

Charging for Non-Residential Care Services (Personal Budgets)

People who are offered a Personal Budget will have to be financially assessed to determine how much they should contribute.

Financial Assessment

A person may not receive the full amount of their personal budget as they are required to be financially assessed. A financial assessment is an assessment of your ability to contribute towards the cost of your care and support paid for by the personal budget. The amount of your personal budget will therefore be reduced by the amount you are assessed as being able to contribute. However if your maximum assessed contribution is higher than your personal budget amount you will only be charged the lower amount.

There are a number of options available to complete the financial assessment and a member of our team will contact you or your representative to go through these. The team has been trained to carry out financial assessments and to give advice on your entitlement to various state benefits. If your circumstances change we may need to recalculate your weekly contribution towards the cost of your personal budget.

We are required:

- To offer all people the option of a visit in their own home to undertake a full financial assessment to determine their maximum weekly contribution. However, in some circumstances a short, simpler financial assessment can be conducted over the telephone which may be quicker and less intrusive.
- To ensure that after paying your assessed contribution you are left with a protected income level. This will be the basic Income Support or Pension Credit level plus 25%.
- To ensure your weekly contribution is applied against the value of your personal budget and not related to the services received.

Short Financial Assessment:

The short financial assessment will only apply to people on certain state benefits and will involve gathering information on the following:

- Capital / savings
- Living arrangements e.g. Married, Living Alone, Living with others
- Entitlement to a means tested benefit for e.g. Pension Credit, Income Support, Income Related Employment Support Allowance
- Entitlement to disability related income for e.g. Attendance Allowance or DLA Care
- Agreement to accept a standard amount per week for disability related expenditure (DRE). See DRE section.

The answer to the questions we ask you will determine which of the following 3 bands will apply to you:

Band 1 – nil contribution

Band 2 – standard contribution (£19.30 per week)

Band 3 – a visit will be required to conduct a full financial assessment.

Example 1: Short Assessment

Bill is an 80 year old man who lives alone. He owns his own house and has £5,000 in savings. His personal budget is calculated at £100 per week and he has decided to let Devon purchase and arrange all services for him.

Bill has confirmed that he gets pension credit and attendance allowance as income and that no one is paid carers allowance for looking after him. He agrees that he uses the standard amount for his disability related expenses (DRE). He is therefore able to have the short assessment and will fit into Band 2 with the standard contribution of £19.30 per week.

Bill agrees by telephone and is then sent a letter of confirmation which he signs and returns. As Bills personal budget is for commissioned services he will receive an invoice every 4 weeks for £77.20 (4 x £19.30) as his contribution towards his personal budget.

Full Financial Assessment

The full financial assessment is usually carried out by one of our Financial Assessment and Benefits Officers who will arrange a time to meet with you. It usually takes place in your home however it can be carried out in another place, for example a relative or friend's home. If you prefer, it is often helpful to have a relative or friend to help you at the time of the visit.

We will work out your weekly contribution by looking at your weekly income, including pensions, state benefits, any capital/savings, and then deducting any appropriate household and disability related expenses. However, the Financial Assessment and Benefits Officer will need to see evidence of all financial documents, such as your benefit award letter, building society & bank statements and evidence of all expenditure claimed e.g. bills, invoices and receipts.

Example 2 - Full Financial Assessment

Gillian is a 75 year old woman who lives alone. She owns her own house and has £16,000 in savings. Her personal budget is calculated at £65 per week and she has decided to have this in the form of direct payments. Gillian pays a local lady and her husband for cleaning, gardening, shopping etc for which she has invoices and receipts as evidence.

Gillian confirmed that she **does not** get pension credit but does get attendance allowance. This means Gillian will need to complete the full financial assessment to determine her contribution. A visit is arranged and the following information gathered:

Income

State Pension:	£125.65
Attendance Allowance	£ 49.30
Occupational Pension	£104.77
Tariff Income on capital of £16,000	£ 7.00

Total income: £286.72

Applicable Outgoings (weekly)

Council Tax	£19.54
Water Rates	£17.10
House & Contents Insurance	£ 8.30
Disability related expenses with evidence	£40.00

Deduct Pension Guarantee Credit Threshold: £171.69 (Set minimum amount plus 25%)

Income available for charging: £ 30.09

The £30.09 figure is compared with the amount of Gillian's personal budget (£65) and her contribution will be the lower figure i.e. £30.09 per week. As Gillian is having her personal budget in the form of direct payments, the amount deposited in her direct payment account will be £34.91 per week (£65.00 less £30.09) and she will pay her contribution of £30.09 into the account which she will then use to pay for her care.

