

Social Care Jargon Buster

The world of social care terms is vast and can seem confusing, especially when issues are being discussed in meetings. This A - Z factsheet, produced from information created by 'Think Local Act Personal', explains some of the terms you may hear in discussions around social care and support.

A

Access

The opportunity to use, get or benefit from something. If you have a disability, you may need changes to be made to enable you to have full access to everything in your community, including services, facilities and information.

Access to Work

A scheme run by the Government that provides practical advice and financial support to help you work **if you have a disability. It can pay for things like someone to help you communicate at a job interview, special equipment to help you do the job, or additional travel costs if you are unable to use public transport. How much you receive depends on your circumstances. You can find details of your local access to work centre at: <https://www.gov.uk/access-to-work/how-to-claim>**

Accountable/Accountability

When a person or organisation is responsible for ensuring that things happen, and is expected to explain what happened and why.

Active listening

A way of listening that enables you to be fully heard, especially if you have dementia or difficulties with communication. Someone who is actively listening to you will be making eye contact, not interrupting, giving you their full attention, not doing other things, and checking with you that they understand what you are saying.

Active participation

When you are included in decisions about your care and support, and have a say in how you live your life and how you want to spend your time. When you are included in decisions about your care and support, and have a say in how you live your life and how you want to spend your time.

Activities of daily living

Things you do every day to look after yourself, **such as eating, washing, dressing and using the toilet. An assessment of your needs will look at how well you can manage your activities of daily living, and what help and support you need.**

Acute care

Health care that you receive in hospital following an injury, operation or illness. It is different to any care you may receive for an ongoing health condition from your GP, community nurse or other professionals in the community where you live.

Adult placement scheme

When an adult with a disability or mental health problem lives in an ordinary home with an individual or family who provides them with a place to live and support. It is like a fostering arrangement for adults: adult placement carers must be checked and approved, and the arrangement is monitored by the local council. People may be placed in someone's home for a short break or on a permanent basis.

Adult social care

Care and support for adults who need extra help to manage their lives and be independent - including older people, people with a disability or long-term illness, people with mental health problems, and carers. Adult social care includes assessment of your needs, provision of services or allocation of funds to enable you to purchase your own care and support. It includes residential care, home care, personal assistants, day services, the provision of aids and adaptations and personal budgets.

Adult Social Care Outcomes Framework (ASCOF)

A tool that the Department of Health in England uses to measure how well your local care and support services are doing in helping local people achieve the outcomes that matter most to them. It should help councils improve the services they offer.

Advance decision

A decision you make about what medical treatment you would or would not want in the future, if you were unable to make decisions because of illness or because you lacked capacity to consent. Unlike an advance statement, it is legally binding in England and Wales. If you are thinking about making an advance decision, you should talk about this with your family and your GP.

Advance statement

A written document that lets people know what your wishes, feelings and preferences are about your future care and support, in case you become unable to tell them. (It may also be included in your **support plan**.) It can cover any aspect of your care, such as where you want to live and how you like to do things. You can write it yourself, with support from your family, friends, doctor and anyone else you wish. It isn't a legal document, but it may help you get the care and support you want. It is different to an 'advance decision' about medical treatment, which is a decision you can make now about whether you want a particular type of treatment in the future.

Adverse event

When something happens that isn't planned and causes harm, or puts people or organisations at risk of harm.

Advocacy

Help to enable you to get the care and support you need that is independent of your local council. An advocate can help you express your needs and wishes, and weigh up and take decisions about the options available to you. They can help you find services, make sure correct procedures are followed and challenge decisions made by councils or other organisations.

The advocate is there to represent your interests, which they can do by supporting you to speak, or by speaking on your behalf. They do not speak for the council or any other organisation. If you wish to speak up for yourself to make your needs and wishes heard, this is known as self-advocacy.

After-care

Support that is provided in your home, or in the community you live in, after you leave hospital. The term is used in relation to mental health to refer to specific support you may receive, free of charge, from a community psychiatric nurse, counselling, therapy, or support with employment, accommodation, family relationships, finances and other things.

Agency

An independent organisation that provides care and support services, such as care in your own home. It is not part of your local council. The council may arrange for care and support to be provided for you by a local agency, or you can arrange this yourself.

Aids and adaptations

Help to make things easier for you around the home. If you are struggling or disabled, you may need special equipment to enable you to live more comfortably and independently. You may also need changes to your home to make it easier and safer to get around. Aids and adaptations include things like grab rails, ramps, walk-in showers and stair-lifts.

Alert

When a concern is raised that a vulnerable adult may be a victim of abuse or neglect. This concern may be caused by what someone has said, or what has been seen. Anyone can raise an alert, and to do so you should contact the adults' services department of the local council. If you believe a crime has been committed, you should talk to the police about it.

Appointee service

A service that your council may offer to manage your money for you, if you are unable to do this yourself and have no family or friends who can help you. The council can receive benefit payments on your behalf, and arrange the payment of your living costs. You may have to pay the council a fee to provide this service.

Appropriate adult

Someone over the age of 18 who stays with you if you have a mental health problem or disability, or are perceived as 'vulnerable', and are held by the police for any reason. This person, who should not work for the police, is there to support you and help you understand what is happening.

