Assessment

1. **When does an assessment start?**

An assessment starts when a practitioner has a conversation with a person to consider their care and support needs and personal outcomes, and advice and/or assistance are provided. This could be through a call to the Information, Advice and Assistance service.

1. **What is the National Assessment and Eligibility Tool?**

The [Part 3 Code of Practice](http://gov.wales/docs/dhss/publications/151218part3en.pdf) (Assessing the Needs of Individuals) sets out requirements for a National Assessment and Eligibility Tool as a way of ensuring a consistent approach to assessments and recording information.

The tool will be developed in partnership with the Association of Directors of Social Services (ADSS) Cymru. The tool will initially comprise a list of common requirements for all assessments of adults, children and carers, and it is available on the [National Assessment and Eligibility Tool page](http://www.ccwales.org.uk/national-assessment-and-eligibility-tool/) on the Hub, for use from April 2016.

The Welsh Government will support ADSS Cymru to develop the tool with a national template and further guidance if needed.

1. **Is there a national template for assessments?**

No. A list of common assessment requirements will be available on the Hub. Initially local authorities can adapt their assessment process and templates to meet the minimum requirements. The longer term plan is to develop a single assessment process in-line with the development of the Community Care Information System (CCIS). Further resources can be developed to support practice, such as guidance on assessing children.

1. **Who can undertake a statutory assessment? What qualifications are required for practitioners to carry out assessments?**

[The Care and Support (Assessment) (Wales) Regulations 2015](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/wsi/2015/1305/pdfs/wsi_20151305_mi.pdf) state that:

*“A local authority must ensure that any person carrying out an assessment:*

* *has the skills, knowledge and competence to carry out the assessment in question, and*
* *has received training in the carrying out of assessments.*

*When carrying out an assessment, a local authority must consider whether the nature of the person’s needs calls for the involvement of a person who has specialist skills, knowledge or expertise.”*

No specific qualification or professional status is specified i.e. there is no exhaustive list of who can do it as long as the local authority is satisfied that all staff undertaking these activities have the skills, knowledge, and competence to work with children and young people, adults and carers, as appropriate.

However, all practitioners undertaking assessments must be suitably skilled, trained and qualified in undertaking assessments. The [Part 3 Code of Practice](http://gov.wales/docs/dhss/publications/151218part3en.pdf) (Assessing the Needs of Individuals) provides a recommendation of appropriate levels of qualification:

* A registered social work or social care practitioner holding a professional qualification at level 5 or above
* A person holding a social care qualification at level 4 or above, which includes knowledge and skills undertaking person-centred assessment, under the supervision of a registered social work or social care practitioner.

These are not mandatory but they are recommended as appropriate levels of qualification.

Local Authorities should work with their partner local health boards and NHS trusts to agree arrangements across the local health board footprint area for delegating practitioners to undertake assessments for care and support.

1. **How does an assessment of needs for care and support link with other specialist assessments e.g. health, mental health, substance misuse?**

Where a specialist assessment is required in addition to the minimum requirements for assessment under the Act they can be appended to the minimum requirements for a fuller assessment of an individual. The aim is to ensure care and support is integrated with other services and the individual does not repeat data already captured. For example, the core data should not be repeated more than once.

1. **Is there a process flowchart for assessments?**

Yes, this is available on the [National Eligibility and Assessment page](http://www.ccwales.org.uk/national-assessment-and-eligibility-tool/) on the Hub.

1. **What is the difference between a review and a re-assessment?**

Where the previous assessment has not fully addressed the person’s care and support needs, or there may be new needs due to a change in circumstances then a review of an assessment must be undertaken.

A review could result in an assessment being confirmed, revised or, if there was a significant change in circumstances, a full re-assessment of needs would be necessary.

1. **When is an assessment closed?**

When a result has been determined for each of the person's needs, the minimum recording requirements are completed (proportionate to the individual) and a copy of the assessment has been provided to the person being assessed (or parent or other person acting on their behalf).

1. **Why is the core data set for assessments different to the core data set in the Integrated Assessment for Older People?**

The core data set in the [Part 3 Code of Practice](http://gov.wales/docs/dhss/publications/151218part3en.pdf) (Assessing the Needs of Individuals) is the minimum data required for all assessments of adults, children or carers. Further core data can be collected as relevant to the circumstance and needs of the individual e.g. practitioners can continue to collect wider health-related core data set for older people.

1. **What happens to existing statutory guidance on:**
* **the Unified Assessment Process**
* **Integrated Assessment, Planning and Review Arrangements for
Older People**
* **Framework for the Assessment of Children and their Families**

These will no longer be statutory when the Act, regulations and codes of practice come into force on 6 April 2016. However, many key elements of these guidance documents have been incorporated into the new codes of practice.

1. **What if a safeguarding issue is identified during the assessment?**

Safeguarding duties would apply and actions to protect an individual from abuse, neglect or harm would take precedence over the need to complete the assessment
in full.

