users who receive the benefit Attendance Allowance. This does not apply to service users who receive nighttime services. This is calculated based on the difference between the higher and lower rate of Attendance Allowance). The Attendance Allowance rates for 2026/2027 are: £114.60 - £30.30 = £84.30 • £37.90 is disregarded for service users who receive the benefit for DLA care component. This does not apply to service users who receive nighttime services. This is calculated based on the difference between the higher and middle rate of DLA care component. The DLA care component rates for 2026/26 are £114.60 - £76.70 = £37.90 • £36.50 is disregarded for service users who receive the benefit Adult Disability Payment (daily living). This does not apply to service users who receive nighttime services. This is calculated based on the difference between the enhanced and standard rate of Adult Disability Payment (daily living). The ADP daily living rates for 2026/27 are £110.40 - £73.90 - £36.50 • £37.90 is disregarded for service users who receive Personal Independence Payment (Daily Living Component). This does not apply to service users who receive nighttime services. This is calculated based on the difference between the enhanced and standard rate of Personal Independence Payment (Daily Living Component) The PIP care component rates for 2026/26 are £114.60 - £76.70 = £37.90

Annex C – Potential Disregarded Benefits/Income List

Direct Payments made by a local authority under Section 12B of the Social Work (Scotland) Act 1968 to Individuals in respect of a care service that they or a dependent child have been assessed as requiring
Disability benefits paid to client's partners where the partner is not a service user
Disability Living Allowance or Disability Assistance (Mobility component)
Disability payment in respect of child
Discretionary Housing Payments
Far East Prisoner of War payment
Future Pathways – Discretionary Fund
Gallantry Awards (e.g. GC, VC, similar from abroad)
Guarantee Credit
Guardian's Allowance
Homes for Ukraine Payments
Housing Benefit
Income from a "home income plan" annuity
Income from a mortgage protection policy
Income frozen abroad
Income in kind (when someone is gifted money)
Income Support
Independent Living Fund Scotland Payments
Industrial Disablement Benefit
Industrial Injuries Benefit
Industrial Injury Disability Benefit
Infected Blood Compensation
Kinship Care payments
Personal Independence Payment (Mobility Component)
MOD Pension
Non-dependent child payments
Non-therapeutic Earnings
Partner's earnings via a job
Payment Scheme for Former British Child Migrants
Personal property, such as household goods, family car etc.
Redress Board (Northern Ireland)
Scottish Infected Blood Scheme (SIBSS) (and equivalent UK schemes e.g. England Infected Blood Support Scheme)
Scottish Welfare Fund – Community Care Grants
Scottish Welfare Fund – Crisis Grants
Social Fund payments
Statutory Redress Scheme and Advance Payment Scheme– Survivors of Historical Child Abuse
Student Loan Repayment
Sure Start Maternity Grant
Tax Credits
Thalidomide Trust

Annex C – Potential Disregarded Benefits/Income List

The Macfarlane Trust
The value of any ex-gratia payments from the Skipton Fund to people infected with Hepatitis C as a result of NHS treatment with blood or blood products
Therapeutic Earnings
Trainees' training premium and travelling expenses
UK Energy Bills Support Scheme
Victims Payment Regulations 2020
Victoria Cross/Japanese Prisoner of War Payments
Victoria or George Cross payments
War Pensioner's Mobility Supplement;
War Widow(er)'s supplementary pension
War Widow's Pension (but not War Widows' Special Payments).
War Widows Pension (pre 1973)
War widows special victims awards
War Widows/Widowers Pension.
War Widows' Special Payments
Where the Service User is a student, any grant payment for a public source intended for the childcare costs of a child dependent
Windrush Compensation Scheme
Winter Fuel Payments
Earnings from employment or self-employed income disregard of £20.00 per week
Work expenses paid by employer, and expenses paid to voluntary workers

The following may also be disregarded in calculations:

- Contributions towards rent / mortgage after housing benefit
- Contributions towards Council Tax / Water & Sewerage

MINIMUM STANDARD FINANCIAL ASSESSMENT

INCOME		
Capital (Tariff Income):	above pension age ²⁶	£1 / £500
	below pension age	£1 / £250
Non-dependent Relatives Income		YES
		(proportion of partners income can be counted)
Compensation (Care Element)		YES
DISREGARDS		
Disability Related Expenditure (DRE)		YES
Capital (Disregard):	above pension age	£10,000
	below pension age	£6,000
Potential Disregarded Benefits		(see list ²⁷)
CHARGING THRESHOLDS²⁸		
Capital Upper Limit (above which full charge is made)		
(income based benefits / non-residential rate)		£16,000
Single Person - below pension age		£176
Single Person - above pension age		£268
Couple - below pension age		£298
Couple - above pension age		£455

²⁷ For consistency this lists the names of benefits and payments which councils may *consider* for disregard.

²⁸ Based on 2024/25 DWP Benefit Rates

What is disability related expenditure (DRE)?

Disability related expenditure is money that you spend on items and services that helps you manage or cope with a disability or a long-term health condition. It is money that we may recognise as an 'outgoing' when we do a financial assessment to find out how much you can afford to pay towards your care.

Thinking about what constitutes disability related expenditure

It can be difficult to think about disability related expenditure and what costs relate to your disability and what costs relate to day-to-day life. Try to think about what is different between what you have to spend compared to a relative, friend or neighbour who does not have your disability or long-term health condition.

Disability related expenditure costs usually fall into one of these two categories:

1. Specialised items and services: you may use things that are made especially to help with your disability, such as wheelchairs and care support. These items may have additional costs, like repair and insurance.
2. Increased use of non-specialised items and services: you may have to use things more because of your disability, such as transport or heating.

