

# **East Lothian Council care home increases rates by 39 percent**

**East Lothian's only council care home is increasing its weekly fee by 39 percent after saying current payments were not covering the cost of running the home.**

A meeting of East Lothian Council this week was told the new fees would be charged from the end of next month after annual inflationary rises in the charges did not 'keep pace' with the rising costs of running the home.

Presenting officer Laura Kerr told the meeting that Scottish Government guidance stated that fees should cover the full cost of running a home and currently they were not.

She also pointed out that the closures of three additional facilities in East Lothian – Eskgreen and The Abbey Care Home along with Belhaven Nursing Home, meant Crookston, which is in Tranent, is the only remaining council home.

She said: "Crookston is now the only local authority run care home that we have and we now need to bring the charging for the home in line with legislation.

"To bring the charge in line with the full cost will mean a 39 percent increase this year bringing the charge up to £1, 557. The increase will only affect the self funding residents in the home."

The previous charge for self funding residents, of which there are eleven in the 60-bed capacity home, was £1,117 last year.

The meeting was told local authority funded residents would continue to be means tested over any fees.

A report to councillors said the cost of running the home was just under £4.9million this year which equated to £1,557 a week cost per bed.

It said letters will be issued to all self-funding residents impacted by the change.

The report said: "The correspondence will inform residents of the reason for the change and provide 30 days' notice of any rate increase. Additionally, the (health and social care) partnership will prioritise the financial re-assessment of the 11 self-funding residents affected to ensure that they still qualify to meet the full cost of their care.

"To enable sufficient notice to be given, a timescale for implementation of 30 September 2024 is proposed."

Crookston Care Home opened ten years ago and offers single bedrooms with their own ensuite facilities.

East Lothian Health and Social Care Partnership closed Eskgreen in Musselburgh last year with residents moving into Crookston which had an empty floor.

This week the local authority put The Abbey, in North Berwick, on the market for offers over £1.2m after it was also closed. Belhaven Nursing Home, in Dunbar has also closed. In all three cases health bosses said bringing the older buildings up to care and safety standards for residents was too costly.

Councillors noted the report.

By Marie Sharp Local Democracy Reporter