



# Living in a care home – How do I fund my care

This factsheet explains how we charge for adult social care services provided in a care home – either residential or a nursing one. It also covers what it means to be a self-funder where you arrange and pay for your own care.

## Navigating this document

This document contains electronic links to other on-line documents. If you are not able to access the documents via the electronic links please consider one of the following options:

- further information can be accessed via [Paying for care](#)
- Or for paper copies please e-mail [ASCengage@leics.gov.uk](mailto:ASCengage@leics.gov.uk)

To avoid this factsheet becoming out of date when money or interest values change, we provide links throughout it to our [fees, costs and allowances](#) page which is regularly updated.

## Assessing what care and support you may need

Whether you are at home or in hospital, if you appear to need support to help you live independently, we will carry out an **assessment of your needs**. We do this regardless of whether you qualify for help or how much money you have. It is your chance to talk about any difficulties you are having in living independently at home. We will work with you to identify care and support services to help you with those difficulties.

The decision to move into a care home can often be a difficult one to make. Before proceeding, it is important to make sure that this is the right type of care for you by looking at all the options available. You can get more information from the council's Customer Service Centre on 0116 305 0004, or see our webpage [Choosing the best place to live](#).

You may also wish to take independent financial and legal advice. If you wish to find your own financial advice, we recommend that you use an advisor or company that is registered with the [Financial Conduct Authority](#). Alternatively, the [Society of Later Life Advisors \(SOLLA\)](#) is a not for profit organisation and will be able to help you find an accredited financial advisor.

If your needs qualify you for help and we agree that a care home is the best place to meet those needs, we will work out a care and support plan with you setting out how we are going to meet your needs. We will then do a financial assessment with you to

work out how much you should pay towards the cost of your care and how much the council should pay.

You have the right to choose which home you go to, but we will normally only pay up to an agreed banded sum – these bands are shown on our [fees, costs and allowances](#) page so that you understand how much you may have to pay if you are assessed as able to pay the full cost, or you choose a home that costs more than we normally pay (in which case, you may have to pay [Top-ups](#) if we think you can afford to).

If you or your family are unable to pay a [Top-ups](#) we will look for a more affordable option that meet the local authorities banded rates.

## **Nursing and health care**

If you have a high level of health needs as well as personal care ones, you may qualify for **NHS Continuing Healthcare** instead – we will work out if you need to be assessed for this. If the NHS agree you qualify for their services in full, they will arrange and pay for care instead of us, and your will not be charged a contribution (as NHS services are free). They may also decide that your care should be jointly funded with us or shared, in which case you will still pay a contribution towards the part of the service funded by the council.

If you don't qualify for NHS Continuing Healthcare but you need nursing care, you may qualify for **NHS-funded nursing care**. If you are also eligible for care from the council, we will meet your accommodation and personal care costs (less your assessed contribution), and the NHS will pay the home for nursing. You will not pay any contribution to the nursing care, but you will pay one towards the accommodation and personal care costs funded by us.

## **Working out how much you may have to pay**

Unlike the NHS, adult social care has never been an entirely free service. That means we need to do a financial assessment to work how much – if anything – you need to contribute towards the cost of these services.

Our calculation applies national and local rules to look at how much money you have coming in, and how much you have in the way of capital – a house, savings, or other investments.

You can work out yourself how much this may be now, by using our [online financial assessment](#) which will provide you with an estimate of your contribution. If you choose to, you can save this and send it to us with supporting documents so that you are not asked to provide the details when we have agreed care with you.

This will tell us your **assessed contribution** which is the charge you will need to pay each week towards the services. It will never be more than the cost of the service you receive from us. If you have a lot of income or capital, your contribution may be for the full cost of the service.

The rules for how much you may have to contribute if you are receiving **services at home or in the community** are different, so please see our factsheet [How do I pay for my care at home](#)

## Self-funding

If you have a lot of capital (defined below) or decide that you do not wish to tell us your financial details, you are a self-funder and you will need to arrange and pay for your own services and can of course choose any home you wish.

However, even if you think you can afford to pay the whole cost of your care, we recommend that your care needs are assessed by us – the assessment is free, and you will get an idea of the costs involved in living in a care home. It will also tell you if you might qualify for help from us in the future when you no longer have enough capital, otherwise you may need to move to a less expensive home if you need to apply to us for financial help.

## What we count in a financial assessment

What we count when we assess your finances can be complex, so we recommend you use the following section as an introduction and then contact our Customer Service Centre on 0116 305 0004 for more information. You can also refer to the council's [Charging policy for adult social care](#).

Firstly, we look at your **capital** – this is the value of your property or assets like a house, land, savings, shares, or ISAs. If you have jointly held property or savings with your partner (by which we mean your husband or wife, or someone else you are living with as a partner), we only count an equal share of the total, unless there is evidence that your share is not an equal one.

Overall, if your capital is over the **upper capital limit** set by the Government (currently £23,250) you are not eligible for Council-funded care and support services and are a self-funder as described above. Please see our: [How do I pay for my care - property and other assets](#) factsheet.

If you are the only owner of your **main home**, we usually count its value in your capital, so after any property disregard you are likely to be a self-funder (as explained above) you may need to get your own financial advice on what next steps you take, as you may decide to keep your property and consider alternative options such as rental,

however, you may also decide to sell it to meet your care fees – unless you are eligible for our deferred payment scheme as explained below.

However, if you have a partner who will still be living in your main home, we may ignore its value when calculating how much you should contribute for the cost of your care, so we strongly recommend you ask us for a financial assessment before assuming that we will not help.