Assessment

The process of working out what your needs are. A community care assessment looks at how you are managing everyday activities such as looking after yourself, household tasks and getting out and about. You are entitled to an assessment if you have social care needs, and your views are central to this process.

Assessment and treatment unit

An inpatient unit that someone with a learning disability or mental health problem may go into for a short period, while their needs are assessed and plans are made to meet these needs. It should not become a person's permanent home. There are various reasons why a person may go into an assessment and treatment unit, including their existing placement coming to an end or their behaviour becoming a challenge for the people who care for them. The unit may be run by the NHS or by the independent sector.

As part of the Transforming Care strategy, there is now a commitment to move away from using ATUs. If you are worried that someone you care about is at risk of being sent to an ATU, please contact the Learning Disability Helpline on 0808 808 1111.

Assets

Things you have that may be valuable in money terms (such as a house), or useful in other ways (such as particular skills, knowledge or relationships).

Assisted living

Housing for older or disabled people, usually privately owned, where you have your own apartment within a larger development, and support (such as help with meals or laundry) is provided to meet your own particular needs.

Assisted living technology (ALT)

Products that are designed to help you live independently in your own home.

Assistive and adaptive technology

Devices or equipment to help you do things if you have a disability. The term often refers to systems that help people communicate if they have problems with speaking.

Autistic spectrum disorder

A condition that someone is born with that affects their ability to communicate and interact with the world around them. It is also called autism, and covers a wide range of symptoms. It affects people in different ways, and some individuals need much more help and support than others.

Autonomy

Having control and choice over your life and the freedom to decide what happens to you. Even when you need a lot of care and support, you should still be able to make your own choices and should be treated with dignity.

B

Beacon service

A service that highlights how something can be done differently and better, and shares what it has learned with other organisations.

Behaviour disorders

Health conditions such as attention deficit disorder that may lead to challenging behaviour, as well as to social and emotional problems. People with behaviour disorders may be treated with medicine and/or given psychological support.

Behavioural intervention

A type of therapy that aims to help a person understand and change their behaviour, if it is causing problems for them.

Best interests

Other people should act in your 'best interests' if you are unable to make a particular decision for yourself (for example, about your health or your finances). The law does not define what 'best interests' might be, but gives a list of things that the people around you must consider when they are deciding what is best for you. These include your wishes, feelings and beliefs, the views of your close family and friends on what you would want, and all your personal circumstances.

Best practice

A way of doing something that has been shown to be the most effective way of doing it.

Block contract

An agreement between a commissioner (such as a council) and an organisation to provide a service to a number of people, for a fixed amount of time, for a fixed sum of money. The number of people who receive the service may not be fixed, and the exact type of care and support they receive may not be specified. This type of contract is not tailored to people's individual needs.

Broker (also known as a Care Navigator)

Someone whose job it is to provide you with advice and information about what services are available in your area, so that you can choose to purchase the care and support that best meets your needs. They can also help you think about different ways that you can get support, for example by making arrangements with friends and family. A broker can help you think about what you need, find services and work out the cost. Brokerage can be provided by local councils, voluntary organisations or private companies.

C

Capabilities

What you are able to do, what your strengths are, and what you might be able to do if you had support or assistance.

Capacity

The ability to make your own choices and decisions. In order to do this, you need to be able to understand and remember information, and communicate clearly - whether verbally or non-verbally - what you have decided. A person may lack capacity because of a mental health problem, dementia or learning disability.

Capacity to consent

'Consent' is when you give your permission to someone to do something to you or for you. 'Capacity' is your ability to understand what you are being asked to decide, to make a decision and to communicate that decision to people around you. Mental capacity can vary over time. If you have capacity to consent, then you understand what you are being asked to agree to, and you are able to let people know whether you agree. See also **informed consent**.

Care account

An account that will be set up by your council from April 2020 to keep track of the costs of meeting your care and support needs. This will be put in place regardless of whether the council is paying for your care and support, or whether you are paying for it yourself.

Care Act 2014

A law passed in England in 2014 that sets out what care and support you are entitled to and what local councils have to do. According to the law, councils have to consider your wellbeing, assess your needs and help you get independent financial advice on paying for care and support.

Care consortium

A group of individuals or organisations that work in partnership to meet a specific need – such as providing care services in a particular area – with each organisation providing the thing they specialise in.

Care funding calculator

A method that some councils use to work out how much a person's care and support will cost, based on how much assistance you need with daily living. You will be asked about everything that you might need help and support with, and the calculator then works out the cost of providing that help and support. This helps councils agree a price with care providers.

Care package

The range of services offered to you as an individual by your council, following an assessment of your needs. It may include day services, aids and adaptations for your home and personal care.

Care pathway

A plan for the care of someone who has a particular health condition and will move between services. It sets out in a single document what is expected to happen when, and who is responsible. It is based on evidence about what works best to treat and manage your particular condition.

Care plan

A written plan after you have had an assessment, setting out what your care and support needs are, how they will be met (including what you or anyone who cares for you will do) and what services you will receive. You should have the opportunity to be fully involved in the plan and to say what your own priorities are. If you are in a care home or attend a day service, the plan for your daily care may also be called a care plan.

Care Programme Approach (CPA)

An approach to care planning for people with serious mental health problems. It helps mental health services to assess your needs and work out how best to support you. You will have regular contact with a care coordinator, who may be a social worker, community psychiatric nurse or occupational therapist. The coordinator will work with you to write a 'care plan', based on your individual needs and circumstances.

