Fair Cost of Care – Care Homes

Shropshire Council FAQs

What is the purpose of Fair Cost of Care?

The government is committed to a wide-ranging and ambitious reform of the adult social care system that protects people from unpredictable costs; offers more choice and control over care received; offers outstanding quality; and is accessible to those who need it. A sustainable care market is fundamental to underpinning this ambition.

The Government recognises that some local authorities are promoting efficient and effective operation of care markets, with sustainable rates of care and ambitious market position statements. Local authorities could pay significant variations in rates, including reports of some areas paying residential and domiciliary care providers less than it costs to deliver the care received. This can undermine markets, affect sustainability and, at times, lead to poorer quality outcomes.

The Fair Cost of Care exercise will gather a significant amount of information on the true cost of care and allow fees to be set at more sustainable rates. The exercise will allow comparison between local authorities and across regions, and it is hoped that the information gathered will be robust enough to influence future funding allocations.

On Friday 25th March Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) published Market sustainability and fair cost of care fund 2022 to 2023: guidance, which follows the Market Sustainability and Fair Cost of Care Fund announcement in Dec 2021. By 30th September local authorities should have:

1. Undertaken a cost of care exercise for home care (for people aged 18+)
2. Undertaken a cost of care exercise for care homes (residential and nursing for people aged 65+).
3. Completed a Market Sustainability Plan.

The DHSC expects local authorities to contact and request cost information from all registered care providers in their area, whether or not they currently commission care from them.
You can read more about the context here: https://iese.org.uk/cost-of-care-tool

What do I need to do?

You are being asked to complete the iESE CareCubed Fair Cost of Care tool for 65+ Care Homes here: https://iese.org.uk/cost-of-care-tool/care-providers

The CareCubed tool is free to use and was commissioned by the Care and Health Improvement Programme (led by the Association of Directors of Adult Social Services (ADASS) and the Local Government Association).

A brief overview is included below but there is full guidance from CareCubed including step by step instructions with screen shots showing you how to register and how to complete the tool. Once registered and signed in you also have access to online support instructions, email support and video tutorials.

Step 1 – Register

You can register more than one person but will need to identify a primary user for your organisation who will add and sub-users or users with read only access. It is recommended you follow the care provider guidance. The guidance takes you through each step of the registration and sign in process: https://fcoc.carecubed.org/

Step 2 – Complete the tool

You can complete the tool for a single care home or for multiple locations. Key information is populated from the CQC database. The tool covers the cost data for 1st April 2021 to 31st March 2022. There is full guidance available to help complete the tool, but the main sections are:

- Home information (e.g. location, capacity etc.)
- Care Home expenditure
    - Staff costs
    - Supplies and services
    - Premises costs
    - Head Office and central costs
- Return on operations and return on capital
- Occupancy
- Hours of care
- Summary data (e.g. cost of care per resident per week)

Step 3 – Submission and checking process

Once you are happy with the data you can submit. This process lets the Local Authority know you have completed the tool and it will allow Shropshire Council to ask questions, or spot anything that seems out of line with expected costs. Shropshire Council will not make any judgement on your costs, this process is designed to ensure an accurate county-wide total and avoid any anomalies. This exercise is about working together to do our best to determine a fair cost of care using the information we have available. We may need to ask you some questions to help us understand the cost issues to a greater degree, rather than because we think there is an issue with the data.

The checking process is designed to be reassuring for both providers and the local authority and once any queries have been considered (if there are any) the data can be re-submitted.

Why is completing the iESE CareCubed Fair Cost of Care tool important?

