



Adult Social Care

Your Guide to Disability Related Expenditure (DRE)



Our Adult Social Care Charter

We will always promote independence.



We will listen with empathy and understanding.



You will know who to contact and we will always get back to you.



Our conversations will be honest and personal to you. We won't just tick boxes.



We will respect your decisions and be honest and open.



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1. What is a Disability Related Expense (DRE)?

Disability Related Expenses are costs you have that arise from a disability or long-term health condition that are not met by your care and support plan. If you need to spend money on items and services to manage your disability or long-term health condition, then you may qualify to have these costs included in your financial assessment.

If you receive (or are entitled to receive) state disability benefits the Care Act statutory guidance says that the council must leave you with enough of these benefits “to pay for necessary disability related expenditure to meet any needs which are not met by the local authority.”

These are extra costs you have to pay because of illness or disability and are known as Disability Related Expenditure (DRE). Our scheme covers reasonable additional costs directly related to your disability; it is not limited to what is necessary only for your care and support.

The statutory guidance Annex C section 39 details specifically how disability related expenditure should be considered.

2. Who qualifies for Disability Related Expenditure?

To qualify for Disability Related Expenditure, you must be receiving:

- Care component of Disability Living Allowance, or
- Care component of Personal Independence Payment, or
- Attendance Allowance.
- Your assessment and care and support plan should also identify a disability or medical condition which demonstrates your need for Disability Related Expenditure.

3. How do we make decisions on Disability Related Expenses?

We will ask five key questions when considering your claim for disability related expenditure:

3.1. Do you receive disability benefits?

This includes the care component of disability living allowance, the daily living element of personal independence payments, or attendance allowance.

3.2. Is the expense directly linked to the person's disability, medical condition, or care need?

This means that the expense is only required because of a person's disability, medical condition, or care need and that someone who did not have the same specific need would not have to pay for this expense. For example, a person who is not disabled or does not have a care need or a medical condition would not require a community alarm.

3.3. Is the expense necessary?

This means that the expense is required due to their disability rather than a choice that does not specifically relate to their disability, that someone's day-to-day life would be negatively affected if they did not pay for this expense. The Care Act Assessment and support plan should also identify disabilities or medical conditions which demonstrate the need for disability related expenditure.

3.4. Is the expense able to be met by any other means?

This means that the expense cannot be paid for by other means – we would check if it is included in a person's personal budget, or if the NHS should be paying for it.

3.5. Is the expense reasonable and can be verified?

This means that the expense is not considerably higher than that of similar expenses. For example, if a DRE claim is for something that costs £500 but something else could meet your needs and costs £200, we would say that the higher amount is not reasonable. We would allow the lower amount.

3.6. Other considerations:

- The lowest cost alternative should usually be utilised, for example, NHS prescription prepayment, Severn Trent's 'WaterSure Scheme,' social tariff internet.
- Is there a free alternative or service that could be used, for example, free alternatives are available through the NHS such as incontinence products, chiropody, physiotherapy, some items of equipment and travel to medical appointments.
- In deciding if a cost can be allowed in your financial assessment, the council will consider what is included in your agreed care and support plan to make sure this is not already covered within it. For example due to a disability someone may need their hair washed by someone else, if the hair washing is part of a carers duties in the support plan we would not disregard the cost if they chose for a hairdressers to come in and wash their hair rather than the carers; the cost is already part of the support plan.
- To be included as disability related expenditure the cost must be higher than normal household living expenses. It is the additional cost above normal household costs that can be considered as additional expense. For example, you may have more laundry than someone without a disability would have, say 5 loads per week per person rather than just 2. The costs of the additional 3 loads could be considered as a disability related expense.
- All allowable costs will be divided by the number of adults living in your household who receive a benefit from the purchased item or service. For example, a cleaner will be treated as shared equally between all adults in the household.

4. What can I claim for?

We work in line with the [Care Act 2014](#). We look at all DRE claims on an individual basis rather than take a blanket approach. This means it is not possible to have a definitive list of DREs because each person is different and will have different care needs and expenses.

However, there are some common things that people ask for as DRE. We have listed a few below and how we consider these expenses:

Community Alarm

If you tell us the name of your provider and we agree the cost is reasonable, we will allow the weekly cost as DRE. If we do not have the information on your community alarm provider, we may ask you how much you pay and how often and compare it to others.

Increased energy/utility costs

Rationale will be required as to why increased costs relate to disability or health condition.

Basic domestic cleaning

We will allow reasonable cleaning costs, if necessitated by the individual's disability and not met by social care. For example, this could be a cleaner that comes weekly or fortnightly to clean your home or could be a yearly deep clean. We would need to see evidence of what you spend to allow this cost.

Basic gardening

We will allow basic gardening costs, if necessitated by the individual's disability and not met by social care. We would not expect any gardening to be completed in winter months and so we only allow these costs for 6 months a year. We would need to see evidence of what you spend to allow this cost.

