

THE BULLETIN

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Spring Issue 2012

disABILITY
is our business



**working together,
working with others**

Spring Bulletin 2012

This is the last edition of the Bulletin that we are circulating by post. Rising production and postal costs and reducing financial support makes this a reluctant necessity. We hope that our regular readers, many of whom have expressed their appreciation of its contents, will take the opportunity to read future editions on our website, www.nwdial.org.uk or register with us to receive an electronic copy via an email address. If you want an email copy just let us know.

Another change which is happening is that the two Dials; North and South Worcestershire and the six CAB's in the County are collaborating in a partnership – **the Worcestershire Advice Network**.

Our aim is together provide the best information and advice in accordance with client's needs and the partnership is working to a specification agreed with the County Council.



Inside this edition is information about Worcestershire County Council's new "**Fairer Charging Policy**" prices, the consultation on which you were invited to participate in last year. If you need help with information, or, applying for support please don't hesitate to contact us.

See also inside news on welfare changes in the pipeline – watch our website for updates and news

Worcestershire County Council's Fairer Charging Policy

Frequently Asked Questions on What is Fairer Charging?

Fairer Charging is a way of ensuring that charges for the services we provide are fair and consistent.

We follow government guidelines to work out how much individuals should be charged for the non-residential adult social care services that we provide.

Everyone who is assessed for adult social care services will be asked to complete a financial assessment to enable us to work out how much they need to contribute.

Should an individual choose not to engage in the Fairer Charging process they will be deemed a **'full payer'** and will be charged the full cost of the service.

How will my contribution be calculated?

A Benefits and Contributions officer will complete a full financial assessment with you. The officer will ask you about your income, capital and expenditure.

You will need to have the following items available when they contact you:

- Details of any benefits you receive
- Details of bank/building society accounts
- Heating bills
- Details of any capital you may have e.g. shares, ISAs
- Details of rent, council tax or other housing costs
- Details of any pensions
- Details of income

As part of the assessment, the Benefits and Contributions officer will also check that you are receiving all the benefits that you might be entitled to as these will be included in the calculations.

How do you work out how much I have to contribute?

If you have savings or investments (excluding the value of the home you live in) above **£23,250** you will be asked to pay the full cost of your care. If your savings and investments are worth less than **£23,250**, we will calculate how much you will need to contribute towards your services. This is known as your maximum assessed contribution.

What if my savings or investments are held jointly?

Jointly held savings or investments will be treated as belonging equally between the named owners. For example, if a husband and wife have a joint savings account with **£30,000**, each individual will be treated as owning **£15,000** of those savings.

What if I do not want to tell you about my finances?

If you prefer not to provide your financial information, you will be regarded as being able to pay the full costs of your care and support services.

What services are chargeable under Fairer Charging?

The following services are charged based on ability to pay (i.e. means tested)

- Home Care
- Day Care
- Transport

Meals taken in a day centre, or delivered to your home, are charged at a fixed rate and are not included in the Fairer Charging Policy.

What are the charges for these services?

The cost of the means tested services are shown below:

Service Average Actual Cost

Home Care £20.60 per hour

Day Care £65.00 per day

Transport £21.00 per return journey

If you were receiving a chargeable service on or before 31st December 2011 you will be notified about transitional arrangements separately.

The average actual cost will be reviewed on or around the **1st April each year**. Supported Living services will be charged for at your maximum assessed contribution.

You will not be charged more than the full cost of the service.

When will I start to be charged?

You will be charged from the date that your service starts. We will charge you a provisional contribution of **£19.55 per week until your financial assessment has been completed in full.**

Once your financial assessment has been completed, you will then be charged up to your maximum assessed contribution. If the maximum assessed contribution comes out lower than the provisional contribution, you will be refunded the difference.

This provisional contribution will remain in place until either a full financial assessment is complete or it is deemed that you do not wish to cooperate with the financial assessment process.

How will I know what my charges are and when to pay?

You will receive a billing advice document which will list all the care services you have received during a particular time period. This will show you the number of Home Care hours you may have had, the number of days you might have been to Day Care and transport.

In addition if you receive any other chargeable services they will be included in the bill. Along with your billing advice document you will receive an invoice which should be paid within 30 days. The invoice will have the reference number of the billing document the charges relate to so you can see what you are paying for.

How do I make a payment?

Variable direct debit is the easiest method of payment. Once you have set up your direct debit, your payments are made automatically and at the correct time. **To set up your direct debit, please call the Client Charging Team on 01905 766936.**

You can also pay by phone on our 24hour automated payments line by calling 01905 362400. You will need to have your invoice number and debit or credit card details available.

Our payments system is fully encrypted, thereby protecting your personal information.

If you receive your Personal Budget as a Direct Payment, your maximum assessed contribution will be deducted before this is paid to you.

What if my circumstances change?

If your financial situation changes you must contact us as soon as possible so that we can ensure your contribution is correct.

What if I do not agree with my charges?

You have the right to appeal against your assessment if:

1. You feel we have not correctly applied the Fairer Charging Policy to your assessment
2. You have an expenditure which we have not taken into account
3. You believe that your assessed contribution will leave you with financial difficulties

Should you wish to appeal you should contact us within 3 months of the date of your assessment.