Care Quality Commission (CQC)

An organisation set up by the Government to make sure that all hospitals, care homes, dentists, GPs and home care agencies in England provide care that is safe, caring, effective, responsive and well-led. If you are unhappy with the care or support you receive, you can contact CQC to let them know. Although CQC cannot investigate complaints about an individual person's treatment or care, it inspects services and will use any information it receives from you to help it decide what to look at during an inspection.

Care records

Information about you that is collected and kept by organisations that assess your needs and provide care and support services. Your records include basic personal details such as your name, address, date of birth, close relatives and carers, as well as information about your health and ability to carry out activities of daily living, and what has been agreed about your care and support. Your care records must be kept safely, and you should be asked if you are happy for them to be shared with people who are involved in your care. You have the right to see your own records and should receive a copy of all assessments and care plans.

Care worker

A person who is paid to support someone who is ill, struggling or disabled and could not manage without this help.

Carer

A person who provides unpaid support to a partner, family member, friend or neighbour who is ill, struggling or disabled and could not manage without this help.

This is distinct from a care worker, who is paid to support people.

Carer's assessment

If you are an unpaid carer for a family member or friend, you have the right to discuss with your local council what your own needs are, separate to the needs of the person you care for. You can discuss anything that you think would help you with your own health or with managing other aspects of your life. The council uses this information to decide what help it can offer you.

Case conference

A meeting that is usually held when you are believed to be at risk of harm or abuse.

The purpose is to discuss your situation and decide on a course of action to keep you safe. It will be attended by people who know you, such as your GP, community nurse or social worker. You (or your representative) should also be invited to the meeting.

Case management

A way of bringing together services to meet all your different needs if you have an ongoing health condition, and helping you stay independent. If you choose this option, a single, named case manager (sometimes known as a ‘key worker’) will take the lead in coordinating all the care and support provided by different agencies, offer **person-centred care** and enable you to remain in your own home and out of hospital as much as possible.

Centre for Independent Living (CIL)

A local organisation run by people with disabilities, that supports disabled people in their area to make choices about how and where they live their lives, with the assistance and support they need to live as independently as possible.

Challenging behaviour / behaviour that challenges

Behaviour that may cause harm to the person or to those around them, and may make it difficult for them to go out and about. It may include aggression, self-injury or disruptive or destructive behaviour. It is often caused by a person’s difficulty in communicating what they need - perhaps because of a learning disability, autism, dementia or a mental health problem. People whose behaviour is a threat to their own wellbeing or to others need the right support. They may be referred by their GP to a specialist behavioural team. The specialist team will work on understanding the causes of the behaviour and finding solutions. This is sometimes known as positive behaviour support.

Chargeable services

Services that your local council may expect you to pay towards, such as day care or home care. The law says that the amount the council charges must be reasonable, and councils have to follow guidance from the Government, to make sure that you are not charged more than you can afford to pay. There are some services that the council is not allowed to charge you for, and these are called non-chargeable services.

Child & Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS)

Specialist services provided by the NHS for children and young people up to the age of 18 who are having emotional or behavioural problems. A young person may be referred to their local CAMHS for depression, eating difficulties, anxiety, sleeping problems, violent and angry behaviour, and other things. They can be referred by a GP or other health professional, or by school staff or a social worker.

Child’s needs assessment

An assessment that the council should carry out before a young person turns 18, if it is likely that they will need care and support from adult community care services. You can ask for this even if a child has not previously been receiving any services. The assessment should include a predicted personal budget, so that young people and their families can plan for the future.

Citizens Advice (also known as CAB)

A charity that offers free, independent, confidential advice - in your local area, online or over the phone - for a range of problems. Advisers can help with things like money, benefits, housing or employment problems, and can help you find legal advice, if necessary.

Client contribution

The amount you may need to pay towards the cost of the social care services you receive. Whether you need to pay, and the amount you need to pay, depends on your local council's charging policy, although residential care charges are set nationally. Councils receive guidance from the Government on how much they can charge.

Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG)

A group of GP practices in a particular area that work together to plan and design health services in that area. Each CCG is given a budget from NHS England to spend on a wide range of services that include hospital care, rehabilitation and community-based. Your local CCG should work with the council and local community groups to ensure that the needs of local people are being met.

Clinical governance

A way for health care organisations to continuously improve the quality and safety of care they provide, and to explain how they are doing this.

Close care scheme

A housing development for older people next to a care home that will provide you with personal care if you need it. This type of scheme may be a good choice for a couple who have different care needs, or a person with a worsening health condition.

Co-design

When you are involved in designing and planning services, based on your experiences and ideas. You may be invited to work with professionals to design how a new service could work, or to share your experiences in order to help a service improve

Co-funding

When you and your council both contribute to the cost of the care and support you receive. This may cover things like home care, day services or assistive technology.

Cognitive behavioural therapy

A type of therapy that can help you manage your problems by changing the way you think and act. It is often used to treat anxiety and depression and can help you think about how your thoughts, beliefs and attitudes may be affecting your feelings and behaviour. You may see a therapist face-to-face or take a therapy course online.

Collaboration

When individuals or organisations work together to achieve a shared goal.

