



Social care and support

Support planning

Putting the person at the centre

Date: August 2020

What does good support look like?

Good support is responsive to the needs and wishes of the individual.

The level of engagement a person is able to contribute to planning their support will be different depending on their individual needs. Some people with complex needs may have family and people who know them well taking the lead in designing their support, based on what they know of the person's interests, likes and dislikes. Others who are more able to communicate their needs and aspirations are likely to be able to have more influence over planning their own support.

Whatever the person's ability they should be at the centre of the support planning process and as much weight as possible should be given to their wishes. If the supported person is not the 'decision maker' this must be because they have received appropriate support to understand their options but despite this have been found to lack mental capacity. The decision made by others on the person's behalf must be in the person's 'best interests'.

Good support involves treating the person with dignity and providing opportunities to develop meaningful relationships with friends, family and the professionals who support them. Fostering positive relationships can help people fully understand the person's needs and can result in the discovery of new information about the person's aspirations and the ways in which they wish to be supported. Good support also facilitates people to develop their independence by providing opportunities that advance their existing skills and enable them to work towards their goals.

For some people, planning the support they need may involve input from specialist professionals. Learning Disability Teams accessed via social care or through the person's GP consist of a range of professionals including clinical psychologists and psychiatrists who have expertise in understanding and assessing people who have learning disabilities. Speech and language therapists and occupational therapists may also be involved to help people and their supporters find effective ways of communicating with each other.

What is 'person centred planning'?

There are many buzz words for having choice and control over one's own life. Some examples are 'person centred support', 'self-determination', 'co-production', 'self-directed support' and 'personalisation'.

Essentially this just means using approaches that support people to recognise and communicate their needs, feelings and wishes and empower them to make decisions about their lives and the support they want and need to reach their goals.

The main objective of person-centred support is to bring about positive changes in a person's life through empowering them to take control of their own life and facilitating them to develop their independence.

A good starting point is to look at a person's life as it is now and how they would like it to be in future so a plan can be made that enables the person to be supported to work towards short, medium and long term goals.

Many aspects of a person's life will need to be explored when planning effective support. For example, the person's aspirations around:

- Family, friends and relationships
- Day-to-day activities
- Involvement in community life
- Health
- Housing
- Education, training and employment

How do we go about supporting in a person-centred way?

There are many methods and planning tools that can help the person and their supporters identify the person's needs, explore their aspirations and plan their lives and their support. These include circles of support, maps and pathway plans.

DSA resources

My Needs Assessment booklet (easy read)

This resource is designed to help people who have Down's syndrome to voice their aspirations and prepare for a Needs Assessment with their local authority.

Listen To Me – 13+ Transition (easy read)

This resource is designed to help students make decisions about their future.

Whichever methods are used to support the person to plan their life, regular reviews of their support and the progress they are making will help to ensure their support is responsive to their changing needs as their life develops. If the person is receiving social care support there is likely to be an annual review. It is well worth spending time with the person in advance of this meeting preparing for their review to identify what progress they have made and to identify what goals they would like to achieve going forward.

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. 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

w. www.downs-syndrome.org.uk

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