

Factsheet 6w ● October 2024

## Finding help at home in Wales



**Age Cymru Advice**

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# 1 Information about this factsheet

As you get older you may find that you have increasing difficulty managing your daily tasks at home.

This factsheet gives an overview of the kind of practical help that may be available to enable you to remain in your own home – or in other community-based housing such as sheltered accommodation – as safely and comfortably as possible.

When arranged by the local authority, social care services at home are often referred to as domiciliary, non-residential or community care services.

A significant focus of this factsheet involves the assistance that your local authority social services department may be able to provide, though there is also some information on help from charitable organisations, or by arranging your own provision privately.

There is also some information on how people providing care on an informal basis – for example, a family member who helps to care for a relative – can access support or assistance for this role.

This factsheet can be read in conjunction with Age Cymru’s other factsheets on adult social care provision and assessments, including:

- 41w *Social care assessments for older people with care needs in Wales;*
- 46w *Paying for care and support at home in Wales;*
- 42w *Obtaining disability equipment and home adaptations in Wales.*

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**Note:** The information given in this factsheet is applicable in Wales. Different rules may apply in England, Northern Ireland and Scotland. Contact Age UK, Age NI and Age Scotland respectively for further information.

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## 1.1 Local authority social services departments

In this factsheet references to the ‘local authority’ or ‘council’ will refer to the **adult social services department of the local authority**. You might also see the relevant social services department referred to elsewhere using similar variations, such as:

- social care department;
- adult social services;
- older persons' department; *or*
- older persons' team.

Adult social services teams are responsible, among other duties, for assessing people's need for 'care and support' or 'social care' services and deciding whether those needs meet the eligibility criteria.

**Information on how to find the contact details for your local authority social services department can be found in section 3.2 below.**

## 2 Legislation covering the social care system in Wales

### 2.1 The Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 and accompanying Code of Practice guidance – relevance to the social care system in Wales

This Act was fully implemented in April 2016 and is the main legislation that covers the social care system in Wales, including:

- the social care assessment process;
- related rules in regard to arranging and paying for care at home and/or other non-residential services<sup>1</sup>;
- the guidance documents that local authorities must use when assessing needs; *and*
- the guidance documents that local authorities must use when means testing people who may need to pay towards their services.

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<sup>1</sup> The Act also contains the rules in regard to arranging and paying for residential care homes and nursing care homes, though that issue is not covered in this particular factsheet.

Many of the sections in this factsheet (and other Age Cymru factsheets on social care topics) will use this Act – and the Welsh Government guidance for local authorities which accompanies it (see section 2.2 below) – as a main source of information. References will be provided in the text where relevant.

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**Note:** For further general information on the *Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014*, see Age Cymru's Factsheet 41w *Social care assessments for older people with care needs in Wales*.

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## 2.2 Welsh Government Code of Practice documents – guidance for local authorities to follow when conducting social care assessments

In common with many other pieces of legislation, there are Codes of Practice (CoP) that accompany the *Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act*.

**The CoP guidance documents are backed by law and aim to assist individuals, professionals and organisations to work within and comply with the Act** – i.e. they are written in more straightforward language and are, therefore, generally easier to understand than the actual Act/regulations.

Local authorities must act in accordance with the codes of practice and their requirements when carrying out their social services functions. See sections 3.4 and 5.1 below which detail the CoP guidance which is most relevant to the subjects covered in this factsheet.

## 3 How the local authority can help you if you have care and/or support needs

### 3.1 Introduction

The terms 'community care', 'social services' and 'social care' can be used interchangeably to describe the broad range of statutory services provided by local authority social services departments.

Broadly speaking, social care is means tested (meaning your income and capital can be taken into account). This contrasts, for example, with NHS healthcare, which is free (though the dividing line between the two is not always clear).

Section 5 below has an overview of means testing for care and support if you live at home, whilst section 7 has further information on the types of homecare service that might be provided by a local authority social services department. Section 8 contains information on community-based NHS services that some people could be eligible for (potentially alongside services from the local authority).

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**Note:** Sections 3.2 to 3.6 below, outline the main processes – care needs assessments and decisions on someone’s eligibility for services etc – that the local authority social services department will follow where a person may require help at home.

