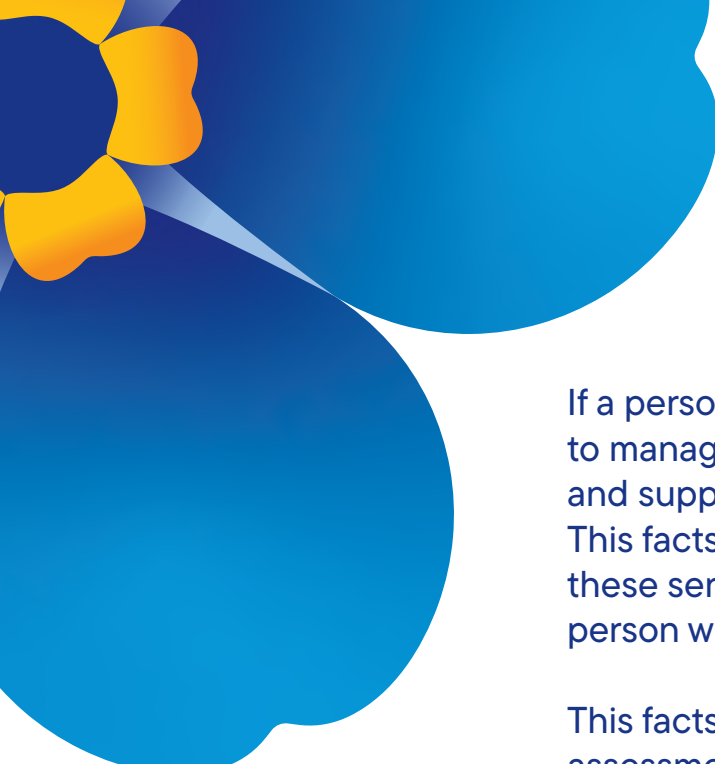


# Assessment for care and support in England



**Alzheimer's  
Society**

Together we are help & hope  
for everyone living with dementia



If a person with dementia or a carer is finding it difficult to manage day-to-day they may be entitled to care and support services paid for by the local authority. This factsheet for carers explains how you can access these services through either a care assessment for a person with dementia or a carer's assessment.

This factsheet is for people living in England, as assessments for care and support are different in Wales and Northern Ireland. See factsheets NI418 for Northern Ireland and W418 for Wales.

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# 1 What is care and support?

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your notes

As a carer, the impact of dementia on your daily life can be challenging. As the person's dementia progresses, they will find everyday activities more difficult. You might be supporting them by:

- regularly checking they are safe and comfortable
- cooking and providing meals for them
- driving or going with them to appointments or the shops
- moving them into your home so you can give full-time support.

However, you may be feeling stressed, anxious, or that you can no longer provide the level of care they need. This can affect the wellbeing of the person with dementia and even put them at risk of harm.

You don't have to manage alone. The point of care and support is to help you as a carer, as well as the person with dementia. This can help you to maintain your health and wellbeing as well as carry on caring for the person.

**Care and support** is available from your local authority. This includes practical services and financial advice for both of you. The local authority can also provide help to support you both emotionally.

It may be difficult to think about asking for support, especially if you feel like you and the person you support have been coping well. Support can be tailored to meet your needs now and adapted or increased in the future.

In order to find out what support and care is needed, the first step is arranging an assessment. There are two different assessments with similar-sounding names. They are different in who they are used for:

- A **care assessment** is for a person with dementia.
- A **carer's assessment** is for a carer.

A care assessment for a person with dementia may be called different things by different organisations. This includes a 'care needs assessment', a 'social care assessment', or a 'Care Act assessment'.

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Everyone has unique needs, so the type of care and support will be different from person to person. For a person with dementia, examples of care and support could be:

- someone visiting their home to help prepare meals
- help with dressing or washing
- attending a day centre or other activities in the community.

For you, as a carer, care and support could be:

- training to help with your caring role, for example training to move and handle the person you care for, or training to use any specialist equipment
- providing additional services to the person so that you can have a break
- advice about your finances and benefits you could be entitled to as a carer.

