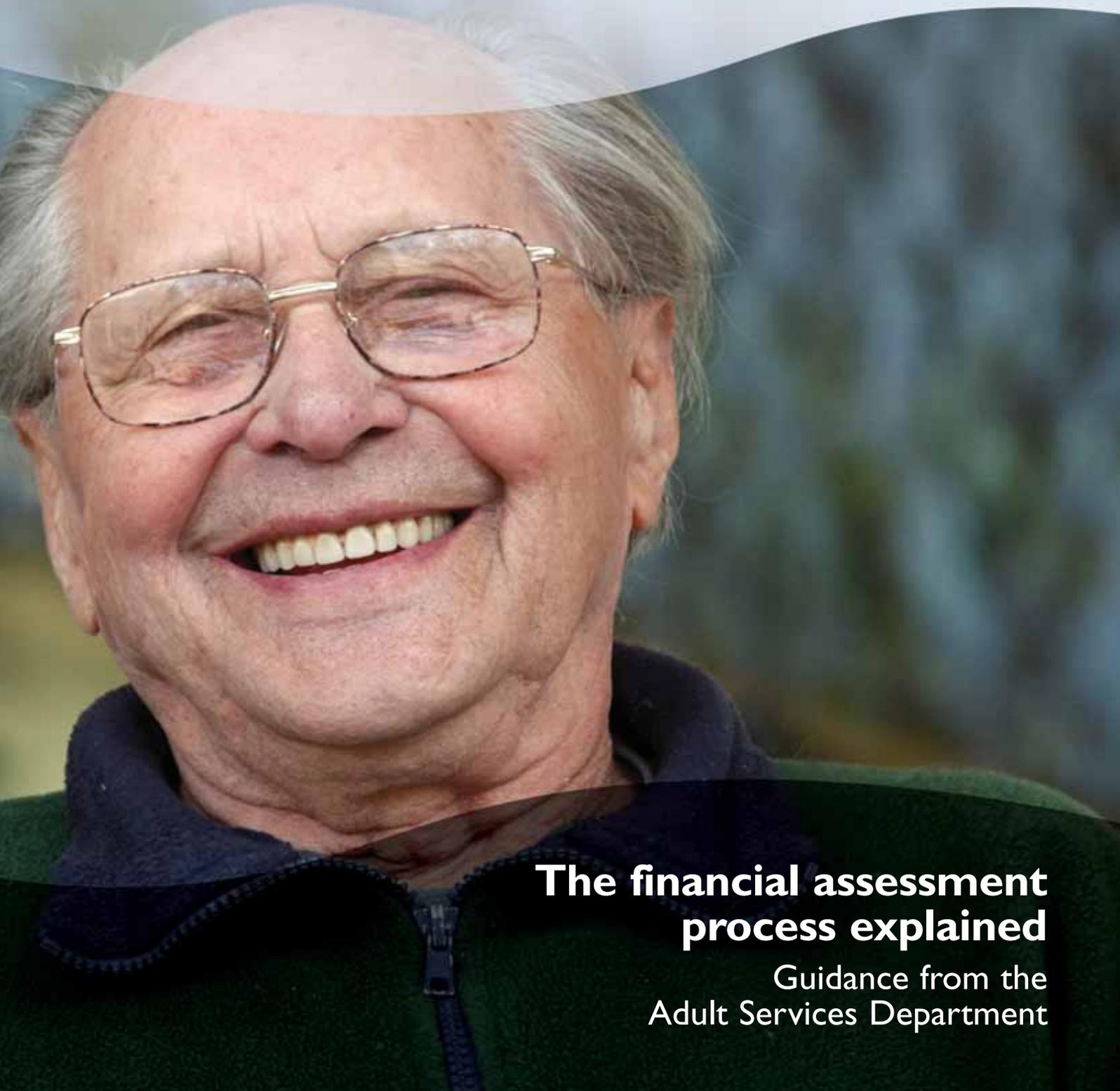


# Paying for Care at Home

November 2009



**The financial assessment  
process explained**

Guidance from the  
Adult Services Department



**Hampshire**  
County Council



## Financial Assessments and Benefits (FAB) Team

If you have any questions as a result of reading this booklet or about the financial assessment process, please contact the Financial Assessments and Benefits (FAB) Team on 01962 845600. Alternatively, you can write to them at Queen Elizabeth II Court South, The Castle, Winchester, SO23 8UB.

