

Information Sheet

13 Care at Home

If you need help to continue to live independently in your home, you may be able to get services from your local council. This information sheet looks at three particular issues in detail: managing your own care package through Direct Payments; local council funding for care at home; and the common problems people have with getting and paying for community care services from their local council.

General advice about help at home and getting a care assessment is given in our free advice leaflet, *Help in Your Home*. You might find it helpful to read the leaflet and this information sheet together for more comprehensive information on community care services. This information sheet only looks at the help you can get from your local council; for information on services provided by voluntary and private care agencies, see our free advice leaflet, *Help in Your Home*.

Contents

Getting help from your local council	page 2
Direct Payments	page 3
Paying for home care services	page 10
Withdrawal of services	page 16
Problems with local council services	page 17
Useful contacts	page 20

Getting help from your local council

If you need help in your home from your local council, you should first contact your social services department (social work department in Scotland; health and social services trust in Northern Ireland). Ask for an assessment of your needs. Someone should visit you at home to carry out this assessment. Depending on your situation, the assessment may involve several professionals: for example, a social worker, an occupational therapist and a nurse.

Your assessment should **not** be carried out over the telephone or by letter. When you ask for an assessment, request that someone comes to visit you at home. You can explain the problems you are having and why you want an assessment. But there is nothing wrong with saying that you don't know exactly what help you need. Be careful about asking for specific services – your local council may not provide them. If you are uncertain whether help is available for a particular difficulty you have, ask at your assessment. Without a proper assessment at home you may not be aware of the different types of help available.

Once your needs have been assessed you should be given a **care plan**, detailing what services you will receive and who will provide them. You should be given the name of the person who will be responsible for your care services. They are often called your **care manager** and they should regularly check that your services are right for you and that your needs haven't changed. Your local council can:

- directly provide its own services;
- arrange for services to be provided by voluntary organisations and private agencies; or
- give you cash to arrange and manage your own care, known as Direct Payments (we look at this in more detail in the next section).

Each local council has its own rules, often called **eligibility criteria**, about who it will provide services for. Your **assessed needs** are those needs that fall within your local council's eligibility criteria. Unfortunately this means that you may not be offered all the services you think you need. However, once your local council has assessed you as having met its criteria, it **must** then provide services to meet your **assessed needs** – it can't just say it has run out of money.

See our free advice leaflet, *Help in Your Home*, for more information about getting an assessment and about local council services. We look at some of the problems people have with getting services on page 17.

Direct Payments

If you have been assessed as needing community care services, you may have the option to receive Direct Payments instead of services. Direct Payments is cash provided by your local council for you to arrange your own services. It allows you to make your own choices about who cares for and supports you; and can give you more flexibility over when, and how, you receive care or services.

You don't have to take Direct Payments just because your local council offers it to you. You can still have your care arranged for you by your local council if this is what you prefer. Your local council shouldn't insist that you take Direct Payments.

Who can get Direct Payments?

Everyone aged 16 and over (in England and Wales), who has been assessed as needing community care, should be offered the option of Direct Payments. The rules about who else should be offered Direct Payments are different depending on which area of the UK you live in.

- Local councils in **England** and **Northern Ireland** have a legal duty to offer Direct Payments to anyone who has been assessed as needing community care, including carers.
- In **Wales**, local councils have a legal duty to offer Direct Payments to anyone aged over 18 who have been assessed as needing community care, including carers.
- In **Scotland**, local councils have a legal duty to offer Direct Payments to anyone aged over 18 who has been assessed as needing community care; and to carers of disabled children.

Your local council will have to be satisfied that you are willing and able to manage a Direct Payment, either on your own or with support. You will have to provide detailed accounts of how you are spending the money. But you should be able to get help with keeping records (we explain more about the help and support you can get later on).

The Government has been piloting Individual Budgets in certain areas of the UK; these aim to give people more choice and control over the services that they receive. More information about Individual Budgets can be found on the Department of Health website at www.dh.gov.uk

What can I use Direct Payments for?

Direct Payments can be used to buy any services that will meet your assessed needs. For an explanation of assessed needs see page 2. This includes help with personal care and daily tasks. For example, bathing and going to the toilet; respite care; and equipment for example, grab rails.

