

Information sheet C17 – “reablement” support in your own home

“Reablement” is short-term support in your own home which aims to help you to return to being as independent as possible, when a health condition or an accident has limited what you can do. This means that, as well as making sure you get the immediate help that you need, a reablement service aims to help you to find safe ways to carry out daily living tasks yourself.

In Northumberland, reablement is provided by our Short-Term Support Service (STSS), which is operated by Northumberland County Council in partnership with the NHS. No charge is made for reablement.

The STSS service includes both therapists and specially trained care workers. This information sheet is mainly for people who will be getting support for a few days or weeks from STSS care workers, but the service also supports people who only need advice or equipment provided by therapist.

■ How is STSS different from an ordinary home care service?

STSS care workers can if necessary provide you with some of the same kinds of help that you would get from a home care agency, such as helping you to get dressed or to wash yourself or with meals. But they will always also be thinking about whether there is a way that they can help you to be able to do the task again yourself, either by themselves working with you to try different ways of carrying out a task or by asking one of the therapists in the service to work with you.

Examples of the ways in which the service may be able to help you to do things yourself again are:

- advising you about equipment you could buy which would make tasks easier, or in some cases supplying equipment from our equipment loan service
- arranging small adaptations to your home, such as “grab rails” if you need support to keep your balance
- teaching you techniques and demonstrating use of equipment which will help you to prepare meals in your kitchen
- helping you try different techniques for dressing and managing your personal care
- helping you practice exercises to improve your balance when walking around your home, and demonstrating and helping you to practice safe ways of using mobility equipment outdoors

■ How long will the service last?

The service usually works with people only for a few days, or sometime a few weeks. For instance you may need only a few days of support to help you adjust to life back at home following a hospital stay, or you may need a few weeks if your recovery will take longer or you will benefit from an extended programme of rehabilitation at home.

We will continually monitor and assess your progress while you are supported by the service. It is common for the length of visits to reduce during the period when we are working with you, as you begin to become more independent.

■ What if I have already been getting care at home?

We may offer you support from the service even if you were already receiving support before your recent illness or accident. This would usually be in addition to your existing support which will continue as before. For example, someone who was already getting help from a home care agency with washing and dressing might find it difficult to prepare meals after a recent health issue, and we might work with you to find ways in which you can safely manage again in the kitchen. Or a therapist might visit you for a while to help you with exercises that will help you to improve your strength and balance.

If you were paying for the care services you were getting before, you will still have to do so, but there will be no additional charge for the rehabilitation or reablement service.

■ What if I still need care and support when the service ends?

Many people get better and do not need any further support when the service finishes, but some people do need some longer-term care and support. If that is your situation, you can either make your own arrangements, or you can ask the service to arrange an assessment of your needs, to find out whether you are eligible for longer-term support arranged by the Council or the NHS.

If you do need longer-term support arranged by the Council, you will probably have to pay at least part of the cost of this. Only people with a high level of health-related care needs are likely to be eligible for longer-term support funded by the NHS. Our Information Sheet C8 provides information about charges for services arranged by the Council. You can ask us to get you a copy, or you will be given it when an assessment takes place.

If there is a problem arranging the longer-term support you need quickly, we are sometimes able temporarily to provide it using STSS care workers. However this is only possible as a short-term solution to bridge a gap when no other options are available.

If STSS does provide a “bridging” service on this basis, you will have to pay the same charges that you would have had to pay if we had arranged the support from a home care agency (unless you are eligible for long-term support funded by the NHS).

■ Safety for all during the Covid pandemic

The Short-Term Support Service operates within current infection control guidelines and regulations. You may be contacted by a member of the team prior to a visit to your home for us to ask screening questions. The team take every care to ensure that they visit you in the safest way possible. Therapy and care team members will wear appropriate Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) when visiting your home, which may include gloves, aprons, face masks and visors.