ASC Disability Related Expenditure Policy (DRE)

Summary:

This policy is to offer guidance to Adult Social Care and Finance staff concerning the assessment and application of Disability Related Expenditure when completing a financial assessment for an individual in receipt of Adult Social Care and Support Services.

Date of Issue	January 2026
Next Review Date	January 2027
Policy Owner (TITLE not name)	Emma Baxter - Finance Manager
Policy Author & Department	Kelly Redman - ASC Income Team, Finance Hayley Murch - ASC Income Team, Finance
Related Documents	Care Act 2014 - Charging and Assessment of Resources Care and Support Statutory Guidance ASC Charging Policy - ASC Income Team
Applicability	Adult Social Care Income Team - Finance Adult Social Care Teams including Older Persons, Learning Disability, Adult Mental Health and Physical Disability Teams
Revision History	*v.1.0*

Contents

1. Introduction

The purpose of this Policy is to outline Portsmouth City Council approach surrounding the assessment and application of Disability Related Expenditure when completing a financial assessment for care and support services received in the community.

This Policy should be read in conjunction with the Care Act 2014 Charging and Assessment of Resources , the Care and Support Statutory Guidance and PCC ASC Charging Policy.

The Care Act 2014 gives the council power to charge adults for their care and support.

This applies where adults are being provided with care and support to meet needs identified under Section 18, Section 19 or Section 20 of the Care Act 2014.

These needs can be referred to as 'identified needs' or 'eligible needs'.

The Care Act 2014 Charging and Assessment of Resources provides a universal approach to Local Authorities for the assessment of charging for eligible needs.

Portsmouth City Council conducts financial assessments in accordance with Care Act 2014, the Care and Support (Charging and Assessment of Resources) Regulations 2014. Further details can be found on the Department of Health's Website.

Portsmouth City Council's policy aims to ensure that the Council's approach to charging for Adult Social Care and Support services is open, transparent, and is a fair and consistent process for all.

2. Care Act 2014

The Care Act provides a single legal framework for charging for care and support under sections 14 and 17. It enables a local authority to decide whether to charge a person when it is arranging to meet a person's care and support needs.

Where a local authority arranges care and support to meet a person's needs, it may charge the adult, except where the local authority is required to arrange care and support free of charge (see page 5 for further details).

The framework is intended to make charging fairer and more clearly understood by everyone. The overarching principle is that people should only be required to pay what they can afford. People will be entitled to financial support based on a means-tested financial assessment.

The framework is therefore based on the following principles that local authorities should consider when making decisions on charging:

- Ensure that people are not charged more than it is reasonably practicable for them to pay.
- Be comprehensive, to reduce variation in the way people are assessed and charged.
- Be clear and transparent, so people know what they will be charged.
- Promote wellbeing, social inclusion, and support the vision of personalisation, independence, choice, and control.
- Be person-focused, reflecting the variety of care and caring journeys and the variety of options available to meet their needs.
- Apply the charging rules equally so those with similar needs or services are treated the same and minimise anomalies between different care settings.
- Be sustainable for local authorities in the long-term.

Any dis-application of the Care Act principles would need to be agreed and signed off by the Director of Adult Social Care and Health and the S151 Director of Finance.

3. Scope

This policy is intended to outline and demonstrate Portsmouth City Council's approach and application of Disability Related Expenditure within the Financial Assessment as per the Care Act 2014.

4. Statement of Policy

4.01 An allowance will be made for Disability Related Expenditure (DRE) for individuals receiving Adult Social care and support services in the community.

4.02 Reasonable expenditure needed for independent living by the person, where they have little or no choice other than to incur that expenditure, will be considered.

4.03 This policy will ensure that assessed charges do not result in a person being left without the means to pay for any other necessary care, support or for other costs arising from their disability or illness.

4.04 There is no definitive list of allowable Disability Related Expenditure or standard costs, as it is recognised that Disability Related Expenditure will vary from person to person based on the individual needs of the individual.

Therefore, the assessment for Disability Related Expenditure (DRE) will be person centered around the individual considering their own needs and circumstances.

4.05 The Local Authority will not include items of expenditure that would be considered "normal living costs" as these should be met from the individual's weekly personal allowance - the Minimum Income Guarantee (MIG) or the Personal Expense Allowance (PEA).

Please refer to the ***ASC Charging Policy*** for further guidance on personal weekly allowances.

