

Adult Social Care Policies and Procedures

INFORMATION AND ADVICE

WARNING! Please note if the review date shown below has passed this procedure may no longer be current and you should check the PPG E Library for the most up to date version

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POLICY VERSION CONTROL

POLICY NAME	Information and Advice		
Document Description	This document sets out the council's response to the Care Act 2014 in regard to its duty to deliver a comprehensive Information and Advice Service to all.		
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1. POLICY STATEMENT

The Care Act (2014) recognises that the county council has a crucial part to play in the provision of information and advice and **must** take an active role.

Information and advice is fundamental to enabling people, carers and families to make well informed choices about care and support for their needs and to take control of how it is provided and funded. Information and advice promotes people's wellbeing by increasing their ability to exercise choice and control, it is also a vital component of preventing or delaying people's need for care and support.

The Care Act stipulates that the county council **must** establish and maintain an information and advice service for people in its area. This information and advice offer should support adults with needs, carers and those wanting to plan for their futures.

The county council does not have to provide all elements of this service itself, however there is an expectation that local authorities should understand, co-ordinate and make effective use of other high quality statutory, voluntary and private sector information and advice resources available to people within their area.

The county council should promote access to relevant independent and impartial advice. There should be careful consideration about who is best placed to provide services, the county council directly or another agency.

The service should enable people to understand how the care and support system works, what services are available locally and how to access those services. The service should provide a universal offer, providing information and advice to all Lancashire citizens regardless of whether they have been assessed for their care and support needs. Local authorities cannot fulfil their universal information and advice duty simply by meeting eligible needs – nor would information and advice always be an appropriate way of meeting eligible needs.

The county council is required to proactively identify people with unmet needs and signpost them to preventative and early intervention services. Information and advice must not only cover basic information about care and support but must also address finances, health, housing, employment and what to do in cases of abuse or neglect of an adult.

In providing information and advice, the county council **must** recognise and respond to the specific requirements that carers have for both general and personal information. A carer's need for information and advice may be separate and distinct from information and advice for the person they are caring for.

The Act states that local authorities **must** also have regard to identifying people who contact them who may benefit from financial information and advice independent of the local authority and actively facilitate access to it.

Therefore to fulfil its duty under section 4 of the Care Act, the council will deliver and maintain, working with its statutory, voluntary and private sector partners, an

information and advice service relating to care and support that is relevant, coherent, timely and sufficient.

The service will be available to the whole population of Lancashire and not just those with care and support needs or in some other way already known to the system, and delivered in ways that are accessible. The council will make all reasonable adjustments to ensure that all disabled people have equal access to its information and advice service 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, information or advice, the council's complaints procedures will be made available and accessible.

2. KEY DEFINITIONS AND PRINCIPLES

2.1 Information:

The term 'information' means the communication of knowledge and facts regarding care and support.

2.2 Advice:

'Advice' means helping a person to identify choice and/or providing an option or recommendation regarding a course of action in relation to care and support.

2.3 Financial Information and Advice:

This refers to a broad spectrum of services that will help people to plan, prepare and pay for their care costs. 'Independent' financial advice within this document refers to a service independent of the county council. Reference is also made to 'regulated' financial advice which means advice from an organisation regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority (FCA). The county council should make sure that people are able to access all of these types of financial information and advice which help people to plan their care and support.

3 PROCEDURES

The county council has a comprehensive information and advice service relating to care and support that is accessible and relevant to the needs of the local population, not just those who are in receipt of care and support funded by the county council.

The main method of providing care and support information and advice, is through our [Adult Social Care](#) pages on our website. We also offer an Adult Social Care telephone service to help support individuals, family members or friends on **0300 123 6720**. Information and advice is available from a range of providers and sources not just that offered by the council.

For those individuals in Prisons or other custodial settings, the county council provides hardcopies of its complaints procedure. [Link will be available shortly].

