

FINANCIAL MATTERS 7 – SELF-FUNDERS

Paying for your care and support (if you have more than £23,250)

This factsheet explains what it means to be a self-funder and what you can expect from Sefton Council if you are paying the full cost of your care and support. It also explains what you should do if your savings/capital later fall below £23,250. If someone manages your finances for you, please share this factsheet with them.

What is a Self-Funder?

A self-funder is the term used for you if you pay for your care and support in full because:

- You have capital above the higher capital limit. The current Government threshold is £23,250. Capital may include money held in bank or building society accounts, ISAs, stocks and shares, a second property, commercial premises or a holiday home; or
- You choose not to disclose financial information for a full financial assessment; or
- You decline an assessment of your needs.

What can you expect from Sefton Council as a self-funder?

Anyone who appears to need care and support is entitled to a Care Act Assessment, regardless of their financial situation. The assessment is a conversation with you to understand your needs, what matters to you, and your strengths. It can help identify what support may be available and support you to make informed decisions. As part of the assessment process, Sefton Council will offer information and advice about organising care and support.

You will be asked to provide financial information so the Council can complete a financial assessment. This confirms whether you are eligible for Council-funded care and support now, or whether you are likely to become eligible in the future.

When planning how to meet your eligible care and support needs, and how to pay for your care, the Council will support you to maintain choice and control over decisions about what your care looks like.

As a self-funder, you will pay the full cost of your care and support from the start.

Important:

If you ask Sefton Council to do so, the Council can arrange community-based services to meet your eligible needs. Alternatively, Sefton Council can support you to arrange your own care directly with a care provider.

Types of services

The quality and cost of services vary significantly depending on the care and support you require. Sefton Council can provide information about local services, but is unable to recommend any single care or service provider. You can search Sefton Council's directory of services or the Care Quality Commission (CQC) website <https://www.cqc.org.uk/> for inspection reports.

Services Sefton Council can arrange include:

- Day care services
- Carer respite services
- Extra care services
- Assistive technology
- Homecare services
- Supported living services
- Shared Lives services

When arranging services privately, you should check what is included in the cost, how and when the cost may change, and what notice you need to give if you want to end the service.

Sefton Council can also offer advice and information about local services such as voluntary groups, support groups, health services, cleaners, community groups, and carer support services.

What to think about if you are self-funding residential or nursing care home accommodation

If you need care in a care home, it is important to check that your needs can be met by the care home you choose.

You can ask Sefton Council to assess your needs, and the Council will provide advice about which type of care homes in Sefton could meet your assessed needs.

As a self-funder, you will usually need to set up a contract with the care home and pay fees directly to them.

Before you agree a placement, you should check the contract carefully, including what the weekly fee includes, any additional charges the home may levy, and how and when the provider can increase fees.

Important:

Sefton Council will not arrange residential or nursing home services to meet your assessed needs unless you do not have capacity to manage your finances and there is no one with legal authority to manage finances on your behalf.

If you later become eligible for Council funding but choose to remain in a care home that costs more than the Council would usually pay, you (or a third party) may need

to pay a 'top-up' to cover the difference. The Council will explain if a top-up applies and who can pay it.

Deferred Payments

If you own your own home but cannot pay the full cost immediately, please see the Deferred Payment Scheme Fact Sheet for further information. The value of your property will not usually be considered for the first 12 weeks of your stay in residential care.

If you have been living in residential or nursing care accommodation for more than 12 weeks, you will not qualify for a 12-week property disregard because you have already been in specified accommodation for longer than 12 weeks.

What happens when my money falls below the £23,250 limit?

You should contact Sefton Council around 3 months before your capital drops below the higher capital limit of £23,250. To arrange a new assessment, please contact our Customer Access Team via Sefton Plus (Tel: 0345 140 0845) who will make a new referral for an assessment of your care needs and a financial assessment. Some capital may be disregarded from a financial assessment, such as Investment Bonds, Trusts, compensation payments, you should seek advice as to whether this will be included in your capital.

If you are living in another Council area when your capital reduces, you should contact that Council instead. The relevant Council will need to confirm that your capital has reduced below £23,250 and that you meet the care eligibility criteria before an offer of funding is made.

If you have been funding your own care and your savings have reduced, you may become eligible for Council-funded support. Your care and support needs will need to be assessed, and you may have to pay towards your care costs if you receive Council-funding. You will then need to complete a financial assessment. This will determine how much you can contribute from your income towards your ongoing care costs. Information on Sefton Council's charges can be found here:

<https://www.sefton.gov.uk/social-care/adults/paying-for-care/>

Important:

Do not stop paying care and support charges until the relevant Council confirms your capital is less than £23,250.

If you are in a care home when you become eligible for Council funding, the Council will consider whether the care home fee is one it would usually pay. If it is higher, a top-up may be needed to help you stay in the same care home. If there is no one to pay any top-up, you may be supported to move to another care home.

Deprivation of income or assets

Deprivation of assets is when someone deliberately reduces their overall assets to reduce the amount they are charged towards their care and support.

If a financial assessment determines that you have deliberately given away or disposed of some or all of your savings, another capital asset, or income to reduce your assessed care and support charge, you will be assessed as if you still had those savings, assets or income.

State benefits

It is advisable to seek advice to make sure you are receiving all the benefits you are entitled to, such as Attendance Allowance or Personal Independence Payment (PIP), while you are self-funding your care.

Some benefits can change depending on your circumstances, for example if you move into a care home, so you should seek advice.

Independent advice

Paying for care can be complex, particularly if you are funding your own care. When considering options for care and support, you are advised to seek independent financial advice to help ensure your plans are affordable and sustainable, as care costs can be substantial.

In some situations, you may be eligible for NHS funding towards your care (for example NHS Continuing Healthcare). If you are in a nursing home, you may also be eligible for NHS-funded nursing care. You should ask your health or social care professional for advice about assessments for NHS funding.

The Council cannot provide individual financial advice directly, but we recommend that you consider seeking independent financial advice as early as possible.

We will help you to understand how to access independent financial advice.

We recommend that you check that any financial adviser you choose is registered with the [Financial Conduct Authority | FCA](https://www.fca.org.uk/) their website is: <https://www.fca.org.uk/>