4.06 All requests received for Disability Related Expenditure will be treated in a fair and equitable way.

5. Assessment of DRE

5.01 Where an individual is in receipt of disability-related benefits and these are being taken into account on the financial assessment for Care and Support Services, the local authority should allow the person to keep enough benefit to pay for necessary disability-related expenditure to meet any needs which are not being met by the local authority.

5.02 If an individual is in receipt of **DLA / PIP Mobility only** and is not in receipt of the care component of DLA / PIP, no allowance for DRE will be considered due to DLA / PIP Mobility being disregarded from the financial assessment.

5.03 The **only** exception to this will be for any additional **transport costs** that may be incurred that are **over and above the mobility rate in payment**.
Evidence of transport costs being incurred over and above the mobility payment will be requested.

5.04 When considering whether an amount of DRE should be added as an expense on the financial assessment, the financial assessment will be completed with the individual at their main residence (where practical) so that a holistic review can be undertaken of the disability related items that are being purchased to meet the individual's needs.

5.05 A Disability Related Assessment Form will be completed for every financial assessment and review completed in order for the rationale and decision making to be documented. The form will be saved on the finance system for future reference. See Appendix 1 for an example of the form.

5.06 A copy of the most recent Adult Social Care and Support plan will be obtained and used by the FAB officer as an aid to support decision making when the financial assessment is being completed and Disability Related Expenditure is being discussed.

Note:_Completed ASC Care and Support Plans **are not** to be updated/amended for the purpose of allowing/adding DRE on the financial assessment._

5.07 When a request to allow an item of Disability Related Expenses is received, consideration should be given as to whether the purchase is a personal choice of the individual, which should be met from their weekly personal allowance (MIG/PEA) or whether the item is being purchased because of the individual's disability/illness for which the Council is funding the care package for.

5.08 Request for items of Disability Related Expenses where there are cheaper alternatives of the item available, but an individual is choosing to purchase the more expensive option, the value of the cheaper option will be the amount allowed on the financial assessment.

5.09 In some cases, consideration will need to be given as to whether the amount of expenditure being incurred is over and above the average cost that someone without a disability would incur and only the difference in cost will be allowed.
For example, if a request is made for the cost of special dietary food due to an individual's disability/illness, the FAB officer will consider what the average cost of a food shop would be for any individual and then only allow the difference if the cost being incurred is over and above the average amount.

5.10 Consideration must also be given as to whether the item purchased is something that the individual would already be purchasing if they didn't have care and support needs, for example going on holiday. In this case we may consider the costs incurred for the individual to take a carer with them on holiday as Disability Related Expense due to their care and support needs but not the cost of the holiday itself.

5.11 The item of Disability Related Expense being requested should not already be met by the package of care that is being funded by Portsmouth City Council. i.e. request is made to consider £20.00 per week Disability Related Expense for cleaning but this service is being delivered by the care agency as part of the commissioned care package. If there is any doubt, the Adult Social Care and Support plan and/or the recorded Care Package Line Item should be reviewed in the first instance. If this is the case the request for Disability Related Expenditure will be declined.

5.12 If a request for Disability Related Expenditure is received that maybe considered outside of the normal parameters, the assessment officer will refer to the most recent ASC Care and Support Plan that has been completed by the 's allocated practitioner to see if the requirement for the item being purchased or the reason for the item being purchased is detailed in the plan and in some circumstances may also need to contact the practitioner direct for further guidance and clarification.

5.13 If it is not clear from the ASC Care and Support plan or from discussion with the practitioner whether the item of Disability Related Expenditure is necessary to meet the individual's care and support needs, further evidence will be requested that the expenditure has been incurred since the latest ASC Care and Support plan was completed.

5.14 If the assessment officer is still unsure as to whether an item of Disability Related Expenditure should be accepted and they have followed and considered the points above; the case will be escalated to the ASC Income Management Team for further consideration.

5.15 Depending on the nature of the request, it may also need to be escalated to senior managers of Adult Social Care before a final decision is made.

5.16 Final decision making on Disability Related Expenditure will be a joint decision between Finance and Adult Social Care and will be clearly communicated to the individual and/or their representative including the rationale as to how the decision has been made.

Process Flow for Escalating DRE Requests

If a request is received for an item of DRE to be added to the financial assessment and is considered to be outside of the normal parameters or requires further approval, the following process should be followed in order to escalate the request for consideration for either approval or decline:

Item of DRE is requested and this is considered to be outside of the normal parameters i.e. high weekly cost, doesn't meet the P.L.A.N principles on page 8 of this policy, not considered a usual item of disability related expenditure.