**More detailed information on each of these areas – in particular, the Welsh Government’s national eligibility criteria which all authorities should apply – can be found in Age Cymru’s Factsheet 41w *Social care assessments for older people with care needs in Wales*.**

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### 3.2 Initial contact with the local authority and making a referral

There are a number of ways in which your situation can be brought to the attention of the local authority, including:

- a self-referral;
- or*, with your permission:
- a referral from a carer, friend or family member;
- a referral from a professional such as your GP; *or*
- a referral from a doctor or nurse in a hospital setting (should you need help at home following a hospital stay, for example).

The individual who may be assessed is the most important person in this process and the local authority should liaise directly with them on receipt of a referral or other relevant information to confirm whether they wish to have an assessment and to check whether a third-party referral has been made for an appropriate reason.

### **If the person who may need help at home lacks mental capacity**

If it is possible that the person may lack the capacity to request assistance from the local authority social services department – or give consent to another person doing so – a friend, relative or professional may still make a referral on their behalf if they are concerned about the person’s wellbeing.

**It should be noted that, generally speaking, a local authority has no power to make a person accept help against their will.**

*However*, there can be exceptions where services could be put in place for someone in order to meet their best interests and/or protect them from harm, where they lack sufficient capacity to make these choices – Age Cymru’s Factsheet 41w *Social care assessments for older people with care needs in Wales* contains some information on the potential exceptions (that may apply in limited circumstances).

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### **Note: The concept of ‘best interests’**

All those who work with adults who lack the mental capacity to express their needs or views, or make decisions, must act in that person’s *‘best interests’*.

The ***Mental Capacity Act 2005*** and its *Code of Practice* define what actions need to be taken to ensure legitimate ‘best interests’ decisions are made. To find out more about the standards required in this context, see Age UK’s Factsheet 22 *Arranging for someone to make decisions on your behalf* and Factsheet 41w (mentioned above).

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## Finding contact details for your social services department

If you have internet access, you can search for your local authority using your postcode on the Welsh Government's website:

**[www.gov.wales/find-your-local-authority](http://www.gov.wales/find-your-local-authority)**

Alternatively, our Age Cymru Advice line can provide them – see section 13 for contact details.

### 3.3 Having an assessment of your needs

The first step in obtaining help from the local authority social services department is to ask for an assessment of your needs. The local authority will generally not be able to assist you until it has first carried out the assessment (this may be referred to by a number of similar terms, such as 'social care assessment', 'community care assessment', 'care needs assessment', or simply 'needs assessment').

**The local authority has a legal duty to carry out an assessment of anyone living in its area who *may* need community care services, once it becomes aware of this need.**

**The assessment must take into account *all* aspects of your needs.**

An older person would nearly always be entitled to a needs assessment itself (though note that this wouldn't necessarily mean they would be deemed eligible for services as a result – this would depend on the level or extent of their needs that are identified in the assessment).

**The right to a needs assessment is not affected by the level of your financial resources or other circumstances** (however, subsequent services provided as a result of the assessment are likely to be charged for – see section 5 below).

Someone's finances should also not affect the level or detail of the assessment process<sup>2</sup>.

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<sup>2</sup> Welsh Government guidance states that the local authority duty to offer an assessment of needs applies "regardless of the level of...the adult's financial resources" – Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014: Part 3 Code of Practice (assessing the needs of individuals), Welsh Government.

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**Note:** If you get help from a friend or family member (a carer), your carer's own needs and opinions should be considered and taken into account as part of your own assessment.

**Carers also have a right to their own assessment in parallel or sometimes jointly with yours** – see section 4 below.

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The assessment will be carried out by a representative of the local authority, usually a care manager, or social worker.

Other professionals, such as an occupational therapist, may also be required to carry out a related specialist assessment. There may also be a requirement for joint working, for example with housing and health staff.

### 3.4 Deciding eligibility for service provision

After the completion of a needs assessment, based on the results, the local authority will decide whether or not it should provide or arrange social care services for you.

Each local authority in Wales must use national eligibility criteria to make this decision.