There is no charge for either assessment and anyone who may have care and support needs is entitled to have one. Preparing for the assessments will help you understand what needs the person with dementia has, and what needs you may have as a carer. It will also help you to start thinking about what care and support will help.

## 2 Arranging an assessment for care and support

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You can ask for a care assessment or carer's assessment directly from your local authority's adult services or social services department. You can find the department's contact details:

- online
- at your GP surgery
- on a Council tax bill
- at local carers organisations
- at the local library
- through the PALS (Patient Advice and Liaison) team or through staff involved in the person's discharge (if the person is in hospital).

The person with dementia can ask for a care assessment themselves or you can do this for them. Other people can also arrange a care assessment on behalf of the person with dementia. These include:

- the person's GP, consultant or another health or social care professional such as an occupational therapist
- a carer or relative
- a hospital social worker (if the person is in hospital).

If you ask for a care assessment on behalf of the person with dementia, you must get their consent first. You can get consent by checking that the person agrees to you requesting this. Some people with dementia may lack the ability (mental capacity) to give consent. You can then ask for an assessment if it is in the person's best interests. For more information on this see factsheet 460, **Mental Capacity Act 2005**.

Speak to your local authority and ask for information and advice as soon as possible. You could start by looking at your local council website to see what support is available and how to get in contact. The information will help you to plan ahead for care and support. This will give you both more time to explore your options. It will also help with planning for emergencies or preparing for times when you may not be able to provide care.

## Space for your notes

## Who pays for care and support?

You have to meet certain criteria (conditions) to have care and support provided by the local authority. There are different criteria for the care assessment and a carer's assessment. In addition, the local authority will undertake a financial assessment for each person. The adult services or social services department will use this to decide if and how much it will pay towards care and support for a person with dementia or their carer. There are different ways this can happen:

- The local authority will provide and fully pay for the care and support of some people.
- Some people will pay towards their care and support and the local authority will also pay towards it.
- Some people may have to pay in full for their care and support themselves.

The local authority cannot refuse to carry out an assessment, even if they think the person will have to pay for their own care and support. If the local authority does not pay towards the care and support, the information in the assessment can still be helpful. You can use the information to discuss care and support needs with other organisations and companies, such as home care agencies. See section 'Financial assessments' on page 15.



**They did point out to me that I could get the local authority health care to pay for a sitter to be with my other half for 3 hrs per week, if wanted. I got the forms and applied.**

Partner of a person with dementia



# 3 The criteria for a care assessment

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Anyone with dementia can get a care assessment. It should identify the person's needs and what support would meet these needs. It also helps the local authority to decide if it will pay towards meeting these needs.

The care assessment will identify if the person with dementia has one or more 'eligible care needs'. A person must have an eligible care need for the local authority to consider paying for their care and support.

## Criteria for eligible care needs

There are three criteria (conditions) that apply across England. The local authority uses them to decide whether a person is eligible for care and support. These are:

- 1 They have care and support needs because they have a physical or mental condition** (this includes dementia).
- 2 The person's needs mean they are unable to do at least two of the following:**
  - Manage and maintain nutrition – such as buying food and remembering to eat meals.
  - Maintain personal hygiene – such as washing themselves or doing laundry.
  - Manage toilet needs – such as using the toilet or changing incontinence pads.
  - Be appropriately clothed – such as dressing themselves in clothes suitable for the weather and their needs.
  - Be able to use their home safely – such as moving around the home safely (including going up and down stairs), using the kitchen or getting to and using the bathroom.
  - Maintain a habitable home environment – such as keeping the home clean and safe or paying bills.
  - Develop and maintain family or other personal relationships – such as spending time with friends.
  - Access and engage in work, training, education or volunteering – such as attending a course.
  - Make use of necessary facilities or services in the local community – such as getting to the doctors, using public transport and local services or shops.
  - Carry out any caring responsibilities – such as caring for children or grandchildren.

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The person is considered unable to do these things:

- if they cannot do them without help
- if they can do them without help, but it causes them pain, distress, anxiety or puts them (or someone else) in danger
- if it takes them much longer to do them than you would expect.

**3 There is, or likely to be, a significant impact on the person's wellbeing** because of not being able to do these things.

