

# Kent Adult Social Care Provider Bulletin



Thursday 22 February 2024

## Adult Social Care Charging Policy consultation

Kent County Council (KCC) provides adult social care services to approximately 16,394 residents aged over 18 years old. Approximately 15,806 of these people receive chargeable social care services.

When people living in Kent need adult social care, as well as assessing their care needs, we also assess their income to decide how much they pay towards their care. Some people don't pay anything, and the council picks up all of the cost, some people pay a contribution, and some people pay for all of their care (these people are known as self-funders).

KCC sets out what and how people need to pay in the [Charging Policy for adult social care in a person's own home or in the community\(External link\)](#). This policy does not impact on people who live in and receive care and support in a residential care home.

KCC is facing a large increase in the cost of providing services and ever-increasing demand for services and needs to find ways to make these services sustainable. One possibility is to make changes to the Adult Social Care Charging Policy. You can find more information about this [here](#).

### *What are these consultations about?*

KCC is reviewing how much people may have to pay towards the chargeable care and support services that we provide or arrange at home (for example homecare including supported living) and in the community (for example daytime support).

We are consulting on two potential changes to our Adult Social Care Charging Policy:

1. **To stop disregarding the higher or enhanced rates of Attendance Allowance (AA), Personal Independent Payment (PIP) and Disability Living Allowance (DLA) when we calculate a person's income.**
2. **To introduce a new Self-Funding Arrangement Set up Fee for all new self-funders who would like KCC to negotiate, arrange and manage care and support services with care providers on their behalf.**

*How can you find out more and have your say?*

Click on the links below for more information on both consultations, including details of:

- The proposals, who could be impacted and how
- Why we are proposing these changes
- The current charging policy
- How you can tell us your views.

[Higher Level Disability Benefits](#)

[Self-Funding Arrangement Set up Fee](#)

These consultations are open from **Tuesday 6 February** and close at midnight on **Sunday 7 April 2024**.

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## HSF4 Winter Energy Scheme - launch information

You have recently subscribed to the Household Support Fund mailing list, please find details of the latest schemes below:

Funded by the UK government, the Household Support Fund scheme supports vulnerable Kent households in need of help with significantly rising living costs. The Scheme is being delivered in two phases, ***Phase 1 Summer Voucher scheme & Phase 2 Winter Energy Support scheme***.

***The Summer Scheme has now closed but has been successful in delivering nearly £1million worth of support via food vouchers to Kent residents. We now move on to***

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***Phase 2 the Winter scheme which will deliver energy support to households.***

As with Phase 1 the application route will provide 2 pathways to access either the self-referral or professional referral scheme.

Please feel free to share this information with your own professional networks, or pass on the subscription link, <https://forms.office.com/e/2aKaNrjwBj>, to our HFS4 mailing list to receive the latest news and updates on the scheme.

**The winter scheme is open for applications from 12pm Tuesday 9 January 2024. The scheme will close on Thursday 29 February 2024, or earlier if the budget is spent.**

***Please note that the summer food voucher scheme closed early due to high demand and we expect a similar response for the winter scheme so advise professionals to refer their clients as early as possible.***

If successful, support will be provided in one of the following:

- £100 prepaid physical card to be used to pay for energy via PayPoint or Post Office physical locations.
- Sent to applicant via Royal Mail
- Full T&Cs found here  
<https://legal.purecard.com/terms?cctid=fICBryCnN8F1c50558fICBryCnN8F1>
- FAQs – <https://help.purecard.com/>
- £100 virtual energy card to be used to pay directly to energy providers for electricity, gas or water bills. Energy providers including British Gas, EDF, E.on, Bulb, Octopus and many more
- Sent to applicant via email
- Full T&Cs found here  
<https://legal.purecard.com/terms?cctid=fICBryCnN8F1c50551fICBryCnN8F1>
- FAQs – <https://help.purecard.com/collection/753-energy-card-cardholders>

This card is issued by GVS Prepaid Ltd, pursuant to license by Mastercard International Incorporated.

All applicants will need to complete the card activation process which will require online access and those without internet access will require professional referrer assistance, or they can access their local gateway service.

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There is a limited amount of funding available for this scheme and funds will be distributed on a first come, first served basis, with only **one award per household**.

### **Who is eligible?**

There is an expectation for professionals to complete due diligence checks of applications to ensure that beneficiaries meet the eligibility criteria as set out below:

Applicants that self-refer will be required to submit evidence to prove that they are the energy bill payer for the household and a Kent resident, within an eligible Kent district, at the point of application.

