



This is your guide to Paying for Care and Support

About this guide

Although some care and support services are free, most are chargeable. This means that most people have to pay something towards their own care, and some will have to pay for all of the costs. No-one will be charged more than they can afford to pay.

This guide will help you if you have had a needs assessment and we have agreed that you are eligible for council funded social care. It explains:

- Who pays for care and support.
- How we work out if you are entitled to receive care and support.
- What a personal budget is and how you can use it to pay for care and support.
- How we work out what you can afford to contribute towards your care and support (financial assessment).
- About deferred payment agreements.
- How to get independent financial advice about paying for care and support.



Who pays for care and support?

Care and support services are not free. Most people have to pay something towards their own care and some will have to pay for all of the costs. The Council may cover some or all of the cost of care, but this help is 'means-tested'. This means that what you pay depends on what your needs are, how much money you have, and what level and type of care and support you require.

In some situations, the NHS is responsible for meeting care needs. This is usually when your need is mainly for healthcare rather than social care. For more information visit www.nhs.uk and click on care and support.

This guide tells you about paying for care and support that is provided or arranged by the Council.

Am I entitled to receive care and support from the Council?

If you think you or someone you know might need care and support, the first thing that you need to do is contact us. When you contact us we will talk about how we can help you. This help may include:

- Providing advice.
- Providing information.
- Arranging for an assessment of your needs.

If you need an assessment, a member of our team will visit you to talk to you about your needs and how care and support services might help you. This will help us to make a decision about whether or not you are eligible (or entitled to) to receive care and support from the Council. We can assess your needs even if it is likely that you will not be entitled to financial support towards your care costs. More information about needs assessment can be found at www.redcar-cleveland.gov.uk/adultcare

Once we have assessed your needs and agreed that you are eligible for care and support from the Council, we will work out what it will cost to meet your needs, and whether or not you will have to pay anything towards those costs.

I have had my assessment and have been told about my personal budget - what is this?

Your personal budget is the amount of money that it will cost to meet those needs over a 12-month period. Your personal budget might be funded entirely by the Council, or you may have to contribute towards it.

Once we have agreed that your needs are eligible, you will be told what your 'indicative personal budget' is. This is an estimated amount that will help you to plan your care and support. Your final personal budget will be confirmed when your Support Plan is approved and we have worked out whether you can afford to pay towards your personal budget.

How does the Council decide what I can afford to pay towards my care and support?

If you are eligible for support from Adult Social Care, we will carry out a financial assessment to find out if you can afford to pay towards any of the services you need. Sometimes this is referred to as a 'means test.'

We will ask you to complete a financial assessment form that asks for information about your income and expenditure. This is how much money you receive and how much you have to pay out for living expenses each week. It also looks at things like savings, investments and any property you might own. Together, these are called your capital assets.

As part of the financial assessment, we will offer you a benefit check. This will be carried out by the Council's Welfare Rights Team to make sure that you are receiving all of the state benefits that you are entitled to. A benefit check might increase the amount of money that you receive each week. However, this may also affect the amount that you will have to contribute towards your care and support.

It is very important that you give us all of the information that we ask for in your financial assessment. We will need to see documents as evidence of what you have told us. This might include things like bills, letters and bank statements.

If you decide that you do not want to complete a financial assessment you will be responsible for paying the full cost of your care.

Once we have gathered the information about your finances, we will calculate whether or not you can afford to pay anything towards your care. The calculation is made on an individual basis using government rules. It is based on how much your capital assets are worth and how much income you have.

The amount that you have to contribute is called your maximum weekly charge. We will not ask you to pay any more than this unless your financial situation changes. This means that if your health worsens and you need more support, you will not have to pay any more towards your care.

We will write to you to tell you what you will need to pay and what the Council will pay. If you have to make a contribution you can decide whether or not to go ahead with the support you have chosen, or to consider other alternative support first.

More information about means testing, and the government rules for working out your contribution can be found at www.moneyadviceservice.org.uk or at www.nhs.uk

Can I give my money or assets to someone else so that it doesn't get included in my financial assessment?

If you need care and support, you should not give away or transfer your money, property or other valuable items to avoid paying social care charges. If you do this, it may be 'deprivation of assets.' If we think that you have done this, we will carry out an investigation to find out if you had a valid reason for doing so. If we find that you have intentionally deprived yourself of assets, we will assume you still have them when working out what you should pay towards your care. If you have transferred money or property to someone else, they may then be liable to pay some or all of your care charges.

What if I think that I cannot afford to pay?

If you have had a financial assessment but you feel that you cannot afford to pay the agreed amount, you can ask for your charge to be reviewed.

If your financial circumstances change, either for the better or for the worse, you need to

ask for another financial assessment to be carried out.

Will I have to sell my house to pay for my care?

