

# Financial Assessment policy for Adult Social Care and Support - Residential home, nursing home or residential college

Information for service users,  
relatives and carers

April 2026 to March 2027



**HILLINGDON**  
LONDON

[www.hillingdon.gov.uk/  
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# Introduction

Do you think you may need care in a residential home, nursing home or residential college?

If you do, you will probably have some important questions, such as:

“Where can I get help and advice?”

“Will I be able to afford the fees?”

This booklet will help you with these questions. Here we tell you about the help that is available, including financial help, and a little about some of the people who are there to help you.

We can also give you important information about care in residential homes, nursing homes and residential colleges.

This information includes:

- our Adult Social Care team and the role of care managers
- what to expect if you move into a residential home, nursing home or residential college
- the help you can expect towards the cost
- state benefits you may need to claim
- what happens to the state benefits you are currently receiving.

# Going into residential or nursing care

## Choosing a home

If you are assessed as needing residential or nursing care, your care manager will be able to tell you about the choices that are available to you.

## More expensive homes and top-up agreements

If you are eligible to receive help from Hillingdon Council, in relation to paying for care home fees, and it has been agreed that a place in one of our contracted homes will not meet your needs; the authority will help you find somewhere more suitable.

If you choose a home, which costs more than the amount the authority can pay, a third party can agree to pay the difference. This extra cost is in addition to your client contribution and is referred to as a 'third party top up'. The top up must be paid directly to the home by someone else other than the person receiving the care.

Your chosen third party will need to sign an agreement called a third party top up contract with the authority. If they fail to pay the top up directly to the home, the authority may ask you to move to another home within local authority rates.

Very rarely, charities or benevolent societies may help you with any shortfall. This will depend on you meeting their conditions for help. You will need to source this assistance independently.

## Example of a third-party top-up

Lloyd has no assets other than his State Pension. Lloyd has chosen a care home that is more expensive than the amount Hillingdon Council will pay.

### What will the top-up fee be?

Full cost of the chosen home	£1,200.00 a week
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Less Hillingdon Council's contribution	£1,100.00 a week
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(including Lloyd's assessed charge, which is the amount that we have financially assessed him to pay each week towards the care home fees)

The contribution from Hillingdon Council will depend on each individual case.

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<b>Third-party top-up</b>	<b>£100.00 a week</b>
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The person who has agreed to pay the third-party top-up will be expected to pay £100.00 a week towards Lloyd's fees directly to the home. Lloyd cannot pay this money himself. Lloyd can only use his money to pay his weekly assessed charge to the council.

## **Let's look at questions about money**

- What will I have to pay for the services I receive?
- What happens to my benefits?

Before looking at some of these details, there are some important things to bear in mind.

If your weekly income is less than the weekly cost of a home, we will help you financially but only if your savings and assets are less than £23,250. If you have more than £23,250 in capital and assets, you will need to fund your care privately and directly with the care home unless you have joined the Deferred Payment Scheme.

This may or may not include the value of your home, but this is covered in more detail later in this booklet.

You will need to claim all the benefits you are entitled to receive. A member of our team can advise you about this.

## **What happens when my capital falls below £23,250 and I am paying for my care home fees privately?**


If your capital has fallen or is about to fall below £23,250 you need to contact Hillingdon Social Care Direct to advise them of this. A 'Capital Limits' finance form will be sent to you for completion. You will need to provide evidence of your financial situation, so we can confirm the estimated date that your capital fell below the limit. It is important that you let us know as soon as your capital has reduced so that you do not miss out on any financial help that we can give you.



## **Who can help you to look after your money?**

You may continue to receive your own benefits if you want to and are able to do so. Alternatively, you can appoint someone to receive your benefits on your behalf, as your Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) appointee. This may be a relative, friend or anyone else you want to appoint. You may choose to have your benefit paid into a relative's or friend's account so they can access the money for you to pay your contribution towards the cost of your care and give you your personal expenses allowance.

Please note that this can only be arranged if you cannot manage your own affairs because you are mentally incapable or severely disabled. If you want someone else to deal with your benefits, please contact the DWP.

**Please note that whoever you choose should be trustworthy and reliable.** If you do not have someone to look after your money, our Client Financial Affairs Team can be appointed to do so. They will become responsible for claiming and receiving your benefits on your behalf. They will pay your weekly assessed contribution from your income and capital, if applicable. They will also arrange for your personal expenses allowance to be paid to you at your care home.

Please contact Hillingdon Social Care Direct on  01895 556633 for further information.

You may want to consider getting advice about appointing a power of attorney or deputy to manage your financial affairs and any property you own. A solicitor or the Public Guardianship Office will be able to advise you about this. You can contact the Public Guardianship Office on  0300 456 0300 or visit  [www.publicguardian.gov.uk](http://www.publicguardian.gov.uk).

## **What will I have to pay?**

If you are moving into a nursing home or residential care home with help from social care, we will expect you to contribute towards the fees. The rules for working out charges are laid down by law. We will usually ask you to contribute as much as you can afford, but you will always be left with a small amount of money for your personal use, called your personal expenses allowance.

From 1 April 2015, your financial assessment is worked out using the following legislation and guidance:

- the Care Act 2014
- Care and Support (Charging and Assessment of Resources) Regulations 2014
- Care and Support Statutory Guidance 2014.