The council's information and advice service goes much further than the narrow definition of care and support offering information and advice on:

- available housing and housing-related support options for those with care and support needs.
- effective treatment and support for health conditions, including Continuing Health Care arrangements.
- availability and quality of health services.
- availability of services that may help people remain independent for longer such as, home improvement agencies, handyman or maintenance services.
- availability of befriending services and other services to prevent social isolation.
- availability of intermediate care entitlements such as aids and adaptations.
- eligibility and applying for disability benefits and other types of benefits.
- availability of employment support for disabled adults.
- children's social care services and transition.
- availability of carers' services and benefits.
- sources of independent information, advice and advocacy.
- the Court of Protection, power of attorney and becoming a Deputy.
- raising awareness of the need to plan for future care costs.
- practical help with planning to meet future or current care costs, including the Deferred Payment Scheme.
- accessible ways and support to help people understand the different types of abuse and its prevention.
- support in crisis situations.
- benefits and Welfare Rights advice.

The council delivers its information and advice service on three levels offering a tailored range of services, which assist people to navigate all points and aspects of their journey through care and support:

3.1 Tier 1 – Universal Service

People often need information and advice before they need to access care and support services, to consider what actions they may take now to prevent or delay any need for care, or how they might plan to meet the cost of future care needs.

The council promotes access to information that is universally available to all and aims to increase the opportunities for people to source information and advice independently where appropriate.

This universal service is considered to be the first point of access for all residents of Lancashire offering timely and accessible information that can be sourced independently or with minimal support.

Information and advice at this point will, in the main, be available online or from local/community service providers. Online provision from Lancashire Council is currently through the main website www.lancashire.gov.uk

3.2 Tier 2 – Signposting Service

We realise that there are many options available for people who are thinking about getting help with adult social care, and this can be very confusing. Through our [Adult Social Care](#) webpages we provide information and advice on how we can support the public.

Where support is needed to access relevant and often specific information and advice the Council's Customer Access Service offers an Adult Social Care telephone signposting service on **0300 123 6720**.

Where possible and appropriate, the Customer Access Service will signpost to universal and/or specialist services - these include the [Lancashire Wellbeing Service](#), [Children's Centres](#) and [Youth Zones](#).

3.3 Tier 3 – Services for eligible people

Where a person has undergone a Social Care Assessment [Link will be available shortly] and been deemed to meet the [national eligibility threshold](#) established by the Care Act 2014, the council will still ensure that relevant, proportionate and timely information and advice will be made available as required to meet identified care and support needs. Support with more complex issues will be offered particularly at the time of assessment, when developing a care and support plan for the individual or indeed a support plan for carers and also at the point of review.

Where the person does not satisfy national eligibility criteria, the council must still provide information and advice on what can be done to meet or reduce the needs (for example what support might be available in the community to help the adult or carer) and what can be done to prevent or delay the development of needs in the future. This includes those individuals who are known or likely to be full self-funders of their own care. The council should consider how this package of information can be tailored to the needs which the person does have, with the aim of delaying deterioration and preventing future needs, and reflect the availability of local support.

Information and advice will be delivered by specialist, professional workers representing the council.

Support of Independent Advocacy Services [Link will be available shortly] for those who meet the criteria at these key points in the social care journey will also be made available.

3.4 Financial Information and advice

Financial information and advice is fundamental to enabling people make well-informed choices about how they pay for their care. It is integral to a person's consideration of how best to meet care and support needs, immediately or in the future. People with good and impartial financial information and advice have a better understanding of how their available resources can be used more flexibly to fund a wider range of care options.

To this end the council has worked in partnership with the Society of Later Life Advisors (SOLLA), <http://societyoflaterlifeadvisers.co.uk/> to develop appropriate information, advice and signposting to 'independent' and 'regulated' financial advice. We recognise that people will want/need access to financial information and advice at key points in their journey to enable them to make sustainable plans to pay for their care. The council therefore offers a service that facilitates access to the full spectrum of financial information and advice – from basic budgeting tips to regulated advice.

In delivering this service, adult social care staff will be able to:

- support people to access the information and advice they need;
- actively describe the general benefits of independent information and advice;
- explain the reasons why it may be beneficial to take financial advice; and
- explain the difference between generic free services, fee based advice and regulated services.