After the assessment, the local authority may decide that the person with dementia does not have an eligible care need. If you or the person believes they do, you will need to make a complaint (see section 9 'Complaints' on page 19).



## 4 Getting a care assessment

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The local authority's adult social services department carries out most assessments. The assessor is normally a social worker or care coordinator. They may ask to involve other professionals, for example, the person's doctor. In some places, the local authority allows other professionals to do this, such as someone from a carers' centre.

### What to expect at the care assessment

A care assessment will involve answering questions that you should receive before the assessment. It can be helpful to use these to prepare for the care assessment. If the person with dementia has the assessment questions, they can look through them and think about their answers.

It can be useful to make notes so that the person with dementia can tell the assessor what support they need. You and the person with dementia may also do this together. If you have not received the questions, contact your social services department to ask for them.

The questions will help the local authority to find out:

- where the person with dementia lives and what care they currently receive
- if the person has any health conditions, and what they can and cannot do for themselves
- the person's views about their support, and how they would like to be supported
- the carer's views.

Everyone at the assessment will discuss the answers. However, not all assessments are done face-to-face and may be done through a self-assessment questionnaire.

### Self-assessment questionnaire

Sometimes an assessment is done through a questionnaire that the person with dementia completes themselves. They may need help to fill this out. You or a social worker can help make sure that all their needs are considered, or you can also ask the local authority for support. Some local charities, such as a carers' centre may also help with this.

## Space for your notes

### Phone assessments

Assessments can be carried out over the phone. However, this is only appropriate if the person is already known to the local authority. For example, if the local authority has already assessed them and the phone assessment is because of a change in their needs. A phone assessment may also be appropriate if the person's needs are not complex.

People with dementia often have more complex needs, meaning their needs may change from day to day. Therefore, telephone assessments should not be used as the only way of assessing their care needs.

If the person with dementia is offered a self-assessment questionnaire or phone assessment, they can ask to have the assessment in person. They should explain why they need a face-to-face assessment. If a face-to-face assessment is still not offered, they can make a complaint about the lack of support they have received. You can also do this on their behalf if the person with dementia consents or if it is in their best interests. See section 9 'Complaints' on page 19.

### Advocacy

Sometimes a person with dementia may need an advocate to help them with the assessment process. The purpose of an advocate is to support the person to be fully involved in the assessment process and understand their rights. This type of advocate is called a 'Care Act advocate'.

Someone having a care assessment will be entitled to an advocate if:

- they have difficulty understanding and being involved in the assessment without support
- they have no friends or family that are appropriate, able and willing to support the person during the assessment.

An advocate can help the person with dementia understand and engage in the assessment and ensure the person's voice is heard. The social services team will arrange for you to have an advocate if they feel you need one. If you or the person feel that they need an advocate, then ask the social services for one and they will check to see if the person with dementia is eligible.

### Where the care assessment takes place

A face-to-face care assessment usually takes place in the person's home. This can help the assessor understand what care and support the person needs. If the assessment is arranged elsewhere, it should be somewhere convenient for the person and you.

## The care assessment: tips

The tips below can help the person with dementia get more from the assessment. Use the suggestions to make notes or comments on relevant details. Make sure to share these in the assessment.

- **Create a daily diary for a few weeks.** Include tasks the person needs help with.
- **Make a list of any medicines the person is taking.** Include what conditions they are for.
- **Collect any letters from the GP or other professionals.** This is called 'supporting evidence', such as a GP letter suggesting ramps if the person has problems with walking.
- **Are there carers or relatives that the person would like at the assessment?** Check if they are available to attend.
- **Do they follow any cultural or religious practices?** They may have dietary requirements, such as being a vegetarian, or may regularly visit a place of worship.
- **What support do they get from family and carers?** Even if these people carry on giving care and support, the assessment should cover what would happen if they could no longer do this. It's also important to mention if anyone is finding it difficult to provide care or meet the person's needs.
- **Is there any equipment or assistive technology that would help?** This could be an automated pill dispenser or smart home systems. For more information see factsheet 437, **Using technology to help with everyday life.**
- **Is there any care and support given by professionals that would help?** This could include care and support from a care organisation, support groups, or day centres.
- **What care and support might they need in the future as their dementia progresses?** This can include support from other people as well as equipment and assistive technology.