The amount you contribute will depend on how much money you receive every week and how much you have in savings and other assets. We ignore some types of income and may give you some extra allowances according to your needs. As the amount that you are asked to contribute is affected by the benefits you should be getting, it is very important that you claim everything you are entitled to.

We expect most people to pay for all or some of the costs of their care in a care home from their own income or capital. There are two main exceptions to this:

- people who are in care homes that are providing nursing care paid for in full by the NHS or whose placements has been arranged by the NHS. In these circumstances, you are treated as a hospital patient for benefit purposes
- people receiving after care under section 117 of the Mental Health Act 1983, who have previously been held in hospital under certain sections of that act.

### **What financial information will I need to provide?**

Our care management staff will ask you for details about your income and your capital and whether you own your own home.

If the care manager agrees that you need residential or nursing care, you will be asked to fill in a financial assessment form if you want financial help from social care.

At the moment, financial help towards the cost of care in a residential or nursing home is only available to people who:

- have less than £23,250 in savings and investments (not including the value of any property), and
- have been assessed as needing care in a residential or nursing home by social care.

### **How do you assess my contribution?**

Once you have filled in the finance form, we will assess the information that you have given us. If you have access to the Internet, the quickest and easiest way to complete a finance form and provide your documents is to use the online financial assessment form. You can also use the calculator to estimate how much your weekly contribution towards your care costs will be. For further information, visit

 [www.hillingdon.gov.uk/financial-assessment](http://www.hillingdon.gov.uk/financial-assessment).

A means tested financial assessment is a calculation, based on your income and capital assets, to work out the contribution we will expect you to pay if you go into a care home permanently or on a short term basis.

If you are entitled to certain benefits but have not made a claim for them, we will financially assess you based on your benefit entitlement, this is called notional income.

Most of your income, including your Pension Credit (not including £7.30 a week of your Savings Credit), has to be paid towards the fees of the home, less £31.80 a week for personal expenses. This is your personal expenses allowance.

This allowance could be used to pay for items, such as toiletries or reading materials. The allowance is set annually by the Government. If you have entered into a deferred payment agreement, this amount can increase up to £144.00 per week.

We will require evidence of your income and capital. We cannot accept redacted or amended documents. Definitions of income and capital can be found below:

## Income

- all state benefits (except for Disability Living Allowance (mobility component) or Personal Independence Payment (mobility part))
- If you are not claiming benefits, to which you are entitled to, we will include the benefits in your financial assessments, this is called 'notional income'
- occupational or private pensions
- trust incomes
- annuities (a fixed sum paid every year)
- any other income (except for interest on bank and building society accounts, and income from investments, which will be treated as capital)
- rental income.

## Capital

Capital includes **all** monies you have in:


- bank or building society accounts, no allowance is made for deferred expenditure
- National Savings bank accounts
- PEP or ISA accounts
- save-as-you-earn (SAYE) schemes
- cash
- Bonds or National Savings Certificates
- stocks, shares, trust funds and investments
- property, building and land (including income from rent) and an account that someone holds on your behalf.

- Where a person has joint beneficial ownership of capital, except where there is evidence that the person owns an unequal share, the total value will be divided equally between the joint owners. The person being financially assessed will be treated as owning an equal share.
- You must declare all dormant accounts. If your benefit/income is paid into an account; and the account is not in your name, the account must be declared.

If you have capital of more than £23,250, you will have to pay the full cost of the home. Therefore, you may find it easier to purchase your care privately.

If you have capital of more than £23,250 and the council agrees to arrange and purchase care on your behalf, you will have to pay the full cost of the home. This cost may change from time to time, for example, if the provider increases their fees.

Before a package of care is arranged, a needs assessment must be undertaken first to ensure that you meet the council's eligibility criteria. This can be arranged by phoning Hillingdon Social Care Direct on

 01895 556633.

We will try to let you know beforehand about any increase in care home fees. We cannot always let you know if negotiations in fee increases are already taking place. In these circumstances, fee increases can be backdated and you will be expected to pay the difference. However, we will let you know of any increases as soon as we can and give you the chance to pay any backdated increases by instalments over an agreed period.

If you are self funding you can claim or may continue to receive Attendance Allowance, the care part of Disability Living Allowance, Severe Disablement Premium of Pension Credit or the daily living component of the Personal Independence Payment, depending on your age. We can help you make a claim for these benefits, if you don't have a formal representative in place.

If your capital is below £14,250, we will ignore it when working out how much you will have to contribute but it will be recorded in your financial assessment.

When we work out your income from any capital you own, capital between £14,250 and £23,250 will create an income of £1 a week for every £250.

This is called the tariff income charge.

## Example of a capital tariff

Dylan has £16,155 in capital. The tariff income charge on the capital will be £8 a week (£16,155 minus £14,250 equals £1,905, divided by £250 and rounded up to the nearest £1 equals £8).

## Property

In certain circumstances, we will take account of the value of your property 12 weeks after you go into the home permanently (see the section 'What if I own my own home?').