Your local council has to be satisfied that what you are spending your Direct Payments on does meet your assessed needs.

You can use your Direct Payments to employ your own staff to carry out the services, or to buy services from voluntary or private agencies.

Employing your own staff

You can use Direct Payments to employ your own care workers, also known as 'personal assistants' (someone who helps with everyday tasks such as getting dressed, cooking, getting around and remembering to take your medicines). Employing your own staff can give you greater flexibility about the precise kind of help you want and when you want it. It can also mean that there will be more continuity in your care, because the same people will be supporting you all the time.

You can't usually use Direct Payments to pay a spouse or close relative if they live with you. But exceptions can be made to this rule if it is considered necessary to meet your needs. However, if you live in Scotland you can only use Direct Payments to pay for services from a spouse, partner or close relative if they **do not** live with you.

If you are employing your own staff you will need to deal with things such as recruitment, tax and national insurance. You will need to make sure that you have insurance, in case your carer or personal assistant has an accident whilst working for you. Check whether this covers the personal assistant injuring someone else or damaging someone else's property whilst working for you. You will also have to work out things such as wages and holidays for your staff. There are a number of organisations which can offer help and support with this aspect of Direct Payments. See pages 9–10 for contact details.

You should also be able to get support from your local council if you want to employ your own personal assistant or care workers. For example, social services may be able to explain how to keep records or direct you to a payroll service.

You may have a local Direct Payments support service. A Direct Payments support service can help you through all the stages of getting and looking after Direct Payments. Direct Payments support services are user-led and are usually run by voluntary organisations: for example, a local disability organisation or Age Concern. They can:

- give information and advice on how the scheme works
- help you to decide whether it is suitable for you
- help you complete the application forms and other paperwork
- help you to find someone to work for you or to choose an agency.

Direct Payments support services often hold regular user meetings where you can meet other users and discuss any matters that concern you. Your care manager should be able to give you details of your local Direct Payments support service if you decide this is what you want.

If you are employing your own staff, you will also need to think about getting cover for holidays and emergencies. For example, if you employ a personal assistant who helps you to get up in the morning, what will happen if they are taken ill? It is worth discussing this with your local council and finding out what arrangements you should make for emergency cover.

You should always be able to contact social services in an emergency. If something unexpected does happen, and you haven't got cover, contact your local council. It should step in to make sure you have the services you need. If you need help outside of office hours, telephone the main social services number and a message will give you the number of a duty social worker.

Buying care services from a voluntary or private agency

If you prefer, you can make a contract with a voluntary or private agency, using your Direct Payments to buy care and support services from them. This means that you won't have the same responsibilities that you would have if you were an employer. For example, you won't have to worry about paying national insurance, holiday pay and so on.

All agencies providing care at home should be registered with one of the following care authorities:

- the **Commission for Social Care Inspection** in England
- the **Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales** in Wales
- the **Scottish Commission for the Regulation of Care** in Scotland
- the **Regulation and Quality Improvement Authority** in Northern Ireland.

This means that an agency has to abide by national minimum standards. These standards cover a range of issues, from your right to a written care plan and contract, to your rights to privacy and dignity.

You can check whether a home care agency is registered by contacting the care standards authority for your country (see page 20–21 for contact details). It should also be able to give you a copy of the standards for your country which covers care at home (often called ‘domiciliary care’); or ask at your local library.

There are a number of ways that you can find out about private and voluntary care agencies.

- You can find out about care agencies in your area from your care standards authority (see above).
- The **UK Home Care Association** can give you details of home care providers who follow its code of practice. It also has a useful leaflet, *Choosing Care in Your Home*. You can contact it on **020 8288 1551** or visit its website at **www.ukhca.co.uk**
- You may also be able to get details of approved agencies from your doctor, library, Citizens Advice Bureau or by looking in your phone book.

The charity, **Counsel and Care**, publishes factsheets called *Home Care Agencies: what to look for* and *Home Care: using Direct Payments*. You can contact it for copies on **0845 300 7585** or visit its website at **www.counselandcare.org.uk**

The organisations listed on pages 9–10 should be able to give you advice on what you need to think about before making a contract with a private or voluntary agency.