## Equality

Whenever you have dealings with Adult Services, you will not get less favourable treatment than others because of your gender, disability, age, ethnic or national origin, religious creed, marital status or sexual orientation.

## Complaints

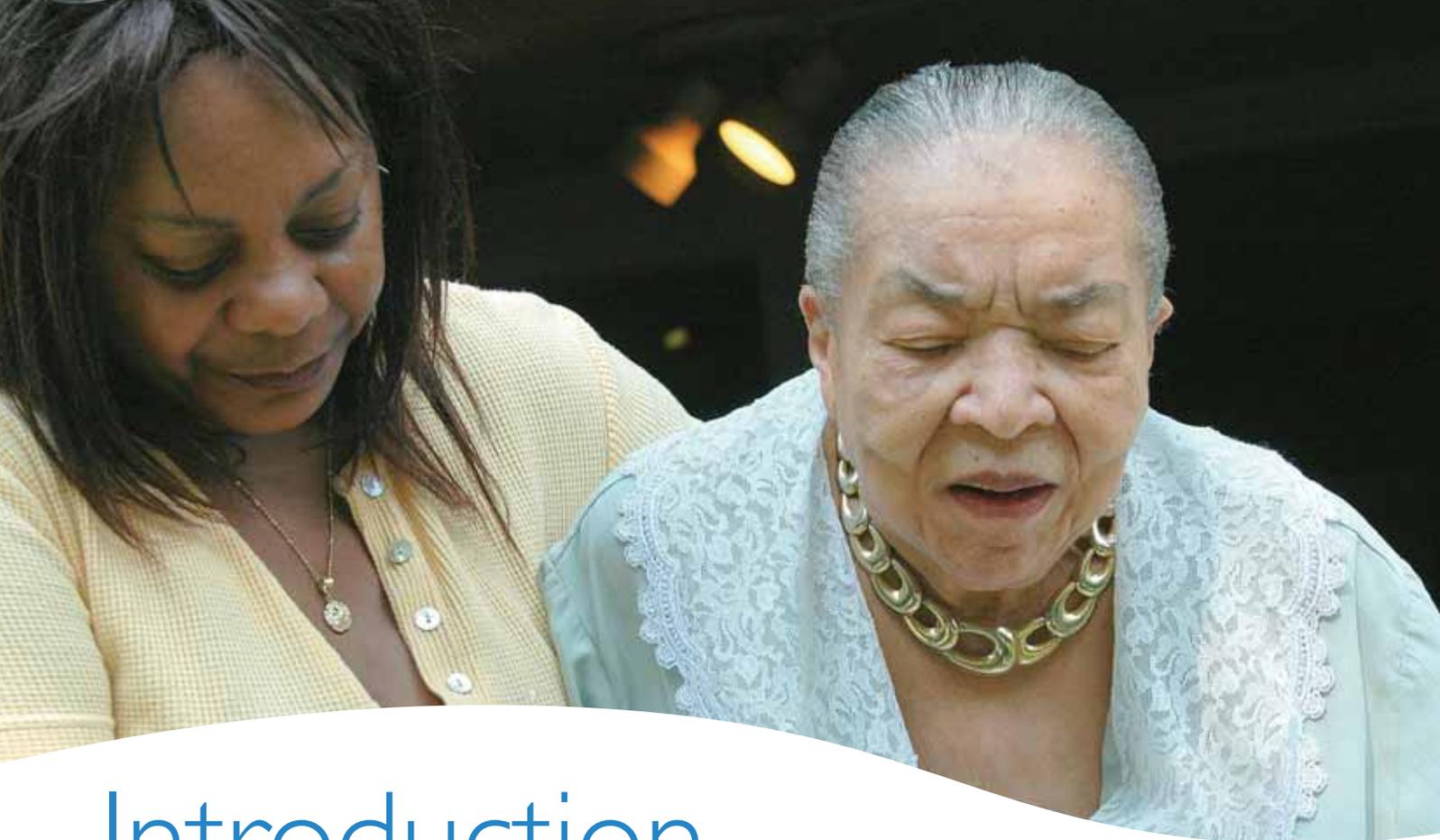
If you are not happy with any aspect of the service you have received from us or with the way you've been treated, speak first to the person you have been dealing with or their manager.