## Allowances

We deduct a personal expenses allowance of £31.80 a week from your total income, along with a deduction of up to £7.30, if you receive the savings part of Pension Credit. For the first four weeks of a permanent placement, we may consider making an allowance for any additional expenses that you have to pay during this period. The personal allowance for those who have entered into a deferred payment agreement can be up to £144.00 per week.

## Example of a financial assessment

James has been offered a place in a care home. The care home charges £1,250.00 per week for the placement. Adult Social Care has agreed to provide financial assistance, so James can move to the care home. James will require a means tested financial assessment to calculate how much he should pay Hillingdon Council for the cost of his care.

## How much will you contribute towards the fees?

James receives a retirement pension of £185.00 each week and rental income of £300.00 each week.

James' income	£485.00
Minus personal allowance	£31.80
	<hr/>
	<b>£453.20</b>

We will expect James to pay Hillingdon Council **£453.20** a week towards his care fees. Hillingdon Council will pay the care home the weekly fee of **£1,250.00**. This means that Hillingdon Council will only be contributing **£796.80** per week towards James' care home fees. James will pay the shortfall to Hillingdon Council.

## Do I have to pay in a residential college?

If you are living in a residential college and you are 24 or over, you only pay your contribution while you are living there. You do not have to pay when you are living at home between terms.

If you need any other social care service, while you are at home, we will have to carry out a non-residential financial assessment. This may result in you having to pay for the additional service you receive.

### **How do you assess my contribution if I am married or living with a partner?**

If you are married or living with someone as a couple and you alone are going into residential or nursing care, we will only assess your financial resources. Even if both you and your partner are going into care, we will assess your finances individually to work out how much you will each have to contribute towards the cost of your own care, unless you jointly share a room. In this case, we will assess your finances jointly.

If you are in a care home and you have a spouse or civil partner who is not living in the same care home as you, you can pay half of the value of your occupational pension, personal pension or retirement annuity to your spouse or civil partner. This will be disregarded in your financial assessment. Evidence of the transfer must be provided.

Your spouse/partner's state benefits may be affected, if their income increases. You may want to get independent advice to help you make the best decision based on your individual circumstances.

### **How do I pay for my contribution?**




Once you have filled in and returned a finance form with the relevant supporting evidence, this will be looked at by the Financial Assessment team who will work out your contribution towards the cost of your care fees.

The Financial Assessment team will then send you or your representative an assessment letter giving a breakdown of your financial assessment telling you the weekly contribution that you have been assessed to pay.

If you disagree with the amount or the figures used in your assessment, you should contact the Financial Assessment Team in the first instance to discuss the amount you have been assessed to pay.

Following your financial assessment, the Corporate Collections team will send you a bill for your contributions. Further bills will be sent to you every four to five weeks. Bills are issued in arrears and will set out clearly the period covered, and the amount you need to pay. To continue our efforts to deliver a digital-enabled, modern and well-run council, bills will be issued electronically wherever possible.

You can pay in one of the following ways:

- online at  [www.hillingdon.gov.uk/social-care-charges](http://www.hillingdon.gov.uk/social-care-charges)
- using the automated telephone payment line  01895 556699
- by standing order, straight from your bank account, once you have filled in a standing order form, available from the Corporate Collections team
- via Direct Debit will be available in the future. If you are interested in this payment method, please email the Corporate Collections team  [ascrecovery@hillingsdon.gov.uk](mailto:ascrecovery@hillingsdon.gov.uk)
- by bank transfer, cheque or cash payment at a bank.

If a third party top up is in place, it should be paid directly to the care home. It is separate to the weekly client contribution paid to Hillingdon Council.

### **Provisional charges pending a financial assessment**

For the period before we can complete a means tested financial assessment for you, we will charge you from the date that you went into the care home; this will be at a provisional rate depending on your age. The provisional rate will apply for a maximum of eight weeks while we gather enough information to complete your financial assessment. The provisional rates, depending on your age, are as follows:

- |                              |                  |
|------------------------------|------------------|
| • Pension Credit age or over | £206.20 per week |
| • 25 to pension credit age   | £108.60 per week |
| • 18 to 24 years             | £88.70 per week  |

Once we have received the completed financial assessment form and the required supporting evidence, a full financial assessment will take place.

We will assess your finances back to the date that you went into the home.

If the required information is not received within the period allowed, we will have no option but to charge you the full cost of the care home, which will be backdated to the date that you entered the home.

### **What happens if I give my money or assets away?**

If the council considers that you, or someone acting on your behalf, have given away some assets, for example money or your house, in order to pay less fees at the care home you will be treated as still owning the asset and you will be required to pay a higher fee.

Depending on the value of the asset and the remaining assets you hold, this could be the full cost. If you cannot pay these fees the council will claim the money from the person(s) to whom you have given these assets, and legal action may be taken against yourself and the person

in receipt of the assets. You should always seek independent financial and legal advice before making a decision to distribute your assets.

### **Annual review**

The amount you financially contribute towards your care will usually increase every April, in line with the annual increase in state benefits and pensions. We will review the amount you have to contribute every April and will notify you in writing of any change to your contribution. However, if you experience any change in your circumstances before April, for example your income or capital increases or decreases, you must tell us about the change immediately, so we can review your contribution. We reserve the right to backdate any changes in your circumstances to the date the change occurred, which could result in you being billed for backdated charges.