1. **Are there any timescales for reviewing assessments?**

If this is in relation to a formal review, the date will be set when the care and support plan, or support plan, is developed. The date will be agreed with the individual, and relate to their circumstances and the most appropriate time for review. If a review leads to a re-assessment because of significant changes to their circumstances, the expectation is that the assessment will be undertaken quickly and without delay. There are no specific timescales for completing an assessment or re-assessment for adults; however the code of practice is clear that they must be completed quickly and without delay. An assessment, or re-assessment, for children must be completed within 42 days of referral.

The duty to review an assessment is triggered where the previous assessment does not fully address the individual’s care and support needs, or there are significant changes in the individual’s or family’s needs or circumstances, and as such the five elements of the assessment need to be considered anew. Any individual has the right to request a re-assessment at any time, and the local authority must comply with the request if it is satisfied there has been a significant change in the person’s circumstances or in their personal outcomes. This duty is not the same as reviewing the care and support plan where a date for review must be agreed and set out in the care and support plan.

1. **Duty to offer an assessment when a carer becomes known and may have needs for support – what are the implications for becoming known to other parts of the local authority, such as the leisure centre, etc?**

Carers have the same rights to assessment as those they care for. The local authority must offer an assessment to any carer where it appears to the local authority that the carer may have needs for support. This duty does not stand if the carer refuses an assessment. The carer is entitled to change their mind at any time, in which case the local authority must then carry out an assessment of need. The local authority must

again offer to carry out an assessment if it is satisfied that the circumstances of the carer have changed and an assessment would be beneficial for the carer. A local authority must record any refusal of an assessment of need.

A referral for an assessment can be made by any individual or professional if they have the consent of the individual to share personal information. Local authorities are encouraged by Welsh Government to communicate the expectations of the Act to their workforce who may come into contact with individuals who have needs for care and support, or support. The legislation promotes and encourages partnership and integrated working across organisations and communities. However, implementation is a matter for local authorities.

1. **When the duty kicks in, what’s a reasonable timescale for undertaking the assessment? What if there's a 10-month waiting list for assessment?**

The common principles of assessment state that the assessment must be completed in a timely manner and respond to the urgency of the individual’s needs. The carer should be kept informed of the progress of the assessment and the expected timescales for completing the assessment process.

1. **At what point, if any, are the parents of disabled children considered to be carers within their own right?**

A carer is defined in the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 under Part 1 Section 3(3) as a person who provides, or intends to provide, care for an adult or a disabled child. That is all they would need to be doing to present for an assessment.

Under Part 3 of the Act, which relates to assessing children, Section 21 (7) states that for the purposes of assessment *“a disabled child is presumed to need care and support in addition to, or instead of, the care and support provided by the child’s family”*.

Further to this, in relation to assessing carers, the duty to assess a carer under Section 24 (2) applies in relation to a carer who is providing or intends to provide care for an adult or disabled child who is ordinarily resident within the authority’s area. A local authority must offer an assessment to any carer where it appears to that authority that the carer may have needs for support. Note that the detail in Section 24 is quite clear about the requirements for assessing carers. Part 4 of the Act then places a duty on local authorities to determine whether any of those assessed needs meet the eligibility criteria and how those needs can be met.

1. **If someone has needs that are met through Continuing Health Care funding, does the Act apply?**

The Act is relevant to all people who need care and support. The responsibility for funding services for people who have a primary health need and who have been deemed to be in need of a continuing NHS care-funded package lies with the NHS. The Act is relevant to the NHS and local authorities.

Pooled budgets are relevant – however, if someone is in receipt of fully NHS funded Continuing Health Care, direct payments cannot be used.

1. **Is there a requirement on local authorities to report the number of assessments carried out? If so, how often should this information be reported and should carers be broken down by type, e.g. carers of people with mental health conditions, etc?**

Local authorities will report annually on the number of assessments for care and support, and the number of assessments for support for carers, that have been carried out throughout the year. Data in relation to assessments will be separated for carers, but carers will not be broken down into type. [Guidance in relation to this data can be found here](http://gov.wales/statistics-and-research/local-authority-social-services-data-collections/?lang=en).

Local authorities will begin reporting this data in April 2016. Data for 2016/17 will be provided to Welsh Government in May 2017 and published in September 2017.

1. **Before receiving a service, you would expect assessment to be the vehicle for accessing that service. Will there be a requirement to complete an assessment before accessing a service?**

It isn’t as black and white as this, and will depend on each authority and what preventative and open-access services they provide, and what services are met through a care and support plan. However, the information, advice and assistance service will be accessible to all and the assessment will begin when advice or assistance is provided. This ensures that the individual and the adviser have a discussion about the outcomes the individual wishes to achieve and they can explore solutions together based on a ‘what matters’ conversation. This proportionate assessment may conclude with advice about the preventative services available and how to access them or it may lead to the development of a support plan, which is managed by the local authority. Some services will be more open access if they are

preventative and some will be for eligible needs, so it will depend on each individual need and how they can best be met.