

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 who require mental health service
• people with a physical disability	• people with a learning disability
• people with a sensory impairment	• people needing drug, alcohol, HIV/Aids services
• carers	• people with a long term condition

What services can be provided?

• personal care (eg. washing and dressing)	• provision of meals
• sitter services/ carers/ befrienders	• day services and lunch clubs
• short breaks from caring/ respite	• telecare / equipment, adaptations, alarms
• Recovering from a stay in hospital	

How to get help

The Health and Social Care Department, based on an assessment of need, may be able to provide a range of services for the person you care for, from simple requests for equipment to more complex support packages. This department also carries out carers' assessments, to assess your needs as a carer. There are two useful publications on health and social care services - *Guide to Adult Care Services* available from 0131 200 2324 and *Your guide to Edinburgh Community Health Partnership and Social Care Services* available from 0131 537 9525. 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.

Community care assessment

To request an assessment of need for the person you care for contact Social Care Direct on 0131 200 2324 Social Care Direct staff will take some details and pass them 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 been given 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. For more information about how the team prioritise cases see the *Guide to Adult Care Services* booklet.

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, and the latest National Carers Strategy (July 2010) refers to carers as 'equal partners'. 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.

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. For more information about paying for care see the *Money and finance* factsheet.

Carer's assessment

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:

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| • services which provide a break from caring | • services to help with support you provide |
| • information and advice | • referral to local support services |

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

- You can 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)
- You can request a full carer's 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. There is an option on the form to request a full assessment and carers are encouraged to choose this option. 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.

Short breaks and respite

Each of the four local authorities in Edinburgh and the Lothians arranges short breaks differently, please contact your local authority directly (see A-Z factsheet) for more details.

In most cases short break (respite) services are available following an assessment of your needs, as well as the person that you care for. The type of short break chosen will depend on the needs and preferences of the person you care for. Breaks might include:

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| • sitter or befriending service at home | • short stay in a care home |
| • day care service | • overnight support |

For more information on organising and planning short breaks, and to search a list of short break and respite opportunities in Edinburgh and Lothian visit: www.sharedcarescotland.org.uk

Coming home from hospital

As soon as people are admitted to hospital a process of planning should begin to find out what services and support they may need when they leave. For some people leaving hospital the process is simple, for others it can be more complicated. By the time someone leaves hospital they should know:

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| • how to contact relevant services | • what treatment will be provided |
| • how to use any equipment needed | • what, and how, medication will be given |

A team of professionals in the hospital will work together to discuss discharge arrangements and a named person will be in charge of this plan. You should be given this person's name. For more details see *Leaving Hospital: a guide to discharge planning for relatives and carers* (call VOCAL on 0131 622 6666).

Telecare

Telecare is a simple system that can tell the local authority when there is an emergency in your home and allows them to get help to you straight away. Telecare can be provided alongside any other services you have like home care and offers 24 hour monitoring and support. It provides a system that automatically alerts the Community Alarm Service to get the help you need if you become ill or something is wrong. Telecare isn't meant to replace people but it can support carers in many different ways. The types of sensors and alarms available may include:

Ambient/temperature extremes sensor	Flood detector
Epilepsy monitor	Pendant alarms
Smoke/heat/excessive heat detector	Bed sensor
Door exit sensor (wander alerts)	Fall detector
Movement detector	Pill dispensers

For more details contact your local authority (see A-Z of Useful Contacts for contact details).

Regulation and quality

The National Care Standards set up the standard of services that you can expect from the care services that you use. Up until April 2011, the Care Commission was responsible for registering and inspecting care services in Scotland. From April 2011, Social Care and Social Work Improvement Scotland (SCSWIS) took responsibility for regulation and inspection of care services, and also carries out social work and child protection inspections. SCSWIS can be contacted on 0845 600 9527.

Making 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 for details.

Social Care and Social Work Improvement Scotland (SCSWIS) can only deal with complaints against care services. They do not have the authority to deal with any complaints about local authority social work departments. If you want to make a complaint about a local authority please contact them directly or contact the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (see A-Z of useful contacts for details).

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 carry out 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. 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 (0131 200 2324) 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.

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 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. 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.

Pharmacist

Pharmacists dispense prescriptions and can advise on minor ailments. Services include 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.