If things cannot be resolved this way, ask your local Adult Services office for a copy of 'Tell us what you think' which also tells you what to do if you want to make a complaint. You can also contact 0845 603 5630.

**For a copy of this booklet in another language or format (e.g., large print) please phone 0845 603 5630**

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# Introduction

In September 2003, the Department of Health published “*Fairer Charging Policies for Home Care and Non- Residential Social Services*”. This document explained that anyone who receives adult care through services in their own home will be offered a financial assessment to work out what, if anything, they can afford to contribute towards the cost of their care.

Hampshire County Council Adult Services Department has produced this booklet to help you understand the financial assessment process. We want to answer your most common questions - from why the assessment is carried out to what you need to do to prepare for it.

**Please read this important information carefully before you meet with a member of the Financial Assessments and Benefits (FAB) Team.**

Don't forget that whenever you are meeting someone from Adult Services to talk about your

finances or your care, you can ask a member of your family, a friend or advocate to be there as well to help you.

## Legal Authority

If you have legal authority to act for the person in receipt of care - such as Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) Appointeeship, Court of Protection Receivership, Court Appointed Deputy, Power of Attorney, Enduring Power of Attorney or Lasting Power of Attorney.

We will ask you to provide photocopies of these documents to the FAB officer at the visit.

### **Legal authority regarding management of finances**

A lasting power of attorney or a court appointed deputy can be used for finance or health and welfare. For financial assessment they will need to have authority to deal with finances.

The hourly rates for care at home services are reviewed every year in April. Please refer to the leaflet *Charges and terms for care at home services* or ask your care manager for details of charges.

## Are all care at home services charged for?

No – we charge for services that give personal care and some other help at home, including services where someone comes to give a carer a short break. We do not charge for information, advice and 'care management' (that is, discussing and assessing needs and arranging care services), for help, advice, and equipment from our occupational therapists, for help in claiming benefits, or for sessions at day centres or day services. However, if you attend a day centre there may be a charge for transport or meals, which you pay direct to the centre.

## Why is a financial assessment necessary?

We would like, where possible, to give people the care and support they need to stay in their own home and retain their independence. We have to ask for a contribution from those who can afford to pay something towards the cost of their care so that we can help as many people as possible to get the services they need. Therefore, everyone who receives services needs to have a financial assessment to work out what, if anything, they can afford to pay.

## Do I have to have a financial assessment?

You can choose not to have a financial assessment if you wish. However, this could mean that you will pay the full charge for the care that your care manager has agreed with you. The financial assessment is there to work out if you are entitled to financial assistance from Hampshire County Council. Importantly, another reason to have the financial assessment is that the information you provide concerning your finances will help the Financial Assessments and Benefits (FAB) team member decide whether you may be entitled to welfare benefits that you aren't getting. We can give you information about benefits, and can help you with making a claim, if you wish.

## When will I have the financial assessment?

Your care manager will agree a 'care plan' with you, which will outline the services you need and how they can be provided. When the 'care plan' is agreed, your care manager will arrange for someone from our FAB team to contact you to arrange a visit in order to carry out an assessment of your financial circumstances. This financial assessment is always carried out after your care needs have been assessed. In other words, the services you are offered are those which will meet your needs and are never affected by how much you can afford to pay towards them.



## What are the guidelines for whether I should pay and what is taken into account – in a nutshell?

When assessing your financial situation to see whether you should pay towards care at home services, each local authority has an **upper and lower savings limit** (in 2009, for example, the upper limit in Hampshire was £23,000 and the lower limit was £14,000). These usually go up every April. (To see the current savings limits, please refer to the small leaflet **Charges and terms for care at home services**).