## During the care assessment

- **Be honest.** Some people feel uncomfortable talking to professionals about their problems. The assessor will be used to discussing things like incontinence and changes in behaviour. Being open will help the person with dementia get the best results from their assessment.
- **Tell the assessor if there are things the person wants to do.** For example:
  - be more active
  - stay living at home for as long as possible
  - attend groups and events to engage with other people
  - get help with activities such as shopping or going for walks.

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# 5 Support for carers: carer's assessment criteria

Anyone over the age of 18, who provides regular, unpaid care to a person with dementia, can get an assessment of their needs as a carer. This includes multiple people caring for the same person.

A carer's assessment should identify what your needs are and work out what type of support would help. You can still have a carer's assessment, even if the person you care for refuses an assessment or doesn't want care or support.

**Everyone needs support from time to time. For more information see factsheet 523, Carers – looking after yourself and booklet 600, Caring for a person with dementia: A practical guide. For advice, call our Dementia Support Line on 0333 150 3456.**

If you meet certain eligibility criteria (conditions), the local authority may pay for your support. Even if the person you are caring for is self-funding their care, you may still be able to receive support.

## Eligible care needs for carers

The carer's assessment will identify if you have an 'eligible care need' to receive care and support. Once the assessment is complete, the local authority will carry out a financial assessment to decide if they have a duty to meet your needs.

For more information on the financial assessment see 'Financial assessments' on page 15 or factsheet 532, **Paying for care and support in England**.

After the assessment, you may be told you are not eligible to get your support funded by the local authority because you do not meet the criteria. If you feel you do, you will need to make a complaint (see section 9 'Complaints' on page 19).

The 'criteria' (conditions) below apply across England. A carer must meet these three criteria for the local authority to consider funding their care and support:

- 1 The carer has needs because they are providing care** to the person with dementia.
- 2 As a result of providing care, a carer's physical or mental health is getting worse**, or is at risk of getting worse. Or the carer may find they are putting themselves or others in danger. They may also be unable to do any of the following without assistance or feeling pain, distress and anxiety:
  - Carry out caring responsibilities for a child – such as caring responsibilities for children and grandchildren.
  - Provide care to another person or people – such as caring for another friend or family member.
  - Maintain a habitable home environment – such as keeping the home clean and safe or paying the bills.
  - Manage and maintain their own nutrition – such as going shopping and preparing meals.
  - Develop and maintain family or other personal relationships – such as staying in touch with family and friends.
  - Engage in work, training, education or volunteering – such as continuing to work or attending a course.
  - Make use of the necessary facilities or services in the local community and have the opportunity to use local resources – such as going to the gym or cinema.
  - Engage in recreational activities and have leisure time – such as having free time to read a book or take part in hobbies.
- 3 Because of these needs there is, or is likely to be, a significant impact** on the carer's wellbeing.

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**A visit from a carer three times a day to give meds and make a meal and a hot drink would probably help a lot.**

Family member of a person with dementia

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## Space for your notes

# 6 Getting a carer's assessment

A carer's assessment is often carried out at the same time as a care assessment for the person with dementia. This can be helpful as your needs may be met by support provided to the person you care for. For example, if you need a short break from your caring role, the local authority could offer replacement (respite) care to the person with dementia. For more information see factsheet 462, **Respite care in England**.

The carer's assessment can also be arranged as:

- part of a care assessment for the person you care for
- a referral from a health or social care professional, friend or relative. If someone makes the referral for you as a carer, they must have your consent. You must agree to have a carer's assessment before it can take place.
- a separate carer's assessment. You may feel you will be able to speak more openly about your feelings and needs if the person you care for is not at the assessment.

Speak to the local authority to arrange this. See section 2 'Arranging an assessment for care and support' on page 3 for details on how to contact them.

## What to expect at the carer's assessment

A social worker or care coordinator usually carries out the assessment. Alternatively, the local authority may ask another organisation to carry out the assessment. For example a local voluntary group such as a carers' centre. The assessment may also involve other health professionals, such as a GP. The assessor will arrange this if needed.

