

ADOPTING A FAMILY APPROACH

Short Guide Series

Adult Care and Support Needs

What are care and support needs?

Care and support is the mixture of practical, financial and emotional support for adults who need extra help to manage their lives and be independent. This includes older people, people with a disability or long-term illness, people with mental health problems, and carers. Care and support comprises the assessment of people's needs, provision of services and the allocation of funds to enable a person to purchase their own care and support. It could include residence in a care home, home care, personal assistants, day services, or the provision of aids and adaptations.

The Care Act 2014 sets out the eligibility criteria which define whether an adult has care and support needs. If they do, then these needs must be met, fully or in part, by the local authority. The national eligibility criteria sets a minimum threshold for adult care and support and carer support - all local authorities must, at a minimum, meet needs at this level.

The threshold is based on identifying how an individual's needs affect their ability to achieve relevant desired outcomes, and whether, as a consequence, this has a significant impact on their wellbeing.

The overall aim of adult care and support is to help people meet their needs to achieve the outcomes that matter to them in their lives and which, in turn, promote their wellbeing.

Eligibility outcomes for adults with care and support needs

When determining eligibility, local authorities must consider the following three conditions:

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The 'listed outcomes' are as follows:

- Managing and maintaining nutrition.
- Maintaining personal hygiene.
- Managing toilet needs.
- Being appropriately clothed.
- Being able to make use of the adults home safely.
- Maintaining a habitable home environment.
- Developing and maintaining family or other personal relationships.
- Accessing and engaging in work, training, education or volunteering.
- Making use of necessary facilities or services in the local community, including public transport, and recreational facilities or services.
- Carrying out any caring responsibilities the adult has for a child.

There is no hierarchy to the eligibility outcomes – all are equally important.

How does the Care Act help prevent people developing care and support needs?

The Care Act helps to improve people's independence and wellbeing. It makes clear that local authorities must provide or arrange services that help prevent people developing needs for care and support or delay people deteriorating such that they would need ongoing care and support.

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Local authorities have to consider various factors:

- What services, facilities and resources are already available in the area (for example local voluntary and community groups), and how these might help local people.
- Identifying people in the local area who might have care and support needs that are not being met.
- Identifying carers in the area who might have support needs that are not being met.

In taking on this role, local authorities need to work with their communities and provide, or arrange, services that help to keep people well and independent. This should include identifying the local support and resources already available and helping people to access them.

Local authorities should also provide or arrange a range of services which are aimed at reducing needs and helping people regain skills, for instance after a spell in hospital. They should work with other partners, like the NHS, to think about what types of service local people may need now and in the future.

Support needs of carers

Carers may also have support needs. Recognising a carer's needs can be difficult, as sometimes people do not consider themselves as 'carers', but just someone looking after a loved one. Carers can neglect their own needs, or neglect the needs of the person they are caring for, by not seeking support until things reach a crisis point. This was especially evident during the coronavirus pandemic highlighting the importance of recognising at an early stage when family and unpaid carers need support.

Further Information

[Care Act 2014](#) - Original and latest online versions of the Care Act legislation, which sets out the duties of local authorities when assessing people's care and support needs.

[The Care and Support \(Eligibility Criteria\) Regulations 2014](#) - Outlines the needs which meet the eligibility criteria for 1. adults who need care and support and 2. carers.

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[Determination of eligibility under the Care Act 2014](#) – Resource from the Social Care Institute for Excellence to support practitioners on the assessment and determination of eligibility under the Care Act. It also provides practical guidance over what to do when applying the letter and spirit of this law.

[Skills for Care](#) - Skills for Care is the strategic workforce development and planning body for adult social care in England. They work with employers, government and partners to ensure social care has the right people, skills and support required to deliver the highest quality care and support.

Also see the Adopting a Family Approach [Short Guide Series](#) on Accessing the Support Needs of Carers and Carers and Safeguarding.