### **Applicants must**

- be aged 16 or over
- be a Kent resident, permanently living within one of the 12 local authorities covered by Kent County Council (this excludes Medway, Bromley, and Bexley)
- have a household income less than £40,000 per annum before tax (including any means tested benefits)
- be the named utility bill payer for the household
- **not** have savings above £1000
- **\*not** be receiving free school meal support within their household

***\*Free School Meal eligible families have received an additional energy voucher for each eligible child via their child's school outside of this scheme.*** Eligible FSM families have received a voucher per eligible child for the value of £100 direct from their child's school before Christmas and should be referred back to their school for further advice if this has not been received.

Residents with no recourse to public funding are still eligible for the scheme. If a National Insurance number is not available, please email [householdsupportfund@kent.gov.uk](mailto:householdsupportfund@kent.gov.uk) with circumstances and reasons why the applicant should receive this support (please attach all supporting evidence to the email).

### **Application link:**

If support is required because of the increase in cost of living, apply for the Household Support Fund on the following link: [Household Support Fund - Kent County Council](#)

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## Processing timescales

We do aim to send the physical and virtual cards out as quickly as possible, usually within 10 working days of a successful application being made, however we anticipate there will be high demand for support, and this could impact on timescales. The applicant and referrer (if applicable) will receive email confirmation of the application outcome.

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## Household Energy Bill – additional support

We are delighted to inform you that Kent County Council is currently working with Citizens Advice North and West Kent to support residents on low incomes who are taking positive steps to address their debts.

**Residents could be eligible for additional support towards their household energy bill and receive up to £500 (subject to eligibility criteria).**

### Eligibility criteria

To be eligible for this scheme, residents must at a minimum meet the following qualifying criteria:

- Be aged 16 or over.
- Be a Kent resident, permanently living within one of the 12 local authorities covered by Kent County Council (this excludes Medway, Bromley, and Bexley)
- Be responsible for paying the household energy bill (one award per household). *If a partner is awarded an energy card, but is not the main energy account holder, they can still use the card against the household energy costs.*
- Be accessing support through the 'Kent Money Advice Hub'.

Other eligibility criteria will apply and be assessed through the debt advice process.

**Funding is limited so please encourage residents that meet the above criteria to contact the Kent Money Advice Hub (we advise residents to contact the Kent Money Advice Hub via 'video call' in the first instance - click on the link below and scroll down slightly to select 'make a video call').**

[Kent Money Advice Hub](#)

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***This support is funded by the UK Governments Household Support Fund – the scheme will close once all funds are spent or before the 31 March 2024.***



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## Kent County Council funded Scils site for providers

We are looking to re-new registration of the [Scils on-line learning portal](#), **giving care providers free access** to over 250 short courses and group sessions for Adult Social Care and Children's Services, along with support materials for the care certificate, news, resources and a chat function.

**Are you or your workers one of the 2,300 people currently using the site?** If so, it would be really helpful to provide us with some feedback.

Please use [this link](#) - just one question to respond to.

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## Kent Connect to Support website and financial estimator tool



Have you explored our new website for adult social care in Kent?

Visit [kent.connecttosupport.org](http://kent.connecttosupport.org) and take a look at the range of information, advice and guidance now available to you - and to the people that access your services.

You can browse the homepage and navigate to specific areas such as:

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- **Community directory** - listings of local organisations, voluntary and community groups and much more. You can also submit a listing for free for your own care-related business or community organisation.
- **Financial estimator tool** – use the simple tool to gain a better indication of what care and support may cost
- **Support in the home and community** - homecare, home adaptations, personal assistants and residential care.
- **Caring for someone** - financial support, emotional support and carers assessments.
- **Health and wellbeing** - staying healthy, keeping safe, neurodiversity, learning disabilities, autism, mental health and more.
- **Housing** - information about local housing options and homelessness prevention and support.
- **Out and about** - public transport, accessible toilets, changing places, how to get involved in sports and leisure activities
- **Money and legal** - paying for care and support, power of attorney, welfare and benefits.