At the carer's assessment, you will have the opportunity to explain what you do as a carer. You can say what help and support you would like. The assessment will involve answering questions. You should get the list of assessment questions in advance so you can prepare your answers. If you haven't received the questions, contact your social services department and ask for them.

### Self-assessment questionnaire

Sometimes the local authority will ask for information through a self-assessment questionnaire. You can ask them for support completing this if you need to. Some local charities may also help with this.

## Phone assessments

Assessments can also take place over the phone. However, this is only appropriate if you are already known to the local authority. For example, if they have assessed you before and the telephone assessment is a result of a change in your needs. A phone assessment may also be appropriate if your needs or circumstances are not complicated.

If you're offered a self-assessment questionnaire or phone assessment, you can ask to have the assessment in person if you prefer. You should explain why you need a face-to-face assessment. If this is still not offered, you can make a complaint about the lack of support you are receiving. See section 9 'Complaints' on page 19.

## Where the carer's assessment takes place

The carer's assessment is likely to take place in the home of the person with dementia. However, a carer's assessment may also take place separately from the person with dementia's care assessment. Or the person with dementia may not be having an assessment at all. In this case, the carer's assessment should take place somewhere that is convenient for you.

## The carer's assessment: tips

There are a few things you can do to prepare for a carer's assessment. Look through the questions and take your time to think about your answers.

The tips below can help you prepare and get more from your assessment. Think about the support you need. Use the suggestions to make notes or comments on relevant details. Make sure to share these in the assessment.

- **Create a diary for a few weeks and include all the tasks that you do to support the person with dementia.** This could include helping them with washing and dressing or doing their shopping.
- **List the care and support that you give the person including when, where and for how long.** Include details on any time you spend checking on the person's wellbeing. Or times you respond to phone calls to support them.
- **List any benefits you or the person you are supporting get.** The assessor may be able to suggest other benefits if appropriate. If you are not receiving any benefits and think you should be, you can ask the assessor for more information.
- **What care and support can you continue to provide?** You should not feel pressured into providing care that you are not willing or able to give.

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## Space for your notes

- **Do you find your caring role difficult at times?** Mention the occasions when you feel irritable, stressed or depressed. If appropriate, include any physical health problems caused by your caring role.
- **Are there things you can't do or find difficult as a result of caring?** You may not have time to clean your home, go to work or see your friends.
- **Think about what support would help you now and in the future, as the person's dementia progresses.** This could be arranging respite care so you can have a break. Or practical help, such as equipment or training.
- **Be open and honest.** You might find it difficult to talk about how you feel at first, but remember that the assessor is there to support you. To get the best results from your assessment, they need to understand how you are managing.



# 7 Organising care and support

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your notes

If an assessment shows that support is needed, the local authority looks at how best to put this in place. They will firstly carry out a financial assessment.

## Financial assessments

The financial assessment decides if and how much the local authority will pay towards the care and support that is needed. This could be:

- the local authority covers the full cost of care
- both the local authority and the person contribute to the cost of care
- the person pays for all the care themselves.

If you feel that the charges are unreasonable or the financial assessment has not been done properly, contact the local authority. Ask for a breakdown of costs and an explanation of the decision. You can also speak to them about your concerns.

If you think the charges are wrong, you may want to get further advice and information (see 'Other useful organisations' on page 20). You can make a complaint about the charges by following the local authority's complaints procedure (see section 9 'Complaints' on page 19).

**When the local authority provides a service directly to a carer, for example driving lessons, it has the power to charge the carer. However, a local authority must not charge a carer for support provided directly to the person they care for, under any circumstances.**

For more information about paying for care at home (and in a care home) see factsheet 532, **Paying for care and support in England**.

## Space for your notes

### Personal budgets and direct payments

If the local authority is paying for some or all of the care, they will do this through a personal budget. A personal budget is the amount of money the local authority decides will meet someone's needs. The local authority will use the financial assessment to decide how much money the person will contribute to their personal budget.

You or the person with dementia may choose to receive a 'direct payment' from the local authority, so you can arrange services yourselves. Direct payments can offer more flexibility when choosing services to meet the person with dementia's needs.

