

Self Advocacy Toolkit: Care Act Assessments



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Aims of this toolkit:

- To provide an overview of the different care assessments available to individuals
- To explain the different stages of a care assessment
- To encourage individuals to self-advocate in their care assessments and the planning of their support package



Why would you ask for a Care Act Assessment?

- you find that you are struggling with certain things you need to do in your day-to-day life (even if you do not always find these things difficult)
- you are turning 18 soon and you feel you need support once you are an adult
- you are struggling to care for someone (whether you are an adult or a young person)

A local authority must carry out a needs assessment if it becomes aware an adult may have care and support needs. It does not matter what the local authority may already know about their situation, whether there is already a carer providing support, or anything to do with the adult's finances.

There are 2 types of Care Act Assessment you can request:

- 1) **Care Needs Assessment** – this is for an adult (or a Young Person that is nearing adulthood) that has care and support needs. The aim is to identify what support they need and put a plan in place to meet that need.
- 2) **Carer's Assessment** – this is for any adult that provides a caring role for another person. The aim is to identify if they need any support they need to carry out their caring role and put a plan in place to meet that need.

You may request a **Care Needs Assessment** if you have difficulty with things like:

- managing and maintaining nutrition
- maintaining personal hygiene or toilet needs
- maintaining a habitable home environment
- accessing and engaging in work, training, education or volunteering
- making use of necessary facilities or services in the local community, including public transport, and recreational facilities or services

You may request a **Carer's Assessment** if you have your own care and support needs and these impact on your ability to provide care, or they are worsened by providing care.

How to request a Care Act Assessment

To request an assessment, you will need to contact the responsible local authority. You can give a friend, family or health professional permission to request a needs assessment for you.

You can find more information on how to contact your local authority to request an assessment on this website

<https://www.gov.uk/apply-needs-assessment-social-services>.

You will need to following information to do this:

- request a Care Needs Assessment: Postcode of where you are living
- request a Carer's Assessment: Postcode of where the person you are caring for is living

Note: If you do not have a fixed address, the local authority where you are currently should support you.

The local authority should provide accessible information about the process. You can ask for this when you contact them. The local authority should provide this as soon as possible and preferably before the assessment.

What is involved in the Assessment?



Step 1: Pre-screening

To confirm that the needs you have may be care and support needs, the local authority may ask you to complete a pre-screening questionnaire, so that they can have some more information about you and your situation. This might be via a phone call, or the local authority may arrange to meet you. You should let them know if you have a preference for how you communicate with them.

Step 2: Assessment

If the pre-screening has confirmed the needs you have are care and support needs, the local authority will carry out a longer assessment. This is so that they can get an understanding of your day-to-day life and what kind of support you may need.

The local authority may decide to carry out this assessment remotely (via phone, video call, or email) or in person. The format they choose should allow you explain your needs fully. If they have not chosen an option that is suitable for you, please inform them as soon as possible. The local authority may carry out a **Combined** assessment with another service, for example, health services, where this is relevant to your situation. If you have a carer who has also requested a Carer's Assessment, they may do a **Joint** assessment to consider your needs together.

There is no specific timeframe for the local authority to complete the assessment. It should take place within a *timely* manner. This would be based on your individual needs and circumstances. If your needs or situation change while you are waiting for an assessment, make sure to let the local authority know as this may change how urgent your assessment is. The local authority can also put some urgent support in place, while you are waiting for an assessment.

Step 3: Determination of Eligibility

The local authority will need to determine whether you are eligible for care and support. When looking at this, the local authority needs to ignore any care and support already provided by a carer.

If the local authority determine that you do not meet the eligibility criteria, they must provide the reasons in writing. If you think the reasons are not correct, you can challenge their decision and ask them to look at your assessment again or redo the assessment.

The local authority will also carry out a **Financial Assessment**. This is separate from your main assessment. The purpose is to see how much you are able to contribute to paying for your care and support. If the amount of care you need costs more than you are able to pay yourself, the local authority will need to contribute to the costs as well.



Preparing for your Assessment



The local authority needs to take into account anything that impacts on your wellbeing. Think about:

- all your needs, whether they are currently affecting you or not (some may change over a week, month, or year) or met by a carer
- how your needs impact your wellbeing and your day to day life
- what you would like to change about your situation
- how much help you need and how often
- if your carer will be able/willing to continue to provide care, and any other support you currently have in place
- putting together information from a specialist, like a doctor, if appropriate

Advocacy

You may find it difficult to go through their Care Act Assessment because of your support needs. If this is the case, you may have the legal right to an Independent Care Act Advocate. The advocate can support you to understand the different parts of the process, support you at your assessment, and help you understand the outcome of the assessment. If you feel this support would be right for you, please tell the local authority and they can make a referral for you to your local advocacy service.

After the Assessment: Care Plan



If the local authority decides that you are eligible for care and support, they need to prepare a care and support plan. Your care plan should be a package of care that is centred around what you need and how you feel support would work best for you. It should help you to live independently and have more control over your daily life.

The plan should cover:

- which support needs are eligible and which are not
- how the local authority will meet the eligible needs and support you to achieve your goals
- how this should be paid for – if you are going to receive a personal budget, how you will be spending it
- a plan for backup or emergency support to make sure you are not left without the support you need

If you have questions about your care plan or you are not happy with parts of it, you should explain this to the local authority. Remember, the care plan is about supporting you and you have the right to have your say.