### **What can I do if I think the contribution is wrong?**

If you think the contribution is wrong, you can request an appeals form. The request must be made to the financial assessment team within 28 days from the date of your financial assessment notification letter.

### **What if I own my own home?**

If your stay in a residential home is temporary, we will not count the value of your home in the cost of your stay.

If your stay becomes permanent, we will take account of the value of your home, except in certain circumstances. Examples of these circumstances include where one of the following people currently live in your home, as their main and only home. The time that the person lived with you, before your admission to a care home, will need to be verified and may affect the decision to allow a property disregard:

- your husband, wife or partner
- a relative who is aged 60 or over, or who is incapacitated (incapacitated means they receive a social security benefit which recognises incapacity or disability, or they would be eligible for one)
- a dependent child of the resident. Child is defined as being aged under 18.

We will always ignore the value of your home for the first 12 weeks of a permanent stay, if your capital is under £23,250 – this is called the 12-week property disregard. However, this does not apply if you have previously funded your own care fees.

If you're eligible for the 12-week property disregard, we will need to carry out a financial assessment to work out your contribution for this period, from your income and capital under £23,250.

If you are entitled to a property disregard, we will ignore the value of your main/only home. However, if you own or have an interest in another property or properties, the property value(s) will be considered for inclusion in your financial assessment, which could result in you being financially assessed to pay the full cost of any care arranged for you.

**What is the 12-week property disregard?**

If you are a property owner and do not have capital above the capital limit for funding set by the Department of Health, currently £23,250, you can apply for a 12-week property disregard. However, this is only applicable if you have needs of a certain level which mean that you are eligible for residential/nursing care and your needs cannot be met in the community.

If eligible, this means that for the first 12 weeks of your stay at the care home, we will ignore the value of your property. However, you will have to pay a financial contribution in this 12-week period based on a financial assessment of your income and capital between £14,250 and £23,250. The 12-week property disregard does not apply to second homes.

If your property is sold within this 12-week period, the disregard ceases to have effect from the date of sale. The proceeds from the property sale will be counted as capital. In this situation you would be classed as a self funder from the date the property is sold.

If the cost of the home is more than the Adult Social Care team is prepared to pay for a placement (the ceiling rate), the difference between the ceiling rate and the actual cost of the home must be paid from your own capital (if your capital is below £14,250) or by someone else. This is called a third party top up and is in addition to your own assessed contribution. It is normally paid direct to the care home and a separate third party top up agreement must be signed by the person responsible for paying the top up.

We will not claim back our part of the funding from you at the end of the 12 weeks.

**Example of the 12-week property disregard**

Weekly cost of the care home	=	£1,000.00 a week
Your assessed contribution	=	£150.00 a week
Hillingdon Council will pay	=	£766.61 a week
Third-party top-up	=	£83.39 a week
<b>Total</b>		<b>£1000.00</b>

In this example, Hillingdon Council would contribute **£766.61** a week towards the cost of the fees for the first 12 weeks of the permanent placement.

After this period, if Hillingdon Council agree to provide additional financial assistance, the value of your property will be included as assessable capital in your financial assessment. This usually means that you will be liable to pay Hillingdon Council for the full cost of your care home charges.

If you cannot pay the full cost of your care, either because your property has not yet been sold, or because you do not want to sell your property, we can enter into a deferred payment agreement with you.

From 1 April 2015, the 12-week property disregard no longer applies to you, if you have been paying your own care fees in a residential or nursing setting, but later need financial help from the council because most of your savings have been used up. The council will expect you to start contributing towards the cost of fees from the value of your property straight away.

This is because, according to the government, you should have had time to sell your property (or make other arrangements such as securing a bridging loan or renting the property out) whilst paying your own care home fees. You would have been able to foresee that your money was running low. The 12-week property disregard is designed to protect people from unexpected changes in circumstances.

Please note that if you own more than one home or have a financial interest in more than one home, you may not qualify for a property disregard.

### **What is a deferred payment agreement?**

In accordance with the Care Act 2014, and effective from 1 April 2015, the Department of Health requires all local authorities in England to offer a standard universal deferred payment agreement scheme to those who are eligible. This replaces any previous discretionary powers.

A deferred payment agreement is an arrangement with the council that will enable people to use the value of their homes to help pay for care home costs. If you are eligible, the council will work out how much you can afford to pay each week towards the cost of your care home fees, based upon your income and available capital. The council will then pay the difference between your 'assessed weekly contribution' and the actual cost of the care home. You will still have to make a weekly contribution based on your income and available capital. We will send

you monthly bills for the contribution that we have assessed you as having to pay.

The part that the council pays on your behalf is the 'deferred payment' amount. Any deferred payments build up as a debt and will be secured against your property using a legal charge. This debt is repaid when your house is sold or when your residential setting ends. A deferred payment agreement means that people should not have to sell their home, in their lifetime, to pay care home bills.


The deferred payment agreement only becomes active when a legal charge has been placed on your property to secure the council's interest. You will be charged the full cost of your care until the legal charge has been confirmed. Once confirmed, we will reassess you based on your income and capital.