Commissioner

A person or organisation that plans the services that are needed by the people who live in the area the organisation covers, and ensures that services are available.

Sometimes the commissioner will pay for services, but not always. Your local council is the commissioner for adult social care. NHS care is commissioned separately by local clinical commissioning groups. In many areas health and social care commissioners work together to make sure that the right services are in place for the local population.

Communication passport

A tool for passing on essential information about someone with communication difficulties, to help people who work with them understand who they are, what they need and how they communicate. The person's own views are recorded and information is presented in a way that is very clear and easy to read. It is a particularly important tool when people move to a new environment or when new staff or volunteers become involved with their care and support.

Community learning disability team (CLDT)

A team made up of a number of different professionals, including therapists, nurses, psychologists and others. This team provides health advice and support to adults with a learning disability, their families and others who are involved in their care and support. Local teams support people with learning disabilities to live full and healthy lives within their communities.

Community Mental Health Team (CMHT)

A team of professionals who can support you in the community, rather than in hospital, if you have a complex or serious mental health problem. The team may include psychiatrists, psychologists, nurses, social workers and occupational therapists. Their role is to organise and coordinate your treatment and care.

Complaint

When you express that you are unhappy with some aspect of a service that has been provided or with how someone has acted towards you.

Confidentiality

Keeping information about someone safe and private, and not sharing it without the person's knowledge and agreement. Any information you provide about yourself should be protected carefully, and should only be shared with people or organisations who genuinely need to know it. Your personal details should not be discussed without your agreement.

Consent

When you give your permission to someone to do something to you or for you.

Consultation

An invitation to express your views and opinions about a particular service or proposed change, before any final decisions are taken. Your local council, NHS and organisations that provide services may consult you before making a change that will affect you. You may be able to give your views in writing or in discussion at a meeting.

Continuing healthcare / CHC

Ongoing care outside hospital for someone who is ill or disabled, arranged and funded by the NHS. This type of care can be provided anywhere, and can include the full cost of a place in a nursing home. It is provided when your need for day to day support is primarily due to your need for health care, rather than social care. The Government has issued guidance to the NHS on how people should be assessed for continuing health care, and who is entitled to receive it.

Court of Protection

An English court that makes decisions about the property, finances, health and welfare of people who lack mental capacity to make decisions for themselves. The court can appoint a 'deputy' to make ongoing decisions on behalf of someone who lacks capacity. It is also able to grant power of attorney.

Cross-border placement

When your local council finds a place for you in a care home in another council area.

This may be because you have requested it, in order to be nearer your family or friends, or because there is no suitable place available in a care home in your home area. You should be involved in any decision to move to a new area, and it cannot happen without your agreement. If you move, your council should let the other council know that you are there, and they should agree which council is responsible for your care.

D

Day services

Opportunities to do things during the day, while living in your own home. These may include social activities, education, or the opportunity to learn new skills. What your local council offers will vary, depending on what you need and what is available in your area. You may have to pay something towards the cost.

Decommissioning

Removing or replacing a service. In the case of a local service that provides care or support, the council as **commissioner** may stop using it or paying for it. This may mean the service will close.

Deferred payments

If you need residential care, the council will assess what you need and whether you can afford to pay for a care home. You may only be able to pay care home fees if you sell your house. If this is the case, the council may help pay the fees while you wait for your house to be sold. You would still have to pay as much as you can during this time, based on your income or available capital. Once the house is sold, you would then have to repay the council. In certain circumstances councils will have to offer this scheme to people. Broadly this is when someone has limited savings other than the value of their property.

Deprivation of assets

When you deliberately reduce the amount of savings or property you have, in order to qualify for help from your council with paying for care costs or for various benefits. Your council may judge that you have deliberately reduced your assets if it believes that you knew you would probably need care and support.

Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DOLS)

Legal protection for people in hospitals or care homes who are unable to make decisions about their own care and support, property or finances. People with mental health conditions, including dementia, may not be allowed to make decisions for themselves, if this is deemed to be in their best interests. The safeguards exist to make sure that people do not lose the right to make their own decisions for the wrong reasons.

Developmental disability

A type of disability that affects the development of a person's brain, causing them difficulties throughout their life with things like speaking, moving, learning and living independently.

Direct payments

Money that is paid to you (or someone acting on your behalf) on a regular basis by your local council so you can arrange your own support, instead of receiving social care services arranged by the council. Direct payments are available to people who have been assessed as being eligible for council-funded social care. They are not yet available for residential care. This is one type of **personal budget**.

Disability-related expenses (DRE)

Money that you have to spend on things because of your disability, that you would not have to spend otherwise. This may be for things like extra laundry, high heating bills or special clothes. The law says that your council should look at these expenses when it does a financial assessment, to work out how much you can reasonably afford to pay for chargeable services.

Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG)

A grant you might be able to get from your local council in order to make changes to your home because you have a disability. Changes include things like widening doors, adding ramps or installing a downstairs bathroom. If the person with a disability is an adult, your household income and savings will be looked at, and you may need to pay towards the cost of the work. If the person is under 18, the family can get a grant without the parents' income being taken into account. If you want to apply for a DFG, you should contact your local council. This applies to England, Wales and Northern Ireland, but not Scotland.

Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS)

A government organisation that checks people's criminal records, in order to prevent unsuitable people from working with children or adults who may be at risk of harm or abuse.

Discrimination

Treating a person, or a group of people, differently to other people because of their sex, age, race or other things. It usually means treating the person unfairly and not offering them the same opportunities as other people.

Dual diagnosis

A combination of severe illness and problematic drug or alcohol use. These two things are closely linked for many people. People with a dual diagnosis often have serious physical, social and psychological problems.

Duties

In relation to a public organisation such as your local council, duties are things that the law tells the organisation it must do. (Services that the council has a duty to arrange or provide are known as 'mandatory' services.) With regard to care and support, your council has a duty to assess your needs, arrange care and support if you are entitled to it, and provide you with information about what care and support is available.

Duty of candour

When something goes wrong with the health or social care that is provided to you, the organisation that provides the care has a legal duty to be open with you, to explain what has happened and to apologise to you.

E

Early intervention

Action that is taken at an early stage to prevent problems worsening at a later stage.

It may apply to children and young people, or to help that is offered to older people or people with disabilities to enable them to stay well and remain independent. See also **preventive services**.

Education, Health & Care (EHC) plan

A legal document for a child or young person up to the age of 25 if they have a disability or special educational needs (SEN). It describes the child or young person's particular educational, health and social needs, and sets out the support and extra help they should have to meet those needs, and how this will support them to achieve what they want in their life. EHC plans replaced SEN statements on 1 September 2014. Children who currently have a SEN statement are being gradually transferred to a EHC plan. EHC plans are developed by the child or young person's local council, which is responsible for carrying out an education, health and care needs assessment and deciding whether a EHC plan is needed.

Eligibility

When your needs fit the criteria that allow you to receive a service.

Eligible care and support needs

The needs you have for care and support that your council is required by law to meet.

Under the Care Act 2014, councils no longer decide for themselves what type of needs they will meet, and now have to follow the new national minimum eligibility threshold. You are likely to have 'eligible needs' if you need a lot of help to do things like washing yourself, getting dressed, getting in and out of bed, and keeping your home safe.

Enablement

A way of helping you to become more independent by gaining the ability to move around and do everyday tasks for yourself. You may be offered an enablement service if you have lost some daily living skills because of poor health, disability or a hospital stay. It usually lasts for around six weeks, takes place in your own home, and you won't have to pay.

Equality

When every individual person has an equal opportunity to make the most of their life and is treated fairly, regardless of their race, gender, disability, belief, sexual orientation or age.

Extra-care housing

Similar to sheltered housing, but with additional care and support available for people with illnesses or disabilities who wish to have a home of their own. Extra-care housing may be an option if living alone at home is difficult, but you do not wish to opt for **residential care**. It allows you to have your own home, either rented or bought, with personal care and domestic help readily available.

F

Fairer charging

Guidance to councils from the Government on how much they should charge you for things like home care and day services (but not a care home). You should not be charged more than is 'reasonable' for you to pay, or more than it costs to provide the service.

Family group conference

When family members are invited to get together to make a plan to support and protect a child or adult who is at risk of abuse or neglect. Families can choose whether or not they wish to take part in this process, and are helped by an independent person. The aim is to make it possible for families to problem-solve, and to avoid blaming anyone.

Financial assessment

A discussion that your council may have with you to work out how much you can afford to pay towards the care and support you need. It involves looking at your income, savings and individual circumstances. This will take place after an assessment of your care and support needs.

First contact

The first time you get in touch with the care system through your local council and begin the process of assessment.

Fluctuating needs

Care and support needs that change over time, or that vary from day to day. The Care Act 2014 says that councils should ask, as part of your assessment, how your needs vary, and should look at you over a long enough period of time to get a complete picture of your needs. If you have fluctuating needs, your care plan or support plan should say what you want to happen if you have a sudden change or an emergency.

Gateway worker

A mental health worker such as a nurse, social worker, occupational therapist or psychologist, who can help you with problems such as mild depression, anxiety or stress. Gateway workers work closely with GPs and can give you information and advice about support services in your area that may be helpful for you. You may see a gateway worker at your GP surgery or in your own home.

H

Holistic care

Care and support that treats you as a whole person and considers all your needs at the same time - physical, psychological, social and spiritual.

I

Impairment

A physical or mental problem, caused by an injury, illness or condition you were born with.

Improving Access to Psychological Therapies (IAPT)

A programme to help people with mental health problems such as depression or anxiety get a limited number of sessions of ‘talking therapies’ through the NHS. You can refer yourself to this programme online, or a professional can refer you.

Inclusion

Meeting the needs of everyone in a community by taking action to create an environment where everyone feels comfortable, respected and able to achieve their potential. It means treating people as equals and removing barriers that may stop them participating in an event or activity.

Independent living

The right to choose the way you live your life. It does not necessarily mean living by yourself or doing everything for yourself. It means the right to receive the assistance and support you need so you can participate in your community and live the life you want.

Independent Mental Capacity Advocate (IMCA)

An independent person who is knowledgeable about the Mental Capacity Act and people’s rights. An IMCA represents someone who does not have capacity to consent to specific decisions, such as whether they should move to a new home or agree to medical treatment. The law says that people over the age of 16 have the right to receive support from an IMCA, if they lack capacity and have no-one else to support or represent them.