FAB Officer will discuss the DRE with the individual in more detail and obtain rationale for expenditure, disability/illness, frequency of purchase, are their cheaper alternatives available? The most recent completed ASC Care and Support Plan should have already been reviewed to see if the expenditure, item and rationale is evidenced in the plan.

If it is still unclear following discussion with the individual and/or review of support plan as to whether the item of DRE should be allowed on the assessment, the case will be escalated to the ASC Income Team Managers. The FAB Officer will present the case for consideration including all information / documentation obtained which may also include a supporting statement from the individual's allocated social worker.

The ASC Income Team Manager/s will discuss the request in consultation with with Adult Social Care including the Deputy Head of Service and Head of Adult Care and Support if required in order to provide a joined-up response from both Finance and Adult Social Care.
Consideration will be given based on the supporting evidence/rationale/discussions provided.

The final decision and rationale will be communicated to the FAB officer who will advise the individual of the decision made and confirm in writing.

Should the individual wish to appeal the decision made, they can do so within 10 working days. Appeals for DRE should be made in writing and should include additional information not included in the original request.

6. Application of DRE

6.01 Where an item of DRE is being purchased monthly the amount will be multiplied by 12 months and then divided by 52.14 weeks to calculate a weekly figure.

6.02 One-off purchases such as walking sticks, mobility scooters or wheelchairs, will be divided over a certain number of weeks depending on the value and will be removed from the assessment once the period has expired:

- £500.00 or less - the amount will be divided over 52.14 weeks.
- £500.01 - £5,000.00 - the amount will be divided by 260.7 weeks.
- £5,000.01 or more will be divided by 521.40 weeks

6.03 Large purchases costing £5,000.01 or more will be divided over a 10-year period to reflect the lifespan of the large purchase.

6.04 If a request is made to allow the cost of a wet room or disabled alterations to a property, evidence will be requested and documented as to why the individual was not eligible for a Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) to cover the cost of the adaptations required.

6.05 If an individual's capital has been reduced due to the purchase of a large item or adaptation and we are including tariff income; we will not allow both the reduction of capital AND the Disability Related Expense amount on the financial assessment. Both options will be explored, the financial impact of each explained to the individual and only one option applied to the financial assessment.

6.06 Requests for expenditure being incurred that are mobility/transport related (to help get an individual "out and about") such as the ongoing costs of maintaining or insuring scooters and wheelchairs or taxis to doctor appointments should be met from individuals' mobility component of PIP.

The only exception to this is if there is no eligibility for PIP mobility i.e., Attendance Allowance is in payment, or if the PIP mobility is already being used for other transport/mobility costs, and can be evidenced, in which case the difference between the total costs and PIP mobility in payment can be allowed as DRE.

If there is no PIP Mobility in payment, but requests are being made for mobility/transport related DRE, the FAB Officer will explore whether eligible and support with the application.

6.07 Requests for allowing the flat rate PCC transport charge as DRE, will be considered for clients only in receipt of Attendance Allowance or those where PIP mobility is already being used for other transport/mobility costs and can be evidenced.
In which case the difference between the total costs and PIP mobility in payment can be allowed as DRE

6.08 Requests for DRE items such as heating costs that are above the national average will be considered in line with the NAFAO Guide to Disability Related Expenditure which is updated annually.

6.09 Requests received for DRE for the costs arising from domestic pets such as dog walking will not be allowed unless the animal is required for "working" or "therapy" in relation to the disability or illness of the individual and evidence of such will be requested to support this.

6.10 Where a request is made for Disability Related Expenditure relating to the purchase of special dietary foods or drinks, the Council may request additional supporting evidence from the individual's GP, Consultant, or other relevant health practitioner.

This evidence may be required to assist in determining whether the expenditure is necessary as a direct result of the individual's disability.
In the first instance, the individual or their representative must demonstrate that the costs being incurred for the purchase of special dietary foods or drinks exceed the average cost of a standard weekly food shop* based on the individual's circumstances and only the additional cost over and above the average costs will be considered as potential DRE.

6.11 Where a request is made for Disability Related Expenditure relating to the purchase of Private Prescriptions for items not being prescribed through the NHS such as Medicinal Cannabis, the client or their representative must provide sufficient supporting evidence before a decision will be made.