If we are counting the value of your former home, we may be able to ignore it for up to twelve weeks after you first enter a care home – called a **disregard**. This gives you time to decide what to do with your former home. During that time, the contribution you pay will be reduced because we ignore the value of your former home, (and can give certain allowances for household costs).

Knowing that you may have to pay for care and support in the future might tempt you to give money away to friends or family, but this is called **deprivation** and can have serious consequences for you and anyone you've given your assets to.

For more information on disregards, deprivation, and capital generally, please refer to factsheet [How do I pay for my care - property and other assets](#).

Your **income** is then assessed - we do not count the income and savings of your partner, but you can choose to include these as we have a partner's allowance which may lead to you paying a lower contribution:

- We count most state benefits, including the care/daily living components of disability benefits (Attendance Allowance, Disability Living Allowance and Personal Independence Payment)
- We also count pensions you have, plus income from property rental
- However, we ignore some disability benefits (the mobility component of Personal Independence Payment or Disability Living Allowance) and some war pensions
- Please note that some benefits will stop when you are in permanent residential care funded by the council, but you may be entitled to others. Please see our [Living in a care home – What happens to my state benefits](#) factsheet.
- If you have difficulties with your benefits claim, there are a range of organisations that can assist:
  - [Citizens Advice Leicestershire](#)
  - [Entitledto](#)
  - [Disability Rights](#)

- [Age UK Leicester](#) or their [national advice service](#)
- If you have a work or private pension, you can transfer up to half to your partner if they are remaining in your home - please see our [Living in a care home – What happens to my state benefits](#) factsheet.
- When we calculate your contribution, we make sure that you have enough income to buy personal items which the home would not provide, based on Government rules – this is the **Personal Expenses Allowance**. These, and other allowances and costs, are shown in [fees, costs and allowances](#).

## Deferred Payment Scheme

This may be available to you if you own your home, and we are counting its value in your financial assessment. If your capital excluding the value of your home is less than the **upper capital limit** set by the Government (currently £23,250), and you want to keep your home during your lifetime, rather than selling it to meet your fees, we may be able to make a Deferred Payment Agreement (DPA) with you.

This is effectively a loan based on the value of your home: we pay your care home fees less any contribution you are assessed to pay. The agreement can last until your death, until you have reached the maximum deferrable amount, or it can be used as a “bridging loan” to give you time and flexibility to sell your home at a time that is convenient to you.

If you take out such an agreement with us, we will place a legal charge on your home to cover the fees we are lending you, and your loan will pay interest and fees. Please see the [Deferred Payment Scheme factsheet](#).

## Top-ups

If we offer you a care home at the rate we normally pay, but you choose a more expensive one, then (if we agree it is suitable to meet your assessed care needs), you may have the option to make a **top-up payment**, which covers the difference between what we will pay and the home's charge. This would be in addition to any financial contribution we assess you as due to pay.

During any 12-week disregard (see above), you might be temporarily able to pay this from your own funds, but normally only a **third party** can pay this for you from their own funds - a relative, friend or a charitable organisation. They must prove that they can meet these costs and sign a legal agreement to pay the top-up amount now and for the foreseeable future. Please see our accompanying factsheet [Third Party Top-ups](#).

## Paying your contribution

If you have low income and capital, your contribution may be lower than that paid by others - it will never be more than the full cost of your service.

We will **review** this contribution for you each April (when benefit and pension rates generally change), but you can request a review at any time. You must let us know immediately of changes to your income or capital or any other changes in your circumstances, as it may affect what you must pay.

You will receive invoices from us four-weekly in arrears. You can receive your invoice by email, instead of by post. If you would like to receive your invoice by e-mail, please call ASCF on 01163057474 or e-mail [ascfinvoicequeries@leics.gov.uk](mailto:ascfinvoicequeries@leics.gov.uk). Please include your SSIS number or Customer number in your e-mail or have this information ready for when you call us. This information is in the top right-hand corner of your invoice.

Depending on when you provide your financial information, your services may have already started and your first invoice may include a large sum for **backdated charges**. If you have difficulty paying this, we may be able to arrange a payment plan – please contact our Finance Operations Team, telephone 0116 305 3730 or email [FinOpsDebts@leics.gov.uk](mailto:FinOpsDebts@leics.gov.uk)

## Reviews, appeals, complaints

You can request a review of your assessed contribution at any time if you want to challenge your assessed contribution, how much we have given you in allowances, or any other aspect of our decision-making, including any concerns about being able to afford your contribution because of other costs that we did not count. If you remain unhappy after that, you can ask for an appeal to be heard.

If you are unhappy with how we dealt with you, rather than our decisions, then you can also access the council's [complaints and comments process](#).

Contacts for further information

- Our website [leicestershire.gov.uk/adult-social-care-and-health](http://leicestershire.gov.uk/adult-social-care-and-health) has a wide range of information on care and support, including paying for care, plus the full range of our factsheets.

You can arrange a care and support assessment or estimate your financial contribution by going to our [Adult Social Care portal](#)

For more information on residential care homes in general, and our directory of local registered homes, see [residential and nursing home](#)

Or you can call our Customer Service Centre on 0116 305 0004



- Care Quality Commission (CQC) monitor, inspect and regulate services to make sure that they meet acceptable standards of quality and safety. They publish their findings to help people choose care services.

For general information regarding care homes (but not funding issues), including copies of inspection reports about specific care homes, see their website [cqc.org.uk](http://cqc.org.uk) or call them on 03000 616 161.

- [Age UK national website](#) or advice line: 0800 055 6112
- [Age UK Leicester Shire & Rutland website](#) or helpline: 0116 299 2278
- [Carers UK website](#) or helpline: 0808 808 7777
- [Citizens Advice website](#) or advice line: 03444 111 444
- [Independent Age website](#) or helpline on 0800 319 6789