

# Adult Social Care



www.slough.gov.uk  
**Slough**  
Borough Council

Provider bulletin

March 2024

## Adult Social Care Fees 2024/25

Further to recent discussion at Care Connected Forums and my letter last month I can confirm that discretionary fee uplifts for 2024/25 have now been agreed by Slough Borough Council.

The Chancellor's Autumn statement contained a larger, and wider reaching, increase to the National Minimum Wage than expected. This will inevitably have a big impact on the care sector.

We recognise the extraordinary pressure the whole sector has faced over the last few years, and it would be disingenuous to imply that these challenges will not be with us for some time.

It is reassuring that the record levels of inflation that we experienced last year are coming down, but they are still higher than the government's own target and the legacy will remain for several years.

The Local Government Finance Settlement 2024/25 has not increased at a rate to match inflation or to meet the increased demands, and record demands on social care services has led to another very challenging position for Slough Borough Council in terms of meeting the budget shortfall for 2023/24 and setting a balanced budget for 2024/25.

The cost of our services is growing significantly faster than our income, even with additional government grants, so, in common with many councils and particularly those with social care responsibilities, we have experienced overspends in 2023/24.

As such we will be automatically uplifting care fees by 2.90% from 1 April 2024, which is the contract inflation provided by Slough Borough Council in the Medium Term Financial Plan for 2024/25.

We recognise the hard work and dedication of all providers over the last 12 months, particularly with the additional challenges brought on by the cost-of-living crisis, record levels of inflation, and the ongoing effects of the Covid-19 pandemic.

We will continue to work closely with providers across the sector to find solutions to overcome these challenges; we believe that the best approach here is to work closely together, to find innovative long-term solutions for current concerns.

If you wish to have a review of the uplift applied you will need to submit a request to Slough Borough Council via our dedicated inbox [Fee.uplifts@slough.gov.uk](mailto:Fee.uplifts@slough.gov.uk) together

with a completed template and supporting information to describe the exceptional circumstances, to inform a business case.

The Business Case and financial information provided will be considered by the ASC Directorate's Expenditure Control Panel (DECP) who will look at:

- The care needs of the individual people
- The model of care
- Unit costs current and proposed
- Benchmarking costs with other provision
- The host authority uplift for Out of Borough requests (if applicable)

If approved the business case will be considered at a corporate expenditure control panel in line with the governance procedures required as part of S114. You will be informed of the outcome from the panel.

Please note there is a deadline of 30th June 2024 for any requests for 2024/25 uplifts to be received in the dedicated inbox; requests submitted after that date will not be considered.

Please can I take this opportunity to thank you all for your continued hard work and dedication, your professionalism makes a huge difference to the lives of our most vulnerable residents.

## Training

### Dysphagia and IDDSI Training

Virtual sessions led by Carina from Nestle Health science covering:

- An overview of Dysphagia, how to identify the correct symptoms and manage risks, including support around CQC requirements and how to support vulnerable residents in care homes
- An IDDSI framework recap, identifying the correct Levels and knowing how to test each level, recipe ideas on how to prepare these foods safely including flow test demonstration
- How to safely mix thickened drinks, including squash, Tea/coffee, fizzy. Including the risks of unsafe mixing and support around thickening Movicol

Sessions are scheduled for 3 April, 17 April and 15 May – same session repeated, please forward and share with staff to attend one date if training required.

[Use this link to join the dysphagia and IDDSI training](#) or contact [carina.taylor@uk.nestle.com](mailto:carina.taylor@uk.nestle.com) – for any face to face requirements.

### Thames Hospice Training

For further information or to book please go to the [Thames Hospice website](#)

## Capacity tracker

### Capacity Tracker Top Tips

The following 'top tips' have been shared by the Capacity Tracker team to help ensure providers are regularly submitting the mandatory Department of Health and Social Care data within the monthly reporting windows;

- To update/refresh as soon as the window opens; less reminders/saves time chasing!
- To attend CT training sessions to get a better understanding of the system & how to quickly update their information.
  - Care Home Training (April-May 2024) [ch provider sessions \(apr may2024\).pdf \(windows.net\)](#)
  - Homecare Training (April-May 2024) [hc provider sessions apr may 2024.pdf \(windows.net\)](#)
- To have additional users registered on CT to cover periods of absence.
  - To register for a CT account, click on the link below:  
[Register - Capacity Tracker](#)

Support remains available to new and existing providers who may require assistance:

NECS Capacity Tracker Support Centre: [necsu.capacitytracker@nhs.net](mailto:necsu.capacitytracker@nhs.net) or by calling the Support Centre (8am-5pm Mon-Fri, excluding public holidays) on 0191 691 3729.

