

Members' Library Service Request Form

Date of Document	22/01/26
Originator	East Lothian Health And Social Care
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Document Title	Amendment to Tapers in the Non-Residential Social Care Financial Assessments

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Additional information:

Authorised By	David Hood
Designation	Head of Operations ELHSCP
Date	22/01/26

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COMMITTEE:	Members' Library Service
MEETING DATE:	January 2026
BY:	Chief Officer – East Lothian Integrated Joint Board
REPORT TITLE:	Amendment to Tapers in the Non-Residential Social Care Financial Assessments
REPORT STATUS:	Public

1 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To request an amendment to the taper rates used in the Financial Assessment process for Non-Residential Social Care Charging. This amendment follows changes made to the Non-Residential Charging Policy as agreed by Council in April 2024, which included adjustments to the taper rates.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

Members are recommended to:

- 2.1 Note the amendment to the taper rates in the financial assessments 2026/27 as detailed in table 3.11.
- 2.2 Note that the proposed changes are based on insights from the 2025/26 financial assessments, which revealed a negative impact from continuing with the taper rates agreed in April 2024.
- 2.3 Note the previous agreement made in April 2024 to move one Taper remains in place.

3 BACKGROUND

- 3.1 In April 2024, the Council approved several changes to the financial assessment process for non-residential social care charges. One key change was the phased removal of the second taper, aiming to simplify the system by retaining only one taper.

- 3.2 In the financial assessment a taper refers to the rate (%) at which the accessible income is gradually taken into account when calculating the contribution towards care costs.
- 3.3 A taper prevents people from being fully charged on all their accessible income above the thresholds, offering a protective buffer. See Appendix 1 for an example of how tapers are applied within the assessment process.
- 3.4 Taper Rate Progression Table Agreed April 2024:

Year	23/24	Year 1 (24/25)	Year 2 (25/26)	Year 3 26/27
Taper 1	60%	65%	70%	75%
Taper 2	75%	80%	90%	n/a

- 3.5 Note we are currently charging based on 'Year 1' taper, as we assess a year in arrears to ensure that client contributions are affordable, preventing financial hardship by assessing based on the previous year's income.
- 3.6 Due to the pandemic and the anticipated removal of social care charges by 2026 (now deemed unfeasible), financial assessments had not been completed since 2019. The 2024 assessments resulted in significant increase in charges for many individuals, reflecting income growth over the four-year gap.
- 3.7 The changes agreed in April 2024 allowed the IJB to access more income from individuals. However, in line with the charging policy it is important future changes do not cause financial hardship and need to remain in line with available income and charging thresholds.
- 3.8 Income from Social Care Charging (excluding community alarms):

Year	Income
23/24	£413,490
24/25	£786,038
25/26	£900,000 (projected)

- 3.9 On review of the taper arrangements and based on the current, updated financial assessments, the following table shows the impact per person, per week of the current taper agreement.

Year	Taper applied		Average Charge per week
24/25	65% (on 1 st £50)	80%	£84.71
25/26	70% (on 1 st £50)	90%	£93.74
26/27	75%	N/A	£86.45

3.10 Unlike in 2024 when the charges were out of sync with the individual's income, the current charge is a truer reflection of the available income. The increase of £9.03 per week this year, would be significantly above the benefit rate rise (expected to be less than 2% in 26/27).

3.11 Proposal for implementation on 25/26 assessments.

Taper	Taper 1	Taper 2	Average charge per week
Existing	60%	70%	£84.71
Proposal	75%	N/A	£86.45

3.12 An example of the financial assessment with the impact of the taper changes is shown in Appendix 1.

4 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

4.1 This change will impact the Non-Residential Social Care Charging Policy.

4.2 Agreement will require amendment to the Financial Assessment Process.

5 RESOURCE AND OTHER IMPLICATIONS

5.1 Finance: Reduction of Income available to the IJB.

5.2 Human Resources: none.

5.3 Other (e.g. Legal/IT): none.

- 5.4 Risk: Reduction of income to IJB- offset by sustainability of non-residential charging and introduction of other charges.

