

Supported Living Fee Setting 2025/2026

Consultation Document – 28th January 2025

Proposed approach, stages and timescales

- 1.1 The City of Doncaster Council and Doncaster Integrated Care Board (ICB) need to make decisions about fee rates for the new financial year from April 2025 to March 2026.
- 1.2 The information in this document addresses the approach that is proposed for inflation. There is a further consideration of what base costs should be following the recent cost of care exercises across domiciliary care and care home sectors. However, because national government have only advised the Council of its allocation this week, the Council needs to do further work before proposing outcomes. Timelines are set out below.
- 1.3 Doncaster Adults Wellbeing and Culture have the following vision:

We want every person in Doncaster to live in the place they call home with the people and things that they love, in communities where they look out for one another, doing things that matter to them.

**Adults, Health and Wellbeing
Doncaster Council**

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- 1.4 Our services are operating under the new Practice Framework which was co-produced with people in Doncaster and outlines the way we work with and for people who need care and support. We want to support our providers to work with people in the spirit of the vision and the framework below.



Adults, Health and Wellbeing practice framework

WHY?	We want every person in Doncaster to live in the place they call home with the people and things that they love, in communities where they look out for one another, doing things that matter to them.						
WHO?	Everybody		People with urgent needs for support		People with longer-term needs for support		
	We listen to people to understand what matters to them. We make connections and build relationships to improve people's wellbeing and independence.		We don't make long term plans in a crisis. We work with people until we're sure there is no immediate risk to their safety, health or wellbeing, and they have regained stability and control in their life.		If people need longer-term care and support, we work with them to understand what a good life looks like for them. We make sure they have resources and support to live the life they choose and do the things that matter to them as independently as possible.		
HOW?	Hope	Connection	Relationships	Inclusion	Flexibility	Rights	
	We focus on possibilities, dreams and aspirations. We don't limit people's choices.	We explore ways to involve people in their communities. We make and maintain meaningful connections.	We support people to keep existing relationships and make sure they have opportunities to build new ones.	We don't judge people or make assumptions. We involve people as equal partners in conversations and decisions about them, their families and their communities.	We are willing and able to adapt. Our approach is responsive and proportionate.	We make sure people know their rights. We promote autonomy, choice and self-determination.	
	We're kind	We behave	We're trusting	We're transparent	We're present	We're honest	
	We respect and understand people as individuals. We don't make snap judgements.	We know and follow the law, ethics and best practice. We are always open to improvement.	We know people tend to be honest and know what's right for them. We listen and we keep an open mind.	We're open about our rules, making them clear so people know what they can and cannot expect.	We connect and engage well with people. We respond in a timely manner.	We are honest about what we are going to do. When we say we are going to do something, we do it.	
	We know the language we use matters. We use plain, respectful and kind language.						
WHAT?	Wellbeing and independence	Information and advice	Active and supportive communities	Flexible and integrated care and support	When things need to change	Workforce	
	Living the life I want, keeping safe and well	Having the information I need, when I need it	Keeping family, friends and connections	My support, my own way	Staying in control	The people who support me	
SO?	Better experiences and better lives for Doncaster people		Improved morale and satisfaction for Doncaster's workforce		More sustainable use of resources		

- 1.5 There will be four stages to the decision-making process, taking into account the vision and the practice framework:
- The initiation and conclusion of formal consultation with all supported living providers in Doncaster within scope on the basis of proposals for 2024/2025 fee rates drawn up by the Council and ICB. This will run between **Tuesday 28th January to Friday 14th February 2025**
 - A decision-making stage incorporating full consideration of all consultation feedback by the Council and ICB. This will follow appropriate governance within the constitutions of both the Council and the ICB. The Council decision will be made by Council Cabinet **on 27th February 2025**.
 - An implementation stage when decisions and justifications are communicated to care providers. This will be by **Friday 21st March 2025** to allow for notice to be given to care providers ahead of the introduction of new fee rates.
- 1.6 The Council is required by law to set a balanced budget for each financial year. This will be agreed by full Council in February 2025 for the financial year running from April 2025 to March 2026. Therefore, this overall process must be concluded in line with the timescale above.
- 1.7 The Council and ICB continue to welcome the role of providers in constructive dialogue on the fee setting process.
- 1.8 Decision-making is the preserve of the Council and ICB. The above process is intended to ensure that feedback from providers is fully taken into account and decisions made are on a robust and lawful basis.

