

# Care and support packages: reviews and new assessments

This factsheet provides information for people who are already receiving care and support through a package of social care.

At some stage after your care plan is set up, you may be told that your local authority will undertake a review or even carry out a new assessment.

This factsheet explains the review and new assessment process, the differences between the two, when these should happen and what they look like in practice.

## What are reviews?

Once you have a package of care and support in place, the local authority should review it regularly to confirm that it is still appropriate for you.

Your package is based on your original needs assessment which formally records all of your needs.

Reviews are an ongoing process used to reflect on the current package, to discuss what is working, what is not working and what might need to change in future. If the review identified that your needs may have changed in a way that affects your care and support plan, this must trigger a new needs assessment.

It may be that small revisions to your package are possible as a result of the review process, but it must not decrease the amount of support you receive and must still continue to meet all of your needs.

The review must not be used as a way of reducing your package of care and support simply for budgetary reasons.

Reviews are usually carried out by a social worker or assessor from your local authority. They may also be carried out on behalf of your local authority by your care and support provider. They will arrange a meeting time with you for the review.



If you had any support at your original needs assessment from a family member, friend, supporter or independent advocate, this person should also be invited to attend your review.

Reviews can only focus on the basis of the existing needs assessment. They cannot be used to reassess eligibility. If your needs have changed, you will need a new needs assessment.

## When should I ask for a review?

If there is something that is not working about your package, you should consider asking for a review. They are usually scheduled at least annually, but either you or your local authority can request one at any time.

A review is a good opportunity to discuss what isn't working; what might need to change; and whether your care plan is achieving your outcomes and aspirations.

Your local authority – together with the care and support provider – can investigate whether there are changes that can be made within the review process or whether the changes are such that a new assessment is needed.

If the review shows that your needs have changed, you can request a new assessment, and the local authority must consider this request.

## What should I expect from a new assessment?

A new assessment should take place if your needs have changed since your last needs assessment.

Local authorities cannot revisit the old needs assessment to make changes: a new assessment **must** take place, taking into account all presenting needs.

Authorities must adhere to the 'proportionality' principle. This means that social workers only have to make enough enquiries to explore the

underlying needs. While presenting problems should not be taken at 'face value', the process should not feel overly intrusive.

Sometimes, local authorities may talk about a 'reassessment', in which a type of review meeting takes place to change the original needs assessment. The Care Act 2014 is very clear that there is no such thing as a reassessment.

The new assessment should be carried out in exactly the same way as your original assessment, by a social worker or another suitably trained assessor. The assessment should focus on your disability, how this affects the things you want to do in your everyday life (known as 'outcomes') and how this affects your wellbeing.

### **Examples of review processes**

Here is one example of the review process being appropriate and one example when it is not appropriate.

#### **Aliyah**

Aliyah is receiving 15 hours per week support from a support worker. This is paid through direct payments. Her support worker helps for 3 hours a day with shopping, housework, cooking and paperwork. The support worker currently arrives at 0900am and leaves at 1200 noon.

Aliyah wants to start a morning college course, and later in the week wants to go to a day centre which may involve mornings. In addition, the fees for the support worker have increased.

Aliyah requests a review and her care and support provider carries out the review. It is agreed that they will move the 15 hours around to different times, and one different day. It is also noted that there is a small shortfall in funding due to the support worker charge increases, so funding is increased to cover that shortfall.

## Mohammed

Mohammed is receiving 20 hours per week care and support from a support worker. He has learning disabilities and autism. He also has epilepsy. Over the past 6 months, Mohammed has been having increased seizures and can no longer shower safely by himself. He is also struggling to cook meals because he is suffering weakness in his arms and hands.

He contacts his social worker to ask for more support. His social worker attends and carries out a review of the original package.

Mohammed is told that as he has only been allocated the 20 hours per week support, he hasn't got funding for any more support, but they are happy for him to move the hours around if this would help him.

Mohammed should be offered a new assessment as his needs have changed. Relying on funding limits is not lawful, and the review process would not be sufficient in this situation.