



Information sheet 5 – charges for services (from 12 April 2010)

This sheet explains the charges you may have to pay for “social care” services. There are no charges for NHS services, or for seeing a care manager. **Information sheet 6** explains what you will have to pay if you move to live in a care home.

You will **not** have to pay the charges described in this sheet if:

- You are receiving after-care following compulsory treatment under mental health legislation
- You are living in a care home
- You have Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease [short break charges may still apply]

■ Home care

The standard charge for home care is £3.48 per quarter-hour of care, up to a maximum of £90 per week. However many people on low incomes do not have to pay for the service, or have a lower weekly maximum. A Financial Assessment and Benefits Officer will visit to assess what you can afford to pay – or you can simply choose to pay the standard charge.

Each person getting a service will be assessed individually, on the basis of their own income and savings (or their share of joint income and savings). If two people in a household both get home care, they may each have to pay the standard charge. You will have to pay the standard charge if you have savings of more than £23,250.

The normal method of payment for charges is by Direct Debit. People paying by Direct Debit currently receive a 4% discount. If you would have a problem paying by Direct Debit, you can discuss options with the Financial Assessment and Benefits Officer.

■ Day care and activities outside the home

There are charges for day care services and for other kinds of support which people get outside their homes (including from 26 April 2010 “enabling” services which help people to make use of ordinary community facilities). These charges are based on the full cost of the service which you use, which varies between services.

As with home care, the charge which people pay depends on their financial circumstances, and many people do not have to pay or will pay less than the full cost. The assessment is based on the same rules as for home care. We total up the cost of the home care and day care that each person gets, and the most that anyone will have to pay for the two kinds of service together is £90 per week (except that this does not include charges for meals and transport in day care).

Meals and transport charges for day care are standard amounts which apply to everyone who eats meals or uses transport. These charges are paid directly to the day care centre.

If you will be taking meals or refreshments there is usually a standard charge of £2.50 per day. Where the standard charge applies, it is a fixed charge – there are no reductions for people who eat only some of the food provided. Some day services may offer different arrangements, such as a cafeteria.

If you use transport provided by the centre, or funded by us, to get to a day service, there is a charge of £2.00 per day for this (£1.00 if you use transport in one direction only). If you go out with an “enabler”, and your care plan says you need to go to a specific place, you will pay the standard charge – but if you choose where to go, you will usually pay a mileage rate, or the fare if you go by public transport. The transport charge does **not**

apply to some mental health day services, because of the close integration of health and social care. Your care manager can tell you whether the charge applies to the service which you are going to use.

■ **Short break (respite) care**

If we arrange for you to have a short break in a care home, a Financial Assessment and Benefits Officer will visit you to assess how much you can afford to pay for this. If you have previously had an assessment for home care charges, we may already have collected the information which we need to set your charge for short break care.

The charge will vary, depending on your financial circumstances. If you depend entirely on social security benefits for your income, your weekly charge will usually be between £43.15 and £163.95 a week. If you have savings of more than £23,250, you will usually have to pay £419.58 per week. This figure may increase if you receive more than 56 nights of care in a year.

■ **What if I cannot afford to pay?**

Most charges are set after considering people's means and the costs that they face because of their disability or illness. Many people do not have to pay these charges. Charges for meals and transport are based on the Council's view of what it is reasonable for anyone to spend on food and travel, and apply to everyone who uses the services.

If you believe that you cannot afford to pay because of special circumstances, you have a right to ask for your charges to be reviewed. Your care manager can arrange this. However we will only waive charges in exceptional circumstances.

■ **Further information**

These charges are set by Northumberland County Council, and administered by Northumberland Care Trust.

If you have questions about your charges which your care manager cannot help with, please contact our Charges Helpline on (01670) 533893, or write to:

Finance Section, Social Care Directorate,
Northumberland Care Trust,
County Hall, Morpeth,
Northumberland NE61 2EF
Email scFinance@nct.nhs.uk