Independent Mental Health Advocacy (IMHA)

A service that should be offered to you if you are being treated in hospital or somewhere else under the Mental Health Act. Independent Mental Health Advocates are there to help you understand your legal rights, and to help make your views heard. This is not the same as Independent Mental Capacity Advocacy (IMCA), which is for people who are unable to make certain decisions and have no one to support or represent them. But there may be times when someone needs both an IMHA and an IMCA.

Independent supporter

A trained person who provides advice and support, independent of the local council, to parents whose child is being assessed for an Education, Health and Care plan.

Independent supporters often work for a charity. They can explain the process, help you to work out how the Local Offer can help, and ensure you have all the information you need.

Indicative personal budget

An approximate guide to how much money you may receive in your *personal budget* to help meet your care and support needs. It is estimated by the council using the Resource Allocation System, following their assessment of your needs and your finances. It is not an exact figure: the final amount is agreed later, based on the actual cost of the support you need, as set out in your support plan.

Informed consent

When you have received the right information to enable you to decide whether to allow someone to do something to you or for you. You should only give consent if you understand what you are being asked to agree to, what the benefits and risks might be, and what the alternatives are if you do not agree. See also capacity to consent.

Inter-agency

Where more than one organisation is working together on something.

Intervention

Action of some kind where someone gets involved to improve a situation or prevent it getting worse.

J

Joint assessment

There are two possible meanings to the term 'joint assessment': having the needs of the person who cares for you assessed at the same time as your own needs, or having an **assessment** carried out by more than one type of care professional at the same time.

Joint commissioning

When two or more organisations in a local area - usually the NHS and local council - work together to plan services to meet the needs of people who live in the area. Together the commissioners plan what kind of services should be available, who should provide them and how they should be paid for.

Joint strategic needs assessment

The process of identifying the future health, care and wellbeing needs of the population in a particular area, and planning services to help meet those needs. This process is led by your council, working with the NHS and private and voluntary organisations in your area.

K

Key worker

A person who acts as a single point of contact for you, helps coordinate your care and can give you information and advice.

L

Learning disability

A term that is used to describe a brain impairment that may make it difficult for someone to communicate, to understand new or complex information, or to learn new skills. The person may need help to manage everyday tasks or live independently. Learning disability starts in childhood and has a lasting effect on a person's development. It can affect people mildly or severely.

Local area coordination

An approach that is being used by some councils to help people live better, less isolated lives in their home area. Local area coordinators help people make the most of what is available locally, and make sure that communities are supportive and welcoming to older people and people with disabilities, mental health problems or other needs.

Local offer

This relates to services for children and young people up to the age of 25 who have special educational needs or a disability. All councils are required to publish a local offer that sets out in a single place what services are available in their area, so that parents and carers can see what exists and how to access it.

Looked-after child

A child who is in the care of the local council rather than their parents, either because the child is at risk of harm or because the parents are struggling and have asked the council to be involved. Looked-after children may live away from their parents or family in foster care or in a children's home, or they may remain in their own home supervised by a social worker. The council takes on the responsibilities of a parent.

M

Means-tested contribution

If the council assesses your needs and finds you are entitled to care and support, it will then carry out a financial assessment. This is to work out how much you can afford to pay for the services you receive. The amount you pay is your means-tested contribution, based on how much money you have.

Mediation

A way of solving disputes or disagreements without going to court. It involves meeting with the person you have a disagreement with, alongside a mediator who is a trained, independent person. The aim is to find something you can agree on. Mediation can take place between family members, or between an individual or family and a care professional.

Mental Capacity Act

A law that is designed to protect people who are unable to make decisions about their own care and support, property or finances, because of a mental health condition, learning disability, brain injury or illness. 'Mental capacity' is the ability to make decisions for yourself. The law says that people may lose the right to make decisions if this is in their best interests. Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards are included in the law, to make sure that people are treated fairly.

Minimum income guarantee

A way of keeping some of your income when you have to pay for all or some of the care you receive in your own home. When the council carries out a financial assessment, it must make sure that your care costs do not cause your income to fall below a certain level. There is a different arrangement if you live in a care home, where you will have a personal expenses allowance.

Multidisciplinary team

A team of different professionals (such as doctors, nurses, therapists, psychologists, social workers, and others) working together to provide care and support that meets your needs. The team brings together many different types of knowledge, skills and expertise, and should look at you as a whole person.

N

National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE)

An organisation that provides advice and guidance to improve health and social care services in England and Wales. It looks at all the evidence on what works and what doesn't and how much it costs, and advises on what treatment and care should be offered to people. It doesn't have the power to insist that its guidance is followed in local areas.

National minimum eligibility threshold

The level at which your needs reach the point that your council, by law, has to meet them. From April 2015, every council in England will have to offer care and support services to adults who have a lot of care needs. This replaces the previous situation, where each council made its own decision about what level of need it would meet.

Nearest relative

A term that is used in the Mental Health Act 1983 to refer to a single member of your family who is given certain rights and responsibilities if you are kept in hospital (also known as being ‘sectioned’). It is not the same as ‘next of kin’ and may not necessarily be the person you have given power of attorney to (if this is relevant to you). The law decides who your nearest relative is, and although you cannot choose who this is, it can sometimes be changed.