We would be grateful if you could promote the platform in your service. If you would like to request copies of printed posters or flyers or gain further information, please email: [connecttosupport@kent.gov.uk](mailto:connecttosupport@kent.gov.uk) and visit the site at: [kent.connecttosupport.org](http://kent.connecttosupport.org)

The website has been developed in collaboration with people that access care and support and we are constantly seeking feedback, so please do use the online form to send through your own comments and ideas to be considered for further development. Find out how you can get involved in shaping adult social care and share your views, by joining the Your Voice Network. Visit [kent.connecttosupport.org/get-involved](http://kent.connecttosupport.org/get-involved) to register for updates.

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## Adult social care digital roadshow

# DIGITAL ROADSHOW

The stakeholder engagement team in adult social care at KCC have been attending

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events, visiting community spaces and holding webinars. The aim is to take people on a short tour and demo of some of the new digital technology and resources available to support independence and wellbeing.

**If you would like the team to talk to your workforce or attend an existing event,** please contact [makingadifference@kent.gov.uk](mailto:makingadifference@kent.gov.uk). You can also call 03000 413 998 if you prefer to speak to someone directly.

In the meantime, visit the **Kent Connect to Support** website for the latest information on care and support where you live and make sure your organisation is listed on our community directory: <https://kent.connecttosupport.org/> .

You can also explore a new online self-assessment service called Better Care Support from the same site to access more detailed advice and guidance that's right for you. Read more about Better Care Support below.

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## BetterCare Support online Self Assessment

Adult Social Care and Health (Kent County Council) have launched [BetterCare Support](#), an online self-assessment tool, to enable people to live independently and safely within their communities and home.



By answering questions about their social care needs, the tool provides people with information, advice, and guidance about the options and services available to them.

Other online resources:

- [Kent County Council Adult Social Care and Health website](#)
- [Financial Calculator to estimate how much you may need to pay](#)
- [Connect to Support, information, advice and guidance website with community directory](#)
- [Kent PA Personal Assistants website](#)

Please share and advertise these resources with your services and contacts.

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## Funding has increased for International Recruitment

Due to unprecedented demand, two £1500 grants per care service are now available meaning providers can:



- access up to £3,000 towards their international recruitment costs!
- Providers who have previously received a £1,500 grant are now invited to apply for a second grant.

### **Please see details below:**

The government has made funding available to support international recruitment into the social care sector during the 23-24 financial year.

In order to be eligible for a grant, a provider must meet the following criteria:

- Be registered with the CQC as a provider of social care
- Be located (determined by registered CQC location) in one of the Local Authority areas in the South East region
- Have an overall CQC rating which is above the 'Inadequate' rating at the time of application (i.e. 'Outstanding', 'Good' or 'Requires Improvement')
- EITHER intend to apply for a Licence to Sponsor skilled workers OR to hold a licence already and intend to recruit at least one international worker on a Skilled Worker Visa between 1 April 2023 and 15 March 2024
- Confirm that they will understand and will abide by the provisions of the Ethical Recruitment Framework (See the Code of Practice: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/code-of-practice-for-the-international-recruitment-of-health-and-social-care-personnel/code-of-practice-for-the-international-recruitment-of-health-and-social-care-personnel-in-england>)
- Confirm that they are able to offer any international workers they recruit work in accordance with the requirements of the Skilled Worker Visa
- Correctly and fully complete the correct [application form](#).

A provider's eligibility will be assessed at the time of application. Each must apply to the hub for the local authority whose area includes that location. For Kent and Medway, this is the Kent Integrated Care Alliance (KiCA).

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Providers do not need to have applied for a licence or recruited a skilled worker in order to apply for a grant, however they will have to provide evidence that their licence has been awarded or that they have employed a new skilled worker **between 1 April 2023 and 15 March 2024** before a grant will be paid to them.

The [application](#) is for providers included in the **Kent and Medway Council Districts**. Please ensure it is completed in its entirety, double check all details are correct, and do not hesitate to contact [recruitment@kica.care](mailto:recruitment@kica.care) or [grants@sesca.org.uk](mailto:grants@sesca.org.uk) if you have any concerns or queries.

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Want to have your say on social care? Join the Your voice network!



If you aren't already a member, are interested in hearing more about social care in Kent and would like us to keep you updated about opportunities to get involved, receive our newsletter or link you up with our lived experience groups.

Please join our **Your voice network** online or contact [makingadifference@kent.gov.uk](mailto:makingadifference@kent.gov.uk) to speak to a member of the team.

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**We'd love to hear from you!**

**Our mailing address is:**

[Stakeholderteam@kent.gov.uk](mailto:Stakeholderteam@kent.gov.uk)