If you have **more than the upper savings limit** (i.e., in 2009, if you have savings of more than £23,000), you will be asked to pay the **full hourly rate** for your services up to the weekly maximum limit on contributions (see leaflet as above).

If you have **less than the upper limit**, or when your savings drop below this limit, then your ability to pay for care at home will be assessed by looking at **both your capital and your income**:

- Any savings you have **below the lower limit** (i.e., in 2009 savings less than £14,000) are ignored.
- Savings **between** the lower and the upper limit are converted into an 'assumed' weekly income using a simple formula. This is often called a **tariff** income. For every £250, or part of £250, you have over the lower savings limit, £1 a week will be added to your income. (For example, if your savings were £15,150 in 2009, we would take that portion over the lower savings limit of £14,000 - £1,150 - and £5 would be added to your income).

The value of the home you live in is not included when calculating your savings.

When calculating your income, we will ignore:

- any income you have from earnings;
- any Pension Credit savings credit you get;
- age-related payments, for example Winter Fuel Allowance.

The income and savings of your husband, wife or registered civil partner or anyone else you live with is not taken into account. Only your income\* and capital is counted, **unless**:

- you have a legal entitlement to your partner's income; or
- you are part of a couple **and** your benefits (e.g., Pension Credit) are paid to one of you on behalf of both.

The value of anything held jointly (for example, bank or building society accounts) is split equally between all the holders.

\* You may opt to have a joint assessment if you wish. Please speak to the FAB team member who will advise you if this would be beneficial.



## What should I do before my meeting with the FAB team member?

It will be helpful for you and any friend, relative or advocate you might like at the meeting with you, to read this booklet. This will help you both understand the financial assessment process. Your care manager will also give you some information from the FAB team to have a look through, and a copy of the form we use for details of your finances – the Statement of Financial Circumstances (often referred to by its reference number, the SAS10).

## What information will I need to have ready for the meeting?

In preparation for the assessment, please can you gather as many receipts as possible for any expenses you have because of disability which are for things which are not included in your care plan, and for which you are paying separately (called 'disability related expenses' – DREs); and household expenses. You will also need to show evidence (e.g. benefit notifications, bank statements/books, utility bills) of your income, savings, household costs and any expenses you have because of your disability, frailty or condition.

It is important that this information is ready for when the FAB team member calls to carry out the Financial Assessment. You may find the following checklists useful (these are only examples and not a complete list):

### Types of income you may have:

#### Pensions, such as:

- Pension credit
- Retirement pension
- Works/Private Pensions
- Annuities
- Charitable payments

#### Other benefits, such as:

- Income support
- Employment & Support Allowance (ESA)
- Attendance allowance
- Disability living allowance
- Incapacity benefit
- Severe disablement allowance
- War pension

### Types of savings you may have:

- Savings in a bank or building society
- Post Office savings/National Savings
- Premium bonds
- Stocks and shares, unit trusts
- Cash over £250
- Trust funds
- ISAs, PEPs etc
- The value of any properties you own which you are not living in

### Types of expenses you may have:

#### Types of household costs you may incur:

- Mortgage payments
- Insurance premiums
- Rent
- Council tax
- Water charges
- Boiler or water pipes policy

#### Types of disability expenses you may incur:

- Community alarm
- Help with cleaning etc
- Personal care paid for privately
- Special diet
- Extra laundry
- Extra bedding
- Special clothing
- Extra heating fuel
- Help in the garden
- Transport costs i.e. taxi fares, bus fares
- Special equipment i.e. mobility scooter, stair lifts,
- Maintenance of wheelchair

## Will my benefits count as income for the financial assessment?

Some benefits that you claim will count as income in your financial assessment whilst others won't. The member of the FAB team who carries out your financial assessment will discuss matters fully with you. However, it is important that this fact doesn't deter you from having a financial assessment as the process may identify other benefits you are entitled to, which could help you pay for your care (such as Attendance Allowance or Disability Living Allowance). If you start receiving a benefit, or extra benefit(s), after we have carried out your financial assessment, you must let us know straight away. The extra money may make a difference to your contribution.

