

Freedom of Information Request

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

The total number of care homes in the Northern Trust area at 24th June 22 charging a third party top up was 95 made up as follows:-

Type of Home	Number Charging 3 rd party top up
Nursing	42
Residential	26
Dual – Home providing Nursing and Residential Care	27

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

Annually, Department of Health agrees a standard contract price for core services to be paid to care homes – the tariff Rate. Care homes may set their weekly rate at above tariff ie their full cost is higher than the standard rate. The additional cost is the difference between the contract price and the provider’s weekly charge as outlined in their Patients’/Resident Guide.

At the point of placement the Northern Trust will seek to identify a suitable home at tariff. If a home is not available at tariff the Northern Trust will commit to pay the charge in respect of the lowest cost home available at above tariff. In either circumstances, if the family agrees a different more costly home, they will in turn agree to pick up this additional charge as third party.

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

A third party top up fee can be charged if a home is providing extra and or upgraded services. Enhanced services will be specific to an individual care home. Below are some examples of when a third party top up fee may be charged:-

- Home more expensive due to locality
- Resident has superior accommodation
- Resident receiving services greater than those covered within the standard tariff rate

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

As at 28th June 22 the Northern Trust had a total of 2,021 residents in care homes currently charging a third party top up. The Northern Trust pay all or part of the top up fee for 1,022 clients.

5. How much money did the Northern Trust Invoice persons for a third party top up fee in the calendar years 2018 – 2021?

The total invoice raised for a third party top up was as follows:-

Calendar Year	Total 3 rd Party Invoices Raised
2018	£1,389,171.19
2019	£1,696,223.83
2020	£1,665,018.84
2021	£1,573,470.95

6. How much money did the Northern Trust receive after invoicing for a third party top up fee in the calendar years 2018 – 2021?

The total monies received by Northern Trust after invoicing for a third party top up was as follows:-

Calendar Year	Monies received from 3 rd Party Invoice
2018	£1,188,798.90
2019	£1,430,710.33
2020	£1,414,626.88
2021	£1,332,174.41

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

Where the persons who pay a third party top up feels a service is not provided to an adequate standard this should be raised with the provider to seek resolution.

A provider shall ensure it has a complaints procedure in place which meets the requirements of Guidance on Complaints in Regulated Establishments and Agencies issued by the Department of Health (Circular HSC (SQSD) 23/2009, the Minimum Standards and the HSC Complaints Procedure. The provider has responsibility to investigate and respond to any complaint, record the outcome and any actions taken.

Where agreement between the parties is not achieved then the dispute resolution provision shall be implemented – Regional Residential & Nursing Provider Specification and Contract, Clause 30.

Should resolution determine a refund is due this would be paid by the provider, as the care home was the recipient of the 3rd party top up fee.

8. Provide a copy of the Northern Trust third party top up fee policy?

Regional Residential & Nursing Provider Specification and Contract - Special Terms and Conditions of Contract and Service specification 15.11 refers to third party top up.