Buying care services from your local council

If you live in England, Wales or Northern Ireland, you **cannot** use Direct Payments to buy services from your local council. You will have to buy your services from a voluntary or private agency. The Government is thinking about changing this rule in future. However, it is possible to have a combination of some services provided directly by social services and others arranged by yourself with Direct Payments. If you think this would suit you best, ask social services if it will agree to do this.

If you live in Scotland you **can** use Direct Payments to buy services from your local council, or from another local council.

Care homes

You can only use Direct Payments to pay for short, temporary stays in a care home; they cannot be used to pay for longer or permanent stays. You are allowed to use Direct Payments to stay in a care home for periods of up to four weeks at a time. If you are at home for 28 days or less in between stays in a care home, your separate stays will be added together.

Vouchers

If you are a carer and live in England, you **may** be able to get vouchers from your local council to pay for services which allow you to take short-term breaks from caring: for example, respite care. These vouchers can **only** be used for services you would otherwise have received through your local council. The 'voucher' will come in the form of cash paid to the person you care for, for them to pay for alternative care; or it may be issued to you if the person you care for agrees to this. A third party can 'top up' the amount you're given. To get vouchers, your break must not last longer than 28 days at a time and can't be for more than 120 days in any 12-month period. Ask your local council for more information.

How much will I get?

Your local council should always give you enough money to enable you to buy services that meet your basic assessed needs. If you decide that you would like a more expensive service or extra help, there is nothing to stop you from 'topping up' your Direct Payments with your own money; or from getting help from someone else: for example, a relative, friend or charity. But this should be a matter of choice; you should **not** be forced into doing this because the local council doesn't give you enough money.

If you choose to employ your own care workers, you should be paid enough to be able to fulfil your legal obligations as an employer. For example, your Direct Payment might include an amount to cover employer liability insurance, your personal assistant's National Insurance payments and statutory holiday and sick pay.

If you don't think that you have been offered enough money, you can make a complaint. For more information about complaints – see page 17. While your complaint is being dealt with you can, for the time being, choose to:

- accept the Direct Payments you were offered; or
- receive services from your local council instead.

Will I have to contribute towards the cost?

If you receive care services from your local council, they will work out how much you should contribute towards the cost (see page 10). If you are getting Direct Payments instead of services your contribution should be calculated in exactly the same way.

Once your local council has worked out how much you should pay they will either:

- take this amount away from your Direct Payments before you are paid, with your agreement; **or**
- pay you the whole amount and you will then have to pay your contribution to the local council.

Examples:

1. Mr Li is assessed as needing a Direct Payment of £97.80 per week to buy his care services. His local council decides that he can contribute £25 per week towards the cost of his care. They take this away from his Direct Payment and he is paid £72.80 per week.

2. Mrs Brown is assessed as needing a Direct Payment of £72.60 per week. This is paid to her in full. Her local council decides that she can pay £23.80 towards the cost of her care. She has to pay this amount to her local council.

Will Direct Payments affect my benefits?

Direct Payments is tax free and will not affect your benefits. However, your benefits may be taken into account when your local council is working out how

much you can afford to pay towards the cost of your care (see page 10 for more information).

Help and support

If you are receiving Direct Payments you should get help and support from your local council. Ask your care manager for advice. Your local council should also be able to tell you where you can get help locally: for example, if there is a local Direct Payments support service near you.

There are also other organisations that can help you:

- The **National Centre for Independent Living** can give you more information about Direct Payments and tell you about local organisations that can offer help and support. Its contact details are:

National Centre for Independent Living
4th Floor, Hampton House
20 Albert Embankment
London SE1 7TJ
Tel: 020 7587 1663
Textphone: 020 7587 1177
Web: www.ncil.org.uk

- If you live in Scotland, you can contact **UPDATE (Scotland's National Disability Information Service)** at:

UPDATE
27 Beaverhall Road
Edinburgh EH7 4JE
Tel: 0131 558 5200
Textphone: 0131 558 5202
Web: www.update.org.uk

If you are thinking about employing a personal assistant, you may find it useful to contact **SPAEN** (Scottish Personal Assistant Employers Network):