Needs assessment

The process of considering whether you need help or support because of your age, disability or illness. Anyone who appears to have a need for care or support - regardless of how severe those needs are or how much money they have - is entitled to a needs **assessment**, which can be arranged by contacting the adult social services department at your local council and requesting it.

NICE guidelines

Recommendations on health and care produced by an organisation called NICE, based on the best evidence about what works and what is best value for money. The guidelines set out the care and services that are suitable for most people with a specific condition or type of need. They are put together by professional experts and people who use health and care services and are based on evidence from research. They apply to England only.

Non-chargeable services

Care and support services you receive in your home or in your community that the local council does not charge you for. The law prevents councils from charging for certain things, including assessments and advice about services. On other things (including day care, home care, domestic help and equipment and adaptations), each council makes its own decisions about which services it will charge for and how much the charge will be.

Notifiable incident

Any unexpected event that causes any sort of harm to a person while they are receiving treatment or care. If this happens, the law says that care providers have to tell the person (or someone acting on their behalf) what has happened, apologise for it, explain what the effects might be, and offer to help fix the situation.

O

Ombudsman

Someone appointed by the Government or Parliament to investigate your complaints about an organisation or service. In England, if you have made a complaint about the NHS that you think has not been fully dealt with or you are unhappy with the response, you can ask the Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman to look at your complaint. If you have made a complaint to a council, you can contact the Local Government Ombudsman if you haven't had a response within a reasonable time or if you are unhappy with the result.

Ordinary residence

The place where you live, or main home, which determines which council will assess your needs and potentially fund any care and support you need. If you have more than one home, councils follow guidance from the Government to help them decide which one is your main home, and which council should fund your care.

Out of area placement

If you need residential care and your council is arranging this, you may be offered a place outside your home area. This may be because there is nowhere suitable for you to move into in your home area, or because you want to move to a different area. Your home council remains responsible for checking that the care you are receiving is right for you and continues to meet your needs.

Outcomes

In social care, an 'outcome' refers to an aim or objective you would like to achieve or need to happen - for example, continuing to live in your own home, or being able to go out and about. You should be able to say which outcomes are the most important to you, and receive support to achieve them.

P

Panel

A group of people with different backgrounds and areas of expertise who jointly make decisions - or agree decisions made by others - about services and funding.

Participation

Taking part in decisions about things that affect you and other people. This may be about your own day-to-day life, such as what to eat or how to spend your time, or about how a service or organisation is run. It is more than consultation: you should not just be asked your view, but should be able to have an influence over the final decision.

Personal assistant

Someone you choose and employ to provide the support you need, in the way that suits you best. This may include cooking, cleaning, help with personal care such as washing and dressing, and other things such as getting out and about in your community. Your personal assistant can be paid through **direct payments** or a **personal budget**.

Personal budget

Money that is allocated to you by your local council to pay for care or support to meet your assessed needs. The money comes solely from adult social care. You can take your personal budget as a **direct payment**, or choose to leave the council to arrange services (sometimes known as a **managed budget**) - or a combination of the two.

An alternative is an **individual service fund**, which is a personal budget that a care provider manages on your behalf. A **personal health budget** may also be available: it is a plan for your health care that you develop and control, knowing how much NHS money is available.

Personal expenses allowance

The amount of money you are allowed to keep for your own personal needs if you move into a care home and paying for care takes up all of your income or savings. The allowance is currently £27.75 per week (in January 2015).

Power of attorney

A legal decision you make to allow a specific person to act on your behalf, or to make decisions on your behalf, if you are unable to do so. There are two types. Ordinary power of attorney is where you give someone the power to handle your financial affairs for you, but you continue to make decisions about your money. This depends on you continuing to have mental capacity to make these decisions. Lasting power of attorney is where you allow someone to make decisions on your behalf about your property and finances or health and welfare, if the time comes when you are unable to make these decisions for yourself.

Primary health need

When your need for ongoing, long-term care is mainly because of your health (due to a disability, accident or illness), and the care you need is provided by health professionals, or by care staff trained by qualified health professionals.

Proportionate assessment

A way of assessing your needs that tries to find out as simply as possible what your needs are and avoids asking for unnecessary amounts of information.

Protected characteristics

A list of factors that people are not allowed to use as a reason to treat you differently to anyone else. These factors are set out in the Equality Act 2010 and include things like age, disability, marital status, gender, race, religion and sexual orientation.

Q

Quality of life

Your satisfaction with your life in terms of wellbeing and happiness. The way you define your own quality of life will depend on the things that matter most to you as an individual and make your life enjoyable and meaningful. The care and support you receive should make a positive difference to your quality of life.

R

Reasonable adjustments

Changes that public services, buildings and employers have to make to make it possible for people with disabilities to use a service or do a job. These changes include things like adjusting your working hours or providing you with a special piece of equipment to do the job. It is against the law to discriminate against you because you have a disability.

Referral

A request for an assessment of a person's needs, or for support from a social care organisation. A referral to adult social care may be made by your GP, another health professional or anyone else who supports you. You can also refer yourself, or a member of your family, by contacting the adult social care department at your local council.

Resource Allocation System

The system some councils use to decide how much money people get for their support. There are clear rules, so everyone can see that money is given out fairly. Once your needs have been assessed, you will be allocated an indicative budget - so that you know how much money you have to spend on care and support. The purpose of an indicative budget is to help you plan the care and support that will help you meet your assessed needs - it might not be the final amount that you get, as you may find that it is not enough (or is more than enough) to meet those needs.