Deferred payment agreements will suit some people's circumstances better than others and not everyone will be eligible. You should be eligible for a deferred payment agreement if you are in or moving into a residential or nursing care home and:

- you have been assessed by adult social care as needing that care
- you own your own home, and it is not occupied by a spouse or dependent relative
- you have capital, including savings and investments, of less than £23,250. This will be established through a means tested financial assessment.

Permission may be refused in certain circumstances, such as where there is insufficient security.

Once you enter into a deferred payment agreement, interest will apply from the start date of the agreement to any deferred amount. Interest will be compounded on a daily basis. The interest rate is based upon the cost of government borrowing and is expected to change every six months; on the 1 January and 1 July each year. We will send you regular statements to show the amount of care charges deferred and the amount of interest payable.

A one off administration fee is required to cover the council's costs in setting up the agreement. More information regarding the deferred payment scheme and the application form for the scheme can be found at  [www.hillingdon.gov.uk/socialcare/howpayforcare](http://www.hillingdon.gov.uk/socialcare/howpayforcare).

While payments are being deferred, you can rent out your property but the rental income you receive, less some expenses, will be included in your financial assessment for your contribution towards care fees.

If you are already in receipt of Attendance Allowance, Disability Living Allowance (care component), Severe Disablement Premium or Pension Credit or the daily living component of the Personal Independence Payment, you may continue to receive these benefits. They will be included in your financial assessment. If you are not in receipt of these benefits, you can claim Attendance Allowance, if you are over state pension age or Personal Independence Payment, if you are under state pension age. Again, they will be included in your financial assessment. You or your legal representative is responsible for notifying the Department for Work and Pensions of any changes in your circumstances. It is advisable that you speak to a financial adviser or seek advice from an independent organisation before entering into any financial agreements. Please note that you may be charged for independent financial advice.

### **How much of my income can I keep, if I enter into a deferred payment agreement?**

If we agree to enter into an agreement, you can keep up to £144.00 each week from your income, or a lesser amount of your choice. This is called your 'Disposable Income Allowance'. When deciding how much you want to keep each week, you should consider how you will maintain your property throughout the term of the agreement. You will be required to pay the remainder of your weekly income towards your care home costs. If you receive the savings part of the Pension Credit, a further deduction of up to £7.30 will be disregarded from your income.

The amount of allowance you decide to keep will depend on your expenses and whether or not, for example, you are renting the property to tenants to generate extra income. If this option is taken, a copy of the relevant tenancy agreement would be required. The rent would be taken into account when calculating how much you can afford to contribute each week, which would minimise the final debt and interest that you or your estate would repay to the council.

Some people will want to keep the maximum amount of 'Disposable Income Allowance'; others will choose to pay more towards their care from income, which in turn reduces the amount deferred overall and consequently pay less interest.

### **Example of a deferred payment**

Anya is over state pension age and lives alone. Anya has a State Pension of £200.10 a week, Attendance Allowance of 76.70 a week and a personal pension of £157.36 a week. Anya has capital of £9,500 and a property worth

£250,000. Following a care needs assessment, it has been agreed that Anya will need to move into a residential care home on a permanent basis. The residential home costs £1,000 a week. Anya’s total income is not enough to pay the care home fees. However, Anya has been financially assessed to pay for the full cost of the care home fees, as the value of Anya’s property has been included in her financial assessment following the end of the 12 week property disregard. Anya decides to enter into a deferred payment agreement with Hillingdon Council to help pay her care home fees.

Hillingdon Council will pay the difference between Anya’s assessed client contribution and the cost of the care home. The difference that Hillingdon Council pay will be deferred and must be paid when Anya’s property is sold. Interest will accrue on all deferred amounts. While the deferred payment agreement is active, monthly invoices will be sent to Anya, so she can pay her weekly client contribution to Hillingdon Council. The invoice will also show the weekly amount that has been deferred.

Weekly care home fees	£1000.00
Anya’s weekly assessed contribution (Her total income less £144.00 disregard)	£290.16
<b>Deferred weekly contribution</b>	<b>£709.84</b>

Interest will be added daily to any amount deferred including the set up fee, which accompanies all deferred payment agreements.

## Benefits in a care home

### **What happens to my benefits when I enter a care home?**

The following information tells you about what benefits you may be entitled to if you are:

- contributing towards the cost of your care; or
- paying the full cost of your care.

Some benefits are not affected by being in a care home, although they will usually count as income when we assess your contribution. When you enter a care home (either temporarily or permanently) you can continue to receive the following benefits.

- State Pension
- Pension Credit

- the mobility part of Disability Living Allowance or Personal Independence Payment
- Incapacity Benefit/Employment and Support Allowance/ Universal Credit
- Severe Disablement Allowance
- Bereavement Allowance
- Widowed Parent's Allowance
- Widow's Pension
- Widowed Mother's Allowance
- Child Tax Credit (if you continue to be responsible for a child).

The following benefits are affected.

- Attendance Allowance
- the care part of Disability Living Allowance or Personal Independence Payment
- Carer's Allowance
- Severe Disablement Premium of Pension Guarantee Credit and Employment and Support Allowance
- Income Support/Employment Support Allowance
- Housing Benefit
- Universal Credit
- Winter Fuel Payment.