SPAEN
Unit 9 Motherwell Business Centre
130 Coursington Road
Motherwell ML1 1PR
Tel: 01698 250280
Web: www.spaen.co.uk

- If you live in Northern Ireland, contact the **Centre for Independent Living** at one of the following addresses:

Centre For Independent Living
Belfast (eastern area)
61 Duncairn Gardens
Belfast BT15 2GB
Tel: 028 9087 5001
Textphone: 028 9087 5003
Web: www.cilbelfast.org

Centre for Independent Living
Belfast (southern area)
c/o Armagh Confederation of
Voluntary Groups
1 College Street
Armagh BT61 9BT
Tel: 028 3752 2282
Web: www.cilbelfast.org

Centre For Independent Living
Belfast (western area)
Andersen House
Market Street
Omagh BT78 1ES
Tel: 028 8224 8926
Web: www.cilbelfast.org.uk

Paying for home care services

Once your local council has assessed you and decided what services you need, it will work out how much you should contribute towards the cost. The rules on charging depend on which area of the UK you live in and are outlined over the following pages.

The assessment of how much you should contribute should always come **after** your needs have been assessed. In other words, the services you are being offered should never be affected by how much you can afford to pay towards them.

The rules on funding aren't always clear and can be complicated. If you would like advice on your personal situation call **SeniorLine** on **0808 800 6565** (in **Northern Ireland** call SeniorLine on **0808 808 7575**).

England and Wales

Local councils do not have to charge for services; but most will choose to do so. Each local council has its own charging policy. But there are some general rules that they should all follow when they are working out how much you should pay.

In **England** you **should not** be charged for your services if your weekly income is at or below the basic level of Pension Credit guarantee credit plus 25 per cent. In 2007–08 this is:

- £155.06 if you're single; or
- £236.68 between you if you're a couple.

In **Wales** you cannot be charged for your services if it would mean your weekly income would fall below the basic level of Pension Credit guarantee credit plus 35 per cent. In 2007–08 this is:

- £167.46 if you're a single; or
- £255.62 between you if you're a couple.

Any charge that you do have to pay for services should not bring your income below this level.

When your local council is working out your income it should ignore:

- any income you have from earnings
- any Pension Credit savings credit you get
- age-related payments: for example, the Winter Fuel Allowance.

The income and savings of your husband, wife or registered civil partner or anyone else you live with should **not** usually be taken into account. Only your income and capital should be counted, **unless**:

- you have a legal entitlement to your partner's income; or
- you are part of a couple and your benefits (eg Pension Credit) are paid to one of you on behalf of you both.

Regardless of your income and savings, if you live in England you shouldn't have to pay for:

- any community care equipment; or
- adaptations up to the cost of £1,000.

In Wales, many local councils won't charge for community care equipment and adaptations; but they can charge if they want to.

For information on local organisations which provide assistance to people with disabilities, contact the information line at **Disability Wales**. Its number is 0800 731 6282. Its opening hours are limited and you may need to leave a message.

Disability benefits

Local councils can, if they want, treat most disability benefits as income. This includes Attendance Allowance (AA), the care component of Disability Living Allowance (DLA), and any extra Pension Credit you get because of severe disability. But they should ignore the mobility component of Disability Living Allowance. Also, if you are only receiving daytime services, they shouldn't count any part of your AA or DLA that is paid for night care.

If your disability benefits are counted as income, your local council should assess your 'disability related expenditure'. This is the extra money you need to spend in order to live independently. Your local council should take this expenditure into account when they are working out how much you should be charged.

For example, as a result of your disability, you may need to pay for:

- privately arranged care services;
- special clothing or footwear;
- additional laundry costs;
- additional heating costs; or
- special dietary needs.

Your local council should make sure that you are left with enough money to pay for this care and support.

Savings and capital

Your local council may decide to take into account any capital and savings you have. However, **the value of your home should not be counted as capital** for non-residential care services.

If it does decide to take your savings into account, its charging policy should, at least, follow the savings limits that apply to care homes (see below) – although it can be more generous and set higher limits if it chooses to.

