

News Release

For Immediate Release Wednesday, March 31, 2004

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Long Term Care – Means Test Capital Limits Increase and Other Changes in England April 04

Capital Limits

The Capital Limits for means testing for local authority support in care homes is to be increased with effect from 12th April 2004.

The lower capital limit is raised from £12,000 to **£12,250** and the higher capital limit is raised from £19,500 to **£20,000**.

Individuals with capital of below £12,250 will have to contribute their income towards the care home fees, less **£18.10** retained for personal expenses (previously £17.50)

Individuals with capital of between £12,250 and £20,000 will also have to contribute a further amount of £1 per week for each £250 of capital between these two figures.

Individuals with capital above £20,000 will have to meet the full cost themselves.

NHS Nursing Care Contribution

The NHS contribution towards nursing care costs in nursing homes is payable in three bands. These are to be increased with effect from 1st April 2004: lower band remaining at £40, middle band from £75 to £77.50 and higher band from £120 to £125.

Where an individual's care needs are primarily health care needs it may be possible that their care home costs could be fully funded by the NHS under their continuing care eligibility criteria and they should seek careful assessment of their needs comparing the results with their health authority's published criteria.

Attendance Allowance

If individuals are self-funding their care they can claim attendance allowance. This is a non-means tested, non-taxable DWP benefit paid weekly at the lower rate of £39.35 (previously £38.30) if they need care by day or night and the higher rate of £58.80 (previously £57.20) if they need care by day and night. **Worth up to £3057.60 per annum**

Pension Credit

Pension credit increased from £102.10 to £105.45 (couples £155.80 to 160.95).
Severe disability addition £increased from £42.95 to £44.15 per qualifying person.

NHFA Care Fee Advisory Services are free and available to all regardless of means and can be accessed through a *freephone* Care Advice Line 0800 99 88 33, web site www.nhfa.co.uk

Notes for Editors:

Case studies available on request

NHFA Ltd is independent of all care providers, financial institutions and authorities provides free advice and information on obtaining and paying for long term care. NHFA advice is available to all regardless of means and encompasses the many financial and legal issues older people and their families should consider when the need for care arises.

Combines specialist financial advice with the complexities of our care system including local authority assessment and charging procedures, health authority responsibilities, DWP benefits and legal matters i.e. enduring power of attorney.

Free Publications include Long Term Care Guides and an extensive range of 'Infosheets' on common problems including 'Treatment of Couples', 'Treatment of Property', 'Deprivation of Assets', 'The Legal Framework', 'Local Authority Charging Procedures', 'NHS Nursing Care Contribution', 'Immediate Need Care Fee Payment Plans' and 'Issues Surrounding Choice'.

The aim of the NHFA is to enable older people meet the cost of chosen care for life whilst also preserving their original capital and with that their independence, dignity and right of choice.

Ends