The appeal should be directed to:

Benefits and Contributions Manager, PO Box 589, Worcester. WR4 4AH

If you continue to be dissatisfied, you can use the County Council's Complaints policy at

www.worcestershire.gov.uk/cms/consumer-relations/adult-social-care.aspx

or by **calling 01905 766365.**

Glossary

Maximum Assessed Contribution - This is the maximum weekly amount that we will charge the individual for the means tested services they receive.

Provisional Contribution - All service users are charged from day one of receiving a service. This provisional contribution is the maximum amount which we will charge per week until the financial assessment has been completed.

Cost - This is the amount that it costs us to 'purchase' the service from the provider.

“Fulfilling Potential”

A national consultation – Office for Disability Issues

Dial, as a member of the Worcestershire Coalition for Independent Living, Wcil, recently co-operated with other members and the County Council to consult groups of people with diverse disabilities from across the County.

There have been eight gatherings of various sizes; some conditions based and some by geographical locations. Participants have been from the spectrum of circumstances and have included some Black and Minority Ethnic individuals although no discrete BAME events were organised.

The consultation timetable did not allow us to do any detailed analysis but further work will be undertaken to utilise this work locally as well as contributing to the national consultation.

In addition to these responses a number of individuals expressed the intention of reflecting on their feelings and experiences and to make a personal reply direct to ODI.

For the full summary of local consultation inputs go to www.nwdial.org.uk or www.wcil.org.uk

New PIP consultation adds fuel to concerns

(Personal Independence Payment)

A new consultation on disability living allowance (**DLA**) reform has added fuel to concerns that the government is ignoring the likely impact of the changes on disabled people’s lives, say campaigners.

Disability Rights UK (**DR UK**) spoke out after the Department for Work and Pensions (**DWP**) quietly published the latest consultation document on its plans to replace working-age DLA with a new personal independence payment (**PIP**).

<http://www.dwp.gov.uk/consultations/2012/pip-detailed-design.shtml>

The document lays out plans for some of the detailed rules on PIP.

Among the proposals is a key change to the rules governing payment of DLA to people on the Motability car scheme who are admitted to hospital.

Currently, DLA payments stop after a disabled person has spent 28 days as an in-patient, but claimants who use their DLA mobility component to pay for a Motability vehicle can continue to receive those payments until the end of their lease.

But these payments are also now set to stop after 28 days, meaning PIP claimants who spend more than a month in hospital are likely to lose their Motability vehicles.

It is not yet clear exactly when this change will be brought in, as the document says only that the change will be rolled out **“from 2013 alongside the implementation of PIP”**.

Neil Coyle, director of policy and campaigns for DR UK, said the government appeared to have ignored the potential costs of the suggested new rule. It could mean disabled people not being able to drive home from hospital or finding it impossible to travel to work, while the government could face extra hospital costs from delayed discharges.

The consultation document also says that PIP will often be awarded for short fixed-term periods of just one or two years, although longer term awards of five or 10 years **“may be more appropriate”** in other cases.

Coyle said he expected fewer people to qualify for the new PIP than even the government had predicted, leading to more **“wasteful and stressful”** assessments and appeals, and a huge backlog in the PIP system. He warned that the move to PIP could see a **“never-ending”** revolving door for many disabled people from PIP assessment to appeal to another assessment, as has happened with the much-criticised employment and support allowance, the new out-of-work disability benefit.

He said he feared many disabled people would simply **“feel it is not worth the effort”** to claim PIP.

The new document says that the levels at which PIP will be paid will not be announced until the chancellor makes his autumn statement later this year.

DWP will start to phase in PIP for new claimants from April 2013, and begin to reassess existing DLA claimants from Oct 2013.

News provided by John Pring at www.disabilitynewsservice.com

Useful Contacts

Disability Living Allowance / Attendance Allowance Helpline:	08457 123456
Benefit Enquiry Line (BEL):	0800 88 22 00
Pension Credit:	0800 99 1234
Social Services:	0845 6072000
Out of hours Emergency Number:	01905 768020
Worcestershire Carer's Unit:	0800 3892896
Worcestershire Association of Carers Helpline:	0300 012 4272
Blue Badge Offices:	
Bromsgrove District Customer Service Centre:	01527 881288
Redditch One Stop Shop:	01527 534123
Wyre Forest Customer Service Centre:	01562 732928
Community Legal Advice (CLA):	0845 3454345
Age UK Bromsgrove & District:	01527 871840
Age UK Redditch & District:	01527 584653
Age UK Kidderminster & Wyre Forest:	01562 827788
Worcestershire Citizens Advice Line (new number for all CABs in Worcestershire)	
Calls from a Land Line call (calls cost 5p per minute)	0844 411 1303
Calls from a Mobile call	0300 330 0650
(Open Monday to Friday 10.00am to 4.00pm)	

NW DIAL can help with your queries about all manner of issues related to impairment / disability, access, holidays, discrimination, support organisations both local and national, transport etc. We can also help with form filling.

Helpline:	0800 970 7202
Office:	01562 60241
Fax & Minicom :	01562 68248
Text Line:	075 000 27 030
Email:	info@nwdial.org.uk
Website:	www.nwdial.org.uk



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