There is an upper and lower savings limit. These savings limits usually go up every April. The current savings limits (2008–09) for England and Wales are:

	Upper limit	Lower limit
England	£22,250	£13,500
Wales	£22,000	£19,000

If you have **more than the upper limit** in capital you may be asked to pay the full cost of your services.

If you have **less than the upper savings limit**, or when your savings drop to this level, then the local council may assess your ability to pay for your care by looking at both your capital and your income:

- Any savings you have **below the lower limit** should be ignored.
- Savings between the lower and upper savings limits are converted into an assumed weekly income using a simple formula. This is often called **tariff income**. For every £250, or part of £250, you have over the lower savings limit, £1 a week will be added to your income.

If you refuse to give your local council information about your income and savings, it may charge you the full cost of your services.

What if I refuse to pay?

Your local council should not withdraw a service because someone cannot pay a charge. But it can pursue the debt through the civil courts.

If you don't agree with the amount you have been charged, you can ask the decision to be reviewed or make a formal complaint. Ask your care manager for information on how to do this. Or see our information sheet no. 27, *How to Make a Complaint*.

Intermediate care

You shouldn't be charged for any 'intermediate care' you receive.

Intermediate care is a type of short-term rehabilitation and recovery service. It is intended:

- to help you recover your independence and get back to living at home if you've been in hospital; or
- to help you maintain your independence by providing short-term intensive support so that you can avoid going into hospital.

Intermediate care is often only for one or two weeks and is normally limited to **six weeks** at the most. It can be provided in a hospital, care home, day centre or your own home. If the NHS provides your intermediate care it will be paid for by the NHS.

Scotland

If you live in Scotland, you **won't** have to pay for any personal care services you are assessed as needing if you are aged 65 and over. However, you may have to pay towards other services, such as cleaning and shopping. This will depend on the charging policy of your local council. If you are under 65 your local council will work out how much you should contribute towards all of your care services.

Your local council should be able to give you information on what services 'personal care' includes, and on the local eligibility criteria for these services.

However, in general, personal care covers things such as:

- help with washing, bathing and trimming nails
- help with going to the toilet or using a bedpan
- help with the use of continence equipment, such as catheters and stomas
- help with eating and managing special diets
- help with applying creams, eye drops or dressings
- help with getting up and going to bed
- help with getting dressed
- help to move about indoors
- memory and safety devices that help you to manage: for example, systems to remind you to take your medicines, or sound/movement alarms linked to light controls.

Local councils are allowed to charge for any services that do not come under personal care and each one will have its own charging policy. Your local council should be able to provide you with information explaining how its charges are worked out.

Although the Scottish Executive hasn't issued guidance on charging for care at home, CoSLA (the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities) recommends that local councils should follow some general rules when working out how much you should pay. Your local council doesn't have to follow these rules, but it should at least consider them when it makes its own charging policy.

- Your earnings, pensions and benefits (except for the mobility component of Disability Living Allowance) **should** be taken into account.
- Your partner's financial resources will also be taken into account.
- Any charges that are made should not bring your income below the level of Pension Credit guarantee credit plus 16.5 per cent (for 2008–09 this is £144.51 for a single person or £220.59 for a couple).
- There is no upper limit to the amount of savings you can have. For savings over £6,000, every part of £500 will count as £1 of weekly income.
- Local councils should consider not charging for day care services or for aids and adaptations.

Can I get free personal care if I'm arranging my own care?

If you are arranging and paying for your own personal care, you must ask your local council for an assessment (see page 2). If your local council agrees that you need personal care services, it can:

- make a contractual arrangement with the agency providing your care, and pay it directly; **or**
- give you cash to pay your carer or care agency (Direct Payments).

However, your local council may not agree to pay for all of the services you are currently receiving. It will only contribute towards the cost of your care up to the level it has assessed you as needing. It will also have its own rules about the kinds of services it will offer, how much care you will be given and how often. You can continue to receive other services but you will have to carry on arranging and paying for them yourself.

Care at home after hospital discharge

You should be given up to four weeks free care at home after discharge from hospital. This covers both personal and non-personal care.

Northern Ireland

If you live in Northern Ireland, you shouldn't have to pay for any home help services you receive from your local council if you are:

- aged 75 and over; **or**
- are receiving Pension Credit (guarantee credit, savings credit or both) or Income Support.