This is contained in the following Welsh Government guidance document:

**Code of Practice on the exercise of social services functions in relation to Part 3 (Assessing the needs of individuals) of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014.**

A copy can be accessed on the Welsh Government's website at:

**[www.gov.wales/assessing-care-and-support-needs-individuals-code-practice](http://www.gov.wales/assessing-care-and-support-needs-individuals-code-practice)**

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**Note:** Also see Age Cymru's Factsheet 41w *Social care assessments for older people with care needs in Wales* for further discussion of the eligibility criteria.

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### 3.5 If you have eligible needs

Having established that your identified needs fall within the national eligibility criteria (that you have 'eligible needs'), the local authority then has a **legal duty** to arrange or provide services for you to meet those needs.

Section 7 below has further information on the **different types of services** that a local authority might provide in order to meet someone's eligible care needs.

### 3.6 The care and support plan

Following an assessment by a local authority where it is identified that you have 'eligible needs', a care and support plan must be discussed, agreed and written down. The service user or their representative should be provided with a copy of it. The care and support plan documents the services you have been assessed as needing and how they will be arranged – see sections 6 and 7 below. You should have as much input as possible into this process to reflect your needs and wishes.

The Welsh Government's guidance advises that the care and support plan must include the following:

- The desired outcomes that are to be achieved from the support provided.
- Specific actions which the local authority and, where appropriate, other persons will take to help the service user to achieve those outcomes. Defined roles and responsibilities should be included for both professionals involved in delivering services and, where applicable, a person's informal carer and/or family members.
- Information on how progress towards achieving the outcomes will be measured and monitored.
- A care plan review date.
- Any financial contributions which the service user has been assessed as needing to pay – see section 5 below for information about how your contribution towards your care costs will be calculated.

- In situations where some or all of a person's needs are to be met via direct payments, a care and support plan must also contain information on which needs these are “and the amount and frequency of the direct payments”<sup>3</sup> – see section 6.2 below for further information on direct payments.

## 4 How the local authority can help a carer – services for a family member or friend who assists someone with care needs

The *Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014* provides a legal framework in Wales for improving the well-being of people who need care and support. The Act specifies that this includes *carers* as well as people with care needs – for example, a relative or friend who helps to care for someone, but requires support or assistance to prevent this role adversely affecting their own health or well-being.

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**Note:** A carer, in this context, is someone who provides – or intends to provide – care for an adult (or a disabled child). “In general, professional carers who receive payment should not be regarded as carers for the purposes of the [*Social Services and Well-being (Wales)*] Act, nor should people who provide care as voluntary work. However, a local authority can treat a person as a carer even if they would not otherwise be regarded as a carer if they consider that, in the context of the caring relationship, it would be appropriate to do so”<sup>4</sup>.

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### Carer's needs to be considered as part of the cared for person's assessment

If you are a carer, your own needs and opinions should be considered and taken into account as part of the care needs assessment for the person requiring support.

However, carers also have their own standalone right to an assessment of their own needs.

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<sup>3</sup> Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014: Part 4 Code of Practice (Meeting Needs), Welsh Government.

<sup>4</sup> Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014: Part 3 Code of Practice (assessing the needs of individuals), Welsh Government.

## Individual assessments for carers

The Welsh Government's assessment guidance to accompany the *Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014* states that:

**“A local authority must offer an assessment to any carer where it appears to that authority that the carer may have needs for support”.**

The authority “must assess whether the carer has [a need] for support (or is likely to do so in the future) and if they do, what those needs are or are likely to be”.

A factor that should be examined in the assessment includes the “extent to which the carer is able and willing to provide the care” (and, if they are able and willing, will this continue to be the case going forward – as an example, if the carer “works or wishes to work and whether they are participating...in education, training or leisure activities” should be looked at)<sup>5</sup>.

**Carers can request an assessment, even if the person cared for does not want one for their needs.**

During the assessment process, staff should not make any assumptions about the level or quality of support that might be available from a carer without discussion and agreement with the carer and the cared for person.

