



What is a top-up payment?

This leaflet explains when a top-up may be paid and why



What is a top-up?

A top-up may be required when your choice of provider costs more than the amount of money the council has allocated to meet your care and support needs.

If you have been assessed as eligible for care and support, we will agree an amount of money that is sufficient to meet your needs. We call this a personal budget. The personal budget is made up of the council's contribution and the amount you have been assessed as being able to pay. We have to make sure that the personal budget is enough to meet your individual needs. We will offer you at least one available care home place that can meet your needs for that amount of money. If you decide you would prefer a more expensive provider, you may still be able to have this service if a third party agrees to pay the difference - this is called a top up.

For example, if the actual cost of a care home is £800 per week and your personal budget is £680, then a top up of £120 a week would be needed to be paid by a third party.





We may agree to meet the difference between your personal budget and a more expensive provider, if there are no longer any vacancies at the care home that we had identified and no other provider is able to meet your needs.

Who pays the top-up?

A top up is usually paid by a third party, such as a family member or friend. They will be asked to sign an agreement and the council must be satisfied that the third party is willing and able to pay the top-up fee for as long as needed.

The top-up must be paid directly to the provider unless otherwise agreed.

Occasionally, a charity may pay the top up fee. Turn2Us is a national charity that provides financial support in tough times. You can find out more on their website at **turn2us.org.uk**.

Can I pay the top-up?

It is unlikely that we will agree to you paying the top-up. We will look at your financial situation when we work out how much you have to contribute towards the cost of your care and support. Paying a top-up in addition to your assessed financial contribution may cause you financial hardship, which we would want to avoid.

You can only pay your own top-up fee in one of the following situations:

- you own your own property and have entered into a 12-week property disregard
- you own your own property and have a deferred payment agreement with the council
- your accommodation is being provided under section 117 of the Mental Health Act 1983 as aftercare.

Will changes in my income effect the top-up?

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The top-up is agreed at a set amount so any changes in your income will not change the amount of the top-up. However, the top-up is reviewed every year in line with the overall cost of your care and support.

What happens if the care provider's fees increase?

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Usually care providers increase their charges each year. However, there is no guarantee that your personal budget will increase in line with the provider's revised charges, so the top-up fee could increase.

The council will usually consider annual charges in line with or lower than inflation. If a care provider chooses to increase their fee above inflation, it is unlikely that the council will agree to meet this additional cost, unless it directly relates to a change in your care and support needs.



What happens if I or the third party is no longer able to pay the top-up?

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If the person paying the top-up can no longer afford to pay, please contact us on **020 8871 7707** as soon as possible.

You may also want to let your provider know that you may have difficulties paying the fee. If the person paying the top-up stops paying without prior agreement with the council, we will treat any outstanding top-up payments as debt and aim to recover them accordingly.

If there is no one else who can pay the top-up, we may need to reassess your needs to make sure your needs haven't changed before we discuss the options with you.



Where can I get more advice and information?

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National organisations

There are many national organisations which provide general advice on care and support, financial issues and planning for the future, which include:

Age UK

Age UK provides information and factsheets on a variety of subjects including paying for care and support at home, finding care home accommodation and planning for retirement.

Adviceline: 0800 055 6112

Website: www.ageuk.org.uk

Citizens Advice

Citizens Advice provide free, independent, confidential and impartial advice to everyone on their rights and responsibilities..

Adviceline: 03444 111 444

Website: www.citizensadvice.org.uk

entitledto

Entitledto provides an independent benefits calculator to help people find out what benefits they can claim. They can also provide information on a range of benefits and how your benefits will be affected if you start work.

Website: www.entitledto.co.uk

Independent Age

Independent Age is a national charity helping older people maintain their independence by providing advice, information and support.

Helpline: 0800 319 6789

Website: www.independentage.org

The Money Advice Service

The Money Advice Service is a free, independent advice service. On their website is a section for care and disability that includes topics such as 'care advice and help' and 'paying for care'.

Telephone: 0800 138 7777

Website: www.moneyadviceservice.org.uk

The Society of Later Life Advisers (SOLLA)

SOLLA is a not-for-profit organisation that aims to help people seeking advice about the financial issues in later life by ensuring they can find an Accredited Adviser local to them.

Telephone: 0333 2020 454

Website: <https://societyoflaterlifeadvisers.co.uk>

Turn2Us

Turn2Us is a national charity that provides financial support in tough times. You can find out more on their website at www.turn2us.org.uk

Local voluntary organisations

There are many local voluntary organisations, which provide information and advice about a range of topics and can help find local services to meet your needs.

Age UK Wandsworth

Age UK Wandsworth provides free information, advice and support for older people and their carers. They can help with questions including money and benefits, housing, direct payments and care homes.

Telephone: 020 8877 8940
Email: info@ageukwandsworth.org.uk
Website: www.ageuk.org.uk/wandsworth

Citizens Advice Wandsworth

Citizens Advice Wandsworth provides free, confidential, impartial advice to everybody. They can give free impartial money advice on how best to manage all aspects of your personal finances. Citizens Advice Wandsworth's Disability and Social Care Advice Service (DASCAS) can help make sure you get all the benefits you are entitled to.

Telephone: 0300 330 1169 (Monday to Thursday 10am to 4pm)
Email: info@cawandsworth.org
Website: www.cawandsworth.org

VoiceAbility

VoiceAbility provides free independent and confidential advocacy support to help you make the right choices and decisions.

Telephone: 020 7924 7772
Email: wandsworth@voiceability.org
Website: www.voiceability.org/services/londonborough-of-wandsworth

Wandsworth Carers Centre

Wandsworth Carers Centre offers free and confidential information, advice and support for carers caring and/ or living in Wandsworth.

Telephone: 020 8877 1200
Email: info@wandsworthcarers.org.uk
Website: www.carerswandsworth.org.uk



Our contact details

Monday to Friday from 9am to 5pm.

Telephone: (020) 8871 7707

SMS Phone: 07940 775107

Email: accessteam@wandsworth.gov.uk

Website: www.wandsworth.gov.uk/adultsocialcare

Write to us at:

Wandsworth Council
Adult Social Care
Wandsworth High Street
London, SW18 2PU

For information on local services please visit CarePlace
www.careplace.org.uk

If you have difficulty understanding this publication and you would like this leaflet in a different language, large print or Braille please call:
(020) 8871 7707

For information on our Privacy Notice please visit
www.wandsworth.gov.uk/privacy