Buying disability equipment and the maintenance costs

If you need to buy any equipment related to your disability or care needs, we will consider whether you could claim these costs as DRE. We would look at the initial cost of the item, as well as any maintenance costs, such as servicing or insurance. We will only allow the DRE for the lifecycle of an item - this is normally three years.

For example, if someone with diminished mobility bought a mobility scooter, we would allow the cost of buying it as a DRE over a period of three years. This means that we will divide the total cost of the item you have bought by 156 weeks to work out the weekly cost. We would also allow any annual costs such as maintenance, servicing, or insurance, for as long as the item remains in use.

Transport

Transport costs will only be considered if the cost is over and above any mobility component of DLA or PIP in payment. These transport costs must be specifically due to a person's disability or health need. 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, i.e. council-provided transport to day centres is available but has not been used.

5. What evidence is required?

The person (or their representative) must provide evidence (e.g. bills/invoices/receipts, contracts, bank statements) of extra expense incurred because of their disability or health condition.

Receipts and/or evidence required must be for at least a three-month period where appropriate to show the regularity of the expense.

Additional supporting evidence may be needed from a qualified medical professional if certain items are requested e.g. health related conditions or dietary requirements.

The practitioner/social worker carrying out the DRE assessment is responsible for ensuring that the person (or their representative) produces documentary evidence of any expenses to be allowed and records a clear rationale as to why this expense relates specifically to the disability or health condition.

How do I claim?

Disability related expenses will be discussed with you and your allocated worker during your Care Act assessment or review.

You can also ask us to consider disability related expenses any time you incur a new expense or when there is an increase. You must remember to provide the appropriate and required evidence.

If you have an allocated worker, then please contact them direct; if you have no allocated worker, please contact **Family Connect on 01952 385385** who will take some details and pass your request to be allocated to the appropriate team.

6. Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

6.1 Why must I receive disability benefits to claim DRE?

You must be receiving disability benefits before claiming DRE as this is what the [Care Act 2014](#) says: "**Where disability-related benefits are taken into account, the local authority should make an assessment and 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.**"

Disability benefits are paid to people who have disabilities or illnesses and need extra help that people without disabilities do not need. You receive the benefit to help you pay for the cost of receiving any extra help. This could include a person who helps you, or an expense that you pay for because of your disability.

6.2 What makes an expense necessary?

An expense is necessary if it is something you **need** to pay for due to your disability or health condition rather than something that you **want**. If it is something that is your choice to pay for, for example, buying specific types of food when you have no dietary requirement or diagnosed medical need for it, the expense would not be necessary.

6.3 What makes an expense reasonable?

An expense is reasonable when it is a fair price. For example, if specialised shoes were something you needed, and you could buy these for £30 but you had submitted a DRE claim for a pair you bought for £100, this cost would not be reasonable. However, the £30 would be allowed.

6.4 My friend has been allowed an expense as DRE, but I have not. Why is this?

The [**Care Act 2014**](#) says that DRE should be person-centred and looked at on an individual basis. This is because every person is different and can have different disabilities, illnesses, and care needs. No two people are the same and therefore, no two DRE claims will be the same.

6.5 What if the NHS refuses to provide certain items or prescriptions, what can I do and how can I challenge this decision?

In the first instance, discuss with your GP or relevant health professional and explain why you feel you need that particular prescription. If you remain unhappy with the outcome of this discussion, you can request information regarding their complaints procedure.

Under the NHS regulations your GP must prescribe for you any medication that he or she feels are needed for your medical care. A patient is entitled to medication that the GP believes are necessary, not those which the patient feels should be prescribed. GPs, nurses, or pharmacists will also no longer prescribe probiotics or some vitamins and minerals. You can get the vitamins and minerals you need from eating a healthy, varied, and balanced diet, or you could choose to buy them at a pharmacy or supermarket. If you choose to purchase these, they cannot be disregarded as a DRE.

6.6 What to do if you disagree with the decision?

If a person disagrees with the outcome of their DRE assessment, they can ask for it to be looked at again. A person can do this by telling us why they think the decision is wrong. If you think there is any additional information that should be considered, please let us know.

If a person is still not satisfied with the outcome, they can make a complaint via our complaints procedure by contacting the Customer Relationship Team:

Online form: [Introduction - Adult social care complaints - Telford & Wrekin Council](#)
Email: customer.relationship@telford.gov.uk

By phone: 01952 382006

By letter:

Customer Relationship Team
Telford & Wrekin Council
Darby House
Lawn Central
Telford
TF3 4JA

Further information on the councils complaints procedure can be found here: [Introduction - Adult social care complaints - Telford & Wrekin Council](#)

Should you remain dissatisfied, you can ask the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (the Ombudsman) to review your complaint. You usually have up to 12 months to do this, starting from the date you first knew about the matter you complained about. The Ombudsman will normally only consider complaints made within that time but can decide to look at older complaints if there is a good reason to do so.

