

Information sheet C2 – What we ask about in a needs assessment

This information sheet explains the questions we will ask if you ask us to carry out a “needs assessment”. You can ask someone else to be with you to help you answer the questions. You can also give us your answers in writing in your own words instead of us writing them down – we will soon have an internet form which you can use for this. Information Sheet C1 explains more about needs assessments.

■ General questions

One of the first questions we will ask is what outcomes you are hoping to achieve in your day to day life, and how you hope that we can help you to achieve them. This question isn't about specific problems that you have, but about how you want your life to be different. For instance some people tell us the most important thing for them is to be able to stay living in their own home, or that they want to feel safer, or that they want to get back to doing more of the things they used to do before they became disabled, or that they want to feel less like a burden on other people.

We will also ask you to tell us about the nature of your disabilities or health conditions and any medication or treatment that you are receiving, either prescribed by a doctor or on your own initiative. We will ask whether your assessment needs to involve someone with specialist expertise, for instance about autism, mental health issues, dementia, a learning disability or deafblindness, and whether your health varies from one week to another.

We will ask you to tell us about your life – particularly things that you would want anyone providing you with care and support to know – and about the kinds of things you do in a typical week (or the things you used to do, if you have had recent health problems which may mean your life will change).

We will ask how you want us to communicate with you – for instance whether you find it hard to have conversations on the phone, and whether you need letters to be in large print. If you would be happy to be sent information by email, we will take details (there is some advice about emails in Information Sheet C10).

■ Important contacts

We will ask for details of other professionals or services that are already supporting you (for instance health professionals). We will ask whether you are happy for us to ask them for further information about your needs, and whether you agree to us telling them about the information you give us.

We will also ask about family members and friends who will be providing you with support, or who depend on you, or who live with you and need to be taken into account when we plan your support. If any of them are giving you care and support at present, or plan to do so in future, we will need to have separate discussions with them – Information Sheet C4 says more about how we assess the needs of carers. We will ask you if you want us to send copies of your assessment to your carers, or to anyone else, and whether there is anything else we need to know about what information you are happy for us to share.

We will ask if your home is rented, and if so who your landlord is. (We may need this information – for instance if we think you would benefit from adaptations to your home.)

■ Questions about your needs

The main part of the assessment will be questions about your needs. There is a list of needs that we will always ask about, but you can also tell us about any other needs which aren't on this list. For each need you have, we will ask why you need help, and whether carers (family members or friends) will usually be giving you the help you need. We will discuss with you what you could do to avoid or reduce the need for help.

The first part of the list is about any help you need with regular **tasks and activities**:

- Getting out of bed and getting dressed in the morning
- Getting ready for bed in the evening
- Using the toilet, and having a bath or a shower
- Preparing nourishing food that you can eat, and making drinks
- Eating food safely, without choking or other risks
- Taking medicines that you have been prescribed
- Moving around your home, and getting in and out of your home
- Keeping your home clean enough to avoid health risks
- Looking after your home so that you are safe living in it
- Being able to study, or train, or work or volunteer
- Staying in touch with your family, or other people who are important to you
- Looking after children who you are responsible for
- Getting to places in the local community

The second part of the list is about **unpredictable risks** that you need help to keep you safe from:

- Risks of falling and risks when you lift or carry things
- Risks from fire, including risks from smoking, and risks because of pets or animals
- Risks letting people into your home and risks because of other problems with your home
- Risks of infection, risks of skin damage, and risks because of allergies
- Risks of confusion
- Risks from other people, and risks of not being able to control your behaviour
- Risks because of alcohol or drugs

■ Other questions

After we have discussed the specific things you need help with, we will ask whether there are any other ways that your care and support needs affect your wellbeing.

We will also ask about arrangements in a crisis – for instance whether there is someone else who could step in if one of your carers had a health problem. If we think that your carer(s) will need breaks, or if other commitments mean they will sometimes be unavailable, we will discuss this with you (see also Information Sheet C4 on carers).

■ What happens next

When we have agreed what your needs are, we will consider which of them are eligible for publicly-funded support (see Information Sheet C3). We will then, if necessary, draw up with you a care and support plan (see Information Sheet C6).