



What is community care?

Community care refers to the services provided by a local authority's Health and Social Care Department to help people with care needs to live independently at home or in a community setting. While the Health and Social Care department has the main responsibility for organising and providing these services, other agencies can be involved. They can include the NHS, voluntary organisations, housing and education departments and some private care agencies.

Who gets community care services?

Community care services are provided to:

- older people
- people with a physical disability or long term condition
- people with a sensory impairment
- people who require mental health services
- people with a learning disability
- people who are in need of drug, alcohol or HIV/AIDS services
- carers

What services can be provided?

- personal care during the day and evening (eg. washing and dressing)
- provision of meals and shopping
- sitter services/carers/befrienders
- care workers who can sit with someone needing help at night
- day services and lunch clubs providing social interaction and activities
- short breaks and breaks from caring (respite breaks)
- equipment and adaptations to assist independence
- alarm systems to summon help

How to get help

The following information refers to adult social care services in the City of Edinburgh Council. If you live in East, West or Midlothian please contact your local authority directly - for details see 'Social Care' in the **A-Z of useful contacts** factsheet. If you care for a child under 16, please refer to the **Parent carers** factsheet.

last updated: June 2007

If the person you care for already has a social worker

Contact your local Social Work Centre directly - please see 'Social Work Centres' in the *A-Z of useful contacts* factsheet for more details.

If the person you care for doesn't have a social worker

Contact **Social Care Direct (0131 200 2324)** - a single contact number which receives all new requests for adult care services.

What happens when I call Social Care Direct?

You can request an assessment of need for the person you care for, or you can request a carer's assessment for yourself. For information on carer's assessments please see overleaf. If you want an assessment of need for the person you care for, Social Care Direct staff will pass their details to the relevant Sector Practice Team.

Sector Practice Teams are based at social work centres around Edinburgh and have links to local GP practices. The team will consider the information they have and will decide how quickly they can visit. Urgent cases are dealt with first and in cases of extreme need the first contact is usually made within 24 hours. More information about how the team prioritise cases is included in the *Guide to Adult Care Services* booklet available from Social Care Direct. Copies are also available from VOCAL and can be downloaded from VOCAL's website: www.vocal.org.uk.

What happens at the assessment?

A social worker, occupational therapist or community care assistant will make contact to arrange a meeting for the assessment. With the cared for person's consent, carers can be present at the assessment. New requirements put in place by the Community Care and Health (Scotland) Act 2002 ensure that carers are treated as partners in the provision of care. This means that the support you currently provide, the contribution you are willing to make and your views should all be taken into account.

It is worth preparing for the assessment in advance. There will be questions about the person you care for's lifestyle, their hopes and concerns for the future and how they manage with daily living tasks. It helps to note down the tasks which you do regularly for them and what support would be most beneficial to them.

Once complete, the assessment is written down as a record which needs to be signed by the person you care for, and they will be given a copy. If they do not agree with the record then their views are written alongside those of the social worker. Once a decision is made on the services needed, a care plan is drawn up which outlines, in timetable format, what services are being provided.

Who pays for community care services?

The person you care for may have to pay for some of the services provided. A social worker will carry out a financial assessment asking for details about the savings, income and finances of the person you care for (they will only take their financial details into account). People over 65 who are assessed as needing personal care services are entitled to free personal care at home. This includes services which help with dressing, getting in and out of bed, medication, personal hygiene, incontinence, and preparing meals.

Direct payments

If the person you care for has been assessed as needing community care services, the local authority can give them money to arrange and buy the services themselves. This is called direct payments and must be offered as an alternative to having services arranged by the local authority.

You have a right to ask for direct payments. It is important to be aware that direct payments will only cover services that meet the assessed needs of the person you care for. It is not money to spend as you choose, however direct payments can offer more control and choice. In order to qualify for direct payments the local authority must be satisfied that the person you care for, or their attorney or guardian, can manage the payments and has as much support as they need to do this.

Carer's assessments

Many carers are unaware of their right to request a carer's assessment, a statutory right which was established in the Carers (Recognition and Services) Act 1995 and the Community Care and Health (Scotland) Act 2002.

A carer's assessment looks at the care you provide and aims to determine your needs as a carer. An assessment will consider aspects of your life such as family, employment, social activities, leisure activities, age, health and support already in place. Following an assessment, the types of support which may be available to you include:

- services that provide you with a break from caring
- services that help with the support you currently provide
- information and advice eg. getting a community care assessment

All requests for an assessment should be made through Social Care Direct (0131 200 2324). There are two options:

- request a carer's self assessment with the option to request a full assessment (this form is also available to download from www.edinburgh.gov.uk/internet)
- request a full assessment

If you choose a self-assessment you can record a lot of detail about your caring role prior to the full assessment taking place. If you choose a full assessment a social worker will visit you to complete the relevant forms. This will determine your needs as a carer and may provide additional support services. VOCAL recommends that all carers request a self assessment form and fill it in with support from VOCAL or a local carer project. There is an option on the form to request a full assessment and carers are encouraged to choose this option.

