

13 July 2022

Residential and Nursing Care Homes – Third Party Top Up Fees

1. How many residential and nursing care homes in the Belfast Trust area charge a third party top fee?

Within the Belfast area, Belfast Trust's Finance Department currently pay 70 nursing/residential homes – of these, 52 homes charge a top-up fee, which is being administered through Finance. Please note the Finance Department has no information on rates paid by private self-funders or any arrangements whereby residents' families pay third party top-ups direct to the care home.

2. Why do they charge a third party top up fee?

The third party top up fee may apply in order to meet the cost of more expensive accommodation. Please refer to the Department of Health Circular - Care Management, Provision of Services and Charging Guidance ECCU 1/2010.

3. What extra services are provided in a care home that charges third party top up fee?

A decision may be made by a service user and/or family to select a more expensive accommodation and the rationale could be an optional additional service of an experience-based preference. Please refer to the Department of Health Circular - Care Management, Provision of Services and Charging Guidance ECCU 1/2010.

4. How many residents are currently in care homes that charge a third party top up fee and it is paid for by the Belfast Trust?

We currently have 610 clients for whom Belfast Trust pay third party top up fees throughout Northern Ireland.

Of this 610, we invoice third parties for 454 accounts, and the Trust pay 156 accounts, as we could not provide a bed at the regional rate at time of placement.

5. How much money did the Belfast Trust invoice persons for a third party top up fee in the calendar years 2018-2021

We invoiced as follows:

2018	£1,545,843.22
2019	£1,744,008.16
2020	£1,623,354.98
2021	£1,441,220.83

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6. How much money did the Belfast Trust receive after invoicing persons for a third party top up fee in the calendar years 2018-2021

We received the following receipts:

2018	£1,459,812.16
2019	£1,710,465.50
2020	£1,593,910.29
2021	£1,406,392.87

7. Are persons who pay a third party top up fee entitled to refunds when the service is not provided to an acceptable standard? If not, why not?

The third party agreement enables Belfast Trust to administer the payment on behalf of the resident's family and does not reference refunds.

Should the service provided by the home be of an unacceptable standard, a complaint should be made to the registered manager/provider, the RQIA, the Ombudsman or to the relevant placing Trust. Any such complaints are managed by the Trust on an individual basis. There is no regional policy on refunds

8. Provide a copy of the Belfast Trust Third Party Top Up Fee policy

Belfast Trust does not have a policy in relation to third party top up fees.

The document that contains the relevant regional guidance in relation to third party top up fees is the Department of Health Circular - Care Management, Provision of Services and Charging Guidance ECCU 1/2010.

Please find copy circular attached in separate document.