## What happens if I give away money or property before I am financially assessed?

During the financial assessment, you will have to declare:

"I understand that if the County Council has reasons to believe that I have deprived myself of a capital asset in order to reduce my charge for care at home I will be treated as if I still possess the asset."

This means that if you give away property or money to someone else or spend money on expensive possessions, holidays or gifts before we start helping with the cost of your care, we can still take account of this property or money when we calculate your charge if we think that you are trying to avoid contributing to the cost of your care. In certain circumstances anyone you give property or money to may be liable themselves for some or all of the costs of your care, depending on the value of the asset you gave them. This would happen if you transferred an asset in order to avoid charges for your care and/or gave away or sold an asset for less than its true value.





## What if I don't agree with the outcome of the financial assessment?

We try to make sure that our financial assessment includes all relevant income and outgoings, but if you feel that this hasn't worked effectively in your case and you believe that you cannot afford to pay your assessed weekly charge, please speak to the Financial Assessments and Benefits (FAB) team straight away on 01962 845600.

## What if my circumstances change?

We carry out a regular assessment of your finances every year to make sure that your assessed contributions are still correct. If your circumstances change greatly during the course of the year, you should send details of the change(s) to the Financial Assessments & Benefits Team, Treasurer's Department, Queen Elizabeth II Court South, The Castle, Winchester SO23 8UB.

If at any time you find yourself in circumstances that make it difficult for you to meet the costs of your care - either for a short period or long term - you should contact your local Adult Services office as soon as possible to explain what has happened. We can then discuss with you ways of dealing with the situation.

## So, now you have all the information, how do you work out what my contribution should be?

Your contribution is worked out after your individual financial assessment, during which we go through the following process.

1. We ask you for details and proof of your weekly income, as described earlier.
2. We ask you for details and proof of your weekly outgoings/expenditure, as described earlier. When looking at your outgoings:
  - we make an allowance for general living expenses. The government sets standard allowances for us to use, which are based on Income Support or Pension Credit benefit levels. An individual's allowance varies according to age, disability and circumstances, and when it is worked out, a further 25 per cent is added;
  - we take into account what you actually spend on rent or mortgage payments;
  - we consider what you actually spend on council tax payments;
  - we factor in any expenses you have because of disability which are for things which are not included in your care plan, and for which you are paying separately (called 'disability related expenses' – DREs).
  - we consider savings, investments and capital
3. The income left after all outgoings and expenses have been met is called your disposable income. We calculate your contribution towards the cost of your care based on 95 per cent of this disposable income.

**If you have meals on wheels or a meal at a day centre, there is a standard charge for everyone.**

We will not ask you to contribute more than 95 per cent of your disposable income towards the cost of your care.

- If the cost of your care exceeds 95 per cent of your disposable income, Hampshire County Council will cover the difference.



- If the cost of your care is less than 95 per cent of your disposable income, then you will simply pay for the care you receive and no more.

For example, if the hourly rate was £14.40 and you are in receipt of 3 hours of care per week this would be charged at £43.20 per week.

However, if your Financial Assessment has been completed and you have been assessed to contribute £25 per week towards your care, we would only charge you £25 per week. If you have been assessed to contribute £50 per week towards your care we would charge you £43.20 per week.

These are examples only. Please see the leaflet Charges and Terms for Care at Home Services for the current figures.

