

Adult Social Care Policies and Procedures

CARER'S ASSESSMENTS

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POLICY VERSION CONTROL

POLICY NAME	Carer's Assessments		
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0.1	29 March 2017	All	General proof reading changes
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1. POLICY STATEMENT

The county council **must** ensure that any carer with an appearance of need for support receives a proportionate assessment which identifies their level of needs and how these impact on their wellbeing. This applies whether an individual currently provides or intends to provide care for another adult and is irrespective of their financial situation.

The carer's assessment **must** consider the outcomes the carer wants to achieve in their daily life, their activities beyond their caring responsibilities, and the impact of caring upon those activities. This includes considering the impact of caring responsibilities on a carer's desire and ability to work and to partake in education, training or recreational activities, such as having time to themselves in both the short term and over time.

An assessment **must** seek to establish the total extent of the carer's needs, what outcomes the carer is looking to achieve to maintain or improve their wellbeing, and what types of care and support can help to meet those needs. This **must** include looking at the impact of the adult's needs on their wellbeing and whether meeting these needs will help the adult achieve their desired outcomes. The county council **must** also consider the person's own strengths, if any other support might be available in the community to meet those needs and whether the individual's needs impact upon their wellbeing beyond the ways identified by the individual.

Prevention and early intervention are placed at the heart of the care and support system, and even if a person has needs that are not eligible at that time, the local authority **must** consider providing information and advice or other preventative services.

Carers' assessments **must** seek to establish not only the carer's needs for support, but also the *sustainability* of the caring role itself, which includes both the practical and emotional support the carer provides to the adult. Therefore, the county council **must** include in its assessment a consideration of the carer's potential future needs for support. Part of this **must** be a consideration of whether the carer is, and will continue to be, able and willing to care for the adult needing care. Some carers may need support in recognising issues around sustainability, and in recognising their own needs. Where appropriate these views should be sought in a separate conversation independent from the adult's needs assessment.

Where an adult provides care under contract (e.g. for employment) or as part of voluntary work, they should not normally be regarded as a carer, and so the local authority would not be required to carry out the assessment. There may be circumstances, however, where the adult providing care is also providing care for the same adult outside of contracted or voluntary work arrangements. If so, the county council **must** consider whether to carry out a carer's assessment for that part of the care they are not providing on a contractual or voluntary basis. There may also be cases where the person providing care does so as voluntary work or under contract, but the nature of their relationship with the person cared for is such that they ought to be considered as a carer. The county council has the power to carry out an assessment in such cases, if it judges that there is reason to do so.

The county council should always act promptly to meet people's needs. The lack of a carer's assessment must not be a barrier to action. Neither is it necessary to complete the assessment before or whilst taking action.

Young Carers

The county council **must** also identify any children who are involved in providing care. The authority may become aware that the child is carrying out a caring role through the assessment of the person needing care or their carer, or informed through family members or a school. Identification of a young carer in the family **should** result in an offer of a needs assessment [LINK] for the adult requiring care and support and, where appropriate, the county council must consider whether the child or young carer should be referred for a young carer's assessment or a needs assessment under the [Children Act 1989](#), or a young carer's assessment under section 63 of the Care Act.

When carrying out a carer's assessment, if it appears that a child is involved in providing care the county council **must** consider:

- the impact of the person's needs on the young carer's wellbeing, welfare, education and development
- whether any of the caring responsibilities the young carer is undertaking are inappropriate

An assessment **should** take into account the parenting responsibilities of the person as well as the impact of the adult's needs for care and support on the young carer. We **must** also consider whether any of the caring tasks the child is undertaking are inappropriate. They should consider how supporting the adult with needs for care and support can prevent the young carer from undertaking excessive or inappropriate care and support responsibilities. A young carer becomes vulnerable when their caring role risks impacting upon their emotional or physical wellbeing or their prospects in education and life. This might include:

- preventing the young carer from accessing education, for example because the adult's needs for care and support result in the young carer's regular absence from school or impacts upon their learning
- preventing the young carer from building relationships and friendships
- impacting upon any other aspect of the young carer's wellbeing.

Therefore to fulfil its duty under section 10 of the Care Act, the county council will work with its statutory, voluntary and private sector partners in order to comply with the national threshold relating to care and support in manner that is relevant, coherent, timely and sufficient.

The county council will make all reasonable adjustments to ensure that all disabled people have equal access to participate in the eligibility decision in line with the Equality Act 2010.

The geography and population of Lancashire is diverse and our Adult Social Care Policies and practice will aim to deliver services and supports that are representative of the communities in which we work.

The county council will follow the Care Act and other relevant legislation, policies and guidance to ensure our practice is of high quality and legally compliant. Where our customers or those we come into contact with wish to challenge or raise concerns in regard to our decisions, regarding eligibility the county council's complaints procedures will be made available and accessible.