Where a person may be considering taking regulated financial advice, adult social care staff **must not** make a direct referral to one individual independent financial advisor but will direct the person (or others) to the SOLLA website that will list all financial advisors registered with SOLLA - <http://societyoflaterlifeadvisers.co.uk/>

Financial information and advice will also be available:

- on our [Adult Social Care](#) website which will include the link to the SOLLA website;
- at the point a person makes first contact with us;
- during times of assessment, planning and review of a person's care and support needs and;
- from the county council's [Welfare Rights Service](#), which provides free and confidential advice to make sure that citizens are claiming all of the benefits they are entitled to.

The Care Act 2014, states that local authorities must provide information to help people to understand what they may have to pay, when and why, and how it relates

to people's individual circumstances. The council therefore offers information to enable people to understand:

- care charges;
- ways to pay;
- money management;
- how to make informed financial decisions;
- how to access independent financial information and advice; and
- adult safeguarding – helping people to keep safe.

However, before providing financial information and advice directly, adult social care staff should first establish whether a person has a deputy of the Court of Protection or a person with Lasting Power of Attorney in respect of finance and property acting on their behalf.

3.5 Accessibility

The council will ensure that all information is accessible to all potential users. Our website meets the World Wide Web Consortium (W3C) standards and offers the option to translate all written information into a language of your choice or a larger font size and is compatible with commonly used screen-readers.

The Customer Access Service provides people with hearing impairments the option of contacting them via Email, Short Message Service (**SMS**) **0786 0031294** (Monday - Friday 9am to 5pm) and **Minicom 01254 220 666**.

The Council's Information and Advice service is offered through a range of channels including:

- the councils own [website](#) and other appropriate internet websites, including supported self-assessment of needs;
- face-to-face contact through local council offices;
- email acs.customerservices@lancashire.gov.uk;
- telephone **0300 123 6720**; and
- independent services including [advocacy](#) and [financial advice](#).

3.6 Engagement

In establishing and maintaining an information and advice service the council has and will continue to engage with individuals with care and support needs, carers, the wider public and local providers of information and advice and other types of care and support. We will ensure that we understand what is available locally, what is needed and how and where information and advice should best be provided.

