

**DECISION TAKEN BY OFFICER UNDER SECTION 13 OF THE LOCAL  
AUTHORITIES EXECUTIVE ARRANGEMENT REGULATIONS 2012**

**Officer:** David Vitty, Head of Adult Social Care - Services

**Service Unit:** Adult Social Care - Services

**Date of Decision:** 16<sup>th</sup> March 2016

**Title:** Financial Assessment: Treatment of Couples When Assessing Financial Contribution Towards Care Home Fees

**Decision(s) Taken:**

That the first step (single person) calculation of the Couple Assessment uses 50% of the 'housing costs' and where that first step doesn't give a Nil contribution the second step takes place to assess the 'better buy' contribution for the client (using the contribution with the lowest contribution).

**Threshold Trigger:** (please delete as required and give background)

**Decisions having a substantive effect on the provision of local services,  
e.g. fees/charges**

**Reason for the Decision:**

**Background**

When one of a couple requires care and, as a result a financial assessment takes place to ascertain their contribution to the cost of that care, 2 steps are taken:

1. Assess single person on single rate = on personal income,  $\frac{1}{2}$  of any joint income, less any Disability related expenses (DRE) for that individual; less disregards and 'housing costs', then compare to their relevant single personal allowance.

**IF** this shows a contribution of Nil then the second step doesn't take place

2. If the outcome of (1) is that a contribution is payable then a 'better buy' type calculation takes place. *NB: We can only do this if the partner is willing to provide details of their income and capital.* This second calculation is as a couple, including partner's income and capital, less DRE and 'housing costs'; then compare to their relevant couple personal allowance.

'Housing costs' are Council Tax, rent, mortgage, service charges etc.

### **Issue for consideration**

Historically, assessments have not been made consistently with regards to the 'Housing costs' in the first step of a couple assessment. They have either:

- Used 50% of the 'Housing costs'
- OR
- Used 100% of the 'Housing costs'

There is a financial and slight impact on how the first step is assessed because the contribution is more likely to be 'Nil' if taking 100% of 'Housing costs' against the individual's income (only half the couple)

It is thought the majority of first step assessments have been undertaken using 50% but there are considerations towards 'joint and several liabilities' which has led some assessments to have 100% of these costs used in the first step assessment.

Unfortunately there is nothing clear in legislation or guidance, so it is a Sovereign Authority decision about how this calculation is made.

*It is understood there will always be exceptions and that should there be an exception where the Financial Assessment team are satisfied that 100% of some/all of the 'Housing costs' should be applied to the first step, that will take place.*

### **Declaration of Interest(s), to include:**

(Record of any conflict of interest declared by any Officer consulted by the Decision Maker and/or a note of any dispensation granted by the Head of Paid Service relating to the Decision).

None

### **Report/Information Considered:**

Verbal report to the Adult Social Care Resource Management Group and subsequent written report to David Vitty from Diane Milne, Collection Services Manager, Stour Valley & Poole Partnership.

The decision was taken by the Resource Management Group on 16<sup>th</sup> March 2016, which is a meeting of senior Adult Social Care and Stour Valley & Poole Partnership officers to consider matters relating to domiciliary care and residential placements. The meeting is chaired by David Vitty, Head of Adult Social Care – Services.

### **Alternatives Considered:**

An application of 100% housing cost to the financial assessment for residential care financial contributions. See above for further detail.

**Budget Implications:**

None- this is a decision made to clarify and standardise the approach to financially assessing couples in respect of care home placements.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "DJitty", is positioned above the "Signed:" label.

**Signed:**

**Dated: 24 March 2016**