NB: Once your care plan has been agreed, it should be reviewed once per year. If you feel your needs have changed in between reviews, you can ask them to review your care plan early to check that it is still right for you.

Ways to challenge decisions

There may be situations where you want to challenge a decision made during this process. There are different ways you can do this, but this is the normal order:

1. Contact your social worker directly and explain why you want to challenge their decision. If you do not feel your assessment was carried out properly, you can request that it is redone.
2. Make a formal complaint to your local authority. You should be able to find how to make a complaint on your local authority's website.
3. Contact the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman:
<https://www.lgo.org.uk/>

We have a separate toolkit for making informal and formal complaints about social care. If you feel this would be useful for you, please contact us using helpline@voiceability.org or 0300 303 1660.

Challenging a Care Act Assessment

If you are unhappy with the outcome of your assessment, you have the right to challenge it. Your local authority may have a specific appeals process. The social care team or the person who carried out your assessment should be able to give you more information on this.

If there is no specific appeals process, you can make a complaint using the local authority's complaints procedure. VoiceAbility has a toolkit to support you to make complaints, so please contact us if you could like a copy.



Log sheet section 1: Record the event(s) you have experienced

Date	What happened?	Who was involved?	What did you do next?

Log sheet section 2: Record the stages of your experience

Date	Who did you contact?	What did they agree to do?	What did you agree to do?

Preparation for meetings guidance

Use the section below to prepare **before** a meeting by answering some or all of the questions. You can take this with you to help you on the day.

What is the meeting about?

What time and date is the meeting? Where will it take place?

Who am I speaking to? How many people will be there?

Top tips: If you are unhappy about someone who is due to attend, you can raise this before the meeting. If there is someone you would like to be present to support you, you could ask for them to attend too. Additionally, you can request that the meeting is held in a place / location that is accessible to you. It is ok to ask for a better explanation if you do not understand what is being said, professionals can use abbreviations that people won't always understand, it's ok to ask as many times as you need.

What do I want to say? What outcome do I want?

What information do I need? How can I go about gathering this information?

What information will they need from me? Who could help me with this?
Do I need to ask for advice?

What questions do I want to ask?

What do I want to happen as a result of this meeting?

Would I need to have someone with me during the meeting? Who would be the best person for this?

What happens next if I don't get the outcome I want?

Notes and actions

Use the section below to write down key words or information during the meeting. If there are actions at the end, you could write these down. It may be useful to make a note of who has said they are doing them and when, so that you can refer back to this later.

Top tip: At the start of the meeting make sure everyone introduces themselves and their role so you know everyone in the room – don't forget to introduce yourself as you are the most important person in the room.

Notes about the meeting

Actions	Who	When

Reflection after the meeting

After the meeting, reflect on the following questions. This could help you to make the next meeting go even better:

What went well?	
What do you think could have gone better?	
What could you do differently next time to help you to self advocate?	

Complaint letter template

PRIVATE AND CONFIDENTIAL

[Your name]

[Your address]

[Your phone number]

[The Complaints Manager (name if known)]

[Name and address of above person's organisation]

[Date]

Dear [Name]

Re: (Reason for complaint) – [Complainant name and date of birth]

I am writing to complain about [name(s) of staff] at [place where incident happened] on [date of incident].

Describe what happened, when, and where.

If you were unable to recall events because you were undergoing surgery (for instance) include information provided by third parties and how they were made aware of this.

If you have completed a log sheet or written a list of events, you can attach it as a separate sheet and refer to it here. Explain what, if anything, you have already done to try to resolve matters.

As a result of this complaint I would now like [...]

Say what you want to achieve, for example:

- an explanation of what happened
- an apology
- action to remedy the problem you experienced, by a named person

I look forward to receiving your acknowledgement of this letter. I would like you to carry out a full investigation into my concerns, and provide a response in accordance with your complaint policy.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you need further information.

Thank you for your attention to this complaint. I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely

[Your signature]

[Print your name]

[If you are sending copies of your letter to other people, show this here:]

cc. Other person

Useful information

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/social-care-and-support-guide/help-from-social-services-and-charities/getting-a-needs-assessment/>

<https://www.ageuk.org.uk/information-advice/care/arranging-care/care-needs-assessment/>

<https://www.disabilityrightsuk.org/resources/assessment-eligibility-and-support-planning>

https://england.shelter.org.uk/professional_resources/legal/housing_options/housing_options_for_people_with_care_and_support_needs/care_and_support_needs_assessment

<https://www.rethink.org/advice-and-information/living-with-mental-illness/treatment-and-support/social-care-assessment-under-the-care-act-2014/>

VoiceAbility

☎ 0300 303 1660

✉ helpline@voiceability.org

🌐 voiceability.org

🐦 [@VoiceAbility](https://twitter.com/VoiceAbility)



About VoiceAbility

We make sure you're heard when it matters most. We've been supporting people to have their say in decisions about their health, care and wellbeing for over 40 years. We're an independent charity and one of the UK's largest providers of advocacy and involvement services.