Completing the tool is important for many reasons including:
- If Shropshire Council does not have enough returns our data will not be robust and we will be less able to present a rural perspective. It is important that rural counties like ours are well represented and have robust countywide totals to present alongside our urban counterparts.
- There is a national expectation placed on providers and local authorities that the Fair Cost of Care Tools will be completed and submitted (this links to the local authority's duty to properly discharge its statutory Care Act and stewardship of public funds' responsibilities). The approach is beneficial because it is locally based and gives providers and local authorities more influence. If the exercise fails to be delivered through local partnership working, it is possible that a review would be undertaken nationally to consider different approaches or methodology such as national submission.
- If the local authority does not use the nationally-supported tools (there are different tools for Home Care and Care Homes), then the local authority will have to make its own arrangements for guidance and support to help care providers return Fair Cost of Care information. Providers would therefore not benefit from the national support and resources available.

- The tool is a specialist tool based on 10+ years of experience modelling care costs and changing patterns of care provision.

What are the benefits for my organisation?
There are several benefits for residential care providers:
- You may find that using the tool, and seeing your costs presented differently, gives you more information about the cost of providing care. Although you will have a good understanding of finances the tool may provide greater visibility of costs and can be used to model cost increases and variations.
- Once care home providers in Shropshire submit their costs it will be important to publish the overall research findings (averages/estimates) and this will allow you to see how your costs compare with the local authority research results.
- You may find that use of the tool supports your partnership working with commissioners and helps you to better describe any issues and changes.

Who do I submit the completed tool to?
Local Authorities have a role in the process (including the checking stage briefly outlined above), but you will be submitting your data directly into the CareCubed Fair Cost of Care Tool.

When is the deadline?
Please submit your completed tool online by **5pm on the 27th June 2022.**

If you can make a start early that will leave you with more time to gather information, speak to colleagues or seek support and advice if you have any queries. If you are not able to obtain answers to your questions using the national guidance and support materials, please email TellUs@shropshire.gov.uk and we will signpost you to the right support or try to help find an answer for you.

Is support available?

National support – CareCubed
The tool went live on the 25th May. There is a support website for the tool here: Care Home Cost of Care Tool Once you have registered you will receive regular updates and be able to access the following:
- Frequently Asked Questions
- Guidance documents
- Demo recordings and instruction videos
- Other support material

There is an open Cost of Care (CoC) Community for people to participate in discussions and raise questions about their use of the Tool

Helpdesk - carecubed@iese.org.uk is the email address to contact with any technical queries or feedback about the Tool.

Local support

Shropshire Partners in Care (SPiC) are have been working closely with Shropshire Council to support the design and implementation of this project. Read more on the SPiC website.

Any questions for Shropshire Council can be emailed to TellUs@shropshire.gov.uk and will be directed to the most appropriate team or service to respond.

Are there any top tips?

There are some top tips included in the guidance for the toolkit, but our local top tips are:

- Make a start. It looks daunting but once you have completed the easier sections you will find it may not be as complex as it looks.
- Do follow the step by step guidance.
- Once you have completed a section, check that it looks right to you. If the totals don't look right, you may want to check the data you have inputted in case you have mis-typed something.
- If you find the tool doesn't give you enough sections/rows. Consider making some calculations outside of the tool in Excel, for example.
- If you get stuck please use the support available (see details above).

How do I complete the costs for PPE?

The tool asks for actual costs for 1st April 2021 to 31st March 2022. Since care providers are currently able to obtain PPE without charge through the portal, the real cost of PPE will not be reflected. It may be helpful if you could calculate what you would have paid for PPE and add that into the notes section so we can ensure we have a better idea of potential costs for Shropshire if PPE is used and charged for.

Can the tool be used off-line?

You can export an Excel file to work on and enter data into so you can undertake workings out before completing the online version. It is possible to upload the Excel version into the tool once complete. The Excel function is included in the guidance on the tool under 'Help & Support' once you have registered and logged in.

If you have problems with the online tool it may be that your browser is the issue. Safari is known to limit some functionality so please try to use the tool in Chrome or Edge.

Can I submit anonymously?