Comments and Complaints

If you are unhappy with the recommendations of a community care assessment you can ask for a review and explain why you feel services are needed. If there are unresolved issues following the review, you can go through the formal complaints procedure. See 'Complaints' in the ***A-Z of useful contacts*** factsheet for details.

The Scottish Commission for the Regulation of Care (Care Commission) registers and inspects all care services and ensures they meet National Standards. You can register a complaint with the Care Commission and they can also give you copies of inspection reports. See the ***A-Z of useful contacts*** factsheet for details.

How VOCAL can help

VOCAL's information and advice team can help with queries or concerns you may have about obtaining a community care or carers assessment, the process involved and the provision of services following assessment. We can help you to contact Social Care Direct, make a referral on your behalf or help you to liaise with a social worker if you are having difficulties following an assessment.

Who's Who in Health and Social Care

Here is a short glossary of health and social care professionals and teams:

Social Worker

Social Workers help and advise on all sorts of personal and practical problems. They carry out community care assessments and help with access to services such as respite care, sitter services, home care services or day centres.

Mental Health Officer (MHO)

Mental Health Officers are social workers specially trained in the area of mental health. They are appointed by the local authority to carry out duties under the Mental Health (Scotland) Act and have a significantly enhanced role within the new Mental Health (Care and Treatment) (Scotland) Act 2003 - see ***Things you might need***

to know factsheet for more information. MHOs are responsible for preparing social circumstances reports and care plans for patients with mental health problems and are involved in applications for detention and compulsory treatment orders.

Occupational Therapist (OT)

An OT helps people manage daily living tasks in the home by providing equipment and adaptations (eg. raised seat and rails for the toilet, bathseat, grab rails). They can arrange for adaptations to your home (eg. ramps at steps, widening doors, bathroom alterations). Most equipment is provided free and adaptations can be carried out with help from a grant which the OT can apply for (the grant may not cover the total cost of the adaptation).

Social Care Direct

A single contact number where trained staff deal with initial enquiries to the Department of Health and Social Care. They can advise of the best place to get help or refer your details on to the Sector Practice Team.

Sector Practice team

There are five Sector Practice teams in Edinburgh, made up of social workers, occupational therapists and community care assistants. Each team has links with local GP practices and meets daily to review referrals from Social Care Direct.

Response team

There are five Response Teams in Edinburgh who organise community care assessments and create care and support plans.

Care Management Team

Someone with a severe disability requiring regular input has an allocated social worker from the Care Management team who will be their regular contact.

Home Care Direct

This team manages and co-ordinates existing home-based care services and also co-ordinates the *hospital discharge teams*. These specialised teams provide up to four weeks of care for people discharged from hospital. If, after four weeks, a care package is still required then a referral is made to Social Care Direct.

Rapid Response Team

This team is made up of staff from NHS Lothian and City of Edinburgh Council's Health and Social Care department. The team aims to prevent unnecessary hospital admission by combined assessment and rehabilitation.

GP – General Practitioner

A GP or doctor looks after personal health matters, putting patients in touch with other health or social care professionals.

NHS 24

NHS 24 works with local NHS boards out-of-hours service to provide patients with health advice when GP practices are closed. A trained, experienced nurse will assess your situation and advise on what to do next. The number is 08454 24 24 24.

District/community nurses

District/community nurses provide care to people who are unable to visit their GP's surgery. For example, a follow up to a stay in hospital, to get wounds dressed, to receive injections for specific conditions or help with catheters. The district nurse can order incontinence equipment and supplies.

Practice nurse

Practice nurses provide nursing care in GP medical practices. They can give injections, take blood and urine samples and dress wounds. Many run clinics for conditions like asthma, diabetes and eczema and carry out routine medical checks like smear tests.

Health visitor

Health visitors are registered nurses or midwives who work as members of the primary healthcare team. They work with all age groups to promote health awareness, helping mothers with young babies and working with people of any age who suffer from a long term condition.

Community Psychiatric Nurse (CPN)

The CPN helps people in the community who use mental health services. Some CPNs work with local medical practices to provide counselling to people suffering from depression or anxiety. They can form part of a community mental health team working with people who are more severely mentally ill as part of crisis intervention. Others work with people living in the community who are suffering from dementia.

Counsellor

A counsellor is trained to listen to you talk about your problems. They work in statutory services, voluntary agencies or practice privately (fees can vary so check with individual services). VOCAL offers a free counselling service for carers. For more information see the ***Coping with caring*** and ***A-Z of useful contacts***.

Pharmacist

Pharmacists dispense prescriptions and can advise on minor ailments. Services include emergency contraception, incontinence supplies, needle exchange, oxygen, blood pressure testing and tests for diabetes. Many pharmacists offer a prescription collection and delivery service to people who are house bound or infirm.

VOCAL has produced a booklet entitled 'New to Caring' which covers some of the key issues for carers. You can order your free copy using the ***Publications order form*** at the back of this information pack.