



# Social care and support

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## Asking for a needs assessment

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Date: August 2020

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This information is for people who support an adult over 18 in England who has Down's syndrome.

Most people who have Down's syndrome will need some level of support to live a full life within their community.

**Needs Assessments** look at the needs a person has and determines whether they are entitled to assistance from the local authority. If the person you support has need for care and support, you may wish to help them to request a Needs Assessment. This information explains how a Needs Assessment should work.

### What is the Care Act (2014)?

The Care Act (2014) sets out the way local authorities must work when assessing and meeting the care and support needs of their local population.

Local authorities must consider the things the person themselves wishes to achieve from their day-to-day life and whether the provision of support is necessary to enable them to meet these goals and maintain or improve their wellbeing.

Local authorities must also consider the Care and Support Statutory Guidance when assessing people's needs and providing support and services. [This can be found here](#).

### Who can have a Needs Assessment?

There is a low trigger for local authorities to offer an assessment of need. The underlying principle is until an assessment has taken place it is not possible for a local authority to determine if a person has needs for care or support.

Therefore, when it '*appears to a local authority that an adult may have needs for care and support*' the local authority **must** undertake a Needs Assessment.

### What support might be available following an assessment?

A Needs Assessment may result in support or services for the person you support. The support offered to the person following a Needs Assessment might be:

- Practical help in the home, for example, with cleaning or gardening
- Adaptations for the home
- Extra support to access the community, health and leisure facilities or to attend appointments
- Domiciliary care (care at home)

Depending on your circumstances you may also wish to request an Adult Carer's Needs Assessment for yourself at the same time. See our information about Carers Assessments.

## **What is a Needs Assessment?**

The local authority will use the assessment to decide whether the person is eligible for support by using national eligibility criteria to consider risks to their independence, health and safety, their ability to manage daily routines and their wellbeing.

A Needs Assessment may lead to additional care or support for adults who need help with day-to-day tasks. The following are examples of the things a person requiring care or support might need help with:

- Getting out of bed
- Washing and dressing
- Preparing meals
- Eating
- Shopping
- Budgeting and banking
- Attending appointments
- Getting to work
- Being part of the community and maintaining friendships

The support the person needs might be prompting, emotional support, a structured environment or direct physical care and support.

The assessment should look at the person's physical, mental and emotional needs. For example, it should consider:

- The outcomes the person wishes to achieve in their everyday life
- The types of services, information and advice that may prevent or delay further needs from developing
- The impact of the person's needs on any person who is involved in caring for the individual

## **How do I help the person I support get a Needs Assessment?**

Different teams in different local authorities oversee social care assessments.

Therefore, you will need to ask your local authority which department to contact.

You will need to request a Needs Assessment under the Care Act 2014. It is advisable to contact the local authority in writing and you should:

- State clearly you are asking for a face-to-face Needs Assessment and for whom you are requesting this. It is advisable to list any people the person being assessed wishes to be involved in the assessment. If the person lacks capacity the local authority has a duty to

involve anyone whom it appears to them to be interested in the adult's welfare. You will find further information about capacity on our website.

- It is advisable to ask for acknowledgement they have received your request and how long it will be before an assessment will take place
- Keep written records of your request and copies of any letters or emails you send
- Keep written records of any telephone calls, recording the date of your call and who you spoke to
- Remember to give the local authority your contact details and ask the date you can expect to hear back from them

The local authority should contact you within a reasonable timeframe (likely to be within 4-6 weeks) to arrange a date for an assessment.

The local authority however does have the power to provide interim support or services in certain circumstances. If you feel the person you support needs support more urgently you can ask the local authority to consider providing interim support or services until the Needs Assessment has taken place.

The local authority must provide you with information about how Needs Assessments work and what support is available locally.

## We can help

If you have any questions about social care, please contact us using Tel: 0333 1212 300 or Email: [info@downs-syndrome.org.uk](mailto:info@downs-syndrome.org.uk). If our information officers are unable to help, they will refer you to our social care adviser.

### Contact us

t. 0333 1212 300

### Down's Syndrome Association

Langdon Down Centre  
2a Langdon Park  
Teddington  
Middlesex  
TW11 9PS

e. [info@downs-syndrome.org.uk](mailto:info@downs-syndrome.org.uk)

w. [www.downs-syndrome.org.uk](http://www.downs-syndrome.org.uk)

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