



**COMMUNITY CARE SERVICES - FEES AND CHARGES 2025/26**

Report by Chief Officer, Partnership Services and Community Care

**PURPOSE**

- 1.1 The purpose of the Report is to seek approval for the setting of charges for Comhairle Community Care Services delegated to the Integration Joint Board (IJB) for the financial year 2025/26. The Report includes the inclusion of full cost recovery for Comhairle residential care related services.

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

- 2.1 The Report sets out the framework of charges for 2025/26 for Community Care services, in the context of COSLA guidance on charging for social work services. Personal care delivered to people, regardless of age, has been delivered free of charge since 1 April 2019. People who receive services as a consequence of an Order under the Mental Health (Care and Treatment) (Scotland) Act 2003, and other compulsory measures, are similarly exempt from charges. Charges for food provided in day centres and by care homes to for other service users and those in supported accommodation are payable by all recipients.
- 2.3 The Comhairle continues to follow COSLA Guidance on charges. The charges relating to residential services set out in this Report are the maximum charge for each service, and do not translate into the amount that all individuals will pay towards their care. The estimated income anticipated to be received is included in the revenue projections of the IJB budget. The duty for setting the associated fees and charges remains a decision of the Comhairle.
- 2.4 The 2025/26 recommendations in this Report are based on the implementation of full cost recovery which was introduced in 2024/25 as opposed to the previous approach of applying uplifts to the previous financial year's figures. This is recommended due to the structural deficit within the Integration Joint Board budget. The charges for the external care home provision are set at the fees agreed by the Integration Joint Board in March 2025. To date, the providers have not accepted these rates.
- 2.5 Full cost recovery means that the financial assessment process is applied to the full cost of the service provision as opposed to the practice of a charge set by applying a percentage increase annually. The Comhairle will continue to follow COSLA Guidance on charges and this Report outlines in paragraph 5.1 what the framework of charges for 2025/26 are based on full cost recovery. Full cost is represented by all direct costs and apportionment of any attributable support costs incurred by the service. The charges set out in this Report are the maximum charge for each service, and do not translate into the amount that all individuals will pay towards their care.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 3.1 It is recommended that the Comhairle approve the fees and charges for 2025/26 as follows:
- (a) the standard weekly charge for Comhairle care homes for the elderly increase from £1,912 to £2,008 per individual room per week;
  - (b) the standard weekly charge for Housing with Extra Care (HVEC) at Bremner Court, Goathill, Stornoway increase from £1,108 to £1,163 per individual flat per week;

- (c) the standard weekly charge for Ardseileach Care Home be increased from £2,649 to £2,781 per individual room per week;
- (d) the 2025/26 fee for residential assessment and respite (currently £177.35 per week) be increased by the percentage increase in pension credit (4.1%) to £184.60 per week;
- (e) the rates for the independent care homes for 2025/26 be
  - Bethesda Care Home           £1,203 per bed per week
  - Leverburgh Home of Rest   £1,076 per bed per week
- (f) the meal provision charges for Day Care and other community-based service users be increased by 5% to £0.91 for tea/coffee and £3.76 per meal for lunch or a cooked meal;
- (g) the room hire and other facilities related charges be increased by 5%;
- (h) the hourly rate for direct payments be £19.34 for one-to-one personal care, £39.72 and £79.45 for the half-day to full-day rate for Day Care equivalent for adults with learning disabilities depending on assessment. This is in line with the Scottish Government's Adult Social Care Pay Uplift for Personal Assistants (4.5%).

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## IMPLICATIONS

4.1 The following implications are applicable in terms of the Report.

Resource Implications	Implications/None
Financial	For charges, the 5% increase in line with anticipated pay and cost of living inflation has been applied. Charging is linked to external factors such as Department of Work and Pensions and rates set nationally.
Legal	The legal basis for charging is based on COSLA charging guidance and the local charging policy decisions approved by the Comhairle. The setting of the charge of the externally commissioned residential and nursing care is has been agreed by the Integration Joint Board but not the external providers.
Staffing	None
Assets and Property	None
Strategic Implications	Implications/None
Risk	The ongoing challenge of the budgeted deficit was the trigger for introduction of full cost recovery charging in 2024/25 and it is appreciated that service users and potential service users may continue to be dissatisfied with the increase in charge – regardless of the financial assessment processes caveats. The agreement for fee rates with the external care homes has not been concluded. The requirement to agree a charge early in the financial year is important to enable residents and their representatives to manage their financial affairs, the proposed rate is the payment agreed by the Integration Joint Board.
Equalities	Initial Impact Assessment indicated no Equalities implications. The ability to pay continues to be the approach to financial assessment applying the national policy and guidance when undertaking such matters.
Corporate Strategy	Provision of statutory services.
Environmental Impact	None
Consultation	None