## Support plans for carers

The Welsh Government's guidance advises that local authorities must provide “support plans for carers whose needs meet the eligibility criteria. This is in order to promote consistency between plans for carers and to treat carers in the same way as people with [care] needs”<sup>6</sup>.

## Financial circumstances of the carer

As noted above in section 3, the local authority duty to offer an assessment of needs applies regardless of someone's financial situation. The assessment and charging guidance confirms that this principle applies equally to carers:

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<sup>5</sup> Ibid

<sup>6</sup> Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014: Part 4 Code of Practice (Meeting Needs), Welsh Government.

“The duty to assess applies regardless of the authority’s view of the level of support the carer needs or the financial resources he or she has or the financial resources of the person needing care”<sup>7</sup>.

### Further information

You could contact Carers Wales for more information about carers rights and local support that may be available – see section 13 for contact details. Age UK’s information guide, *Advice for carers*, may also be useful.

## 5 Paying for local authority social care services in your own home

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**Note:** Your needs and eligibility for services should be assessed and identified **prior** to discussions about paying for them. The charging process should be promptly administered following an assessment so that you know what you will be charged. You should not be charged before being provided with a written fee breakdown.

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### 5.1 Background information on charging – means testing and a maximum weekly charge

**You will generally be means tested by the local authority if it is intending to provide you with a social care service.** The authority will carry out a financial assessment to establish how much you should contribute towards the cost of providing the required services to meet your assessed care needs.

In most cases you will have to pay at least something towards the cost of your care, though in some situations people may be “entitled to care and support at no charge”<sup>8</sup> (for example, someone receiving non-residential care services who has a low income may fall within this bracket).

**The means test will include looking into your capital (savings) and income.**

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<sup>7</sup> Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014: Part 3 Code of Practice (assessing the needs of individuals), Welsh Government.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid

## The capital limit

When charging for homecare and other non-residential social care services, local authorities in Wales must apply a capital limit in regard to people's savings and other assets.

This is currently **£24,000** (though it's possible this could change from April 2025)<sup>9</sup>.

The local authority must publish information about its charging procedure and general fee levels for particular services. It must also follow national Welsh Government guidelines when processing the means test. These are contained in the following Welsh Government guidance document:

**Code of Practice on the exercise of social services functions in relation to Part 4 (direct payments and choice of accommodation) and Part 5 (charging and financial assessment) of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014** (*version 7 – April 2023*).

A copy can be accessed on the Welsh Government website at:

**[www.gov.wales/code-practice-charging-social-care-services](http://www.gov.wales/code-practice-charging-social-care-services)**

## A maximum weekly charge

In Wales, there is a maximum weekly charge for homecare and other non-residential social care services.

At the time of writing – October 2024 – the current maximum charge is **£100 per week**.

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<sup>9</sup> The capital limit for homecare differs to that used for means testing people who live in care homes (Age Cymru's factsheets on care home charging contain further information on this topic). If you are reading this factsheet after April 2025, you may wish to contact Age Cymru Advice for any updates on the capital limit figure – see section 13 below for contact details.

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**Note:** The £100 maximum charge has been in place at this level since 2020. However, it appears likely that it will be increased soon (perhaps from April 2025, as changes to charging rules are generally applied from the beginning of a new financial year).

A Welsh Government consultation between February and May 2024 seeking views on their proposal to raise the charge may have some influence on how much it will be increased by. In the consultation document, the Welsh Government states that they “consider £120 to be an appropriate amount to propose for a new weekly maximum charge amount”, though the figures of £115 and £125 were also included as other options for discussion in the consultation<sup>10</sup>.

**If you’re reading this factsheet after April 2025, you may wish to contact Age Cymru Advice for the latest information.**

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Service users should not be asked to pay more than the maximum charge, whatever service – or combination of services – they are receiving (the only exception being some ‘low level, low cost’ services, where an additional charge over and above the maximum may be levied)

In the Welsh Government’s guidance, low-level, low-cost services which can attract the flat rate charges are defined as those typically being for “care and support that substitutes for ordinary living, such as meals or laundry”<sup>11</sup>.