Managing direct payments can be complicated. Therefore, the local authority must be satisfied that the person with dementia is able to manage payments, either alone or with help. If a person with dementia finds it complicated to manage their payments alone, they can choose someone they trust to help them. This would make the person with dementia and the person helping responsible for completing any paperwork.

If necessary, the local authority must help the person managing the direct payment to find local support services. These services may be voluntary or charitable organisations. For more information see factsheet 473, **Personal budgets**.

### Brokerage service

Brokerage is a service that helps you to set up your care and support by direct payment. A social worker or other support worker will be able to tell you about local brokerage services. Their availability varies across different areas.

A broker can help you take part in and understand the care planning process. For example, they may guide you on how to organise tailored support for yourself or the person with dementia. Professional brokers charge fees, but some voluntary organisations might also have a brokerage service. For more information see factsheet 473, **Personal budgets**.

## Care and support plans

If the care assessment shows the person with dementia has eligible needs, they will receive a care and support plan from the local authority. The plan lists the person's needs and how to meet them. For example, if a person needs support at mealtimes, the care and support plan would state that a care worker should visit them to help during meals.

As a carer, you will also get a care and support plan if you are eligible. This will outline support that is specifically for you. This could include counselling for you or training, such as manual lifting and handling to help you support the person.

A carer's assessment may also lead to changes in the care and support plan for the person with dementia. Sometimes, your needs can be met by providing services to the person you care for. An example is replacement (respite) care – where a paid care worker spends time with the person with dementia, so you can take a break. Although the change is there to help you, it will be applied to the care plan of the person with dementia.

## How care and support are arranged

The main ways the local authority arranges care and support are:

- giving the support directly from social services
- arranging for a care provider, such as a homecare agency
- making a direct payment to the person or their carer to buy their own care and support.

Care and support can also be arranged as a combination of these options. How this will be arranged is usually discussed in the assessment and should be in the care and support plan.

The local authority must give you information on where to get local care and support, even if they are not paying for the care. This information can include advice from professionals such as an occupational therapist or a social worker. You can also get information from local care agencies and charities.

The Care Quality Commission lists all registered homecare providers in England. You can use their website to search for agencies using your postcode or the postcode of the person you are supporting (see 'Other useful organisations' on page 20).

Some services, such as community nursing, are arranged through the GP. This can be done directly or after a discussion with your local authority's adult services or social services department.

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**Social services have stepped in and from Monday will be going in each evening to administer the evening meds.**

Family member of a person with dementia

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## Space for your notes

# 8 Reviews

Over time, your circumstances and the person with dementia's circumstances will change. Your local authority will arrange a review meeting to see whether the services you receive are still meeting both your needs.

There are different ways to get a review:

- **A planned review** is discussed and agreed in the initial care plan.
- **An unplanned review** is normally the result of a change in circumstances, such as a hospital admission or a fall that means the person is less able to do things.
- **A requested review** is where the person, their carer or a professional (for example their GP) asks for a review. This may be due to a change in care needs or when it is felt that different support is needed.

If the local authority has given you or the person with dementia a personal budget, they will likely consider an initial review in six to eight weeks. This will not be as detailed as the original assessment. The point of this review is to make sure that the support is meeting all the care needs. The review is also to make sure that any problems are dealt with quickly.

## 9 Complaints

If you need to make a complaint about the assessment process, it's best to try and solve this with the person you're in contact with, such as the social worker. A discussion may resolve a breakdown in communication or a misunderstanding.

If this doesn't work, local authorities have complaints procedures to follow. They will explain how to use this. The complaints procedure might be appropriate if:

- there are problems arranging an assessment
- there is an unreasonably long wait for an assessment
- someone is told that they are not eligible for care and support, and you or they feel that they are
- the required services are not provided, or are unsatisfactory
- there is a dispute about the amount of personal budget given.

Contact the local authority to find out what their complaints procedure is. If the local authority's complaints procedure does not resolve the issue, you can take your complaint to the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman. It may be helpful to talk to a local advice agency first, for example Citizens Advice (see 'Other useful organisations' on page 20).