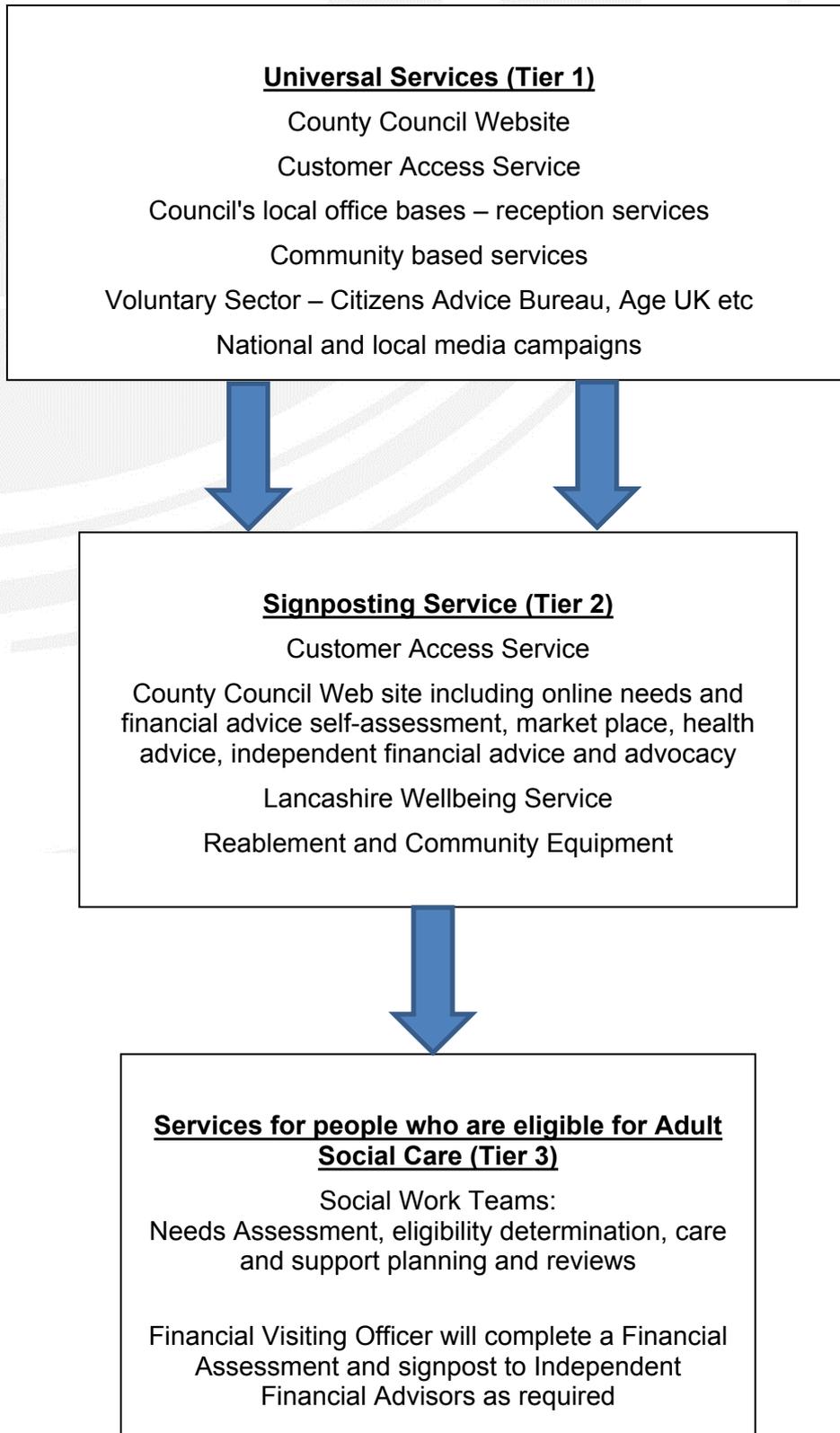
3.7 Complaints

Anyone dissatisfied with a decision made by the county council, can make a complaint which will be initially handled by the county council. The council's complaints process is in line with the Local Authority Social Services and NHS Complaints Regulations 2009 and is available at:

<http://www.lancashire.gov.uk/council/get-involved/compliments-comments-complaints/how-we-handle-your-compliments-comments-and-complaints.aspx>

4 FLOW CHARTS OR DIAGRAMS

Models of Access to Information and Advice:



5 RELATED DOCUMENTS

POLICY, PROCEDURES AND GUIDANCE (PPG) DOCUMENTS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PPG Intranet page
LEGISLATION AND REGULATIONS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Care Act 2014 - Chapter 3 of the Care and Support Statutory Guidance

6 EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

The Equality Act 2010 requires the county council to have "due regard" to the needs of groups with protected characteristics when carrying out all its functions, as a service provider and an employer. The protected characteristics are: age, disability, gender identity/gender reassignment, gender, race/ethnicity/nationality, religion or belief, pregnancy or maternity, sexual orientation and marriage or civil partnership status.

The main aims of the Public Sector Equality Duty are:

- To eliminate discrimination, harassment or victimisation of a person because of protected characteristics;
- To advance equality of opportunity between groups who share protected characteristics and those who do not share them. This includes encouraging participation in public life of those with protected characteristics and taking steps to ensure that disabled people in particular can participate in activities/processes;
- Fostering good relations between groups who share protected characteristics and those who do not share them/community cohesion.

It is anticipated that the guidance on Information and Advice in this document will support the county council in meeting the above aims when applied in a person-centred, objective and fair way which includes, where appropriate, ensuring that relevant factors relating to a person's protected characteristics are included as part of the process.

More information can be found on the Equality and Cohesion intranet site on

<http://lccintranet2/corporate/web/?siteid=5580&pageid=30516>