

Factsheet



Charging for lift maintenance

Introduction

Lift maintenance will only be provided by Durham County Council to people who are assessed as eligible for social care services.

The annual cost to have your lift maintained through a social care provision will be payable in four-weekly instalments. Alternatively you can have a financial assessment to calculate if you are able to get help with the cost of the maintenance.

The financial assessment is in line with the Care & Support Statutory Guidance under the Care Act 2014 and ensures that you are only asked to pay what you can afford. Everyone who receives social care at home is assessed in the same way.

What is a Financial Assessment?

A member of the Financial Assessment Team will arrange a financial assessment, usually by a pre-arranged telephone call to collect the information required to calculate your charge. As part of this process you will be offered a welfare benefits check and assistance to complete some claims for benefits to which you may be entitled.

Where we are unable to assist with the application for a particular benefit we can refer you to one of our partner agencies for assistance.

You may have a member of your family or a friend present during the financial assessment if you choose or you can arrange for an independent advocate to support you. If you prefer, you may visit our office so that the financial assessment form can be completed in your presence. Our Financial Assessment & Benefit Officers are very experienced and well trained and are there to help guide you through the process. Don't be afraid to ask questions or raise anything that you are not sure about.

The Financial Assessment & Benefits Officer will usually complete the financial assessment form, but if you would prefer you may complete the form with their assistance. In either case a copy of the form will be sent to you when you are notified in writing of the charge that you will be required to pay.

The annual cost will cover all necessary servicing, maintenance and repairs costs, however if the lift is unable to be repaired this would not cover the cost of a new lift. If you do not want to have your lift maintenance arranged via Social Care, and would rather make your own arrangements, then the Equipment Advice Service can help you to find an alternative provider. This service can be contacted on Tel: 03000 265 667 or by email at equipmentadvice@durham.gov.uk

Any information given will be treated in the strictest confidence.

What financial information will you need to provide?

Please ensure you have the following information available for the Financial Assessment and Benefits officer:

- Details of all income
- State benefits payable to you
(We will also need to know whether you have any claim for benefits being dealt with at the moment.)
- Private (occupational) pension
- Savings/capital
- Building society accounts
- Bank statements (inc. current accounts and Post Office accounts)
- Details of stocks and shares (PEP, ISA etc.)
- Details of any premium bonds owned
- Any other financial investment (including life assurance)
- Any other asset including details of properties owned (other than your main residence - we do not take into account the value of your home)

We will also need details of expenditure

- Rent
- Council Tax
- Mortgage details
- Extra costs of disability (see page 3)

How do we work out how much you will have to pay?

The Department of Health sets a minimum income annually.

It is expected that this disregard will cover daily living costs such as food, clothing, fuel bills, water rates, insurance, leisure activities, TV license, telephone and subscriptions for satellite/digital television etc.

The formula we use is: Income **less** disregards = maximum assessed charge.

If you do not have any other services with us the actual charge will be the cost of the lift maintenance divided by 52 to give a weekly amount or your maximum assessed charge, whichever is less.

If you have other social care services then the actual charge will be your personal budget divided by 52 to give a weekly amount or the maximum assessed charge, whichever is less.

The following **are not** taken into account when we work out how much you will have to pay:

- Minimum income as set by the Department of Health
- War Pension for veterans (full amount)
- War Widows Pension—first £10 disregarded only
- War Widows Supplementary Pension
- Mobility Allowance/Mobility Component of DLA/PIP
- Wages/salaries/Tax Credits for Service User (partners/spouse **not** disregarded)

We will also need to know whether you have any claim for benefits being dealt with at the moment.

Savings/Capital

If you have savings under £14,250 these will not be taken into account when we work out how much you can afford to pay. If you have savings over this amount we will add £1 to your income for every £250 or part of £250 over £14,250 up to £23,250.

For Example:

For someone with savings of £15,750.

The first £14,250 will be ignored, leaving £1,500.

We divide this remaining £1,500 by £250 which gives us 6. Therefore £6.00 per week will be added to your income.

If you have capital of £23,250 or over you will be responsible for paying the full cost of the service you receive.

What about other expenses you might have?

The minimum income set by the Government is expected to cover your basic weekly costs such as food, clothing, heating and other essentials.

In addition, when we work out how much you will have to pay we cannot take any of the following into consideration:

- Water rates
- Insurances
- Loans, including hire purchase and catalogues
- Pets
- Fuel bills (but see special circumstances)
- Television licence
- Telephone & Broadband (see special circumstances)

When will you find out how much you will have to pay?

You will be notified in writing and have a copy of the financial assessment form sent to you. Charges will be backdated to the commencement of service.

What if you do not agree with the amount you have been assessed as having to pay?

If you feel that the charge is more than you can afford to pay, you can ask to have the charge re-viewed. This will be carried out by a senior officer from the council within three weeks of your request and you will be given the decision in writing.

If you are still not satisfied you can use the official Complaints Procedure. You can obtain a copy of this from your social worker or from the Council's website www.durham.gov.uk

Special circumstances

The council can make special allowances if you have additional expenses caused by your disability. This is called Disability Related Expenditure (DRE).

This might be things like:

- Community alarm systems
- Laundry costs or bedding because of incontinence
- Heating costs over and above the national average
- Specialist disability equipment
- Privately paid for care, cleaning, domestic help or gardening

The Financial Assessment & Benefits Officer will ask you questions to see if you qualify for any extra allowances and we will need to see some evidence that you do have increased expenses. For example if you think you have extra heating costs, we will need to see your last four electricity or gas bills. We can only make allowances when we are sure that you qualify.

Any special allowances for additional Disability Related Expenditure can only be made in circumstances where these are detailed in your care plan.

What happens about other people you live with?

If only one member of a household needs the lift, only that person's financial details should be taken into account. However, some state benefits are paid as a couple and in these circumstances we will carry out the assessment on that basis.

How will I pay my charges?

You pay your charge for the lift maintenance in 13 instalments. The preferred method of payment is Direct Debit.

Alternatively, you can pay the invoice in any of the following ways:

1. At the Post Office/PayPoint with the invoice.
2. By debit card (details are provided on the invoice).
3. By telephone or online banking (details are provided on the invoice).
4. Via the council's website (details are provided on the invoice).
5. By returning the payment slip with a cheque to the address supplied.
6. By Paypal

What if your circumstances change?

To take account of increases in benefits, private pensions and the cost of living we will review your charge in April every year. This is known as a financial re-assessment.

If you have any savings that have been included in the financial assessment you can request these are reviewed every six months to take account of any changes. Your contribution may go up or down as a result of the reassessment.

If your financial circumstances change following a financial assessment you must contact us as soon as possible as this may affect your contribution. Failure to do so could result in increased charges being backdated

Further information

If you would like a copy of the formal charging policy approved by the council, please contact:

Durham County Council – Financial Assessment Team
PO Box 257
Stanley
DH8 1GL

Tel: 03000 268 232

or visit our website: www.durham.gov.uk

Figures correct at April 2021, next review April 2022.



Please ask us if you would like this document summarised in another language or format.

03000 268 232

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