2. KEY DEFINITIONS AND PRINCIPLES APPLICABLE TO THIS POLICY

Many of the core aims of the Care Act (particularly its focus on preventing, delaying or reducing the need for care and support) apply equally to individuals **and** their carer's. While this document details the county council's responsibilities around Carer's Assessments, staff should be aware of other areas of the Act that impact on the role of carer's. Where appropriate, we have provided links to relevant Policy, Procedures and Guidelines (PPG) documents and you can consult Section 4 (Related Documents) for more information.

2.1 Wellbeing

"Wellbeing" is a broad concept under the Act, and it is described as relating to the following areas in particular:

- personal dignity (including treatment of the individual with respect)
- physical and mental health and emotional wellbeing
- protection from abuse and neglect
- control by the individual over day-to-day life (including over care and support provided and the way it is provided)
- participation in work, education, training or recreation
- social and economic wellbeing
- domestic, family and personal
- suitability of living accommodation
- the individual's contribution to society

There is no hierarchy, and all should be considered of equal importance when considering "wellbeing" in the round.

2.2 Assessment

This is one of the key interactions between the county council and a carer (or indeed the person they care for). The process must be person-centred throughout, involving the person and supporting them to have choice and control. It starts from when the county council begins to collect information about the carer, and will be an integral part of the carer's involvement in the care and support system as their needs change. An assessment **must** seek to establish the total extent of needs **before** the county council considers the carer's eligibility for care and support and what types of care and support can help to meet those needs.

2.3 Proportionate

This means that the assessment is only as intrusive as it needs to be to establish an accurate picture of the needs of the carer, regardless of whatever method of assessment is used. This will involve:

- both hearing and understanding the initial presenting problem,
- not taking this at 'face value',
- ensuring any underlying needs are also explored and understood,

2.4 Eligibility outcomes

The national eligibility criteria set a minimum threshold for carer support needs which the county council **must** meet. These are the outcomes that the eligibility determination should be based on. All local authorities **must** comply with this national threshold. Authorities can also decide to meet needs that are not deemed to be eligible if they chose to do so. See the separate [Eligibility Criteria for Carers and Carer's Budget PPG \[LINK\]](#) for more information.

2.5 Fluctuating needs:

Carers with fluctuating needs may have needs which are not apparent at the time of the assessment, but may have arisen in the past and are likely to arise again in the future. Therefore local authorities **must** consider an individual's need over an appropriate period of time to ensure that all of their needs have been accounted for when the eligibility is being determined. The county council **must** also consider how the carer's needs change as a result of the fluctuation in the needs of the person they are caring for. The level of a carer's need can also fluctuate irrespective of whether the needs of the adult for whom they care, fluctuate.

Where fluctuating needs are apparent, this should also be factored into the care plan, detailing the steps the county council will take to meet needs in circumstances where these fluctuate.

2.6 Information and Advice

If a carer is provided with care and support, the county council will provide them with information and advice [\[LINK\]](#) about what can be done to prevent, delay, or reduce their needs as part of their care and support plan or support plan. This should also include consideration of the person's strengths and the support from other members of the family, friends or the community.

Information and advice will be provided, in an accessible form, about what can be done to prevent, delay, or reduce development of their needs. Where a person has some needs that are eligible, and also has some other needs that are not deemed to be eligible, the local authority must provide information and advice on services facilities or resources that would contribute to preventing, reducing or delaying the needs which are not eligible, and this should be aligned and be consistent with the care and support plan for the for the carer.

3. PROCEDURES

The county council uses Liquidlogic [Adult Social Care System](#) (LAS). It is essential that every effort is made to ensure that all information is logged via LAS with extreme care and accuracy (see LAS Guidance).

3.1 Carer's Assessment

- a) From their very first contact with the county council, a carer with an appearance of need for support will be given as much information as possible about the assessment process in a format that is most appropriate for them.
- b) The county council will undertake an assessment of any carer who appears to have any level of needs for care and support, regardless of whether or not it thinks the person has needs that would make them eligible for services from the council.
- c) The carer's assessment may be combined with the person receiving care and support, as a joint assessment, where both the individual and carer agree, or it may be carried out separately as an individual assessment.
- d) Carers' assessments must seek to establish not only the carer's needs for support, but the sustainability of the caring role itself, which includes both practical and emotional support the carer provides to the adult.
- e) In conducting the carer's assessment the county council will take into account the carer's activities that go beyond their caring responsibilities and the impact of caring upon those activities; work, education, training or recreational activities.
- f) Carers' Assessments completed by the county council will be person-centred throughout, involving the carer and supporting them to have choice and control. The assessment will seek to establish the total extent of needs and will include looking at the impact of the adult's needs on their wellbeing and whether meeting these needs will help the adult achieve their desired outcomes. (For more information about wellbeing see the county council's Wellbeing Policy [LINK].)
- g) The county council has a duty to identify any children who are involved in providing care and make an offer of a young carer's assessment. A young carer's assessment will pay special attention to the following aspects:
 - Reflection on the impact of the person's needs on the young carer's wellbeing; welfare; education; and development;
 - Consideration as to whether any of the caring responsibilities the young carer is undertaking are inappropriate. For example, personal care such as bathing and toileting; carrying out strenuous physical tasks such as lifting; administering medication; maintaining the family budget; and providing emotional support to the adult.

