

## A GUIDE TO CONTRIBUTING TOWARDS RESIDENTIAL/NURSING CARE HOME FEES



## **What is this guide about?**

This guide aims to give you a brief understanding of the financial process when entering a Care Home for either a short term or long term stay.

All homes offering residential or nursing care are commonly known as care homes and these guidelines apply to all types of residential and nursing care accommodation.

If you enter a Care Home you will pay a contribution towards the fees based on your financial circumstances. Aberdeenshire Health and Social Care Partnership will carry out a Financial Assessment of your income and capital and calculate your contribution in accordance with Aberdeenshire Council's agreed Local Policy and the Charging for Residential Accommodation Guidance (CRAG). CRAG is produced by the Scottish Government and underpinned by the National Assistance Regulations.

## **Respite**

If you enter a Care Home on a short term basis (sometimes referred to as Respite), you will pay a flat rate contribution towards your stay for up to a maximum of 8 weeks in a financial year. After 8 weeks a full financial assessment must be carried out. The 8 weeks does not have to be a continuous period and can be at different times throughout the financial year.

Please note there is no automatic entitlement to 8 weeks of respite. Any agreed respite is based on your care needs assessment carried out by your Care Manager.

## **What is a Financial Assessment?**

Your contribution towards your Care Home fees is calculated by looking at what weekly income you have together with any capital held. All income received is taken into account in the financial assessment and may include Department for Work and Pension benefits, occupational pensions, private pensions and any income from policies or Trusts.

All capital held is also taken into account in the financial assessment and may include savings, investments, capital held in trust and property.

You will be required to complete an Application towards Financial Assistance form along with a signed mandate. We will verify the information provided in the form direct with the financial establishments or by asking you to provide evidence.

If you choose not to reveal your financial details, a Financial Assessment cannot be completed. You will therefore be charged the full cost of the care. However, you may still be assessed as being entitled to receive a Free Personal Care and/or Nursing Care payment.

## **Savings and Capital Limits**

If you have capital and/or savings which are valued at less than **the lower capital limit** they will not be taken into account in your financial assessment.

If your savings and/or capital are valued at more than **the upper capital limit** you will be self-funding but may still be entitled to the Free Personal and/or Nursing Care payment.

If your capital and/or savings are valued between **the lower capital limit** and **the upper capital limit** a tariff element of **£1.00** for every **£250** is included as a weekly income in your financial assessment.

## **Free Personal Care and Free Nursing Care**

Free Personal Care (for those aged over 65) and Nursing Care was introduced in Scotland in 2002. With effect from 1 April 2019, Free Personal Care will also be available to those under the age of 65.

The Free Personal Care and the Free Nursing Care amounts are set annually by the Scottish Government. The award of FPC or FNC will depend on the result of your Care Needs Assessment. Aberdeenshire Council will pay the amounts awarded directly to the Care Home and you will be advised in writing of the date that these payments will commence.

If you are already resident in the Care Home prior to an application being made, payments for FPC/FNC will commence from application date and not the date you entered the care home if you are assessed as having entitlement.

## **Property**

If your spouse or partner still lives in the property you either fully or jointly own or your stay in the care home is temporary, the value of the property will not be taken into account in your financial assessment. Other circumstances where your share in a property may be disregarded from the financial assessment and more details on property can be found in CRAG.

Where the certain criteria is not met the value of the property will be included in your financial assessment. It is Aberdeenshire Council policy to include any part shares held in property based on the full property value.

Only one property (usually your main home) can be disregarded from the Financial Assessment.

### **The 12-Week Property Disregard**

A 12 week property disregard will apply if your property is to be included in the financial assessment. During the first 12 weeks from the date of your permanent admission to the care home the property will not be included as capital and your contribution will be based on your other sources of income and capital. After the 12 weeks your financial assessment will be re-calculated to include the value of the property or share in property. If you are taking steps to sell a property but it remains unsold after this period you should contact the Local Authority as there are options available to pay for the shortfall of the fees until a later date when the property has sold and capital has become available. Aberdeenshire Council may be able to offer interim financial assistance pending the sale of a property and accrue a debt to be repaid at a later date.

### **Personal Allowance**

Every resident in a care home must be left with an amount of money to spend as they choose on items such as toiletries or clothing. This is called your personal allowance.

The personal allowance amount is set each year by the Scottish Government and must not be used to pay for care home fees.

## **Change of Circumstances**

If there is a change to your financial circumstances whilst resident in the care home you should advise the council immediately as this may affect your contribution. If at a later date we are made aware of a change that should have been informed to us at the time, then any change to your contribution may be backdated to when the change occurred.

## **Drop In Capital**

A full financial assessment can be requested at any time throughout the year if your capital falls below the upper limit. You should inform us timeously of this as any change to your contribution will be applied from the time of application and not backdated to when the drop in capital actually occurred.

## **Deprivation of Capital**

If Aberdeenshire Council considers that you have disposed of a capital asset (eg savings or property) in order to reduce your liability for care home charges, the Financial Assessment may be completed on the basis that you are still in possession of that asset. Each case will be considered individually in consultation with our Legal Department.

## **What happens after the financial assessment?**

- You will be advised in writing of the amount that you will contribute towards the cost of your care home fees and details of how this has been calculated.
- The care home will also be advised of the amount of your contribution and you will be invoiced direct by them for this. If you enter one of our own homes, you will be invoiced direct by the council.
- A financial re-assessment will be carried out annually in line with increases to Department of Work and Pension benefits and other income and you will notified of your revised contribution. The Scottish Government also regularly revise the personal allowance, capital levels and FPC/FNC amounts.

## **Do you want to know more?**

If you have any questions on anything covered in this booklet, or require any further information, you can contact one of the social work finance team's on the following numbers:

Aberdeenshire North (Banff)	01467 469971
Aberdeenshire Central (Inverurie)	01467 533396
Aberdeenshire South (Stonehaven)	01467 539714

To ensure that you are receiving all the benefits to which you are entitled, further advice and information is available from the offices above or alternatively:

Department for Work and Pensions The Pension Service	0800 731 0469
Department for Work and Pensions JobCentre Plus	0800 169 0190
Citizens Advice Scotland	0800 028 1456

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If you would like this information in large print, braille, audio tape or a language other than English please contact Social Work on 0345 608 1206 or [aberdeenshireHSCP@aberdeenshire.gov.uk](mailto:aberdeenshireHSCP@aberdeenshire.gov.uk)