

Paying for your care in a care home

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Paying for your care in a care home

Assessing your needs

Before we can determine how much you will pay for your care, we need to work with you to assess your needs. This involves talking with you, your carer if you have one, and other people who know about the different aspects of your life such as your physical health, your emotional health, how you manage to look after yourself, and your current family and support networks. Our first conversation with you could be face to face, on the phone, digitally or by post.

As part of your care and support planning, we will have a conversation with you to find out what matters most to you now and in the future to keep you healthy and safe. Instead of asking 'what is the matter with you?' we will ask 'what matters to you?' so we can find out what's important to you. We want to have the right conversation with you so we can find the right solution with you.

Paying for a care home

In circumstances where you are considering going into a care home (residential or nursing) we will first consider if you have eligible need for care and support in a care home to ensure that the home is appropriate for you compared to other options such as care in your own home or Extra Care Housing. Options will be discussed with you and your Lead Assessor and a Care and Support Plan agreed. This will look at what you want to achieve (also known as outcomes) and outline the ways in which you want your needs to be met.

We will not provide funding or other financial assistance if we do not consider a care home to be the most appropriate type of care for you.

If you have savings and assets over £50,000

If you have savings or assets over £50,000 then you will be expected to pay for the full cost of your care home. By savings and assets, we mean bank or building society accounts, ISA's, bonds, shares, investments, property and any other savings and assets you may have.

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What happens if I have to pay the full cost?

If you have savings or assets over £50,000 and are able to arrange your own care, or have given somebody else legal power to represent you, we will expect you to enter into a private arrangement with your chosen residential or nursing home.

Things to note when paying privately for a care home

If you are making your own arrangements with a care home, you should make sure that they provide you with a contract detailing the home's obligations and fees. It is important to be sure what services are included in the fees, what may be charged as 'extras', and how much notice is given if fees are going to be increased.

If you are paying your own fees, make sure you are claiming all the benefits to which you are entitled.

If the home chosen provides nursing care, you will need to have your nursing needs assessed. This is because the NHS funds care provided by a registered nurse for people assessed as having such a need. You can find more information in the section below entitled 'Nursing care costs'.

What if I choose a home that is more expensive?

You need to consider carefully the care home you choose. Some people select an expensive home and then use up all of their savings.

If the home you choose costs more than the option offered by the council, you will have to find someone who can pay the difference or you may have to move to a less expensive home.

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What happens when my assets and savings fall below £50,000?

If you believe your savings or assets are likely to fall below £50,000, you should contact us to arrange a full financial assessment. The calculations we use during the financial assessment are outlined below.

If you haven't already received one, we will also need to complete a needs assessment to ensure that the care home is the most appropriate care for you.

As these processes may take some time and we can only help you with funding from when you first contact us, we recommend that you contact us on 0300 456 1000 when your remaining savings and assets are only sufficient to pay for your next three months' care home fees.

What happens if I have assets and savings under £50,000?

If you have savings and assets under £50,000 we will need to complete a financial assessment.

How is the financial assessment completed?

Your Lead Assessor will give you a Financial Assistance form to complete. You will need to return it to the Financial Assessment Team (details at the end of this document) together with supporting documentation.

When all of the information has been provided and the assessment completed, the team will write to you and inform you of the outcome.

You will be expected to pay your contribution direct to the care home and from the date you entered the care home.

You will be expected to keep your money to one side until we are able to confirm what your contribution will be.

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The residential assessment calculation

The following simple example shows the principles of how we work out your residential financial assessment;

Savings and assets (including property) + income – minimum income amount = assessed contribution

Savings and assets

We take into account most types of savings and assets the property you own which may be the property in which you live and any additional property you own.

Income

We will include almost all benefits and other income such as occupational pensions, annuities and income from property rental.

However, we may disregard or partly disregard certain types of income.

For example, we disregard the mobility component of Disability Living Allowance / Personal Independence Payments from all assessments.

Minimum income amount

The minimum income amount is an amount set by Welsh Government and is the minimum amount you must be left with if you are in a permanent care home placement.

Welsh Government usually increases this amount annually from April.

If you have responsibility for dependents not living in the same care home, or who have continuing expenses unrelated to their care home costs we may, exceptionally, be able to increase your minimum income amount.

Please contact our Financial Assessment Team for more information (contact details can be found at the end of this document).

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What if I own a property?

If you own your own home, this will be included in your financial assessment. However, the home will not be taken into account if one of the following people also lives in the home, and will continue to live there after you have moved into a care home:

- a husband, wife or civil partner;
- a close relative over the age of 60;
- a dependent child;
- a relative who is disabled or incapacitated

Twelve-week property disregards

If we take your home into account, we will ignore its value for the first 12 weeks of your permanent stay in a care home. If you have already been permanently resident in a care home before the Council started to help, you might not be entitled to this disregard or only part of it depending on your length of stay. This is also referred to as a 12-week property disregard. The aim of this is to give you time to decide what you are going to do with your former home.

During this period, you will still be expected to contribute towards your care from your income and other assets.

You will also have to continue to maintain the property and meet any on-going costs that arise.

The Deferred Payments Scheme

The Deferred Payments Scheme is designed to help you if you have been assessed as having to pay the full cost of your residential care but cannot afford to pay the full weekly charge because your capital is tied up in your home.

Effectively, the scheme offers you a loan from Denbighshire County Council using your home as security. It doesn't work in exactly the same way as a conventional loan – the

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council doesn't give you a fixed sum of money when you join the scheme, but instead pays an agreed part of your weekly care and support costs for as long as is necessary.

We will financially assess your ability to pay a weekly contribution towards your care from your income and other savings using the assessment calculation above. We will ask you to pay this contribution on a monthly basis direct to the care home.