## Examples showing how the weekly assessed upper limit is calculated (Examples based on 2009/10 figures)

	Single person aged 60 +	Single person aged between 18 and 24	Single person aged between 25 and 59
<b>Income we have disregarded</b>			
DLA Mobility Lower Rate		£18.65	
Earned income from employment			£210.00
<b>Income taken into account</b>			
State Retirement Pension	£95.25		
Occupational Pension	£96.06		
Attendance Allowance Higher	£70.35		
DLA Care Higher Rate		£70.35	
DLA Care Lower Rate			£47.10
Income Support		£46.85	
<b>Sub total (A)</b>	<b>£261.66</b>	<b>£117.20</b>	<b>£47.10</b>
<b>Expenses we have allowed</b>			
Council Tax	-£10.00		-£15.00
Rent		-£15.00	
Mortgage			- £75.00
Incontinence Aids	-£10.85		
Lifeline	-£2.50	-£2.00	
Wheelchair (Manual)			-£3.52
Bed (Powered)			-£5.70
Hoist			-£4.67
Transport	-£5.00	-£5.00	
Gardening	-£6.20		
<b>Sub total (B)</b>	<b>-£34.55</b>	<b>-£22.00</b>	<b>-£103.89</b>
<b>Allowances deducted from income</b>			
General living expenses	-£162.50	-£63.69	-£80.38
Attendance Allowance - difference between Higher and Lower Rate	-£23.25		
DLA - difference between Middle and Higher Rate		-£23.25	
<b>Sub total (C)</b>	<b>-£185.75</b>	<b>-£86.94</b>	<b>-£80.38</b>
Net assessable weekly income (A minus B minus C)	£41.36	£8.26	£ n/a as negative
95% of net assessable income	<b>£39.29</b>	<b>£7.85</b>	<b>£NIL</b>



## If the County Council are paying some or all the costs of my care, can I still have a say in which care providers or services I have?

Yes. In fact, we would encourage you to source and arrange your own care services. You can choose to receive '**direct payments**' which means that you are given money to buy your own care. This allows you to tailor your care package to suit you: you may wish to employ an assistant or carer or to buy services from an agency. Your Care Manager should discuss the option of a Direct Payment with you as part of your care management assessment.

Your contribution to the cost of your care (which has been worked out during the financial assessment) is deducted from your monthly payment from the County Council. So, for example, if your care plan has identified that the cost of the care you need will come to £100 a week and your weekly contribution has been assessed as being £40 a week, you would receive 'direct payments' of £60 a week (paid monthly in advance).

If you choose '**arranged services**', your care manager arranges your services, buying them for you. In this case, your contribution to the cost of your care (if you are assessed as paying a contribution) is a '**weekly charge**', which you can pay weekly or monthly. (See page 11 for details of how to pay).



The following information only applies to people getting services arranged by their Adult Services Care Manager.

## CHANGES THAT MAY AFFECT YOUR CHARGE:

### No service

We will adjust your charge if:

- we fail to provide a service that we have promised;
- you have cancelled services, with sufficient notice, because you will be away from home;
- you have cancelled services because you are ill.

To ensure that you are not liable for charges, please let Adult Services know as soon as possible if any of the above circumstances arise.

### Small variations on the service you get

If in any week you get less care than agreed in your 'care plan', it may make a difference to your weekly charge. It may not make a difference if you get a lot of care, but pay a low weekly contribution. If the care you get in a week is more than 15 minutes under the hours agreed in your care plan and you think it may affect your charge, you should contact Adult Services.

### Long term changes to the services you get

If there is a major change to the care you get, you may have a new weekly charge. Changes would only be made following a review of your needs, and if agreed between you and your care manager, and you would be aware of the change which this would mean to your weekly charge.

## WAYS YOU CAN PAY FOR YOUR CARE

There are a number of different ways that weekly charges can be paid, to suit people's circumstances and preferences. Information about the main methods is given here so that you can decide which will be best for you. If our financial assessment shows that you will pay a weekly contribution, the member of the FAB team who visits you will ask you which method of paying you want to use.

### 'Pay as you go'

If you want to 'pay as you go' for your care, you can do so at any post office using an Adult Services 'paying-in card'. You will be told what your weekly charge is and you can pay it weekly, fortnightly or at four-weekly intervals, either in cash or by cheque. A paying-in card is provided free, and a relative or friend can pay bills at a post office on your behalf if you want them to. You will get a receipt each time you make a payment and there is no charge for using the card. If you use the post office regularly (for example to collect pension or benefits) you may find this a practical way of paying for your care. If for any reason you fall behind with your post office payments, we will send you a bill the following month for any outstanding amount. You can pay this bill at the post office using your card or you can pay by debit or credit card or by sending a cheque in the post.

