

FROM THE MINISTER OF HEALTH



Department of
Health

An Roinn Sláinte

Männystríe O Poustíe

www.health-ni.gov.uk

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Your Ref:

Our Ref: CORR-1144-2022

Date: 9th August 2022

Dear *Vicki,*

Thank you for your letter of 15 July 2022 in respect of Care Home Top up Fees.

The policy on charging top-up fees, or third party charges is detailed in Departmental guidance ECCU 1/2010 'Care Management, Provision of Services and Charging Guidance' (<https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/dhssps/hsc-eccu-1-2010.pdf>).

This states that HSC Trusts must contract for placements at the most competitive rate available, which it considers suitable for meeting the individual's assessed need, even where this is not obtainable at the regional rate. Where a Trust has contracted at that rate there is no top-up.

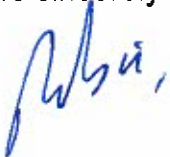
Should a service user select accommodation which is more expensive than other appropriate accommodation which the HSC Trust can secure at a lower rate (for example, because they wish to have a better room in a particular home or a more expensive care home), the HSC Trust will facilitate that choice, but the additional cost must be met by a third party such as a family member or friend. This is what is known as a top-up.

Whilst the aim should always be to facilitate choice for service users', Trusts have a parallel responsibility to secure the best value for money and protect the public funds for which they are accountable.

These additional charges (top-ups) relate to the cost of accommodation provided by independent care providers and are set by them at a level they deem appropriate to reflect market prices. As such it is not appropriate for the Department to investigate the level of these charges.

I hope this response is helpful.

Yours sincerely



Robin Swann MLA
Minister of Health