The difference between your assessed weekly contribution and the actual cost of your care home is the 'deferred payment'. The deferred payment builds up as a debt, which is repaid when your house is sold. If you decide not to sell your property during your lifetime, the debt must be repaid to the council from your estate after your death.

The Deferred Payment Agreement

If you decide to use the Deferred Payments Scheme, you will have to enter into a legal agreement with the council by signing an agreement document, which we call the Deferred Payment Agreement. The council then places a 'legal charge' on your property to safeguard the loan.

Please see our leaflet titled 'The Deferred Payment Scheme' if you wish to find out more.

Are there any costs involved in a Deferred Payment Agreement?

There are administration charges to cover the cost of setting up and maintaining the agreement for as long as is necessary. Other charges, such as legal costs and land registry fees, may also apply.

The loan will have interest charged on it in the same way that interest is charged on a normal loan of money borrowed from a bank. The interest the council charges follows guidance provided by Welsh Government, which is reviewed regularly.

This interest will be compound.

Benefits and care home fees

Depending on the outcome of the financial assessment, your benefits may be affected.

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If you are funding your own care, you will still be entitled to your benefits and these can help towards paying fees.

If we are paying for your care in a care home, you may not be entitled to receive all of your benefits. Any benefits you do continue to receive will be included in the council's financial assessment of how much you are expected to contribute towards the cost of your care.

If you would like further information about how your benefits may be affected if you go into a care home, you should contact the Department of Work and Pensions. You can phone them on 0345 606 0265, or for Welsh language 0345 606 0275.

Top-up fees

A top-up is the difference between the cost of the care that the council has identified will meet your eligible needs and the cost of your chosen accommodation, if it is higher.

For example:

The council assesses that your eligible needs can be met in a care home which costs £507 per week. You wish to choose a care home which costs £525 per week. As your chosen care home costs more than the option the council has provided, a top-up payment of £18 per week will need to be paid.

Any top-up will need to be paid in addition to the amount you have been assessed to contribute towards the cost of your care.

Paying the top-up

This must be paid by someone other than you or us - usually a family member, friend or organisation. You may only pay the top-up yourself, where you own a property and:

- because of your financial assessment, you are subject to a 12-week property disregard
- you have entered into a Deferred Payment Agreement with us
- or if you receive income that has been disregarded following your assessment

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If you are unable to sustain paying a top-up you may have to move to a less expensive care home. To avoid this disruption, it is important to consider whether you will be able to continue to pay the fees in a more expensive home for as long as is needed.

If someone other than yourself agrees to pay the top-Up (known as a third party top-up) there are implications that they need to understand:

- for a third-party top-up to be put in place, a third-party – such as family member(s), friend, employer, organisation or charity – must be willing and able to pay and be able to demonstrate this to the council.
- they should seek independent legal advice to fully understand the implications
- where the third party is an organisation, we will require a letter from a legal representative of the organisation confirming that the organisation has the means and capacity to sustain payments for the period required.

Independent financial advice

It is important that you obtain independent financial advice to help you make the right decision about funding your care.

The [Financial Conduct Authority's website](#) has a range of advice and information on finding financial advice, including;

- how to find and choose a suitable adviser
- what to expect from an adviser
- the difference between independent and restricted advisers
- charging options

All advisers should be accredited by the Financial Conduct Authority (FCA).

The [My Care My Home website](#) offers individuals and their families advice about the cost of care and funding options available to them. They offer a free telephone and face-to-face advice service through home visits, aimed at helping people find a suitable care home.

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The full service, some of which is chargeable, is explained in detail on the [My Care My Home website](#) or you can call their free phone number 0800 731 8470.

There is also free advice available on the [Age UK website](#) and the [Saga website](#).

Nursing care costs

Funded nursing care

The NHS is responsible for providing free nursing care (delivered by a registered nurse) in a nursing care home which is paid for directly to the nursing home in addition to the care home fees. If your needs are being met in a nursing care home and you are self-funding, that is where you are paying all of the care home fees, the care home will apply for what is known as funded nursing care direct from the local health board, which is part of the NHS.

Once it has been confirmed by the NHS that funded nursing care is appropriate for you, it will pay towards the nursing element of your care. This is a standard weekly amount set by the health board and reviewed each year.

Continuing health care

You may be entitled to receive funding from the NHS that will cover the full cost of your care, whether in your own home or in a care home – this is called NHS Continuing Health Care funding. It can be awarded for set periods of time or indefinitely, depending on the individual case.

Care fees and the Mental Health Act

If you have been detained in hospital for an assessment or treatment under the Mental Health Act, the NHS is responsible for any related aftercare that you may need. This can include any care you need in your own home or in a care home.

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Useful contacts

General information

For more information about Community Support Services and to find out about advocacy services please contact us via our Single Point of Access (SPoA) team;

- Phone us on 0300 456 1000
- Email us at spoa@denbighshire.gov.uk
- submit an enquiry via the [Denbighshire County Council website](#)

Information about the financial assessment calculation and charges

For information about the financial assessment calculation and information on charges, please contact the Finance, Income & Assessment Team;

- Write to us at: Finance, Income & Assessment Team, Denbighshire County Council, PO Box 62, Ruthin Denbighshire LL15 1AZ
- Phone Rhyl: 01824 706392 or phone Ruthin: 01824 712403
- Email us at fao.team@denbighshire.gov.uk

Information and advice about claiming benefits you may be entitled to

For information and advice about claiming benefits please contact Citizens Advice who provide a free, confidential, impartial and independent advice service on a wide range of subjects, as well as specialist advice on debt and welfare benefits.

Their office opening hours vary across Denbighshire, so please phone or check the website for details;

- Advice phone line 03444 77 20 20
- Website for [Citizens advice Denbighshire](#)