



Department  
of Health



# A guide to Adult Social Care

care and  
support  
& you



**From April 2015, care and support in England is changing for the better. The new Care Act will help make care and support more consistent across the country.**

‘Care and support’ is the term we use to describe the help some adults need to live as well as possible with any illness or disability they may have. It can include help with things like washing, dressing, eating, getting out and about and keeping in touch with friends or family.

This leaflet helps to explain what we mean by care and support; who can get access to care and support and how.

## How to get care and support

### 1 What is Adult Social Care?

Adult Social Care is the care and support provided by the council for adults who need a little extra help to live an enjoyable life as independently as possible.

Adults who might need extra care and support include:

- older people
- people with learning disabilities
- people with physical disabilities
- people with mental health problems
- people with drug and alcohol problems
- carers





## What does 'care and support' mean?

Care and support means the help some adults need to live as well as possible with their illness, disability or other problems.

Care and support might include help with:

- washing
- dressing
- meals
- getting out and about
- staying in touch with friends and family

Whether you prefer support in your own home or in a residential care home, it's important that you are allowed to control the care and support you receive.

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## 2 What care and support can I get?

If you are entitled to care and support, your local council can help you in lots of different ways. For example, you might need:

- care at home, such as help with bathing, cooking, getting around your community, helpful equipment or a personal alarm
- care away from home, such as day centres, respite care or short breaks in residential care
- housing, such as residential or nursing care, extra care housing, sheltered accommodation or perhaps adaptations to your own home
- information and advice to help you stay safe and well
- support for your carer(s), such as help with travel expenses, respite care, and careers advice

Individuals and carers who want to buy their own care and support to meet their assessed needs can also get a direct payment. This is council money paid directly to you or a carer to pay for the care and support you choose.





### 3 How do I get support?

Contact your local council who will advise you about the services available.

Usually, the council will assess your needs to work out what care and support you need.

If you are a carer for a friend or family member and you feel you need some extra support, you can request an assessment too. You don't need the permission of the person you care for to apply for an assessment.

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### 4 What happens in a needs assessment?

The assessment has to work out your needs in line with national rules about care and support.

During the assessment, your social worker will talk to you about whether you can do things such as:

- prepare and eat food and drinks without help
- keep yourself and your clothes clean
- manage your toilet needs
- dress yourself properly
- move around safely
- keep your home clean and safe
- have enough contact with other people
- take part in activities like volunteering or learning
- use local services, such as the buses and shops
- carry out any caring responsibilities you might have

You will be encouraged to explain what you think you need and what you want to be able to do in the future.



The assessor will discuss how your care needs affect your wellbeing, and whether the services available can give you the help you want. Your wellbeing includes:

- relationships with family and friends
- physical and mental health
- keeping safe
- having enough money
- a good place to live
- being able to control your daily life

The assessment might show that you are entitled to care and support. This will help you make plans for now and your future.

If you have arranged to pay for your own care and support, you do not need to be assessed by the council.

### Can someone support me during my assessment?

Yes, they can! You're welcome to bring a carer, friend or family member to support you during your assessment if you want to.

If you find it hard to understand things or get your meaning across, don't worry. Even if you don't know someone who could help you, the council can arrange for an independent advocate to support you during your assessment. An independent advocate is a trained professional who can help you to get your opinions heard. If you feel that you would benefit from an independent advocate, please raise this with the council at any time.

### What is a carer's assessment?

A carer's assessment looks at the ways in which caring affects your life and wellbeing. Your assessor will talk to you about whether you can:

- take care of any children you need to look after alongside your caring role
- care for any other adults you're responsible for
- keep your home clean and safe



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- do all the shopping and meal preparation for yourself and your family
  - work, volunteer, or train as you wish
  - have time to use local services, such as the gym
  - spend time doing things you enjoy

Your local council will assess the support you might need to carry on doing the things that are important to you and your family. Your physical, mental and emotional wellbeing will also be taken into consideration.

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## 5 What happens if I am entitled to receive care and support?

After your assessment your local council will write to you about the decision it has made and the reasons why.

If you are entitled to receive care and support, your local council will work with you to plan your care and support and decide how to spend the money to meet your needs. A family member or advocate can support you if you wish. Your plan should include the things most important to you and your family, such as:

- your preferences
- what you want to achieve in your daily life
- any free services, minor aids and adaptations that would make it easier to cope
- your personal budget (see section 7 for more information)
- how to make sure your needs don't get worse
- local organisations who could help you

The support you will receive depends on what you need as an individual.



### What happens if I am not eligible to receive care and support?

If your assessment identifies that you are not eligible to receive care and support from your local council you will be given written information and advice on how to access support locally and how to prevent or reduce your care needs. These services could help you with housing, benefits, clubs and voluntary groups. Your local council might also be able to put you in touch with other organisations who can support your wellbeing and help you remain independent for longer.