Your benefits will continue to be paid to you or the person who manages your finances. They will not automatically stop or be paid directly to the council. You must contact the DWP and advise them if you move into a care home.

### **What happens to Attendance Allowance, the care part of Disability Living Allowance or Personal Independence Payment?**

Attendance Allowance and the care part of Disability Living Allowance or Personal Independence Payment are benefits paid to people who need help with personal care or people who need supervision.

When local authority support is being provided, in relation to a care home placement, Attendance Allowance, the care part of Disability Living Allowance or Personal Independence Payment can only be paid for the first 28 days of your stay in the care home, as such the benefit will be disregarded in your financial assessment from day 29. If your stay in the

care home is on a short-term basis, the disregard will apply from day 1. However, your entitlement to the benefit will still end after 28 days.

There are different rules, if you have been placed in the care home straight from hospital or you are paying the full cost of your care home fees to Hillingdon Council.

Please ensure that you inform the DWP of any changes in your circumstances, such as moving to a care home, as the DWP will need to review your benefit entitlement.

## **Who can receive Attendance Allowance or the care part of Disability Living Allowance or Personal Independence Payment after 28 days?**

There are two groups of people in residential and nursing care who can receive Attendance Allowance or the care part of the Disability Living Allowance or Personal Independence Payment after 28 days.

They are:

- people who are paying for their own care; and
- people who are on the deferred payment scheme.

If you are paying for your own care and you do not receive Attendance Allowance or the care part of Disability Living Allowance or Personal Independence Payment, you can make a claim for one of these benefits. If you are entitled to one of these benefits, you will receive payments for as long as you are paying for your own care.

## **What happens to Carer's Allowance?**

To qualify for Carer's Allowance, you must spend at least 35 hours a week looking after someone who receives Attendance Allowance, Disability Living Allowance (care part) at the middle or highest rate or Personal Independence Payment (daily living component). When this person's Attendance Allowance or Disability Living Allowance (care part) or Personal Independence Payment stops, so does the Carer's Allowance.

If the person you care for continues to receive Attendance Allowance, Disability Living Allowance or Personal Independence Payment because, for example, they are paying for their own care, Carer's Allowance will stop after four weeks from the date they go into the care home.

This is because the Carer's Allowance rules only allow a set number of weeks for a break in caring. You are allowed a 12-week break in any 26-week period but only four weeks of that are allowed for temporary breaks in care, for example, because someone is in a care home on a

respite stay or on holiday. The other eight weeks are allowed for hospital stays for either the carer or the person who is being cared for. Some carers will be getting extra Income Support or Pension Credit because they are entitled to Carer's Allowance. When the entitlement to Carer's Allowance stops, the extra amount in Income Support or Pension Credit only continues for a further eight weeks.

### **What happens to Pension Credit?**

When you enter a care home temporarily, your Pension Credit will stay the same. If you are part of a couple, you will continue to be paid as a couple and the amount will not be affected.

When you enter a care home permanently, you should contact the Department for Work and Pensions and tell them about your change of circumstances and that you have now moved into a care home permanently. They will then work out your Pension Credit and pay it at the correct rate.

If you receive a Severe Disability Premium that will also be reviewed.

If you are part of a couple, the Department for Work and Pensions will treat you as a single person for benefit purposes. They will treat your income and your partner's income separately and pay you on an individual basis. After you tell the Department for Work and Pensions about your change in circumstances, it is very important that your husband, wife or partner claims Employment Support Allowance, Pension Credit, Universal Credit or other applicable benefits in their right. We can help them to do this if need be.

This will make sure that both you and your partner are receiving the correct benefits.

### **What happens to Housing Benefit?**

When you enter a care home permanently, you can no longer receive Housing Benefit for your home in the community. Someone else who lives there may be able to claim Housing Benefit instead.

When you enter a care home temporarily for respite care, Housing Benefit can continue to be paid for up to 52 weeks, as long as you plan to return home and not sublet your home. You must advise the council paying Housing Benefit if you move into a care home on a permanent basis.

### **Where can I get advice about benefits?**


The Financial Assessment Team are trained to give advice about the benefits that you are entitled to when entering residential or nursing care. They can check you are receiving all the benefits that you are entitled to and help you claim any additional benefits that are relevant.

They can also offer advice to your spouse or partner if they remain at home following your admission to care. However, you can contact other relevant agencies for benefits advice if you wish.

## The Care Act 2014

The Care Act came into force on 1 April 2015. The Care Act introduced a new national level of eligibility criteria for accessing care and support from your local council. The aim being to make care and support more consistent across the country. There is a new right for carers to receive support if they meet certain eligibility criteria and changes to deferred payment agreements for people who want to use the value of their property to pay for residential care.

The Care Act also gives local authorities the right to charge an administration fee to those who receive care and support and have assets in excess of £23,250 or have chosen to pay the full cost of their care charges.

This is a brief summary of the Care Act and is not intended to replace the full legislation. Full details of the Care Act statutory guidance can be found online at  [www.gov.uk/government/publications/care-act-statutory-guidance/care-and-support-statutory-guidance](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/care-act-statutory-guidance/care-and-support-statutory-guidance).