It was also identified that Gillian may be eligible to receive the higher rate of Attendance Allowance and help was provided for her to complete the claim form.

What if I have Capital/Savings over £23,250?

Under our charging policy, people who have savings/capital of more than £23,250 will be required to pay the full cost of their care and support.

The value of your home in which you normally reside is disregarded when calculating your weekly contribution. However, the value of additional properties may be considered a capital asset.

Tariff Income

If you have savings/capital between £14,250 and £23,250 (jointly held savings will usually be divided in two) we will take into account an assumed income of £1.00 per week for every £250 or part of £250 above £14,250.

For example, if you have savings of £15,300 we will assume a weekly income of £5; if you have savings of £21,500 we will assume a weekly income of £29. This figure is then added to your actual weekly income for the purpose of the financial assessment.

(DRE) Standard Amount which will be off-set without evidence

Disability Related Expenditure is additional expenditure which can be taken into account and offset against disability income as part of the financial assessment process.

The financial assessment requires that a person is expected to provide evidence of all disability related expenditure claimed to determine the exact amount which can be allowed. However, we recognise that having a full assessment of your disability related expenditure (DRE) can be difficult, time consuming and intrusive.

Therefore, we are able to apply a standard amount for DRE without evidence, which can be offset against your disability income. This amount is currently £30 per week and you have a choice as part of both the full and short financial assessment to agree to this. If you feel your disability related expenditure may be higher, then you will need to provide evidence of all outgoings and expenses claimed. If this results in a higher figure for example £38 then we will use the figure of £38. However, if the evidence indicates a lower figure for example £17 then we will use the figure of £17 in the financial assessment calculation.

What if I disagree with my Financial Assessment?

If you disagree with the amount of your weekly contribution you can appeal. To do this you will need to complete and return form SS280C which is attached to your notification letter confirming the amount that you will have to pay. The form should be returned to the Divisional Manager, Client Finance Services, Room G85, County Hall, Topsham Road, Exeter who will deal with your appeal.

What if my Circumstances Change?

You will need to tell us if your financial circumstances change. To do this you must notify the Fairer Charging Team (address below) in writing enclosing evidence of changes or complete and return form SS280C (with evidence) which is attached to your notification letter confirming the amount that you will have to pay.

Additional copies of form SS280C can be obtained by telephoning 01392 382334 or writing to Fairer Charging Team, Client Finance Services, Room G85, County Hall, Topsham Road, Exeter and when completed should be returned to the same address.

Paying your Assessed Charge for Services

How you pay for your social care services will depend upon how you take your Personal Budget:

Services arranged by DCC:

An invoice will be sent every 4 weeks which will show the different ways that you can pay. Your contribution is based against the value of your personal budget and not number of units of different types of services received. Consequently the invoices you receive will not vary. So for example if your weekly contribution is £20 then each invoice you receive will be for £80 (4 x 20).

Direct Payments only

You will be expected to put your assessed weekly contribution into your newly created direct payments account. This means that your contribution will be deducted from the payment you receive into your direct payment account.

A mixture of Services arranged by DCC and Direct Payments

Usually, the direct payment portion will be greater than your weekly contribution. You will be expected to put your assessed weekly contribution into your newly created direct payments account. This means that your contribution will be deducted from the payment you receive into your direct payment account. If the direct payment portion is less, then you will be invoiced for the balance.

When will I start to pay?

You will be charged from the date you are notified of the contribution you will have to pay. In most cases this will normally be the day you are contacted for your Financial Assessment to be carried out (assuming your service has started). However where there have been difficulties in arranging your Financial Assessment, due to your unavailability, we will charge from the date of first contact.

For more information about:

The financial assessment process, contact Client Finance Services, Room G85, County Hall, Topsham Road, Exeter. Telephone number 01392 382334 or email Fairercharging@devon.gov.uk

You can find more information about Personal Budgets and Direct Payments online at <http://www.devon.gov.uk/index/socialcarehealth/factsheets.htm>.

A large print version of this factsheet is available on www.devon.gov.uk/largeprint-factsheets but if you would like it in a different format such as Braille or audio, or in a different language, please contact our Customer Service Centre on 0845 155 1015 or email customer@devon.gov.uk.