

Factsheet 2c – 08 November 2010 (2 pages)

Fairer Charging Assessments for Supporting People

If you are receiving a Supporting People service you will be entitled to receive this service free of charge if you are in receipt of Housing Benefit. If you are not receiving Housing Benefit you can request a Fairer Charging Assessment which will determine the contribution you pay towards your weekly charge.

Devon County Council, in partnership with the Department of Work & Pensions (DWP) and the Citizens Advice Bureaux (CAB), has formed a Finance and Benefits team (FAB) that will complete the financial assessment. They will arrange a suitable time to visit you at home and will send you a list of the documents they will need to see, such as, your benefit books, building society and bank statements.

It is often helpful if you have a relative or friend to help you at the time of the visit.

When our FAB team visit they will offer a welfare benefit check to make sure that you are receiving all the benefits you are entitled to. If you are eligible to claim an extra benefit, they can help you complete the necessary forms and send in the application. If your claim is successful we may need to recalculate your weekly charge.

How much will I have to pay?

If you have capital and/or savings of **more than £23,250** (excluding the home you live in), you will pay the full charge.

Many people who receive income support (pension credit) are either required to pay a small weekly charge or in many cases won't have to contribute towards their service costs at all.

Supporting People service users pay for their services in two different ways depending on whether they receive an accommodation-based or floating support service.

Accommodation-based services. Usually this is a service where your landlord is also your support provider. If you are receiving an accommodation-based service e.g. paying for a warden and/or an alarm service you will already be paying a weekly charge for this service. Your assessment will determine the amount of contribution you have to pay. Supporting People will pay the balance of the charge direct to your service provider. Your provider should advise you of your right to apply for a fairer charging assessment when you start to receive the service, for example:

- If you pay £12.00 a week for a warden and alarm service and are assessed with a nil contribution then Supporting People will pay this charge in full.
- If you pay £16.00 a week for a warden and alarm service and are assessed with a £10 contribution then you will pay £10.00 a week to your support provider and Supporting People will pay the balance of £6.00 directly to the provider.

Floating support service. This type of service is generally delivered by a provider other than your landlord. Before taking up the service your provider will advise you whether you will have to pay. If you receive Housing Benefit it will be free. If you have capital over £23,250 you will have to pay in full. In all other cases your provider should advise you to apply for a Fairer Charging Assessment. This will determine your weekly contribution and you will be charged up to this amount, for example:

- If your assessed charge, after your financial assessment, is £33.00 per week and you have 3 hours support at £16.00 per hour then the total cost would be 3 x £16.00, a total of £48.00. You will still only be required to pay £33.00.
- If your assessed charge, after your financial assessment, is £33.00 per week and you only have 2 hours support at £16.00 per hour then you would be charged 2 x £16.00, a total of £32.00

What if I disagree with my financial assessment?

If you disagree ask your visiting officer for a form to record your objection. The form should be returned to Devon County Council who will advise you in writing of your weekly charge once they have considered the reasons for your disagreement.

If your financial circumstances change you should complete the request for a review form, left by the visiting officer, and send it to the address on the form or contact Care Direct 0845 1551 007 who will pass your request to the appropriate person.

Paying your assessed charge for services

Accommodation-based services

You will already be paying this directly to your service provider. The amount you pay will be reduced to the assessed amount as determined by your assessment. This will start from the first Monday after receipt of your application for an assessment.

Floating support service

If you are assessed as being able to pay a contribution, or have to pay in full for your service, then you will be sent an invoice every 4 weeks to collect this charge. The Supporting People team will contact your provider to obtain details of the number of hours delivered during the period to be invoiced.

For more information about:

- the financial assessment process, contact **Care Direct on 0845 1551 007**
- Supporting People services, contact the helpdesk on **01392 382973**

or check out the Devon County Council website www.devon.gov.uk/fin-assess-ben.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.