



## **Paying for services in a care home (residential care and nursing care)**

This factsheet will be helpful if you are an adult who needs help with paying for services in a care home. You may already be living in a care home, paying your own fees and find that your savings are reducing, or you may be considering moving into a care home.

The factsheet explains how Dorset County Council Adult and Community Services work out how much you will have to pay towards the cost of your care.

Each person requiring funding must have their care needs assessed and must meet the eligibility criteria for funding. The amount a person has to pay will depend on their individual financial circumstances. The rules for deciding how much people pay towards service in care homes, and the capital limits for funding are laid down by the central government in the 'Charging for Residential Accommodation Guide'.

Currently people with more than \*£23,250 capital will be required to pay the full care costs although they may be eligible for free nursing care.

Please note that if you have been assessed as needing continuing NHS care services, or you have been placed in a care home under section 117 of the Mental Health Act 1983, you will not be charged for your care whilst you continue to be eligible for funding and this factsheet will not apply to you.

### **The financial assessment**

If we assess that you require services in a care home and you wish to apply for funding for your placement, we will work out how much you will be required to pay towards the care costs. This is called a financial assessment. A Financial Assessment and Benefit (FAB) Officer will either visit you, or a person you have nominated to act on your behalf, to collect information about your



income and savings. The visiting officer will also ensure that you are receiving all the benefits you are entitled to. Any information provided will be treated in confidence in accordance with the Data Protection Act.

\*Rate as at April 2012

### **What we will need to see**

It would be helpful if you could have the following information available for the visiting officer:

#### *Income*

- Letter from the Department for Work and Pensions giving details of all the benefits you receive, e.g. Retirement Pension, Income Support, Pension Credit, Guarantee and Savings Credit, Attendance Allowance, and/or a bank statement showing these payments
- Notification of any private pension or annuity
- Details of any other income you may have

#### *Savings*

- Bank Statements
- Building Society Books
- National Savings Books
- Premium Bonds and National Savings Certificates
- Stock and Share Certificates
- Details of endowment insurance policies
- The value of land or property (other than your own home) that you own
- Details of any other savings and investments

### **Calculating your charge**

Any savings below £14,250 are ignored. For savings of £23,250 or less but more than £14,250, we will assume an income of £1 per week for every £250 or part thereof. E.g. If you have savings of £16,500 we would ignore the first £14,250 leaving £2,250. We will assume an income of £9 a week. This is called 'tariff income'.

The charge you will be expected to pay will be your total weekly income, including any tariff income, less the statutory personal



allowance, currently £23.50 weekly. If you are over 65 you may qualify for an additional savings disregard of up to £5.75 weekly. Please note that some income is disregarded from the assessment. For example, 50% of any personal pension you may have if you are maintaining your spouse at home, and if your stay at the care home is temporary, we will make extra allowances for the upkeep of your own home.

### **Information about choice of home**

If you would prefer to live in a care home and the fees are more expensive than the amount that has been agreed for your placement, you can still be funded in the home if the care manager agrees that the accommodation is suitable and providing that another person is able to meet the difference in costs. This is called a 'top-up'. The legislation prevents residents 'topping up' their own fees if they choose more expensive accommodation, although there is one exception to this rule. The exception is that if you own your own home you will be allowed to live in more expensive accommodation and 'top-up' your own fees during the first twelve weeks of a permanent placement. However, if you choose to take this option, you should be aware that if your disposable capital runs out before you can sell your property; it is unlikely that the local authority will be able to make up the shortfall in your care costs. Your care manager should be able to advise you about this.

### **Your home**

When you move into a care home on a permanent basis the value of your home is disregarded for the first 12 weeks. After that we may include the value of your home, as savings, but this will depend on your individual circumstances.

We will not take the value of your home into account if someone else lives in it that is:

- Your husband/wife or partner
- A relative who is aged 60 or over
- A relative who is disabled
- A dependent child



(A relative means a parent, child, step-parent, step-child, brother, sister (or their husband/ wife or partner), grandparent, grandchild, uncle, aunt, nephew or niece).

We do have discretion to disregard the value of your property in exceptional circumstances, for example if there is a person living in the property that has no other home and has been your long term carer.

### **Deferred payments**

If your home is included in the assessment of charge you do not have to sell it. If you do not want to sell your home or can't sell it quickly enough to pay for your care you may apply for the deferred payment scheme. Under this scheme, Dorset County Council places a legal charge on your property and in return pay your care costs, less any charges that you can pay from your weekly income. The amount that Dorset County Council pay will accrue as a debt, just like a mortgage, although no interest is added while you remain in the care home. The debt must be repaid by you or your estate as soon as the property is sold, or within 56 days of you leaving care. There is a charge for the administration costs involved in setting up the legal charge.

### **Short term breaks**

If it is agreed for you to go into a care home for a planned short break, a change of scene or so that your carer can have a holiday, providing you have under £23,250 you will be asked to contribute a flat-rate weekly charge.

### **Flat-rate charges**

If you move into a care home before your charge has been assessed you can opt to pay a flat-rate charge for the first four weeks of your placement whilst your charge is being assessed.

### **More information**

This factsheet is a brief guide to charging people in care homes. If you require detailed information please do not hesitate to contact the Financial Assessment Team at County Hall, Dorchester, telephone 01305 224945, 01305 224894 or 01305 228581.



## **Compliments and complaints**

Adult and Community Services staff in Dorset are committed to providing quality services to our service users, their carers and families. We welcome comments from our service users as this helps us to understand what aspects of our service people like.

If you are unhappy about the service you have received and want to make a complaint, our factsheet 'How to complain' describes the procedure. Our Complaints Officer can give you advice on the process and can be contacted on 01305 228563.

## **Diversity statement**

Diversity is not about treating everyone in the same way, but about recognising and valuing difference, as well as recognising and addressing inequalities and disadvantage.

As an employer and service provider, Dorset County Council seeks to promote an environment that accepts and actively supports diversity in age, gender, ethnic origin, sexual orientation, religious belief, disability, culture, work style and the many other ways in which people differ from each other.

All our factsheets are available in large print and on audio cassette/CD, Braille, Easy to Read or alternative languages. Please contact the Information Office on 01305 224320.

Further information on services provided by Dorset County Council Adult and Community Services can be accessed at [www.dorsetforyou.com](http://www.dorsetforyou.com)