Supporting evidence will include a description of the item being purchased, the cost of the item, details of the company or provider supplying the item, confirmation that the person prescribing the medication is a certified medical practitioner, copies of the private prescription and any supporting documentation such as a clinical report from the medical practitioner as to why the item is being privately prescribed to the individual.

In addition to the above, a letter from the clients GP will also be required to confirm the following:

1. *Why the product is not available via the NHS for the client's diagnosed condition(s).*
2. *Whether any NHS-funded alternative treatments exist that would be clinically appropriate for managing the client's condition(s).*
3. *Whether the GP supports the use of the product for the client?*

The FAB officer will gather all the information required and once received, will forward the request to the ASC Income Team manager who will then review the information in consultation with the ASC Senior Management team to determine whether the cost can be considered as DRE.

6.12 Requests for Disability Related Expenditure in relation to the purchase of over-the-counter items—such as vitamins, pain relief (e.g., paracetamol), or skin creams—will only be considered where the item is being purchased specifically as a direct result of the client's disability or health condition for which the Council is funding the care package.
Evidence may be requested to confirm the medical necessity of the item and its direct link to the eligible needs being supported by Adult Social Care.

6.13 Items of Disability Related Expenditure will be recorded clearly on the Financial Assessment including expiry dates if applicable so that it is clear to the client what expenditure is being included and when the expenditure will be removed from the assessment.

6.14 **Payments to a third party for services received:**

PCC has a responsibility to identify and report fraudulent activity therefore no more than £20 per week will be allowable as Disability Related Expenditure for payments to 3rd parties unless satisfactory evidence is provided that the income is being declared to HMRC.

*Guidance taken from the Accredited Official Statistics ***Family Food FYE 2024*** published on 06.11.2025 state the average spend on food and drink per person is £47.19 per week FYE 2024 - [Family Food FYE 2024 - GOV.UK]

6.15 Backdating of DRE will only be agreed in the following circumstances:

- An individual has been awarded a backdated disability benefit and would not have known that Disability Related Expenditure could be considered on their original financial assessment, therefore it is reasonable to allow Disability Related Expenditure from the point where the disability benefit was awarded.
- An individual has been reassessed, and the charge has increased from nil to chargeable and no existing Disability Related Expenditure is shown on the previous financial assessment (i.e. the individual is not a nil charge because of Disability Related Expenditure) and therefore reasonable to allow Disability Related Expenditure from the point where the individual has been assessed to pay a contribution.
- Where an individual is assessed as Nil charge and becomes chargeable via "in office" annual review processes and informs of further DRE which can be evidenced. Individuals will not be expected to continuously update the Council on changes to their DRE where they are already "Nil Assessed", unless the expense is no longer incurred.

If none of the above scenarios apply, the amount of DRE will be added at the point that the assessment is reviewed and **will not be backdated**.

6.16 All decisions and rationale regarding the allowance or non-allowance of Disability Related Expenditure will be clearly documented for future reference.

6.17 Regular monitoring of DRE application will be undertaken to ensure a consistent approach to DRE is adopted by all staff.

7. Key Principles

7.01 **Key Principles Regarding Decision Making for Disability Related Expenditure**

P - Proportionate

Q: Is the value of Disability Related Expenditure proportionate to the size of the care package?
Q: Would the expense still be incurred if not in receipt of ASC services?

L - Lawful

Q: Has Disability Related Expenditure been fully explained and explored where DLA/AA/PIP (care) is considered?
Q: Does the individual understand DRE and how these impacts on their financial assessment?

A - Accountable

Q: Is the value of Disability Related Expenditure a justified and reasonable expense for the value offered?
Q: Have cheaper / free options been explored with the individual - can anything be offered via NHS for example?
Q: Has PCC been consistent in its approach to Disability Related Expenditure?
Q: Can evidence of expenditure be provided if required?

N - Necessary

- Advice and support (are cheaper alternatives known/can be identified).
- To question whether it is a reasonable cost to be included within PCC charging, and unavoidable cost, not a lifestyle choice.
- Would not allowing Disability Related Expenditure have a detrimental impact on the individual's wellbeing/social inclusion?

Tools to aid decision making:

- Care Act 2014
- ASC Support Plan
- Observation during visit
- Discussion with practitioner
- PCC rate information
- Telecare rate information
- Google - can you find it cheaper?
- Probing questions - discuss with the individual why and how?
- ASC Income Management Team

7.02 **Evidence requirement:**

- No receipts or evidence required where expense meets the above criteria and satisfies key principles using PLAN methodology.
- Receipts/evidence are required where the expense is considered excessive, further medical information is required or for one off items as stated in the policy.