3.2 Involvement in the Assessment Process

- a) The county council will start with the premise that the person is the expert in the assessment of their needs and of what their desired outcomes are. We will encourage people to be involved so that the end product is one of co-production.
- b) Our assessment process will be transparent and based on the following steps.
- c) We will help people to:
 - i. develop an understanding of the assessment process and the associated timescales;
 - ii. gain a clear understanding of the implications of the assessment process on their condition(s) and situation;
 - iii. understand their own needs and outcomes they want to achieve to allow them to engage effectively with the assessment process;
 - iv. start to identify the options that are available to them to meet those outcomes and to support their independence and wellbeing;
 - v. understand the basis on which decisions are reached.
- d) The county council will endeavour to establish a person's communication needs and will adapt the assessment process accordingly, seeking a specialist interpreter if appropriate.
- e) We aim to reduce any anxieties caused by considering the person's unique circumstances when arranging the assessment date and we will consider the location; the duration and the time of day. We will also adapt our approach to make the contact person-centred and meaningful.
- f) The county council will ensure that the assessment process is proportionate to each person; we will not take a blanket approach which makes the process too onerous for those with less complex needs. For those who do have complex needs we will aim to work in partnership with other professionals in order to minimise duplication and repetition [LINK to Integration and Partnerships Policy].
- g) Where there is concern about a person's capacity to make a specific decision the county council will make an assessment of capacity according to the Mental Capacity Act (MCA) and the Care Act [LINKs].
- h) We may offer an online or a telephone assessment if the person's needs are less complex or where the person is already known to the county council and the assessment is following a minor change in needs or circumstances.

3.3 Involving Others in the Assessment Process

- a) The county council will consider how the carer, their support network and the wider community can all contribute towards meeting the outcomes the carer wants to achieve. We will give regard to how the carers needs for care and support impacts on their family members or others in their support network. For those identified as experiencing an impact we will provide information and signposting to support services.

3.4 Refusal of Assessment

- a) A carer may choose to refuse to have an assessment if they have mental capacity to make that decision.
- b) The county council will complete an assessment of needs if a carer has previously refused an assessment, or if their needs appear to have changed, if we are subsequently requested to do so.
- c) If the county council has assessed a carer as lacking mental capacity and believes that the carer is at risk of abuse or neglect we would be required to carry out an assessment of needs because doing so would be in the carer's best interests whether or not they had refused to have an assessment.

3.5 Support Planning

- a) Following the carer's assessment and the determination of eligibility in accordance with the Care Act a support plan will be developed.
- b) The county council will ensure that the plan is person-centred and will take all reasonable steps to agree the plan with the person. The person's goals and aspirations will be taken into account and the level of control over their own care and support will vary according to their preferences and individual abilities.
- c) The county council is legally prohibited from meeting needs by providing or arranging any health service or facility which is required to be provided by the NHS, or under the Housing Act 1996.
- d) The county council is not required to meet non-eligible needs but will provide information and signposting that is pertinent to the person, with a written explanation of why their needs are not being met. Where some needs are eligible and others are not eligible, the plan will clearly record both the eligible and non-eligible needs and who is responsible for meeting each element.
- e) The plan will contain the following information:
 - The needs identified by the assessment;
 - To what extent the needs meet the eligibility criteria;
 - The needs that the personal budget payment will be used to meet and how it will do so;
 - the outcomes the carer wishes to achieve, and their wishes around providing care, work, education and recreation where support could be relevant;
 - The personal budget;

- Information and advice on what can be done to reduce the needs in question, and to prevent, or delay, the development of needs in the future;
- f) The county council will encourage flexibility to allow adjustment and creativity, for example by allowing people to include personal elements into their plan which are important to them (but which we are not under a duty to meet), or by developing the plan in a format that works for the person rather than a standard template.
- g) The county council will take a holistic approach that covers aspects such as the person's wishes and aspirations in their daily and community life, rather than a narrow view purely designed to meet personal care needs.
- h) The county council recognises that on occasions the planning process may bring to light new information that may suggest a safeguarding issue. In such instances, we would instigate a safeguarding enquiry which may, in turn, lead to changes in the plan.