2 Quality of Supported Living Provision in Doncaster

- 2.1 The Care Quality Commission (CQC) has a statutory responsibility to regulate and inspect supported living providers in England. The current ratings published in December 2024 within Doncaster, demonstrate a largely positive picture with Doncaster comparing well to national and regional comparators with no contracted supported living providers in Doncaster assessed as Inadequate by CQC. There is one provider who has achieved an outstanding rating.
- 2.2 This is testament to the commitment and dedication of Doncaster's providers, alongside the hard work, compassion and skill of front-line staff.

3. Fair Cost of Care and Fee Setting

- 3.1 Additional funding was made available to Local Authorities through the Fair Cost of Care and Market Sustainability Fund to support a Fair Rate for Care exercise that needed to be carried out by the autumn of 2022.
- 3.2 The Department of Health and Social Care required publication of the Fair Cost of Care in February 2023.

- 3.3 Doncaster Council utilised elements of the outcome of the Fair Cost of Care (18+ Domiciliary Care) to revise the fee levels for supported living for the financial year 2023/2024 resulting in an increase to the hourly rates within the ranges of 14.75% and 14.77% per waking hour and 14.71% and 14.77% per sleeping hour.
- 3.4 For the financial year 2024/2025 the Council and ICB consulted with the market and considered any additional cost pressures providers may experience including CPI of 6.7% as at September 2023 and increases to National Minimum Wage to £11.44 from April 2024.

Agreement was reached to increase the hourly rates for 2024/2025 within the ranges of 9.05% and 9.30% per waking hour and 9.71% and 9.76% per sleeping hour.

4. Proposed Inflationary Increase for 2025/2026

- 4.1 The Council and ICB propose to inflate the non-staffing base costs by the nationally recognised metric CPI for September 2024 confirmed at 1.7%.
- 4.2 The Council and ICB will apply National Living Wage increase to staffing costs as calculated within the 2023/2024 base fee to ensure providers are able pay staff the National Living Wage where appropriate and to continue to retain appropriate differentials between staff groups that reflect their seniority.
- 4.3 The 2025/2026 National Living Wage has been confirmed at £12.21 per hour, an increase of 6.73% on the existing rate of £11.44 per hour and this increase has been reflected in the proposed rates below.
- 4.4 The Government has also made changes to Employer's National Insurance contributions with effect from 6 April 2025. These are twofold – the insurance contribution rate will increase from 13.8% to 15%, and the threshold at which contributions are made reduces from £9,500 to £5,000 per annum.
- 4.5 It is recognised that both changes will increase provider costs and the Council and ICB propose to increase fee rates to reflect these increased costs.
- 4.6 The impact of the National Insurance changes will vary from provider to provider, influenced by the make-up of the workforce, the levels of pay and hours worked.
- 4.7 The overall proposed uplift in the fee rates ranges from 8.8% to 9.45% per waking hour and 7.2% for sleep-in hours.

5. Additional National Support 2025/2026

- 5.1 There is no indication of any additional national funding in excess of the funding being utilised to support the fee increases in 2025/2026 as detailed

within paragraph 4. If any further funding is announced the Council will inform the market.

6. Current Provision

- 6.1 The Council has five providers delivering services through three contract mechanisms.
- 6.2 During 2024 there have been no withdrawals from the Doncaster supported living market.
- 6.3 If providers are experiencing significant financial hardship that may result in closure of their service, then they are encouraged to approach the Council and individual discussions may be held. This would take into account the level of quality of provision (including but not limited to the service CQC inspection rating), type of service delivered, location, market conditions etc.

7. Conclusion

- 7.1 Providers are welcome to make comment on all matters outlined above including the Council and ICBs proposals to increase fee levels.
- 7.2 Representations are welcome from all supported living providers either through collective representations or individually. All representations will be duly considered.
- 7.3 The Council and ICB will make every effort to accommodate meeting requests. This planned contact will ensure clear and respectful communication throughout the consultation period.