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## Space for your notes

# Other useful organisations

### **Age UK**

**0800 678 1602 (advice line, 8am–7pm)**

**[www.ageuk.org.uk/contact-us/information-and-advice](http://www.ageuk.org.uk/contact-us/information-and-advice)  
(contact form)**

**[www.ageuk.org.uk](http://www.ageuk.org.uk)**

Information and advice for older people in the UK.

### **Care Quality Commission (CQC)**

**03000 616161 (8.30am–5.30pm Monday–Friday)**

**[enquiries@cqc.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@cqc.org.uk)**

**[www.cqc.org.uk](http://www.cqc.org.uk)**

The CQC regulates, inspects and reviews all adult social care services in the public, private and voluntary sectors in England.

### **Carers UK**

**0808 808 7777 (helpline, 9am–6pm Monday–Friday)**

**[advice@carersuk.org](mailto:advice@carersuk.org)**

**[www.carersuk.org](http://www.carersuk.org)**

Advice, information and support about caring. This includes information on paying for care.

### **Citizens Advice**

**0800 144 8848 (for England, 9am–5pm Monday–Friday)**

**[www.citizensadvice.org.uk](http://www.citizensadvice.org.uk)**

Free, confidential and impartial advice on debt, benefits, employment, housing and discrimination. To find your local Citizens advice, use the website or look in the phone book.

### **Independent Age**

**0800 319 6789 (helpline, 9am–5pm Monday–Friday)**

**[advice@independentage.org](mailto:advice@independentage.org)**

**[www.independentage.org](http://www.independentage.org)**

Information and advice service for older people, their families and carers, focusing on social care, welfare benefits and befriending services.

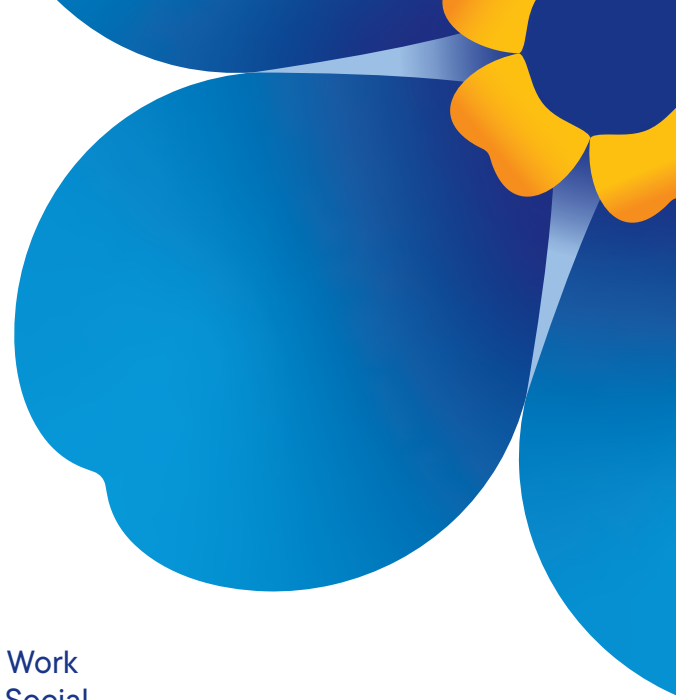
### **Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman**

**0300 061 0614 (10am–1pm Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays  
and Fridays and 1pm–4pm Wednesdays)**

**[complaints.lgo.org.uk](http://complaints.lgo.org.uk) (complaints form)**

**[www.lgo.org.uk](http://www.lgo.org.uk)**

An independent organisation that investigates complaints about councils and care providers and looks for a resolution.



Factsheet 418

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At Alzheimer's Society we're working towards a world where dementia no longer devastates lives. We do this by giving help to everyone who needs it today, and hope for everyone in the future.

We have more information on **Needing greater support with care.**

For advice and support on this, or any other aspect of dementia, call us on **0333 150 3456** or visit **alzheimers.org.uk**

Thanks to your donations, we're able to be a vital source of support and a powerful force for change for everyone living with dementia. Help us do even more, call **0330 333 0804** or visit **alzheimers.org.uk/donate**



**Alzheimer's  
Society**

Together we are help & hope  
for everyone living with dementia

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