3.6 Reviews

- a) The county council recognises that keeping plans under review is an essential element of the planning process. Without a system of regular reviews, plans could become quickly out of date meaning that carers are not obtaining the care and support required to meet their needs. Plans may also identify outcomes that the carer wants to achieve which are progressive or time limited, so a periodic review is vital to ensure that the plan remains relevant to their goals and aspirations.
- b) Planned reviews by the county council will be proportionate to the carer's circumstances and will take into account the value of the personal budget and any risks that were identified at the assessment or support planning stages.
- c) According to the carer's circumstances our reviews will include telephone reviews, online reviews, self-review and face-to-face reviews. The format of the review in all instances will be agreed with the carer or their advocate and it will involve them and any other relevant people identified in the plan.
- d) When carrying out reviews we will make the following considerations:-
 - Have the carer's circumstances and/or care and support or support needs changed?
 - What is working in the plan, what is not working, and what might need to change?
 - Have the outcomes identified in the plan been achieved or not?
 - Does the carer have new outcomes they want to meet?
 - Could improvements be made to achieve better outcomes?

- Is the carer's personal budget enabling them to meet their needs and the outcomes identified in their plan?
- Is the current method of managing it still the best one for what they want to achieve?
- Are there any changes in the carer's informal and community support networks which might impact negatively or positively on the plan?
- Has there been any changes to the carer's needs or circumstances which might mean they are at risk of abuse or neglect?
- Is the carer or independent advocate satisfied with the plan?

3.7 Considering a Request for a Review of a Support Plan

- a) The Care Act places a duty on the county council to conduct a review if a request for one is made by the carer, or a person acting on the carers' behalf. We will provide information and advice in an accessible format to carers at the planning stage, about how to make a request for a review and the timescales involved. Upon receipt of a request we will consider it.
- b) The right to request a review applies not just to the carer, but to others supporting them or interested in their wellbeing. The county council will consider these requests even if they are not made by the carer.
- c) In considering whether to undertake a review, the county council will involve the carer and anyone else the carer requests to be involved where feasible. When there is no appropriate person who can represent or support a carer who has significant difficulty in being fully involved, the county council will consider the duty to provide an independent advocate to support them [LINK].
- d) If the county council makes a decision not to conduct a review following a request we will set out the reasons for not accepting the request in a format that is accessible to the carer. We will also advise the carer of when they can expect to have their next planned review.

3.8 Unplanned Reviews

- a) If there is any information or evidence that suggests that circumstances have changed in a way that may affect the efficacy, appropriateness or content of the plan, the county council will conduct a review promptly to ascertain whether the plan requires revision.
- b) During the review process, the carer, or the person acting on their behalf, will be kept fully involved and informed of what is occurring, the timescales involved and any likely consequences.

3.9 Revision of the Support Plan

- a) When revising plans the county council will:
 - 1. Involve the carer and anyone else they want involved and their advocate if they need one.
 - 2. Support the carer to self-plan the revision whenever possible.
 - 3. Take into account the carers' capacity to make specific decisions.

3.10 Quality Assurance

- a) The county council will ensure that assessments are carried out to the highest quality by staff that have the required skills, knowledge and competence.
- b) The county council will make certain that assessors undergo appropriate training on an ongoing basis.
- c) We recognise that some people's situations are particularly complex and where necessary we will enlist expert support. For example, an interpreter or someone who has specific knowledge of a condition.
- d) The county council will provide carers with a letter stating the outcome of their assessment, or where requested a copy of their assessment, and will share this with others if the carer has asked for this. Where they lack capacity to make the decision to do so we will share the information if it is in their best interest.
- e) Where an independent advocate, an Independent Mental Capacity Advocate or an Independent Mental Health Advocate is involved in supporting the carer [LINK], the county council will keep the advocate informed so that they can support the carer to understand the outcome of the assessment and its implications.

4. DOCUMENT HISTORY

RELATED DOCUMENTS	
OTHER RELATED DOCUMENTS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eligibility Criteria • Assessment of Needs Policy • Continuity of Care Policy • Ordinary Residence Policy • Wellbeing Policy • Information and Advice • Care & Support Planning
LEGISLATION OR OTHER STATUTORY REGULATIONS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Care and Support (Eligibility Criteria) Regulations 2014 • The Care Act 2014 - Part 1 Assessing Needs Section 13 • Chapter 1 Promoting Wellbeing Care Act Statutory Guidance • Chapter 6 Assessment and Eligibility Statutory Guidance • Chapter 19 Ordinary residence Statutory Guidance • Chapter 20 Continuity of care Statutory Guidance