



Social care services

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Introduction

Social care support describes the help provided to people in their own home or in a care home.

It may include home helps, meals-on-wheels or personal care – help with getting up, washing, dressing, feeding or going to the toilet.

The information in this resource relates to adults in England.

For other nations, please visit:

- Wales - www.gov.wales/social-care
- Scotland - www.gov.scot/policies/social-care/social-care-support
- Northern Ireland - www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/arranging-health-and-social-care

If you can afford to pay for some support at home you could consider employing a personal assistant (PA), carer or cleaner, even if this is just for a few hours a week.

You could explore whether you are eligible for any welfare benefits such as Personal Independence Payment (PIP) to help towards the cost of this.

If you cannot afford care privately, the main way to access support is to go through your local council.

You can contact your local council and ask for a care needs assessment.

Trying to get social care from your local council can be challenging, and how you present your needs so that your needs are fully understood, can influence how quickly they respond.

Please be aware that not everyone who asks for support will be [eligible](#).

Contacting social care services

When you initially contact them, make sure to explicitly state: "I am asking for an assessment of my care needs."

At each stage, be realistic about the worst-case scenario that might arise if your needs are not met.

The Care Act 2014 lays out the following definition of an adult with care and support needs in England.

- Your needs arise from a physical or mental impairment or illness and
- Your needs prevent you from achieving two or more of the below outcomes
- And this has a significant impact on your wellbeing.

Outcomes:

- managing and maintaining nutrition
- maintaining personal hygiene
- managing toilet needs
- being appropriately clothed (including being able to get dressed)
- being able to make use of your 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 facilities or services in the local community including public transport, and recreational facilities or services
- carrying out any caring responsibilities you have for a child.

You could use these criteria to explain to the local authority why you need support. If you the local authority tells you they cannot help you even though you feel you meet these criteria, it may be helpful to ask them to explain why they feel you don't meet the criteria laid out in the care act. You could also ask to speak to their manager, or submit a complaint to the council.

If you live in one of the other devolved nations, it may be helpful to look up the criteria for support in your nation, and use these criteria to structure your request for support.

Our This is ME resource may also help you think about and explain how ME affects your health and what kind of support you need.

It should be filled out by the person who has ME or the person that knows them best.

You can then share the resource with carers, social workers and anyone else who you want to communicate your needs to.

[NHS Online](#) offers useful step-by-step information about applying and preparing for a care needs assessment (as well as many other aspects of social care).

Personal budgets

For those assessed as eligible, your local authority will decide your [personal budget](#), i.e. how much should be spent on your care.

Either that could come to you directly via direct payments (someone else can manage your direct payments for you) OR your local authority can hold the budget for you and use it to employ agencies to deliver your care.

A personal budget or direct payment will be created after an assessment by social services.

If the council decides that you need any kind of support, you will receive a personal budget and can choose a direct payment instead of letting them arrange services for you.

If you aren't able to, or don't want to, manage your own finances, it's possible for another person to manage the direct payments on your behalf.

Social care services can also be purchased directly by a person with ME or their carer/family support, at their own expense.

Your local council may keep a directory of service providers, including "care brokers" to help you to assess your needs and decide on the services you require.

Carers UK has [more information](#) on this.



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