

Carers' Assessments

Duty on local authority

A local authority must:

- offer an assessment to any carer where it appears to that authority that the carer may have needs for support
- assess whether the carer has needs for support (or is likely to do so in the future) and if they do, what those needs are likely to be

The duty is triggered if it appears to the local authority that a carer may have needs for support. The duty to assess applies regardless of the authority's view of the level of support the carer needs or the financial resources he or she has, or the financial resources of the person needing care.

What must be included in an assessment

The assessment must include an assessment of the extent to which the carer is able and willing to provide the care and to continue to provide the care; the outcomes the carer wishes to achieve both in terms of themselves; and, if a child is a carer, the outcomes the person(s) with parental responsibility for that child wish(es) to achieve for them. As well as the extent to which support, preventative services, or the provision of information, advice or assistance could assist in achieving the identified outcomes.

The local authority must involve the carer and where feasible the person for whom the carer provides or intends to provide care in the assessment, which must have regard to whether the carer works or wishes to work and whether they are participating or wish to participate in education, training or leisure activities.

The assessment must also include:

- The outcomes the carer wishes to achieve
- The extent to which support, preventative services, or the provision of information, advice or assistance could assist in achieving the identified outcomes
- Consideration of whether the carer works or wishes to work
- Consideration of whether the carer is participating in or wishes to participate in education, training or leisure activities

Proportionality

The practitioner should undertake an assessment that is proportionate to the needs and circumstance, but a completed assessment should at a minimum record the core data and take into account the five elements to determine eligibility. (Although, the obligation to complete the core data set out in its entirety is only required to be met when an individual's needs are deemed to be eligible and a care and support plan, or support plan for a carer, is required)

Information, Advice and Assistance Service

The assessment process will often start when a person accesses the information, advice and assistance service. Access to an assessment should not be restricted to being accessible through this service alone.

Assessment Process

The assessment process should be based on the principle of co-production ensuring that it involves a relationship where practitioners and individuals share the power to plan and deliver support together, and recognising that all partners have vital contributions to make in helping to meet identified personal outcomes.

An assessment may conclude that, immediate needs having been met, a more comprehensive assessment is required and the further assessment can be undertaken by a single practitioner with further information from other sources.

It will often be the case that where a more comprehensive assessment is required, an assessment of care and support needs may need to comprise a compendium of one or more professional assessments which will supplement the minimum data required in the national assessment and eligibility tool.

The need for a more specialist assessment to be undertaken must not prevent or delay appropriate services being provided.

A local authority may combine a person's needs assessment with the needs assessment of his or her carer if it considers it would be beneficial to do so. However, the local authority may only do so if valid consent is given by or in respect of those persons.

In order to avoid the duplication of assessments under different legislation being carried out separately, a local authority may carry out a needs assessment under the Act at the same time as it carries out an assessment under other acts or at the same time as another body carries out an assessment under other acts. In such cases, the local authority may carry out the assessment on behalf of or jointly with the other body. In cases where the other body has arranged for the other assessment to be carried out jointly with another person, the local authority may carry out the other assessment jointly with the other body and that other person.

For more in depth guidance on assessments, an excellent factsheet has been developed by Carers Wales called, '*Assessments: A guide to getting an assessment in Wales from April 2016*'. It can be accessed here:

http://www.carersuk.org/images/publications/Factsheets/Factsheet_W1020_Assessments_a_guide_to_getting_an_assessment_in_Wales_from_April_2016.pdf