The submission process is outlined within the guidance and includes a verification process led by Local Authorities. This means Shropshire Council will be able to ask questions on returns and see which providers have completed the tool and which have yet to complete the tool. We hope to use supporting context data such as provider type, location etc. to boost our understanding and make the data returned more valuable. We would not be able to do that with anonymous returns and it will be challenging if we have very few returns. Good data is important to achieve a positive overall outcome for all providers and generate learning for the Market Sustainability Plan Shropshire Council needs to produce and submit nationally.

Your data will predominantly be handled by Shropshire Council staff within the Resources Directorate. These members of staff have experience of analysis and data handling but not of care costs or commissioning arrangements. It is hoped that this more independent handling of your data will provide reassurance. However, as explained in the context and nationally, no judgement of individual provider business costs will be made. The purpose is to combine returns to determine a fair cost of care. Your data will be used for the purpose of this Fair Cost of Care exercise.

Will the data be protected?

Individual provider returns and costs will be stored securely on the online tool and will not be shared with any other third parties. Confidentiality will be applied throughout. Shropshire Council will operate in line with the UK GDPR and Data Protection Act 2018. Any data you provide will be stored securely and retained for no more than 3 years from the end of the project.

The data is your data and we would need your permission to share it. Although, the data you provide is subject to the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (as any information

held by the Local Authority can be requested by the member of the public), on receipt of a request for information we would take the following steps as we consider this under the FOI provisions:

- We will consult with you should we receive such a request and seek your views on disclosure and any concerns you may have.
- We will consider if we can exempt financial information provided under Section 43(2) of the Act, which allows us to refuse a request where the release of information would prejudice the commercial position of a relevant third-party company.
- We will work with you and discuss a way forward as part of making the decision.

We do not anticipate detailed requests. It is very likely that any such requests would be for our overall summary data (anonymised).

All data published will be aggregated and/or anonymised or pseudonymised before any information is shared or published. Data may be requested by the West Midlands commissioning and finance networks and by the national team (the format of these likely requests is not yet known) but confidentiality will be adhered to when responding to any requests.

Find out more about how Shropshire Council applies data protection legislation and how you may raise any concerns about our use of data here: Privacy | Shropshire Council and here: commissioning-development-procurement-privacy-notice.pdf (shropshire.gov.uk)

How will Shropshire Council arrive at costs locally?
As a simple summary, the CareCubed tool will generate costs for Shropshire Council.

Shropshire Council understands that precise costs are very difficult to determine. We recognise that quality is important and that there may be some costs that are not fully reflected in the tool. We also recognise that different service models, different types of care offer and delivery, different locations etc. will all mean costs vary between providers. We won't take a simple average but will consider common costs and reasons for variations when making any county-wide proposals.

The exercise is a partnership approach and we will value any feedback you provide in addition to your completed tool.

What data will be shared and published?
Aggregate local information (such as minimum, maximum, median and total average figures) will be publicly available. No individual care providers will be named. Should there be any requests made for provider level data (this is not anticipated) specific permission will have to be agreed with each provider, as described above.

There is an expectation that our local summary data may be combined with that of other local authorities across the West Midlands and, indeed, other regions, in order to help support the case to Central Government to provide more funding for adult social care services. Sharing will be through Local Government/Association of Directors of Adult Social Services (ADASS).

What happens next?
The first phase of work was gathering provider Home Care toolkits followed by this phase of Care Homes for 65+. We will bring this information together to develop a picture of costs for Shropshire.

We will also work with finance and commissioning networks regionally to consider relevant local care and labour market characteristics, supply factors and pressures, previous work, contract parameters, future demand/market shaping issues, and implications for NHS commissioning and self-funder proportions.

Following analysis, a draft Market Sustainability Plan outline will be developed.

Because of the importance of the information required under the national Fair Cost of Care programme (and its local significance and potential future importance to the care market) the summary data/analysis (all anonymised) will be presented to Shropshire Council's Cabinet to approve. As a result, the report will be public and posted on the local authority's website.

Final Market Sustainability Plans must be complete by February 2023.

We will keep all providers updated on progress and email with any new information and updates as the project moves forward. Resources will also be made available on Shropshire Council's website.

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