

Paying for non-residential social care services



Information guide
April 2024



Adult Social Care Services

East Lothian Council provides and arranges care services for a wide range of people in the county. Many of these services are free but in some cases we ask people who use services to make a contribution towards the cost of those services. The Council:

- never charges more for a service than it costs us to deliver that service, and
- in most cases the charges we raise are much less than the cost.

But it is important for us to make these charges as the income helps us to ensure that we can provide high quality support.

There are two types of charges:

Flat-rate

Some services are charged at a **flat rate** – meaning everyone pays the same amount for the services. These flat rate charges are kept low to ensure they are affordable and they include things like:

- **Meals** – where meals are brought to your home or provided at a lunch club. We charge a set amount for each meal you receive. This is paid to the lunch club or the company who provides the meals.
- **Community Alarm Service** – we charge a set weekly amount for having the Community Alarm service in place. This is paid every six months in arrears in October and April.
- **Transport**

2) Means-tested

The charge for some services are **means-tested** – meaning the amount you have to pay will depend on both:

- how much of the service you use, and also
- how much income and savings you have.

Most people with a high income or savings over £16,000 will have to pay the **full charge** for the services they receive but **most other** people will be assessed as having to pay much less. Means-tested services include:

- care or support at home
- attendance at building based resource centres with or without transport.

Independent advice

You can get good advice about benefits and money from the council's Welfare Rights Team, Carers of East Lothian, Citizens Advice Bureaux and many more – see the back page of this leaflet for their contact details.

Financial assessment

To work out your contribution, we carry out a **financial assessment**. You will be sent a Financial Assessment form that you need to complete telling us about:

- your income (and your partner/spouse's income, if the service is shared),
- pensions and benefits,
- savings and capital (for example, shares, property).

You also need to provide paperwork to support the information that you have given. For example, we will need to see copies of current bank statements, savings accounts etc.

Please note the sooner we get this information, the quicker we can work out how much you will have to pay.

We will send you a letter to explain how much you have to pay each week and we will base your bill on this amount. We normally bill people every four weeks.

Means-tested charges are reviewed each year to check they remain accurate and you should let us know about any significant changes in your income or savings during the year.

What happens if you don't let us know about your finances?

If you don't wish to disclose your financial details, you will probably have to pay the full charge for the service.

If you have questions or concerns about services

Please contact your social worker or the **Adult Services Team Finance Unit**. For more information

- phone 01875 824 309
- email communitycare@eastlothian.gov.uk

If you have questions or concerns about charges

Please contact the **Financial Assessment Team**:

- phone 01620 827 901
- email awfinancialassess@eastlothian.gov.uk

They will be able to explain the way charges have been calculated and check these are correct.

Appeals

If you are still concerned about the charges for services, you can appeal. We suggest you get independent advice with any appeal (see [Help and Advice](#) section). You can make an appeal by contacting the Adult Services Appeal Panel

Write to: **East Lothian Health and Social Care Partnership**

John Muir House
Brewery Park
Haddington EH41 3HA

Email: awchargingappeals@eastlothian.gov.uk

Appeals Panel

The Appeal Panel meets monthly and considers appeals for all services including flat-rate and means-tested charges. The Panel may decide to:

- not change the charges you have to pay, or
- reduce the amount you have to pay, or
- say you do not have to pay anything.

But we will normally look at the situation again as part of the annual charging reassessment process. Once the panel has reached a decision, we will write to you with that decision within fourteen days.

If you are still dissatisfied

Anyone who remains dissatisfied with the way the appeal decision has been reached will be entitled to pursue their complaint through the Council's Complaints Handling Procedure (CHP).

Complaints Handling Procedure (CHP)

The Appeals Panel can be considered to represent the Stage 1 of the CHP. If the representative person or their representative is dissatisfied with the handling of their appeal, then a complaint can be raised with the Customer Feedback Team. This will be as a Stage 2 complaint. Please note the CHP allows you to complain about how the appeal was handled and is not the opportunity to seek a different outcome to the appeal.

You can complain by contacting the Customer Feedback Team:

Write to: John Muir House
 Brewery Park
 Haddington
 EH41 3HA.

Phone: [0131 653 5290](tel:01316535290)


Email: feedback@eastlothian.gov.uk

Help and advice

If you need more information and advice, here are some organisations that can help.

- **Carers of East Lothian** – phone 0131 665 0135 or email centre@coel.org.uk
- **Partners in Advocacy** – phone 0131 478 7723 / 7724 or email edinburgh@partnersinadvocacy.org.uk
- **EARS** – phone 0131 478 8866 or email info@ears-advocacy.org.uk
- **CAPS** – phone: 0131 273 5118 or email: advocate@capsadvocacy.org
- **Citizens Advice Bureau (Haddington)** – phone 01620 824 471 or contact them via their website at <https://www.haddingtoncab.co.uk>
- **Citizens Advice Bureau (Musselburgh)** – phone 0131 653 2748 or contact via them their website at <http://musselburghcab.org.uk/>
- **East Lothian Council Welfare Rights Team** – phone 01620 827 827 and ask to be put through to Welfare Rights

Versions of this leaflet are available on audiotape, in Braille, and in your own language on request

 01620 827 199

 translation@eastlothian.gov.uk