

1.1. The draft Charging Policy states :

*Where disability related benefits are taken into account as part of the financial assessment process, the Council will allow a person to keep enough benefit to pay for necessary disability related expenditure to meet agreed needs which are not being met by the authority. The Council applies a notional level of banded disability related expenditure (DRE) based upon the level of a person's disability benefits. However, the maximum level of banded DRE can be exceeded in cases where the expense is justified and can be verified through evidence of expenditure such as receipts.*

1.2. The following banded amounts per week are automatically disregarded :

- £5.00 if a service user is not in receipt of any disability related benefits
- £10.00 if a service user is receiving lower or middle rate Disability Living Allowance (DLA)/Attendance Allowance(AA)
- £20.00 if a service user is receiving the highest rate of DLA/AA
- An additional £25 for service users in supported living arrangements

1.3. The banded amounts of DRE were introduced to avoid excessive administration costs and to help service users by reducing the requirement to keep detailed records, receipts and other evidence of purchase. However, the banded amounts are frequently exceeded and local guidelines are referred to in order to determine which expenses are allowed, whether receipts are required, etc.

1.4. The Council's current local guidelines for assessing disability related expenditure claimed in excess of the banded amounts have been reviewed in line with the National Association of Financial Assessment Officers (NAFAO) guidelines and the requirements of the Care Act. The intention is also to introduce more clarity and consistency in the financial assessment process. The main proposed changes include:

- More emphasis on checking with the social worker that the expenditure is disability related if the need is not noted in the care plan
- An increased requirement for documentary evidence to prove regular ongoing expenditure
- The deletion of some categories of expense eg complimentary therapy, gym membership and the reclassification of other categories
- The introduction of maximum amounts of expenditure eg £5.00 per week for specialist clothing
- No allowance for travel costs if not in receipt of DLA/PIP mobility (unless there is evidence of mobility issues noted in the care plan) and no allowance for the fuel costs associated with mobility cars
- The introduction of a new category "Other disability related expenses" which covers specific expenses not included elsewhere subject to the individual's circumstances and the approval of the team manager.

All guideline amounts can be exceeded where the service user can demonstrate that the actual costs incurred are above the suggested allowances. Expenses claimed in excess of the guideline amounts must be approved by the team manager.

Disability Expense	Guideline / Maximum Amount	Comment
<b>Fuel Costs</b>		
<i>Excess fuel costs where related to a disability can be claimed. NAFAO has calculated typical fuel costs over a year for different types of property. The amount to be taken into account should be actual gas and electricity paid, averaged over one year, minus the annual average amounts as below (NAFAO NW rates 2016/17).</i>		
Flat/Terrace- single	£1,384 (amounts above this figure)	Proof of payment over 12 month period required
Flat/Terrace - couple	£1,824 (amounts above this figure)	
Semi-detached – single	£1, 470 (amounts above this figure)	Proof of payment over 12 month period required
(including bungalow) – couple	£1, 936 (amounts above this figure)	
Detached – single	£1,790 (amounts above this figure)	Proof of payment over 12 month period required
(including bungalow) – couple	£2, 357 (amounts above this figure)	
<b>Basic Gardening</b>	Allow actual cost up to a maximum of £7.50 per week average (single person household) or proportionately divided by other household members. Seasonal fluctuations have been taken into account.	Confirm with Social Worker. Receipts, bills, cheque stubs for last 4 payments.
<b>Private Domestic help</b>	Allow actual cost up to a maximum of £12.55 (if single person household) or proportionately divided by other household members.	Confirm with social worker that this additional to care plan provision. Receipts, bills, cheque stubs for last 4 payments required.
<b>Laundry and/or special washing powder</b>	Allow up to £1.20 per home wash up to a maximum of £3.60 per week if in excess of 4 loads per week and if noted in care plan or discussed with social worker.	Care plan or social worker will have identified an incontinence problems
<b>Specialist Clothing and Footwear</b>	Actual cost up to a maximum of £5.00 per week for specialist or frequently replaced clothing due to excessive wear and tear. Full cost of footwear allowed. (Need is noted in the care plan or discussed with social worker).	Proof of purchase required
<b>Frequently replaced bedding</b>	Allow additional actual cost (above £50 per annum) for frequent replacement averaged over one year. Allow up to a maximum of £2.00 per week if the need is noted in the care	Proof of purchase required

	plan or discussed with the social worker.	
<b>Travel costs</b>	<b>If not in receipt of DLA/PIP mobility then no cost allowed.</b> Where DLA/PIP mobility is received costs must be net of benefit and must be incurred solely or mainly due to disability. Mobility issues must be noted in the care plan.	This can be considered on a discretionary basis, if additional travel expenses can be proved and mobility issues are noted in the care plan
Wheelchair	Actual cost divided by 500 (based on number of weeks in 10 years). No allowance if provided free of charge. Add the cost of maintenance and insurance. Maximum allowance will be: £3.75 per week for a manual wheelchair and £9.12 per week for a powered wheelchair.	Check to see if client has a free wheelchair and if not, why not? No allowance to be made if client's choice to 'upgrade' to a different wheelchair Receipts and bills for maintenance/insurance costs
Other Equipment/ Maintenance:	Actual cost divided by 500 plus cost of maintenance / insurance to a maximum of:	Evidence of purchase is required.
Powered Bed	£4.20 per week	Social worker/OT should confirm that this is an essential requirement
Turning Bed	£7.27 per week	No allowance if equipment provided free of charge
Power Reclining Chair	£3.30 per week	Receipts and bills for maintenance/insurance costs
Stairlift	£5.88 per week	
Hoist	£2.88 per week	
Continence Products	Not allowed unless identified in the care plan or discussed with the social worker that NHS supplies cannot be used or are inadequate	Proof of last 4 payments required
Assistance Dog	Allow £10 per week for assistance dogs only	Receipts Required
Community Alarm Cost	If not funded by Housing Benefit , allow full cost if purchased privately	Proof of last 4 payments required
Hair Washing	Actual cost of washing and drying allowed where individual is unable to wash own hair and hair washing is not part of the care package. Maximum £6.62 per week based on average costs	Proof of last 4 payments requirements
Carer Costs	Meals out – allow actual cost up to £4 for	Discretionary

	lunch or £6 for tea Holidays – allow actual cost up to £520 per annum if carer is required to accompany service user.	Proof of costs required
Chiropody	Actual cost if NHS chiropodist not available based on 6 weekly visits	Proof of last 4 payments required
Other disability related expenses	Other specific disability-related expenses may be allowed subject to individual circumstances and proof of costs. Requires approval by SCBT team manager as outlined below	Proof of last 4 payments required.

***\*Where receipts required, a minimum of the last 4 receipts (whether weekly or monthly) should be provided.***

***These are guideline amounts which can be exceeded where the service user can demonstrate that the actual costs incurred are above the guideline amounts. Expenses above the guideline amounts referred to above must be approved by the SCBT manager. Where there is doubt that an expense is disability related this should be discussed with the social worker.***