

Information sheet C9 – charges for living in a care home from 8/4/2019

This sheet explains what you will pay if you live in a care home under an arrangement made by a care manager. The figures are applicable from 8 April 2019 to 5 April 2020.

The charges apply to any care home where the County Council is providing the funding, including nursing homes and homes owned by the Council. Even if your care manager works for the NHS, these charges apply, unless the NHS is funding the fees.

When we agree to support you in a care home, a financial assessment and benefits officer will contact you and collect all the necessary information about your finances. S/he will be able to give you more detailed advice about how charges are calculated. If you need to move into a care home quickly, this may have to happen after you move in.

If your financial circumstances change after you move into a home, you **must** let us know as soon as possible so that we can review your charge.

■ Will I have to pay?

Most people living in care homes do have to pay towards the fees, though they can claim social security benefits to help them if they do not have enough money of their own.

Some people living in care homes are paid for by the NHS, and do not have to pay charges. You will also not have to pay charges for mental health after-care following compulsory hospital treatment, or if you have variant Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease.

■ How will the charge be calculated?

The detailed rules about charges are complicated. Some of them only affect what is paid by the Council and what is paid by social security, and are not explained in this sheet.

For most people the end result is that they are left with a weekly allowance of £24.90 after paying charges. The **most** that anyone has to pay is the full fee for the home – though you will **not** have to pay for care provided by a registered nurse; this will be funded by the NHS. Typical care home fees excluding registered nursing care are over £512 per week – more for specialist services – but you will only pay this much if you can afford to do so.

You can keep some kinds of income on top of the £24.90 allowance, if you get them:

- Mobility elements of Disability Living Allowance or Personal Independence Payment
- War Pension Scheme payments except Constant Attendance Allowance payments, and the first £10 per week of War Widows and War Widowers pension
- Any money which you earn from working while you are in the home (though this may affect any social security benefits which you get)

■ What about my savings and investments?

If your savings are worth less than £14,250 they will **not** be taken into account in setting your charge. If you have savings of more than £23,250, you will have to pay the fees for the home in full, until you have no more than £23,250 remaining.

In between these two amounts, you will be expected to contribute an additional £1 per week for every £250 above £14,250. For instance if you have between £14,251 and £14,500 you will be expected to contribute £1 per week from your savings. If you have between £23,001 and £23,250 this figure will be £36 per week. You will probably find that this extra contribution is more than the income you are able to get from investing your savings, so they will gradually reduce.

■ What about my house?

If you need to live permanently in a care home, the value of your house will be treated as part of your savings, once you have been a permanent resident for more than twelve weeks. We will make allowance for the cost of selling your house, and any outstanding mortgage charges against it. (The value of your home will *not* be taken into account if you are a *temporary* resident, even if you are in the home for more than twelve weeks).

If you do not wish to sell your home now, or if you have difficulty doing so, we can delay asking for part of the charge until you decide to sell it (should you die, the fees will have to be paid then). The financial assessment and benefits officer you speak to will be able to provide further information about this option.

■ What about my spouse, partner or carer?

There are special rules to protect the position of other people who are dependent on you. They affect the way we treat your income and your house.

If you have an occupational pension, 50% of this can be transferred to your spouse or partner and not included in the financial assessment. The Financial Assessment and Benefits Officer you speak to can give advice about whether your spouse would benefit from this (for some people it adversely affects benefit payments).

We will ignore the value of your house when working out charges if your partner is still living there, or a relative who is over 60 or who is incapacitated. We may do the same in other special circumstances – for instance if someone lives there who gave up their own home in order to look after you.

■ Contacting us

For further information, contact:

Finance Section (Care home charges)
Adult Services,
County Hall
Morpeth
Northumberland
NE61 2EF
Phone: (01670) 624 834
Email scFinance@northumbria.nhs.uk