## Public Health

### Vaccination Programme

The [COVID-19 Spring Booster Programme](#) will run between **1 April and 30 June 2024**. Eligible persons include:

- Adults aged 75 years and older
- Residents in care homes for older people.
- People who are immunosuppressed.

We anticipate care home vaccinations will commence on **15 April 2024**.

As always, we appreciate your support in anticipation of your on-site visit, by ensuring consent forms etc are completed and accessible. Find out more [here](#)

### Acute Respiratory Infection Guidance

The [Acute Respiratory Infection \(ARI\) Guidance](#) for adult social care has been updated in anticipation of the changes going live on 1 April 2024.

From **1 April 2024**, management of COVID-19 outbreaks will align to that of other Acute Respiratory Infections (ARI).

Care homes will no longer be required to complete outbreak management testing after this date, noting the on-line portal to order LFD test kits has now closed.

The letter linked below confirms that outbreak reporting will also cease from the end of March. [NHS England » Closure of COVID-19 outbreak reporting portal](#)

## Local resources

### Health and safety building compliance forms

Slough Borough Council's Adult Social Care Contracts Management team reports on H&S building compliance every month to the council.

Providers must email their certificates and reports as and when checks are completed to [ASC.ContractManagement@slough.gov.uk](mailto:ASC.ContractManagement@slough.gov.uk) to ensure they are recorded as compliant.

## Other updates

NHS funded nursing in care homes is set to increase from April 2024

NHS funded nursing in care homes is set to rise by 7.4%; the standard weekly rate will increase from £219.71 to £235.88 as of April 2024. Those working at a higher rate will see an increase from £302.25 to £324.50. Read more about increased funding for nursing in care homes here; [Increased 2024 funding for nursing in care homes - GOV.UK](#)

Launch of Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) and Skills for Care International Recruitment Toolkit

DHSC, in collaboration with Skills for Care has now published the Toolkit for International Recruitment for Adult Social Care Providers. This toolkit is a best practice guide, to support providers to ethically recruit care workers and senior care workers from overseas. The toolkit can be used by providers who are new to international recruitment to help support through the new processes, or by providers who are looking to refine their current international recruitment processes.

The toolkit has been written in collaboration with Skills for Care and is hosted on their international recruitment hub, alongside other key resources and information to support with ethical international recruitment – check out [International recruitment \(Skills for care\)](#)

DHSC have also worked with gov.uk to create a summary version to highlight the key messages within the toolkit [International recruitment toolkit for adult social care providers - GOV.UK](#)

### Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) provider sessions on visiting and accompanying in care homes – 3 April 2024

In December 2023, the DHSC announced legislation to make visiting and accompanying a fundamental standard of care.

Visiting is crucial to the health and wellbeing of those receiving care as it ensures that people remain connected with loved ones and their community. They should also have people to support and advocate for them when they are at their most vulnerable.

The new legislation will come into force on 6 April 2024. The DHSC is running a series of online information sessions via Teams, with support from Care Quality Commission (CQC) colleagues. These will explain what the legislation requires you to do as a provider and you will be able to ask any questions you might have about the guidance.

Sessions take place on Wednesday 3 April for care home providers

Use the form below to sign up for a session. Teams invites will be sent a few days before the session. For any queries, please contact the team on [visiting@dhsc.gov.uk](mailto:visiting@dhsc.gov.uk).

[Registration: Provider information sessions on visiting and accompanying in care homes, hospitals and hospices \(google docs\)](#)

## Contact us

We welcome your feedback and suggestions for future items to this newsletter – please get in touch via [quality.assurance@slough.gov.uk](mailto:quality.assurance@slough.gov.uk)

Information provided in this bulletin is correct at time of issuing.