

Care and Support Packages: Reviews and new assessments

This factsheet provides information for people who are already receiving care and support through a package of social care.

At some stage after your care plan is set up, you may be told that your local authority will undertake a review or even carry out a new assessment.

This factsheet explains the review and new assessment process, the differences between the two, when these should happen and what they look like in practice.

What are reviews?

Once you have a package of care and support in place, it will be checked or reviewed regularly to confirm that it is still appropriate for you.

Your package is based on your original needs assessment which formally records all of your needs.

Reviews are an ongoing process used to reflect on the current package, to discuss what is working, what isn't working and what might need to change in future.

If your needs have changed, this must trigger a new assessment. It may be that small revisions to your package are possible as a result of the review process, but it must not decrease the amount of support you receive and must still continue to meet all of your needs.

The review must not be used as a way of reducing your package of care and support.

Reviews are usually carried out by a social worker or assessor from your local authority. They may also be carried out on behalf of your local authority by your care and support provider. They will arrange a meeting time with you for the review.

If you had any support at your original needs assessment from a family member, friend, supporter or independent advocate, this person should ideally also be present at your review.

Reviews can only focus on the basis of the existing needs assessment. If your needs have changed, you will need a new needs assessment.

When do reviews take place?

Reviews are usually scheduled by default annually, but either you or your local authority can request one at any time.

If there is something that is not working about your package, you should ask for a review. This will give you the opportunity to discuss what isn't working and what might need to be changed.

Your local authority, together with the care and support provider, can investigate whether there are changes that can be made within the review process or whether the changes relate to your needs having changed.

If your needs have changed, you should be offered a new assessment.

What is a new assessment?

A new assessment should take place if your needs have changed since your last needs assessment.

Local authorities cannot revisit the old needs assessment to make changes: a new assessment **must** take place, taking into account all presenting needs.

Sometimes, local authorities may talk about a 'reassessment', in which a type of review meeting takes place to change the original needs assessment. The Care Act 2014 is very clear that there is no such thing as a reassessment.

The new assessment should be carried out in exactly the same way as your original assessment, by a social worker who is appropriately qualified. The assessment should focus on your disability, how this affects the things you want to do in your everyday life (known as 'outcomes') and how this affects your wellbeing.

There is more information available on assessments in our separate Mencap factsheet on social care assessments.

Examples of review processes

This is an example of the review process being appropriate.

Aliyah

Aliyah is receiving 15 hours per week support from a support worker. This is paid through direct payments. Her support worker helps for 3 hours a day with shopping, housework, cooking and paperwork. The support worker currently arrives at 0900AM and leaves at 1200.

Aliyah wants to start a morning college course, and later in the week wants to go to a day centre which may involve mornings. In addition, the fees for the support worker have increased.

Aliyah requests a review and her care and support provider carries out the review. It is agreed that they will move the 15 hours around to different times, and one different day. It is also noted that there is a small shortfall in funding due to the support worker charge increases, so funding is increased to cover that shortfall.

Mohammed

Mohammed is receiving 20 hours per week care and support from a support worker. He has learning disabilities and autism. He also has epilepsy. Over the past 6 months, Mohammed has been having increased seizures and can no longer shower safely by himself. He is also struggling to cook meals because he is suffering weakness in his arms and hands.

He contacts his social worker to ask for more support. His social worker attends and carries out a review of the original package.

Mohammed is told that as he has only been allocated the 20 hours per week support, he hasn't got funding for any more support but they are happy for him to move the hours around if this would help him.

Mohammed should be offered a new assessment as his needs have changed. The review process would not be sufficient in this situation.