The home help service includes:

- basic household tasks: for example, cleaning, preparing and cooking food, and shopping; **and**
- some personal and social care duties: for example, help with washing, dressing, going to the toilet and supervising medicines.

If you don't automatically qualify for free home help, your local council will assess your finances to see how much you should contribute. This will include your income from earnings, pensions and most benefits. However, any Attendance Allowance or Disability Living Allowance you receive should be ignored. The value of your home will not be counted, but other savings and capital you have over £6,000 will be taken into account.

Equipment and adaptations

You shouldn't be charged for any community care equipment, but you may be asked to contribute to the cost of adaptations, depending on your financial situation.

Withdrawal of services

Local councils can take their resources into account when they are setting the eligibility criteria for their services. They can also, within limits, revise these eligibility criteria for financial reasons; in other words they can reduce or cut the services they offer.

If your local council wishes to withdraw or reduce services you are receiving, the following advice may be of help.

- Before it can withdraw or reduce your services, your local council **has to reassess your needs**. This means that your local council should carry out a full assessment of your needs against its new eligibility criteria.
- This reassessment should involve a personal visit – a letter telling you that your services are being withdrawn is not enough. If you receive a letter from your local council telling you that your services are being reduced or cut, contact your council and tell it that you do not accept that you have been reassessed, and ask for a personal visit.
- If your services are being threatened, **seek advice immediately**. It is important to lodge a complaint with your local council as quickly as possible. Our information sheet no. 27, *How to Make a Complaint*, has information on how to challenge your local council. Or call our free advice service **SeniorLine** on **0808 800 6565 (0808 808 7575** if you are in **Northern Ireland**).

Problems with local council services

Calls made to Help the Aged have highlighted some of the common problems people have with local council services. We give some examples below. If your situation isn't covered here, or you need more in-depth advice, call **SeniorLine** on **0808 800 6565** (in **Northern Ireland** call SeniorLine on **0808 808 7575**).

If you are having problems with your local council, you can make a complaint. For example, you may want to challenge your local council if:

- you don't agree with the way you have been assessed;
- you are unhappy with your services;
- you have to wait an unreasonable length of time for an assessment or for equipment or adaptations; or
- you don't agree with the amount you are being charged.

Your local council should provide you with a leaflet about its complaints procedure and have a complaints officer who can advise you. See our information sheet no. 27, *How to Make a Complaint*, for more information.

The rules about funding and accessing home care services that we mention in this information sheet are based on legislation and government guidance. Most people will not need to know about particular regulations or pieces of guidance to get the help that they need. But if you do come across difficulties, you may find it useful to quote the source of your information. We have listed the main sources of legal reference in our information sheet no. 18, *Community Care: Legislation, Guidance and Case Law*.

The Commission for Social Care Inspection (CSCI) produces an advice leaflet called *Social Care – choosing the right service for you*. The leaflet is designed to help people choose the best care services for their personal needs and maintain their independence and quality of life. Tel: **0870 240 7535**;
web: www.csci.org.uk

Case study 1: Mr Benn has been waiting 10 months for an assessment

Mr Benn lives in a two-storey house with an upstairs bathroom, but due to decreased mobility he has become unable to get up and down the stairs. He asked his local council for an assessment, but was still waiting for someone to come and visit him ten months later. He called Help the Aged for advice about what he should do.

Mr Benn was advised that he should complain to his local council. Although there is no set limit for how long you have to wait for an assessment, you should be assessed within a 'reasonable' time period. Someone who is unable to use their bathroom should be assessed as a priority. A ten month delay in this case appears unreasonable. Mr Benn was also advised to ask his local council if it had set its own time limits for providing services. Local councils don't have to set time limits, but if it does it should abide by them.

Case study 2: Mrs Anderson is told to arrange and pay for her care

Mrs Anderson was assessed as needing a daily one hour visit. The local council told her that it had no money left in its budget and gave her a list of private care agencies. It told her she would have to contact one of these agencies, charging £10 per hour, and arrange and pay for her own care. Her daughter called Help the Aged for advice.