## Paying monthly

### Standing order or Direct Debit

If the amount of care you get remains constant from week to week, you can set up a standing order or Direct Debit with your Bank to pay the County Council. The cost of your care is then automatically deducted from your bank or building society account every month until you cancel the arrangement.

### Paying by phone with a debit or credit card

Payments can be made by credit or debit card either by telephoning the number shown on your monthly bill or via the internet, details of which are also shown on the bill.

### Paying by post

You can also pay by post, by tearing off the slip from the bottom of your bill with a cheque made payable to Hampshire County Council.





## Further information

### **Hampshire County Council's "The Guide to Better Care and Support"**

Practical information for independent living including an A-Z listing of home care providers (available free – call 0845 603 5630 for your copy)

### **Citizens Advice Bureau**

To find your nearest CAB, visit [www.citizensadvice.org.uk](http://www.citizensadvice.org.uk) or look under C in your local phone book

### **Benefits Enquiry Line**

**(BEL) Tel: 0800 88 22 00**

A confidential phone service offering general advice for people with disabilities and their carers or representatives.

### **[www.direct.gov.uk](http://www.direct.gov.uk)**

Government website providing information on a range of issues, including care at home.

### **Age Concern**

**Helpline: 0800 328 7154**

### **Help the Aged**

**0800 0099 66**

### **Direct Payments Support:**

#### **Carers Together**

[www.carerstogether.org.uk](http://www.carerstogether.org.uk)

Tel: 01794 519495

#### **Southampton Centre for Independent Living (SCIL)**

[www.southamptoncil.co.uk](http://www.southamptoncil.co.uk)

Tel: 023 8033 0982

*Carers Together and SCIL provide support in New Forest, Eastleigh, Romsey, Havant, Petersfield, Fareham and Gosport.*

#### **Enham**

[www.enham.co.uk](http://www.enham.co.uk)

Tel: 01264 345800

*Direct Payments Support Worker Service which provides support in Basingstoke, Winchester, Andover, Alton and Aldershot.*

# Hampshire County Council Adult Services Department

Hampshire County Council has introduced a contact centre, called Hantsdirect, to improve people's experience of contacting the County Council and the level of service they receive when they do. We want to make it quick, easy and convenient for you to access the services you require and have your request or query dealt with quickly and efficiently. For more information visit [www.hants.gov.uk/hantsdirect](http://www.hants.gov.uk/hantsdirect)

Adults and Children's Services

**0845 603 5630\***

General Information

**0845 603 5638\***

Lines are open 8am – 8pm Monday to Friday, 9.30am – 4pm Saturday

Out of hours emergencies: call 0845 600 4555

## Area Offices:

### Aldershot

Old Town Hall  
Grosvenor Road  
Aldershot  
GU11 3DP

### Alton

Park House  
High Street  
Alton GU34 1EN

### Andover

Chantry House  
Chantry Way  
Andover SP10 1LW

### Basingstoke

Sun Alliance House  
37/41 Wote Street  
Basingstoke  
RG21 7LU

### Eastleigh

Russell House  
26/28 Romsey Road  
Eastleigh  
SO50 9AN

### Fareham

The Health Centre  
Civic Way, Osborn Road  
Fareham PO16 7EP

### Gosport

133 Stoke Road  
Gosport PO12 1SD

### Havant

Town End House  
PO Box 61, East Street  
Havant PO9 1UB

### Hythe

West Shore House  
West Street, Hythe  
Southampton SO45 6AA

### Lymington

Avenue Road  
Lymington SO41 9YB

### Petersfield

Tilbrook House  
2/4 Grenehurst Way  
Petersfield GU31 4AZ

### Romsey

Former Magistrates Court  
Church Street  
Romsey SO51 8AQ

### Winchester

Capital House  
48-52 Andover Road  
Winchester  
SO23 7BH

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## \*Call charges and information:

Calls to 0845 numbers will cost between 4p (local rate) and 6p (national rate) per minute for BT customers. Calls made using other service providers or mobiles may cost more. Alternatively call 01329 225398 - standard and local call rates apply to this number.

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