### Support for carers

If your local council decides that you are entitled to care and support they will discuss with you what they can offer.

If you are not entitled, your council will advise you about the other types of support available in your area. For example, they might put you in touch with local charities or community organisations.

### What if I am not happy with the outcome?

If you are not happy with the outcome of your assessment or your care plan you can ask us to look at them again. If you are still unhappy after that, you might want to contact your local council and make a complaint.

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## 6 How long does it take to access support and help?

There are no national rules about how quickly a council must carry out an assessment following a request. However, many local authorities publish their own standards.

Most local councils aim to complete assessments within 28 days, with all services in place within the next 28 days.

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## 7 How much will I have to pay for my care and support?

You might have to pay for some social care or support services. The amount you pay will vary depending on the care you receive, your income, savings and other personal circumstances. Some care and support services are free of charge.

At the moment, if you have less than £23,250 in savings, or if your savings drop below this amount, your income, savings and finances can be assessed to work out how much you can contribute towards your services.





You might be eligible for some free support (for example if your care package is arranged and paid for by the NHS and Intermediate Care, if you are detained under the Mental Health Act or if you are entitled to a grant such as the disabled facilities grant).

### Financial assessment

A financial assessment will be done with you to work out whether you must contribute towards the cost of your care and support.

The financial assessment will be done in different ways, depending on whether your care will be given in your own home or in a residential home.

If you decide to move into residential care you will always have to contribute towards the cost of your care.

When moving into a care home, your financial assessment might consider the value of your own home when deciding how much you should pay towards your care home fees.

If you do not wish to sell your home, you can choose a ‘deferred payment’ arrangement if you are eligible. A deferred payment is only available if you do not have enough income to cover your care home fees, and you have less in savings than £23,250. It means that your local council will pay your care home bills for you, allowing you to delay paying your care costs until you choose to sell your home, or until after you die. Your local council may charge interest on the amount owed, and there might also be a fee for setting up this arrangement. A deferred payment agreement is only one way to pay for care.

A carer’s assessment does not include a financial assessment. However carers might be asked how caring is affecting their finances.

If you would like more information and advice on planning for care and support costs, you can contact an independent financial advisor, the Society of Later Life Advisers or the money advice service [www.moneyadvice.service.com](http://www.moneyadvice.service.com)



## Personal budget

Any financial contributions that you or the council make will become your 'personal budget'. A personal budget is the money needed to meet your care needs, whether or not the council provides your care. Your personal budget gives you more choice and flexibility over the services you receive.

If you choose to have your personal budget money paid directly to you, you can receive it as a direct payment and use it to choose and pay for your own care providers. Alternatively, you might prefer the council or someone else you choose to manage your budget for you.

## Changes from April 2016

The new Care Act includes a number of proposed changes for 2016, including:

- changes to the “means test” threshold for paying for care and support
- allowing you to ask the council to arrange your care for you if you pay for your own care (your council might charge you a fee for doing this)
- extended financial support to help more people get help with their care and support
- protection for everyone from unlimited care and support costs (the Care Cap)

Further information can be found on the [www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk) website.

## Transition: preparing for adulthood

### 8 What happens to my care and support when I'm 18?

Transition is the period of time when young people are moving from childhood into adulthood.

The Children and Families Act 2014 deals with support from birth to 25. However, anyone over the age of 18 can access care and support from Adult Social Care. This means that young people aged 18-25 might be entitled to both types of support.

If you are a young person, a young carer or an adult caring for a child who is approaching adulthood and may need care and support after 18, your local council can assess the best way for you to get your care and support.

To find out about an assessment, contact your local council.



## Making changes to your care and support

### 9 What if I ask for care and support, then change my mind?

If you change your mind you will need to tell your local council.

A local council cannot normally make someone accept help if they don't want it.

Certain laws may be used to insist that someone receives services, but this is very rare. It would need health professionals (and perhaps the courts) to agree that it must happen.

### 10 What about reviewing my needs?

Your local council will aim to review your care needs every year to make sure that you are getting the care and support you need.

If you (or someone who knows you well) think your needs or financial position has changed, you can request an extra review to check whether your contribution towards your care has changed.

A review might result in changes to your care and support plan and the services you receive.

After the review, your council will send you a copy of your new care and support plan.

Your care and support arrangements will not be changed without discussing it with you first.

### 11 What happens to my support if I move house?

It's up to you to tell your local council if you move house. Your council will then make sure there is no gap in your care and support.

If you move to an area which falls under another council, your current council and your new one will work together to make sure you continue to receive the same level of care and support from the day that you arrive in your new home.

Before you move, your new council will assess your needs and agree a new support plan with you. If this is not possible the new council will arrange the care and support described in your previous plan.