This guide sets out our standard or maximum allowances for disability related expenses:

- Costs for disability related services that support the whole household (like a cleaner) will be shared equally between all adults in the household (unless you have a good reason for us to consider a different way of sharing costs).
- Where a service is made up of different elements we will only consider costs for the part(s) that meet a disability related need. Hairdressing is a good example - we will allow a claim for the cost of washing your hair if your disability prevents you doing this yourself, but not the cost of cutting/styling as most people have to pay for this.
- You must provide bills, invoices and statements to support your claim. If you don't we will use our discretion to decide if your claim is reasonable.
- Allowances for special equipment needed due to a disability or condition will be based on the life span of the equipment and either the purchase price you paid or a lower cost alternative if that we believe would be reasonable to meet you're identified needs.
- If you must pay for maintenance of equipment - we will make an allowance for this in your financial assessment.

Please Note: We won't consider costs incurred for:

- General items or services required for daily living and used by the general population;
- Any item or service met by a payment from a Grant or where another funding source has been provided;
- The difference between the actual cost and a lower cost alternative where we consider it was reasonable for a lower cost alternative;
- Structural or landscaping work (e.g. tree surgery, path laying or re-laying) in gardens or to buildings unless:
 - The work is to help prevent falls (e.g. installing hand rails or repairing footpaths

or

ANNEX E – DISABILITY RELATED EXPENDITURE FACTSHEET (Example from East Lothian)

- The modifications to the garden or building are essential for you to be able to use/store securely scooter or wheelchair that you need to use, or to provide secure storage for a scooter and the facility is used as such. In this case, the amount will be calculated as if the modifications were equipment with a suitable life span applied.

Calculating Disability Related Expenditure

Once DRE has been it will be deducted from your chargeable income and a final contribution to your services will be calculated.

Disability Related Expenditure

Disability Related Expenditure Item	Example	Evidence Required.
Privately arranged registered care services (including respite care)	Allowable ONLY where this is part of an agreed care assessment and support plan AND the council-arranged support is reduced accordingly.	Invoices or bills from the provider/ personal assistants
Specialist washing powders or laundry	If you have to use a special detergent and do more laundry which exceeds 4 loads per week because of incontinence or risk of infection. A fixed amount of £3.91 per week.	Details required about the number of loads of washing each week detailed in care assessment or support plan.
Specific diet/pureed food	Extra food costs specific to your impairment and not available on the NHS. Only the price difference between a specialist product and a regular item will be consider at our discretion.	Receipts or invoices and needs identified in care assessment or support plan.
Additional clothing and footwear	Such as extreme wear and tear of clothing/ footwear because of your impairment. Permitted costs up to £312 per year.	Receipts of purchases Need to be identified in care assessment or support plan
Additional bedding	Such as incontinence but limited to a maximum of £2.50 per week if the cost is in excess of £40 per year	Receipts of purchases. Need to be identified in the care assessment or support plan

ANNEX E – DISABILITY RELATED EXPENDITURE FACTSHEET (Example from East Lothian)

<p>Heating costs</p>	<p>Your heating costs are higher due to your impairment and allowed if the amount is over and above the following fuel bills expected for the size of your property, as follows: Single in flat/terraced £1,552.50 Couple in flat/terraced £2,046.07 Single in semi-detached £1,648.98 Couple in semi-detached £2,171.72 Single in detached £2,007.93 Couple in detached £2,643.97</p>	<p>Bills from your energy provider/ bank statements for a 12 month period.</p>
<p>Basic gardening</p>	<p>Only considered where there is no other able bodied person is residing in the household or not provided by family. A maximum contribution of £156 per annum.</p>	<p>Invoices or bills from the provider and identified in care assessment or support plan and not already provided by a Carers Budget.</p>
<p>Basic cleaning</p>	<p>Disability or condition prevents the person doing this themselves and only where there is no other able bodied person residing in the household or not provided by family. A maximum contribution up to £540per annum</p>	<p>Invoices or bills from the provider and identified in care assessment or support plan and not already provided by a Carers Budget.</p>
<p>Purchase and maintenance of equipment</p>	<p>Equipment includes hoists, powered and turning beds, scooter/wheelchair and stair lifts. For wheelchair and mobility equipment these costs will be allowed net of any DLA mobility component received.</p>	<p>Invoices or bills from provider (excluding any Council/NHS/DFG funding) and identified in care assessment or support plan.</p>
<p>Transport costs if necessitated by illness or disability (If transport is not provided by Adult Social Care or Health)</p>	<p>Transport costs necessitated by illness or disability Including costs of transport to day services, over and above the mobility component of DLA or PIP if in payment. Discretion will be taken not to include these costs if a suitable cheaper form of transport e.g. council provided transport to day services is available but has not been used.</p>	<p>Receipts or bills from provider and identified in care assessment or support plan.</p>

ANNEX E – DISABILITY RELATED EXPENDITURE FACTSHEET (Example from East Lothian)

Chiroprody	Disability or condition prevents the person doing this. We can consider the actual cost up to a maximum of £3.80 per week or £22.80 every 6 weeks.	More than one invoice or bill from provider to evidence the customer is receiving this service on a 6 weekly basis and not as a 1 off session. Care assessment must identify restricted movement.
Hair Washing	Allowable where the customer is unable to wash own hair and hair wash is not part of the care package. We will consider the actual cost up to a maximum of £8.04 per week.	At least 2 receipts for the service and identified in care assessment or support plan.
Other Disability Related Expenses.	Other Disability Related Expenses may be allowed with good reason and proof of costs. These will be at the discretion of the Council.	Evidence and receipts of purchase. Evidence of need within care assessment or support plan.