### **The maximum charge cannot be imposed routinely**

It should be noted that the maximum charge cannot be imposed routinely – for example, depending on the means test, a service user may be found to only be able to contribute a much smaller amount, or else they would be left with insufficient income to live on.

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<sup>10</sup> Further information on the consultation can be found on the Welsh Government’s website at: [www.gov.wales/raising-weekly-maximum-charge-adult-non-residential-care-and-support](http://www.gov.wales/raising-weekly-maximum-charge-adult-non-residential-care-and-support). Further rationale is provided in the consultation document for the recommendation of £120: “The current non-residential maximum weekly charge of £100 was set at this amount in 2020 but has not been adjusted since then. The Bank of England Inflation Calculator, using the Consumer Price Index (CPI) to give an estimate of the comparative value of goods and services, indicates that goods and services costing £100 in 2020 would cost £121.40 in October 2023”.

<sup>11</sup> Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 – Part 4 and 5 Code of Practice (Charging and Financial Assessment) (version 7 – April 2023), Welsh Government.

Or, alternatively, a service user may have a high level of income, but the services themselves cost less than £100 per week for the local authority to provide and thus the authority would not be justified in imposing the maximum charge (rather they would be able to charge the full amount that the services cost them to provide or arrange, be this £70, or £80 or whatever this cost happened to be).

### Minimum income after paying for your services

The Welsh Government's Code of Practice charging guidance advises that "because a person who receives care and support outside a care home will need to pay their daily living costs such as rent, food and utilities, the charging framework seeks to ensure they have enough money to meet these costs". As a result, "local authorities **must** leave a person who is being charged with a minimum income amount" which they will still have once they have paid their contribution towards their services.

As such, after paying the required charge, a service user's income should not be reduced below the **total** amount of the following:

- A "basic entitlement" (this is either the level of Pension Credit Guarantee Credit that someone receives, or if not getting this benefit, an equivalent amount worked out by the local authority based on the person's age, level of disability and personal circumstances); **plus**
- a 'buffer' of at least **35%** of the above basic entitlement; **plus**
- a further allowance of at least **10%** of the basic entitlement in recognition of 'disability related expenditure' which service users are likely to have.

## 5.2 Further information on charging

Age Cymru's Factsheet 46w *Paying for care and support at home in Wales* has more in-depth information on local authority charging procedures for homecare and other non-residential social care services, including:

- types of income and capital that are taken into account in the means test (and those that can be disregarded);
- the maximum weekly charge;
- your minimum income after paying your charge (and how the local authority should calculate this); *and*
- flat rate charges.

### 5.3 The charging procedure for services provided to a carer

**Local authorities must apply the same rules, as outlined above in section 5.1, when charging carers for support services.**

However, the Welsh Government’s guidance does note that authorities may wish to *exclude* carers from charges:

“When deciding whether to charge, and in determining what an appropriate charge is, a local authority **must** consider how it wishes to express the way it values carers within its local community as partners in care, and recognise the significant contribution [they] make”.

It recognises that “carers help to maintain the health and well-being of the person for whom they care, support this person’s independence and enable them to stay in their own homes for longer. In many cases, carers voluntarily meet eligible needs that the local authority would otherwise be required to meet”.

“Local authorities **must** consider carefully the likely impact of any charges on adult carers, particularly in terms of their willingness and ability to **continue their caring responsibilities**. It may be that there are circumstances where a nominal charge may be appropriate, for example to provide support which is subsidised but for which the carer may still pay a small charge. Ultimately, a local authority **must** ensure that any charges do not negatively impact on a carer’s ability to look after their **own** health and well-being **and** to care effectively and safely for the cared for person<sup>12</sup> (emphasis added).

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<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

## 6 Different delivery methods for receiving local authority social care services

### 6.1 Services arranged directly by the local authority

The standard procedure for receiving non-residential social care services is for the local authority to directly provide the care it has assessed you as needing. This will be either:

- via their own staff or facilities; *or*
- by contracting a private care agency to operate the services on their behalf.

Alternatively, you can choose the option of receiving direct payments and organising the services how you wish – see section 6.2 below for further information on this.

If you wish for the local authority to directly arrange your services, you should still be invited to state your views and preferences in regard to what these services will be and how they will be best delivered.

