

# Community care assessment



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Some people may find barriers to living independently at home for a number of different reasons such as mental health problems, learning and physical difficulties or social isolation and loneliness. It is important that everyone knows how and where to get assistance and support.

The support available can be provided for a short period, for example you may require an intense period of care following discharge from hospital and once your condition improves, you might manage without some or all of it. Or you may require longer term care on an ongoing basis to maintain your independence.

Social Services in your local Health and Social Care Trust carry out a **community care assessment** of your needs. This will outline what your needs are and how the Trust can offer support. It is important that you provide as much information as possible to allow the Trust to identify the support you require. Many people find it useful to bring along a family member, a close friend or an

independent advocate to communicate your problems. You may also find it helpful to think in advance about which services will assist you to live independently at home and be socially active on a day-to-day basis.

## How do I obtain a community care assessment?

This can be triggered in a number of ways. You may:

- Self refer by contacting the Social Services team in your area
- Be referred by a GP or someone who works for the Health Trust
- Be referred by a voluntary organisation
- Be referred by a family member or informal carer.

## What does a community care assessment mean for me?

A social worker will meet with you and go through all areas of your daily living. A **community care assessment** will identify the tasks you may need assistance with, for instance getting in and out of bed, washing, dressing and cooking. This is often referred to as personal care. This assessment will also consider your practical care needs such as doing laundry, cleaning and shopping. The assessment should be carried out at a time and a place that suits you.

After the assessment has been carried out, Social Services will draw up a **care plan** tailored to your individual needs. You should be given a copy of your care plan. If you do not agree with your identified needs you should make this clear immediately to the

person who carried out the assessment. The care plan will outline your needs and what services the Trust can provide to support you. The Trust will use **eligibility criteria** to determine which of your assessed needs can be met. However, they must look at a person's individual assessed need. They should not make general statements such as 'we do not provide cleaning or shopping'. It is only after the assessment has taken place that the Health Trust can fully consider their ability to meet your assessed needs.

An assessment should review all of your needs even if the Health Trust does not supply these services at present.

*Age NI would like to acknowledge The Law Centre of Northern Ireland and The Ladies, St Mary's Parish Church Friendship Circle, Comber for their contribution to the Community Care Factsheets.*





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