No-one is forced to sell their home to pay for their care. For some people, the value of their house will be taken into account when deciding how much they can afford to pay towards their care costs. But, for many people, the financial assessment will not take into account the value of their home. This is called a property disregard. Examples include if:

- You are receiving care and support in your own home (home care).
- You are staying in a care home on a temporary basis while you recover from an illness or accident.
- You are living in a care home but any of the following people are still living in your property:
 - Your husband, wife, partner or civil partner.
 - A close relative who is 60 or over, or incapacitated.
 - A child of the resident aged under 18.
 - Your ex-husband, ex-wife, ex-civil partner or ex-partner if they are a lone parent.

If you are living in a residential care home and own your own property but do not want to sell it immediately, you can ask the Council for a deferred payment agreement.

What is a Deferred Payment Agreement?

A deferred payment agreement is a legal agreement between you and the Council that allows you to delay paying some of the costs of your care and support until a later date. It means you are borrowing money from the Council, much like having a loan or a mortgage. You will be charged interest on the amount that you borrow, and there will be an administration fee for setting up the agreement.

The amount that you borrow from us will be secured against your property. This means that it is repaid in full when your property is sold. This could be either be when you choose to sell your home, or after your death. More information about deferred payment agreements can be found at www.redcar-cleveland.gov.uk/adultcare

Making decisions on behalf of a family member or friend

Carers and families can help people to make decisions about their care and how to pay for it, as long as the person needing care has capacity to make their own decisions.

If someone does not have the capacity to understand, or won't have capacity to understand in the near future (for example because of dementia, a learning disability or a mental health problem), you will need to apply for legal authority to make financial decisions on their behalf.

Legal authority includes:

- Power of Attorney.
- Court of Protection Appointed Deputy.

- Appointee.

More information about making financial decisions on behalf of someone who is unable to do so for them self can be found at www.gov.uk or www.moneyadvice.service.org.uk.

If there is no-one who is willing or able to make financial decisions for someone who does not have capacity, then the Council may apply to become their appointee or their deputy. This means that all decisions relating to the adult's property and financial affairs will be made by the Council. Once appointed and where appropriate, we will consult with the individual and/or their family, but the final decision will always rest with the Council. More information about the Council's Corporate Appointee and Deputyship Service can be found at www.redcar-cleveland.gov.uk/adultcare.

Getting independent financial advice

If you are planning how to pay for your care and support, you may benefit from taking independent financial advice. This could help you:

- To prepare and plan for care costs.
- To prevent you from running out of money.
- With continuity of care.
- To support your choice of care and support.
- To consider the options for property – for example whether to consider a Deferred Payment.
- If you are making decisions on behalf of other people.

Independent Financial Advisers are professionals who work to certain standards and offer independent advice on financial matters to their customers. They will meet with you and look at your financial position, your preferences and what you want to achieve. They will then advise the best action and if necessary recommend a financial product to meet your needs. They should make clear the cost of their advice which could be a set fee, an hourly rate or a percentage of any money invested.

All Independent Financial Advisors must have a national qualification and have signed up to a code of ethics. They should be registered with the Financial Conduct Authority (FCA) which regulates the financial services industry in the UK www.fca.org.uk. This gives customers protection if they are not happy with the service and the right to complain to the Financial Services Ombudsman.

Some advisors specialise in the financial needs of older people – these are called Later Life Advisers and they are accredited under the Later Life Adviser Accreditation Scheme.

If you need help to read or understand this guide, please speak to your health or social care worker, or contact Adult Social Care on 01642 065070.

Useful contacts to help you find independent financial advice

The Financial Conduct Authority has a link to a register of Independent Financial Advisers. www.fca.org.uk

The Money Advice Service is a free independent service with useful information on managing money, savings, pensions and getting financial advice.

www.moneyadvice.service.org.uk

PayingForCare is a not for profit company for those seeking advice and guidance on the cost of elderly care and an on-line search facility for Specialist Care Fees Adviser.

www.payingforcare.org

The Society of Later Life Advisers (SOLLA) is a not for profit organisation which helps find financial advisers who understand financial needs in later life.

www.societyoflaterlifeadvisers.co.uk

The Personal Finance Society provides information on qualified and restricted advisers. www.findanadviser.org

Financial-Advisor.co.uk is an independent marketing website which provides an on-line search facility to find local Independent Financial Advisers. www.financial-advisor.co.uk

IFABrokers.co.uk offers an on-line search facility providing specialist advice on financial services at all stages of life. www.ifabrokers.co.uk

Age UK offers a range of financial products and services for the over-50s.

www.ageuk.org.uk

Carers UK supports carers with benefits checks and gives advice on financial matters related to care. www.carersuk.org

Independent Age www.independentage.org provides an advice and information service by phone and email on a range of matters including care options, paying for care and funding concerns.

Telephone 0800 319 6789 or email advice@independentage.org

First Stop Advice provides a free service for older people, their families and carers, on paying for care and other financial matters. www.firststopcareadvice.org.uk

Please note - Redcar and Cleveland Borough Council has not vetted any Independent Financial Advisor and is not responsible or liable for them or any advice or services they provide.