Examples of Disability Related Expenditure

7.03 There is no definitive list of DRE available, and each case will be assessed on a case-by-case basis in discussion with the individual, family/representative, allocated practitioner and if required ASC Income Management Team.

However, the Care Act 2014 does provide some guidance on the type of Disability Related Expenditure items that should be considered:

- payment for any community alarm system
- costs of any privately arranged care services required, including respite care
- costs of any specialist items needed to meet the person's disability needs, for example:
  - (i) Day or night care which is not being arranged by the local authority
  - (ii) specialist washing powders or laundry
  - (iii) additional costs of special dietary need due to illness or disability over and above the cost of normal food purchases
  - (iv) special clothing or footwear, for example, where this needs to be specially made; or additional wear and tear to clothing and footwear caused by disability
  - (v) additional costs of bedding, for example, because of incontinence
  - (vi) any heating costs, or metered costs of water, above the average levels for the area and housing type
  - (vii) occasioned by age, medical condition or disability
  - (viii) reasonable costs of basic garden maintenance, cleaning, or domestic help, if necessitated by the individual's disability and not met by social services
  - (ix) purchase, maintenance, and repair of disability-related equipment, including equipment or transport needed to enter or remain in work; this may include IT costs, where necessitated by the disability; reasonable hire costs of equipment may be included, if due to waiting for supply of equipment from the local council
  - (x) personal assistance costs, including any household or other necessary costs arising for the person
  - (xi) internet access for example for blind and partially sighted people
  - (xii) other transport costs necessitated by illness or disability, including costs of transport to day centers, over and above the mobility component of

DLA or PIP, if in payment and available for these costs. In some cases, it may be reasonable for a council not to take account of claimed transport costs – if, for example, a suitable, cheaper form of transport, for example, council-provided transport to day center's is available, but has not been used.

- (xiii) in other cases, it may be reasonable for a council not to allow for items where a reasonable alternative is available at lesser cost. For example, a council might adopt a policy not to allow for the private purchase cost of continence pads, where these are available from the NHS.

8. Re-Assessments and Complaints

9.01 A re-assessment request can be made for reviewing Disability Related Expenditure should the individual or their representative disagree with the original assessment. The request for a re-assessment should be made in writing within 20 working days of the original assessment being completed.

9.02 Upon receipt of a re-assessment request, the ASC Income Team Managers will assign a different officer to review the original assessment and if necessary, the officer will arrange to visit the individual or their representative.

9.03 Once the reassessment has been completed, the outcome will be confirmed in writing, explaining either that the Disability Related Expenditure on the assessment has remained the same and that there has been no impact to the weekly contribution charge or that Disability Related Expenditure has been added to or removed from the original assessment and the impact this has had to the weekly contribution charge.

9.04 If the individual or their representative remains dissatisfied with the outcome of the re-assessment, they have the right to make a formal complaint by contacting the ASC Complaints Team.

9.05 Complaints regarding the conduct of a member of staff or how a financial assessment has been carried out should be sent to the ASC Complaints Team for formally logging with the service.

<u>APPENDIX 1</u>
Example of Disability Related Expenditure Assessment Form

Disability Related Expenditure Assessment Form

Financial Assessment and Benefit Team

The DRE assessment form is to be completed in line with the PCC Disability Related Expenditure (DRE) Policy and must be completed for every financial assessment carried out.

Client Name:
Address:
ContrOCC Reference:
Assessment Officer:

Item of DRE Requested	**Cost per week £** *£500.00 or less - over 52.14 weeks* *£500.01 or more - over 260.70 weeks* *Large adaptations - over 521.40 weeks*	**Supporting Evidence Viewed** *i.e. viewed during assessment, ASC Support Plan, discussion with Social Worker, receipts provided*	**Expiry Date** *(if applicable)*	**Have all options been explored?** *Consider: are more cost-effective alternatives available? Is it a personal choice to purchase?*	**DRE Item allowed?** If "No" state reason why
	£				
	£				
	£				
	£				
	£				
	£				

I confirm that the above items are purchased regularly and do reflect the actual costs incurred due to my disability/illness.
I understand that it is my responsibility or that of my legal representative to inform the FAB team if there are changes to my DRE expenses.

Client Name: ____ **ContrOCC Ref:** ____________________
Signed: ____ **Date:** ________________________