## Raising concerns about your care and support

### 12 What if I'm unhappy with the quality of my care and support?

If you are worried about the quality of care and support you get, contact your local council to raise your concerns or to make a complaint.

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### 13 What do I do if I'm worried about someone being abused or neglected?

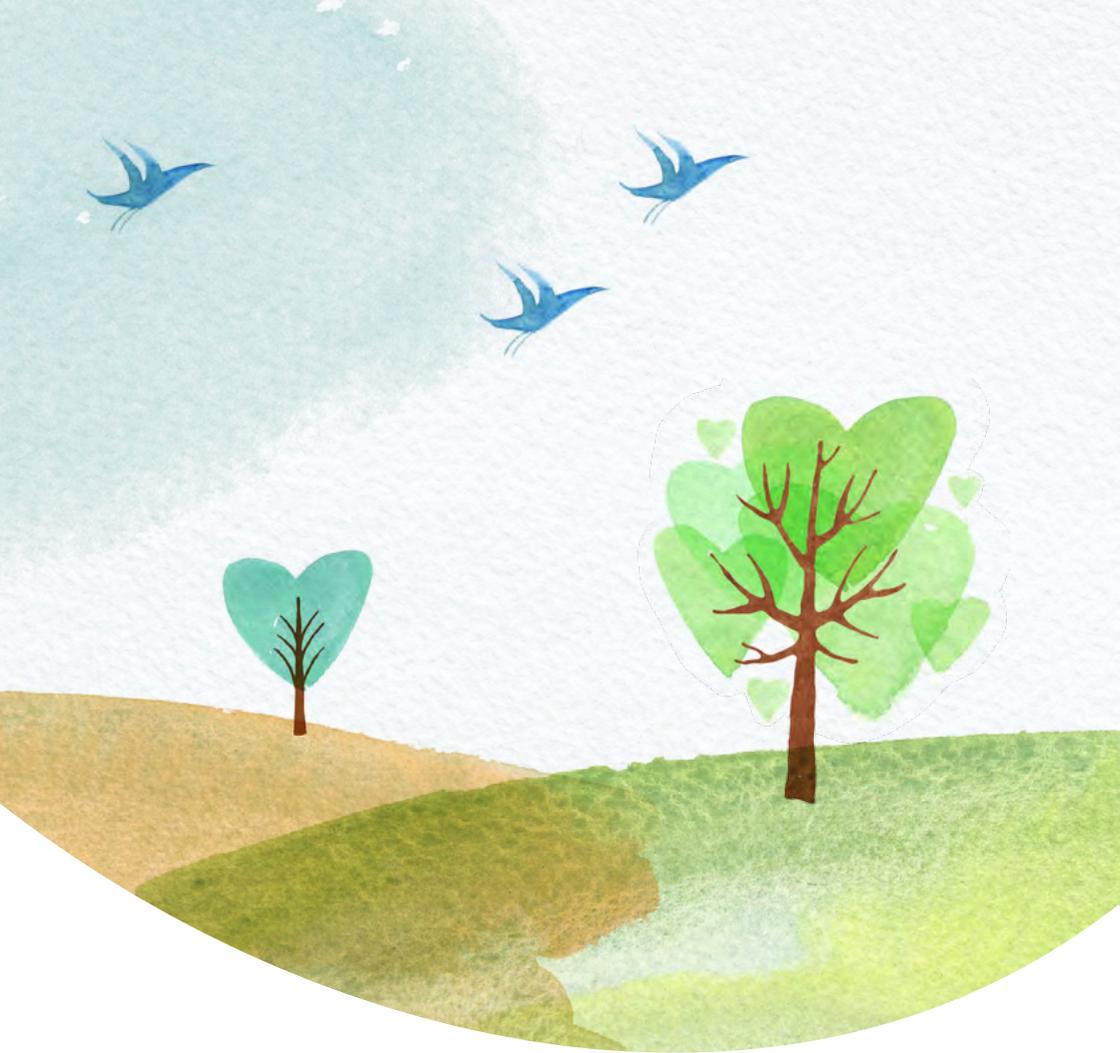
If you are worried that an adult receiving care and support is suffering or might suffer significant harm such as mistreatment or abuse, contact your local council right away. If you think a crime has been committed, call the police on 999. You don't have to give any of your personal details if you don't want to.

Your local council has a specialist Safeguarding Team who will investigate any concerns reported in order to protect adults who might be at risk, abused or neglected.

If your care provider fails to give the care you need, your local council should step in and take action to keep you safe.

If you find it hard to understand or get your meaning across and you don't have anyone to support you, ask your local council for help. They can arrange for an independent advocate to represent and support you.





**This leaflet is available in accessible formats.  
Contact the council for details.**