## PROPOSED CHARGES 2025/26

### Comhairle Care Homes

5.1 Fees and Charges for Comhairle Care Homes in 2025/26 are as follows:

Comhairle Community Care Services	2024/2025	2025/26
Standard weekly charge for Comhairle care homes	£1,912 per individual per week	£2,008 per individual per week
Housing with Extra Care (HVEC) at Bremner Court	£1,108 per flat per week	£1,163 per flat per week
Ardseileach Care Home	£2,649 per individual room per week	£2,781 per individual room per week

5.2 With the introduction of Full Cost Recovery in 2024/25, the financial assessment process is applied to the full cost of the service provision as opposed to the practice of a charge set by applying a percentage increase annually. The Comhairle will continue to follow COSLA Guidance on charges. The

Charging for Residential Accommodation Guidance (CRAG) states that where a person is provided with accommodation under Part III of the National Assistance Act, Section 22 of that Act provides for them to be charged for the accommodation. Section 22 requires local authorities to set the standard rate for local authority homes at an amount equivalent to the full cost to the authority of providing the accommodation.

- 5.3 Personal care delivered to people regardless of age has been delivered free of charge since 1 April 2019. People who receive services as a consequence of an Order under the Mental Health (Care and Treatment) (Scotland) Act 2003, and other compulsory measures, are similarly exempt from charges. People assessed as requiring a service can choose to have their ability to pay assessed, and the total of all charges will thereafter be restricted to the assessed threshold. They also have the option to pay the full charge without assessment.
- 5.4 Full cost is represented by all direct costs and apportionment of any attributable support costs incurred by the service. The charges set out in this Report are the maximum charge for each service, and do not translate into the amount that all individuals will pay towards their care.
- 5.5 Service users assessed as liable to fund the cost of their care qualify for Free Personal Care Allowance. For 2025/26 these rates are £254.60 per week for residential care and £369.15 per week for nursing care.
- 5.6 The standard weekly charge for the new Housing with Extra Care (HWE) at Bremner Court, Goathill, Stornoway is proposed to be £1,163 per individual flat per week in 2025/26.
- 5.7 The 2025/26 fee for residential assessment and respite (currently £177.35 per week) be increased by the percentage increase in pension credit (4.1%) to £184.60 per week
- 5.8 The lower capital limit in residential care charging for 2025/26 is £22,000 (previously £21,500) and the upper capital limit is £35,500 (previously £35,000), These limits are set in line with guidance provided by the Scottish Government.
- 5.9 The Personal Expenses Allowance (PEA) is £35.90 per week (previously £34.50 per week) and is set in line with the guidance provided by the Scottish Government. This is the weekly amount that care home residents must be allowed to retain.

#### **Charges - Independent Care Home Providers**

- 5.10 The rates for the independent care homes for 2025/26 are

Bethesda Care Home	£1,203
Leverburgh Home of Rest	£1,076

- 5.11 **Charge for Meals Provided (Day Care and Community)**

<b>Meals</b>	<b>2024/25 £</b>	<b>Proposed Rate for 2025/26 £</b>
Am/pm Tea/Coffee	0.87	0.91
Cooked Meal/Lunch	3.58	3.76
Total Daily Charge	5.32	5.58

It is proposed to increase the fees and charges for all Community Care premises for room hire and other facilities by 5%.

### Direct Payments

- 5.12 The Comhairle offers several Direct Payment options for assessed needs that fall within the Eligibility Criteria for Community Care services.

Direct Payments	2024/25 £	Proposed Rate for 2025/26 £
One-to-One (Personal Care and Complex Needs)	18.51	19.34
Day Care equivalent for Adults with Learning Disabilities (Half-day)	38.01	39.72
Day Care equivalent for Adults with Learning Disabilities (Full-day)	76.03	79.45
Respite/Short Break	£762.62	£814.40

### Impact of Changes

- 5.13 The introduction of a full cost recovery approach in 2024/25 resulted in a significant increase to charges, with the caveat that the assessment of ability to pay remained central to the assessment process. Due to the continued application of the assessment process for eligibility for residential care related services and similarly the continued application of the financial assessment process based on COSLA charging guidance the impact on the protected characteristic groups is unchanged.
- 5.14 Following confirmation of agreed charges, bespoke communication will be managed with service users and their legal representatives as appropriate. Public information will be issued detailing all service charges for 2025/26. Officers within the Department will continue to ensure that all service users are encouraged to maximise their benefits entitlements through collaborative working with the Western Isles Citizens Advice Service and the Comhairle/Macmillan Benefit Advisers.