6 INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 6.1 **Select the statement that is appropriate to your report by placing an 'X' in the relevant box.**

An Integrated Impact Assessment screening process has been undertaken and the subject of this report does not affect the wellbeing of the community or have a significant impact on: equality and human rights; tackling socio-economic disadvantages and poverty; climate change, the environment and sustainability; the Council's role as a corporate parent; or the storage/collection of personal data.

or

The subject of this report has been through the Integrated Impact Assessment process and impacts have been identified as follows:

Subject	Impacts identified (Yes, No or N/A)
Equality and human rights	
Socio-economic disadvantage/poverty	x
Climate change, the environment and sustainability	
Corporate parenting and care-experienced young people	
Storage/collection of personal data	
Other	

The Integrated Impact Assessment relating to this report has been published and can be accessed via the Council's website:

https://www.eastlothian.gov.uk/info/210558/social_care_and_health/12776/elhscp_integrated_impact_assessments

7 APPENDICES

- 7.1 Appendix 1 showing the impact of tapers.

7.2 Appendix 2 Other Authority Taper Rates

8 BACKGROUND PAPERS

8.1 Agreed April 2024 paper at Item 5:

https://www.eastlothian.gov.uk/meetings/meeting/17116/east_lothian_council.

9 AUTHOR AND APPROVAL DETAILS

Report Author(s)

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Date	08/12/2025

Head of Service Approval

Name	David Hood
Designation	Head of Operations (HSCP)
Confirmation that IIA and other relevant checks (e.g. finance/legal) have been completed	Yes
Approval Date	17/12/2025

Appendix 1

Financial assessment follows these steps:

Step 1: Calculate total income as a weekly amount
Step 2: Create an accessible income for financial assessment. This is done by applying all disregards, these include: - Charging threshold (set by Cosla Guidance) - Disregard appropriate benefits (set by Cosla Guidance) - Disregard Disability Related Expenditure (DRE)
Step 3: Apply taper rates to accessible income
Step 4: Produce client contribution

Example1

Step 1: Income

Employment and support allowance: £240.00 per week
Adult disability payment – Daily living component £108.00 per week
Adult disability payment – Mobility component £75.00 per week
Total income = £423.00 per week

Step 2: Apply disregards

Charging threshold - £167 per week
Adult disability payment – Mobility component - £75.00
Disability related expenditure: £15 per week
Total disregards = £257.00

Total income minus Total disregards
 $423 - 257 = \mathbf{£166 \text{ accessible income}^*}$

**This is the amount of money used when applying the tapers*

Step 3: Apply tapers

For this example, we will use the taper rates for 2024/25.

Taper rate 1: 65% of the first £50

65% of 50 = **£32.50**

Taper rate 2: 80% of the remaining amount

Accessible income £166 minus the £50 from the first taper = £116

80% of £116 = **£92.80**

Step 4: Produce client contribution

Taper 1 £32.50 *plus* Taper 2 £92.80 = £125.30

Client contribution £125.30

Additional notes:

- In the above example the client has £297.70 per week left **after** paying client contribution
- Rent and council tax would be paid by appropriate benefit

- For simplicity, I have not included tariff income in the calculation. Tariff income is applied when a person has over £6,000 in savings.

Comparing different tapers rates:

Steps 1 and 2 do not change regardless of any changes we make to the tapers. This means we can compare the impact of different tapers using the same accessible income of £166.00.

Taper rates for 2024/25

Accessible income	£166.00
Taper one 65%	£32.50
Taper two 80%	£92.80
Client contribution	£125.30

Taper rates for 2025/26

Accessible income	£166.00
Taper one 70% of first £50	£35.00
Taper two 90% of remaining	£104.40
Client contribution	£139.40

Taper rates for 2026/27

Accessible income	£166.00
Taper one 75% of all accessible	£124.50
Taper two removed	nil
Client contribution	£124.50

****We are looking to remove Taper 25/26.**

Appendix 2

Tapers:

Local Authority	Taper 1	Taper 2
East Lothian	65%	80%
Mid Lothian	70%	
West Lothian	65 %	
Scottish Borders	75%	
East Lothian Proposal	75%	