

Care and Support: Needs and Eligibility FAQs

What is a needs assessment?

A needs assessment is a discussion between you (or the person you look after if you are a carer) and a trained person either from the council or another organisation that the council works with, where you will talk about the care and support needs you have and the goals you want to achieve. We will use the assessment to identify your care and support needs, and to discuss how these could be met. This might mean that the council will give you help or put you in touch with other organisations, such as local charities, that you can talk to.

Who should have a needs assessment?

If you think you have any care and support needs, you can contact the council to ask for an assessment. If you are a carer and you need some support, get in touch with the council covering the area where the person you care for lives. The council will be able to give you information and advice about how the assessment will work.

What will be considered during the needs assessment?

The needs assessment will consider what care and support needs you have and how these affect your wellbeing. This will include identifying any physical needs, such as whether you need help to wash or dress, get in and out of bed or keep your home safe to live in. The assessment will also look at your mental and emotional needs and ask what is important to you in how you live your life, such as being able to carry on working or volunteering, or being able to meet your friends.

Everyone's needs and the ways they affect people's wellbeing are different. Identifying your needs and the things you want to achieve will help us to decide if we can help. Depending on what needs you have, we may give you information and advice about other kinds of support available locally that can help you, such as charities or community groups.

Is a needs assessment the same as a carer's assessment?

A 'needs assessment' is an assessment of an adult who may need care and support. A 'carer's assessment' is for someone who gives care and support to an adult family member or friend. Caring can include lots of different things, like helping with their washing, dressing or eating, taking them to regular appointments or keeping them company when they feel lonely or anxious.

Find out more about a carer's assessment in our Support for Carers FAQs document.

Can I get someone to help me with my assessment?

The assessment is about you and we will make sure that you are able to be involved. If you wish, then your carer, a friend or family member can help and represent you. If you don't

have a carer, family member or friend who you can ask, and you have a lot of difficulty doing the assessment yourself, the council will find an independent advocate to help you.

Will I need to be re-assessed?

If you are already receiving care and support from us, you do not need to ask for a reassessment. We will contact you if there are any changes that affect you. If your needs have changed recently and you feel like you need more care and support, you can ask for a new assessment.

Who will do the assessment?

Lots of different people can carry out assessments - as long as they have the right training. The person doing your assessment could be a social worker or care manager, or it could be someone else. We will make sure that whoever carries out your assessment has the right training. You could also be offered a supported self-assessment. This means you do your assessment yourself with help from the council.

Will the council look into my finances?

A needs assessment won't ask about your finances. But if you are eligible for care and support from the council, you may have to pay something towards the cost. To find out how much you might need to pay, we may ask you to do a financial means test and you would then need to disclose details about your savings, assets and income.

How will I know if I have eligible needs?

For the first time, there will be a national level of care and support needs that all councils will consider when we assess what help we can give you.

The council will assess your care and support needs with you, and decide if they are at the level where you need help from us. Your needs could be eligible if you are not able to do a combination of certain things that seriously effects your wellbeing. These may include washing yourself, getting dressed, getting in and out of bed or keeping your home safe for you to live in.

After the assessment we will write to you about our decision and give you reasons to explain what we have decided.

If you have eligible needs, we will contact you to discuss what help might be available. This will be based on the information you gave us during your assessment. As far as possible the council will agree your care and support plan with you.

If you do not have needs that are eligible, we will give you information and advice about what care and support is available to help you locally. This could be help from local charities or voluntary organisations for example.

What happens if my needs are not eligible for care and support from the council?

Everyone's needs are different. They may be physical, mental or emotional. You may find that the support you need could be met by something going on in your local community, for example services organised by local charities or other support networks. Whatever your level of need, we will give you information and advice that can help you. We might also be able to put you in touch with other organisations who can support your wellbeing and help you remain independent for longer.

I pay for my own care, do I need to be assessed by the council?

If you have arranged care and support yourself, either in your own home or in a care home, you do not need to be assessed by the council.

I pay for my own care, how do I get my cap on care costs account started?

To benefit from the cap on care costs from April 2016, you will need to get in touch with us. We will assess you to see if you have any eligible needs. If you do have eligible needs, we will work out if we can help you and we will calculate how much it should cost to meet your needs. This amount will count towards your cap.

You can find out more about the cap on care costs by reading our Cap on Care Costs FAQs document.

How will the new national level of needs affect you if you are planning to move?

The new national level will give you peace of mind that if you decide to move to another area in England, the new council will meet at least the same minimum level of care and support needs as your old one. Councils will also have to work together to make sure that there is no gap in your care.

If I am receiving care and support and decide to move, will I lose the help I currently get?

If you have needs that meet the new national level, you will be able to get some help from your council wherever you live in England.