## Frequently asked questions

### **Will I have to pay and why do you charge?**

A financial assessment will calculate if you have to make a financial contribution towards the cost of your care. The assessment is based on statutory legislation and guidance. If you have to pay towards your care, the start date will be the date that your chargeable package of care began.



### **What income will you take into account?**

We will take into account most of the money you have coming in. However, you will always be left with at least £31.80 a week for personal expenses, which is an amount set out by the government. If you have entered into a deferred payment agreement, this amount can increase up to £144.00 per week.

### **How do I pay the assessed charge and who will pay the home?**


Hillingdon Council will pay the agreed care fees to the care home. The Corporate Collections team will send you a bill for payment of your client contribution due to Hillingdon Council. Bills are issued in arrears and at four or five weekly intervals.

## What happens if I do not pay?


We calculate the amount you must pay towards your care and support using government legislation and guidance. If you are financially assessed pay for all or part of your care costs, you have a liability to ensure payments are made to Hillingdon Council on time. You must pay your care charges to avoid escalation. Debt recovery action will be taken to recover overdue sums. This could include digital reminder campaigns, unannounced debt recovery home visits and legal action. If legal action is taken, you will be liable for legal costs. If you have any difficulty in making payments, you must contact the Corporate Collections team without delay by emailing  ascrecovery@hillington.gov.uk or calling  01895 250345.

## Do I have to tell you about my finances and what information do I need to give you?

If you choose not to declare your finances and refuse a financial assessment or have savings over the relevant limit or you are not eligible for social care support you are referred to as a self funder.

As a self funder the council will not automatically organise your care for you. However, we will support you with finding the right services to meet your care and support needs, but you will need to make arrangements to pay your chosen care provider directly. For further information, please visit  [www.hillingdon.gov.uk/financial-assessment](http://www.hillingdon.gov.uk/financial-assessment).

To carry out a means tested financial assessment, we require a completed finance form and details of your income, savings and outgoings. Relevant supporting evidence will be required, for example, receipts and bank statements covering a 3 month period, this includes dormant accounts and any accounts not in your name but where your benefits/income is paid into. We cannot accept redacted or amended documents.

If you have access to the Internet, the quickest and easiest way to complete a finance form and provide your documents is to use the online financial assessment form. You can also use the calculator to estimate how much your weekly contribution towards your care costs will be. For further information, visit  [www.hillingdon.gov.uk/financial-assessment](http://www.hillingdon.gov.uk/financial-assessment).

During the financial assessment process, if you choose not to declare any or all of your income and savings, you may be assessed to pay the full cost of your care.

## **Will I have to sell my home?**

We will usually need to take account of the value of your home, but we may ignore this in certain circumstances. Individual advice will be given during the financial assessment process.

## **Will my contribution stay the same and what happens if my income or capital changes?**

Your contribution may change if there are any changes to your income, capital or outgoings. For example, most state benefits increase every April, so your contribution to care will be increased in line with this. If your financial situation changes in any way, you must tell us immediately so we can reassess your contribution if necessary. We reserve the right to backdate any changes, which may result in you being billed for backdated contributions.

If the care home increase their fees, this will be passed onto you, if you have been financial assessed to pay for the full cost of your care.

## **What happens if I need to move to a care home after being discharged from hospital?**


If the Adult Social Care team advise that your care and support needs should be met in a care home, after a hospital stay, they will explain funding before the placement starts. A financial assessment will be required. Your assessed weekly client contribution will apply from the placement start date. This includes short-term or long-term/permanent placements. The Adult Social Care team will discuss 'top-up' fees where a preferred home's weekly fees are higher than their usual rate.

## **Will I have to continue paying towards my care home fees if I go into hospital on a temporary basis?**


Yes. If you have been financially assessed to contribute towards your care and you are in hospital for less than 52 weeks, your benefits and income will usually stay the same. Also, your place at the care home will be kept for you. Therefore, you will still be expected to pay towards your care home fees on a monthly basis.

## **What is NHS-funded nursing care?**

NHS-funded nursing care is when the NHS pays for the nursing care component of nursing home fees. The NHS pays a flat rate directly to the care home towards the cost of this nursing care. The remainder of

your care home fees will be subject to a financial assessment to calculate how much you will need to pay Hillingdon Council towards your care costs. More information regarding NHS-funded care can be found at  [www.nhs.uk/social-care-and-support/money-work-and-benefits/nhs-funded-nursing-care](http://www.nhs.uk/social-care-and-support/money-work-and-benefits/nhs-funded-nursing-care).

## **What happens if I am paying the full cost for my care and my capital falls below £23,250?**

You must phone Hillingdon Social Care Direct on  01895 556633 and they will send you a financial assessment form to complete and return.

## **What happens if I give away capital?**

If you give money or property to friends or relatives before or after you move into residential or nursing accommodation, we may still consider it as belonging to you.

## **What is respite care?**

Respite care is provided to allow your carer to have a short break. This care may be in the home, community or residential home or nursing home setting. Please see our booklet entitled 'Paying contributions towards your care and support whilst living in your own home' for more information.

## **Verification**

Verification checks will be carried out for any applicant who applies for funding via the Financial assessment process. The enhanced checks are to ensure that public money goes to those who are entitled to receive funding and protects the public purse. The checks will be carried out by the Business Assurance Counter Fraud team on behalf of the Financial Assessments team. The checks will include, but are not limited to, gathering information held by:


- the council, such as Electoral roll, council tax records, social care records
- other local authorities and government agencies
- Land Registry and credit referencing agencies and
- employers, financial institutions and other non-governmental organisations.