The local council is wrong. If it has assessed Mrs Anderson as needing care then it has to meet that need. It cannot use lack of funds as an excuse. It should arrange her care for her (or provide Direct Payments if this is what she prefers). She shouldn't necessarily have to pay for all her care.

Case study 3: Mrs O'Donnell is told to buy her lunch from the pub

Mrs O'Donnell, who is 92, was receiving the Home Help service from her local council in Northern Ireland to help her prepare meals. She was told that her trust didn't arrange holiday cover so she should buy her lunch from her local pub. She called SeniorLine in Northern Ireland.

Mrs O'Donnell's local council is not meeting her assessed needs. It hadn't considered buying in services from outside its area, or from the private sector, to meet her needs during the holiday. She was advised to make a complaint.

Case study 4: Mr Stewart is refused an assessment of his needs

Mr Stewart called his local council to ask for an assessment. He was asked over the phone specifically what it was that he needed. When he said he needed help with shopping, he was told that his local council didn't provide a shopping service and he couldn't have an assessment. When his daughter tried calling back, she was told that her father's needs had already been assessed over the phone and that the local council couldn't provide services to help him. Mr Stewart's daughter called SeniorLine for advice. She said that her father hadn't really known what to ask for but had felt pressured into saying something.

Mr Stewart's daughter was advised that they should try calling his local council again. Mr Stewart should insist that he needs someone to visit him at home to assess his needs. He should explain the kinds of problems he is having, but say that he doesn't know exactly what help he needs or what services the local council can provide. The local council should accept his request for a home assessment. If it doesn't, Mr Stewart should make a complaint. The likelihood of you being entitled to services should not determine whether or not you get an assessment.

Case study 5: Mrs Bennett is given grab rails but told that she will have to install them herself

Mrs Bennett has difficulty getting in and out of her bath and getting up from the toilet. She was assessed by her local council which agreed to provide grab rails for her. The grab rails were delivered to her home, but no one came to fit

them for her. Her local council said that it didn't provide this service. She called SeniorLine for advice.

Mrs Bennett was advised to make a complaint. The local council is not meeting her assessed needs because she is still unable to use her bathroom. Her local council should arrange for someone to come round to fit the grab rails.

Case study 6: Mr Patel can't get to his day centre

Mr Patel was assessed as needing a place in a day centre, but his local council said it was unable to provide transport for him to get to the day centre. He is unable to get there by himself. He rang SeniorLine.

Mr Patel was advised to make a complaint. By refusing to organise transport, the local council is failing to meet his assessed need of a place in a day centre.

Useful contacts

Care standards authorities

For details of registered care agencies and care standards.

Commission for Social Care Inspection (England)

33 Greycoat Street

London SW1P 2QF

Tel: 0845 015 0120

Textphone: 0845 015 2255

Web: www.csci.org.uk

Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales

4–5 Charnwood Court

Heol Billingsley

Nantgarw CF15 7QZ

Tel: 01443 848450

Web: www.cssiw.org.uk

Regulation and Quality Improvement Authority (Northern Ireland)

9th Floor, Riverside Tower

5 Lanyon Place

Belfast BT1 3BT

Tel: 028 9051 7500

Web: www.rqia.org.uk

Scottish Commission for the Regulation of Care

Compass House, 11 Riverside Drive

Dundee DD1 4NY

Tel: 0845 603 0890

Web: www.carecommission.com

For further information contact:

Information Resources Team
Help the Aged
207–221 Pentonville Road
London N1 9UZ
Tel: 020 7278 1114

If you have access to the internet you can download our information sheets and advice leaflets by logging on to **www.helptheaged.org.uk**

SeniorLine is the free welfare rights advice and information service run by Help the Aged for older people and their carers. Trained advice workers offer free, confidential and impartial advice about:

- welfare and disability benefits
- care at home
- residential care
- housing options and adaptations
- access to health and community services.

Freephone: **0808 800 6565**

Textphone: **0800 26 96 26**

9am to 4pm, Monday to Friday

If you are in **Northern Ireland**, contact **SeniorLine** on **0808 808 7575**.

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Help the Aged is a registered charity No. 272786, registered in England at the above address.