Respite care

A service giving carers a break, by providing short-term care for the person with care needs in their own home or in a residential setting. It can mean a few hours during the day or evening, 'night sitting', or a longer-term break. It can also benefit the person with care needs by giving them the chance to try new activities and meet new people.

Review

When the people in your life look at whether the services you are receiving are meeting your needs **and helping you achieve your chosen outcomes.**

S

Safeguarding

The process of ensuring that adults at risk are not being abused, neglected or exploited, and ensuring that people who are deemed ‘unsuitable’ do not work with them. If you believe that you or someone you know is being abused, you should let the adult social care department at your local council know. They should carry out an investigation and put a protection plan in place if abuse is happening. Councils have a duty to work with other organisations to protect adults from abuse and neglect. They do this through local safeguarding boards.

Safeguarding Adults Board (SAB)

A formal group set up by your council to prevent abuse or neglect of adults in your area who have care and support needs, and to make sure that action is taken if abuse occurs. Every area has to have a SAB, which is made up of different professionals from the council, NHS and police, working together and sharing information. SABs also include representatives from groups that work with older people and people with disabilities.

Safeguarding Adults Review (SAR)

A review that is carried out by a local Safeguarding Adults Board (SAB) when a vulnerable adult has died or been harmed, and someone knows or suspects that they have been abused or neglected in some way. The purpose is to find out what happened, what should have been done differently, and what lessons can be learned for the future, rather than to blame anyone specifically.

Self-assessment

A form or questionnaire that you complete yourself, either on paper or online, explaining your circumstances and why you need support. A social care worker or advocate can help you do this. If your council asks you to complete a self-assessment form, it will use this information to decide if you are eligible for social care services or if you need a full **assessment** by a social worker.

Shared Lives

A type of care for people who are unable to live independently or may not wish to live alone, and an alternative to supported living, home care or residential care. Shared Lives carers offer care and support in their own home to older people, people with mental health problems, or people with physical or learning disabilities. This may take the form of regular visits, or the individual who needs care and support may live with a Shared Lives carer on a permanent basis. Shared Lives schemes are usually managed by local councils or voluntary organisations, and overseen by the Care Quality Commission.

Short breaks

When a person with care and support needs spends regular short periods of time away from their main carer, in order to give the carer a break and to give the person with needs a chance to do something different. These breaks may take place in the person's own home, in the home of an approved carer or in a place such as a hospice. Councils in England are required to provide short breaks services for children and young people with disabilities.

Single assessment process

An attempt to coordinate assessment and care planning across the NHS and councils, so that procedures aren't repeated and information is shared appropriately. It was introduced because people sometimes have a wide range of needs and can end up being assessed more often than necessary, and information can end up getting lost. The single assessment process is widely used for older people, and increasingly for other adults with care needs.

Social care

Any help that you need, such as personal care or practical assistance, to live your life as comfortably and independently as possible, because of age, illness or disability.

Statutory guidance

Information from the Government explaining how specific laws such as the Care Act 2014 should be put into practice and what they mean for people.

Support plan

A plan you develop that says how you will spend your personal budget to get the life you want. You need to map out your week, define the outcomes you hope to achieve, and show how the money will be used to make these happen. Your local council must agree the plan before it makes money available to you.

Supported living

An alternative to residential care or living with family that enables adults with disabilities to live in their own home, with the help they need to be independent. It allows people to choose where they want to live, who they want to live with, how they want to be supported, and what happens in their home.

T

Transfer of care

When you move from one place of care to another, such as from hospital to your home, **supported housing** or **residential care**. Your transfer should be properly planned and coordinated, and health and social care services should work together. Transfers of care may be delayed for various reasons. For example, you may be ready to leave hospital but end up staying there longer than you need to, while you wait for community care services or a place in a care home to be available.

Transition

The process by which young people with health or social care needs move from children's services to adult services. It should be carefully planned, so that there are no gaps in the care young people receive. Young people and their families should be fully involved in the planning process.

V

Vulnerable adult

An adult who may need care and support because of their age, disability or illness, and may be unable to protect themselves from harm, neglect or abuse.

W

Welfare

This may refer to the health, happiness and safety of a person or group of people. It may also refer to financial support that the government provides to people who need it.

Wellbeing

Being in a position where you have good physical and mental health, control over your day-to-day life, good relationships, enough money, and the opportunity to take part in the activities that interest you.

Wellbeing team

A team in your local council area that provides information and advice on ways to improve your physical, mental and emotional health and wellbeing.

Y

Young carer

A young person aged 18 or under who looks after, or helps look after, a family member or friend who has an illness, disability or drug or alcohol problem. They may be responsible for cooking, cleaning, shopping, personal care or emotional support.

We hope that you have found this factsheet useful. Whilst you are here, we have a small favour to ask. More people are using our service than ever before. We can't keep up with demand. We don't want to turn people away, and we want to keep on developing more information resources like this factsheet, but we don't have enough money to expand. So you can see why we need to ask for your help. We know that our information and advice can make a real difference to the quality of life of the people we support. If people using our service could help to support us, our future would be much more secure.

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