In some circumstances the council may carry out an unannounced residential visit to check the details provided within your application.

Where necessary, further documentation and evidence may be requested from you to support decision making within the verification process.

Data may also be shared between departments, in line with our privacy notice.

## Where can I get help and advice regarding my Adult Social Care needs?

If you would like to discuss your care needs with the Adult Social Care team, please contact Hillingdon Social Care Direct on  01895 556633.

## Definitions of words used in this booklet

**Capital** is the total value of your home, savings and investments and cash, including National Savings Certificates, Premium Bonds, PEPs, ISAs and stocks and shares. No allowances are made for any deferred expenditure. Dormant accounts must be declared. If your benefits/income is paid into a third party's account, we will require evidence of the third party's accounts.

**Care assessment** is the way we work out what care services a person needs.

**Ceiling levels** are the maximum weekly amounts, including your contribution, that Hillingdon Council will contribute towards a place in a residential or nursing home.

**Deferred payment agreement and legal charge** is a legal document which is attached to a property, similar to a mortgage, that we can use to reclaim any money owed from selling that property.


**Income** includes all earnings, state benefits, Income Support and Pension Credit, work pensions, private pensions and rental income.

**Nursing homes** provide accommodation with 24-hour board and nursing care. They are registered and inspected by the Care Quality Commission (CQC). The homes must employ a registered nurse on the premises at all times during the night and day, plus a doctor or consultant who must supervise medical care.

**Residential homes** provide accommodation with 24-hour board and personal care but do not have a registered nurse on-site. They are registered and inspected by the Care Quality Commission (CQC).

**Tariff income** is a weekly contribution you will pay if you have capital and assets between £14,250 and £23,250.

## About your personal information



Please view our Privacy notice, which can be found online at  [www.hillingdon.gov.uk/privacy](http://www.hillingdon.gov.uk/privacy).

## Equal opportunities

We will provide services to everyone no matter what their sex, race, religion, sexuality, ability or disability.


## Making a complaint or comment

If you think that you have not been dealt with properly and you want to make a complaint or comment, you should first speak to the member of staff you are in contact with or their manager.

If you cannot settle the problem with them, you can contact the council's complaints department online at  [www.hillingdon.gov.uk/complaints](http://www.hillingdon.gov.uk/complaints) or by calling  01895 277800.


## Other information that is available

### **Information about care in a residential home, nursing home or residential college**

You may want to discuss your needs with someone who is already involved in your care, for example, your doctor, district nurse or home-care assistant, or you can contact Hillingdon Social Care Direct on  **01895 556633**. You may want to get advice on a particular point from a friend, solicitor or accountant, Citizens Advice or Age UK.

**The information given in this booklet is for guidance only. It does not replace the charging regulations and legislation.**

**You can only get information regarding your own circumstances and client contribution from the Financial Assessment team.**

Full details of the Adult Social Care charging policy can be found online at  [www.hillingdon.gov.uk/financial-assessment-hub](http://www.hillingdon.gov.uk/financial-assessment-hub).

# Useful contacts

## Financial Assessment team

3 East, Civic Centre,  
Uxbridge, UB8 1UW

☎ 01895 250207 or 01895 556278 or  
01895 250882

@ financialassessment@  
hillington.gov.uk

## Hillingdon Social Care Direct

☎ 01895 556633

@ socialcaredirect@  
hillington.gov.uk

## Adult Social Care Corporate Collections team

☎ 01895 250345

@ ascrecovery@hillington.gov.uk

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## Attendance Allowance Helpline

☎ 0800 731 0122

## Employment Support Allowance Claim line

☎ 0800 055 6688

## Personal Independence Payment (PIP) Claim line

☎ 0800 917 2222

## Personal Independence Payment (PIP) ongoing claims and enquiries

☎ 0800 121 4433

## Universal Credit helpline

☎ 0800 328 5644

## Carer's Allowance Helpline

☎ 0800 731 0297

## Pension Credit Claim line

☎ 0800 99 1234

## Disability Benefits Unit

☎ 0800 121 4600

## Pension Service General Enquiries

☎ 0800 731 0469

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## AgeUK Hillingdon

2 Chapel Court, 126 Church Road,  
Hayes, UB3 2LW

☎ 020 8756 3040

## Disablement Association of Hillingdon (DASH)

Wood End Centre, Judge Heath Lane,  
Hayes, UB3 2PB

☎ 020 8848 8319

## Carers Trust Hillingdon

Luther Bouch House,  
126 High Street, Uxbridge, UB8 1JT

☎ 01895 811206

## Hillingdon Hospital

☎ General enquiries:  
01895 238282

## Citizens Advice Hillingdon

☎ 0808 278 7893

## Addiction, Recovery, Community Hillingdon Service (Arch)

Old Bank House, 64 High Street,  
Uxbridge, UB8 1JP

☎ 020 3838 7850

## Office of the Public Guardian

PO Box 16185,  
Birmingham, B2 2WH

☎ 0300 456 0300