7. Examples

Example 1: Mr Jones

Mr Jones is a 75-year-old man who lives on his own in his bungalow which he rents from a local housing association. Mr Jones has mobility issues; he is prone to falls and he is sometimes unable get himself out of his armchair. He is incontinent and he washes his clothes and bedding frequently. Mr Jones has not been seen by the Incontinence Clinic yet. Although Mr Jones lives alone, he has an active social life by attending day services and meeting friends and family. He receives Attendance Allowance, and his total weekly income is £350.

Mr Jones has claimed the following items and amounts:

- Community alarm - £4.48 per week
- Electricity costs - £13 per week
- Incontinence items - £3.75 per week
- Domestic cleaner - £30 per month
- Gardener - £250 per year
- Water costs - £130 per quarter
- Mobile telephone - £10 per month

1. Mr Jones provided the name of his community alarm provider, and we checked our records to find the weekly cost. **£4.48 per week has been allowed as DRE.**
2. The average household cost of electricity for someone with Mr Jones' weekly income is £11.40 per week. As Mr Jones pays more than this, the difference is allowed. £13 minus £11.40 equals £1.60. **£1.60 per week has been allowed as DRE.**
3. Mr Jones has not been seen by the Incontinence Clinic, but he has been referred. **£3.75 per week has been allowed as DRE but only for 6 months while he is waiting to be seen.**
4. The allocated worker first works out what the weekly cost of Mr Jones' domestic cleaner is. £30 per month times by 12 months equals £360 per year. £360 divided by 52 equals £6.92. **£6.92 per week has been allowed as DRE.**
5. The cost of a gardener will only be allowed for 6 months of the year therefore the £250.00 cost will be divided by 52 to give a weekly amount this will then be halved to give **a weekly DRE of £2.40 per week.**
6. The allocated worker first works out how much Mr Jones pays for his water per week. £150 per quarter times by 4 quarters equals £600 per year. £600 per year divided by 52 weeks equals £11.54 per week. The average household cost for someone with Mr Jones' level of income is £9 per week and as this is lower than what Mr Jones pays, the difference can be included. £11.54 minus £9 equals £2.54. **£2.54 per week has been allowed as DRE.**

7. As Mr Jones is not socially isolated, the allocated worker would not class the mobile phone costs as DRE because it is a choice to own a mobile phone, and someone would have to pay for it whether they had a disability or not.

This means that Mr Jones DRE amount is:

- Community Alarm - £4.48 per week
- Electricity costs - £1.60 per week
- Incontinence items - £3.75 per week
- Domestic cleaner - £6.92 per week
- Gardener - £2.40 per week
- Water - £2.54 per week
- Mobile telephone - £0 per week
- **Total DRE amount allowed - £21.69 per week**

Example 2: Ms Smith

Ms Smith is a 42-year-old woman who lives alone in a privately rented flat. She has mental health issues including bipolar disorder and anxiety. She can have both depressed and manic episodes and has a pendant alarm which she can use if she becomes overwhelmed. Because of her anxiety, she does not leave the house often and her family do not live locally.

Ms Smith maintains contact with her family by using her smart phone to video-call with them regularly.

Ms Smith receives Personal Independence Payments and has a weekly income of £275. Ms Smith has claimed for the following items and amounts:

- Pendant alarm - £185 per year
- Electricity costs - £65 per month
- Water costs - £90 per quarter
- Mobile phone - £25 per month

1. Ms Smith's self-funds her pendant alarm at an annual cost of £185 per year and provides evidence in the form of an invoice from the provider. The annual amount is divided by 52 weeks equals £3.56 per week. **£3.56 per week allowed as DRE.**
2. Ms Smith pays £65 per month on electricity times by 12 months equals £780 per year. £780 per year divided by 52 weeks equals £15 per week. The average weekly cost of electricity for someone with Ms Smith's household type (property type and household composition) is £11.20 and because this is lower than what Ms Smith pays, the difference can be allowed. £15 minus £11.20 equals £3.80. **£3.80 per week allowed as DRE.**
3. The weekly cost of water that Ms Smith pays is £90 per quarter times by 4 quarters equals £360 per year. £360 per year divided by 52 weeks equals £6.92. The average weekly cost of water for someone with Ms Smith's household type (property type and household composition) is £8.50 per week and as this is higher than what Ms Smith pays, there is no amount to be allowed as DRE.
4. Mobile phone costs would not normally be allowed as DRE but because Ms Smith is socially isolated, we would include this as a DRE to assist her in staying connected with her family.

This means that Ms Smith's DRE amount is:

- Pendant alarm - £3.56 per week
- Electricity costs - £3.80 per week
- Water costs - £0.00 per week
- Mobile phone costs - £0.00 per week
- **Total DRE amount allowed - £7.36 per week**