

Fairer contributions policy

Southwark Council has changed the way we ask people to contribute towards their non residential care and support costs. These changes were agreed by Cabinet in September 2015 after a consultation with service users.

All client groups are included within the new policy, the exception being people receiving aftercare services via section 117 of the mental health act and those with Creutzfeldt-Jacob Disease.

Why did we update our policy?

The Care Act 2014 changed the way adult social care assesses needs, and provides care and support. We need to ensure there is sufficient funding available to pay for this, otherwise the quality of support could suffer and that would not be acceptable.

What are the changes?

The principle of fairer contributions is that **all** services – after the reablement period - are included within the personal budget calculation. A financial assessment is undertaken to determine the ability of the client to contribute towards the cost. This means that previously 'flat-rate' charged services (such as meals at home or at a day centre, and respite care) are now included within the personal budget and not charged separately. Alarms and Telecare services, and transport are now included.

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Question. I don't get any service from the council. Why did you write to me?

Answer. Does a paid carer come to see you at home? Do you go to a day centre sometimes during the week? Do you have the alarm service or Telecare? Maybe you have a pendant for emergencies? Do you receive meals on wheels? If you receive these services you may need to contribute towards the cost of the care and support received.

Question. Why do I have to pay?

Answer. We need to make sure that care is of the highest quality and that everyone who needs support can get it. Increasing numbers of people need help, but we have

had very big reductions in funding from central government. To make sure care continues to be of a high quality, we need to ask people to contribute. All the money we collect goes towards providing more and better services to people who need it. Everyone who asks for care is assessed financially so that people only pay what they can afford.

Question. How much will I have to pay?

Answer. It depends on your finances. We will do a financial assessment with you and let you know the outcome as soon as possible. People on the lowest income are most likely to end up with nothing to pay.

No one will be left with less than the amount of money equivalent to the government's 'minimum income guarantee' or income support level, PLUS 25%. This is shown below (16/17 figures);

Age	govt. amount	+	25% buffer	=	income need
18-24	£106.40	+	£26.60	=	£133.00
25-59	£121.11	+	£30.27	=	£151.38
60+	£151.20	+	£37.80	=	£189.00

After financial assessment, the client will be expected to contribute either their surplus over and above the **income need** amount, or the actual cost of their care & support, whichever is the lesser amount.

Anyone with more than £23,250 in capital or savings will automatically be expected to contribute the full cost of their care.

Question. How do I pay?

Answer. When it is time for you to start paying, we will send you a letter. You can set up a Direct Debit and receive a discount, or we can accept a debit or credit card payment over the phone, or we can send you a swipe card which can be used at a post office or corner shop. We will send you regular statements to show the position on your account.

Question. My carer didn't come last week on 2 days, my bill should be less. Why isn't it?

Answer. It depends on how much other care you received. If your care still costs more than your contribution, your part doesn't change.

Question. I don't want to pay for the services I receive, can I discontinue them?

Answer. If you think that we are charging you too much you can make an appeal via our appeals process. If you are unwilling to make a contribution towards your care cost you will need to speak to a social worker about your decision.

Useful phone numbers

- Helpline number 0800 358 0228
- Collections Team – to accept payments – 020 7525 1111
- CASC (social workers for older and disabled people) 020 7525 3324 -then option 2 – then option 3
- Local Support (previously Rightfully Yours) 020 7525 7434
- Learning Disabilities Social Work Team 020 7525 2333
- Mental health Social Workers 020 7525 2751
- Alarms 020 7525 2999