For example, the *Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014* emphasises that service users should:

- be “at the heart of the [social care system and have] an equal say in the support they receive”<sup>13</sup>; *and*
- “control over reaching the outcomes that help them achieve well-being”.
- The legislation also encourages “co-production” – i.e. enabling individuals “to become more involved in the design and delivery of services”<sup>14</sup>.

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<sup>13</sup> Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014: The Essentials, Welsh Government, 2015

<sup>14</sup> Social care legislation in Wales: Information and Learning Hub - Overview: Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014, Social Care Wales website: <https://socialcare.wales/hub/sswbact> (last accessed 2 October 2024).

## 6.2 Direct payments

**A direct payment is money given directly to an individual to arrange the social care services that they have been assessed as needing, instead of the local authority providing or arranging the services itself.**

If someone opts to receive direct payments, the amount of money received from the local authority will be the equivalent to what it would have contributed towards the services – based on the means test procedure outlined above – if it organised them directly.

As such, you may be asked to make a contribution towards the cost of the service provision – again, in the same way that you would for services directly arranged by the authority.

Some people prefer the extra choice and control that direct payments can provide, regarding the services they will receive in order to meet their care needs. Generally, a person who has opted for direct payments will either employ a carer worker themselves, or use a local care agency.

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**Note:** Direct payments can only be used to meet your assessed *eligible needs*. These are the needs identified in your care assessment – and subsequently set out in your care and support plan – that meet the national eligibility criteria.

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### Responsibilities if you choose direct payments

Direct payments are not suitable for everyone, because there is usually a requirement to take on various responsibilities that the local authority would otherwise manage.

A vital element in achieving good direct payments service outcomes is the provision of adequate advice and support for service users and their carers – for example, in regard to the employment of a personal assistant.

Age Cymru's Factsheet 24w *Direct payments for social care services in Wales* has further information on this topic.

## Direct payments and mental capacity

Direct payments can be paid to those who would otherwise lack the mental capacity to manage them, provided a 'suitable person' is available to assist with the process. This is usually a close family member or friend.

## Local authority duty to offer direct payments

Direct payments must be offered as an option by the local authority to anyone with eligible needs (including carers). They must then be made available in all cases where someone advises that they wish to choose this option. Authorities are advised that they can only refuse direct payments "where it is clear after extensive exploration" that they would not secure the personal outcomes required in the person's care and support plan<sup>15</sup>.

Again, see Age Cymru's Factsheet 24w for further information on direct payments.

## 7 Types of services provided by local authorities for people with care needs who live at home

Depending on individual needs, a wide range of services may potentially be available. The following bullet points list some of the main examples and then sections 7.1 to 7.9 provide further information on each of them.

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**Note:** Section 7.10 has brief information on what the options might be if someone's care needs become too great to be met at home.

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### Examples of homecare or non-residential services

- **Personal care;**
- **home help / domestic assistance;**
- **pre-prepared meals delivered to someone at home (meals on wheels);**
- **day care (i.e. away from the home in, for example, local authority run day centres for older people);**

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<sup>15</sup> Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014: Part 4 Code of Practice (Meeting Needs), Welsh Government.

- **community transport;**
  - **provision of aids, equipment or adaptations to help with daily living tasks and for home safety;**
  - **provision of telecare, including personal alarms, or other assistive technology;**
  - **preventative and rehabilitation services (including reablement); *and***
  - **respite care in various forms (including night-sitting services).**
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**Note:** Many of the above services would also be possible to arrange privately. This section focuses on local authority social services provision; however, see section 9 below for further information on private provision.

Also see section 10 below for some information on certain services that may be available from charitable or voluntary organisations.

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## 7.1 Personal care

Personal care includes help with tasks such as:

- getting up;
- dressing;
- using the toilet;
- washing and bathing;
- eating or drinking; *and/or*
- getting ready for bed.

If you have difficulty getting up from your bed, bath or chair, you may need a specialist manual handling assessment by a local authority occupational therapist (OT). An OT is someone trained to assess the special needs of people with disabilities. They will work alongside a social worker and/or other social care staff.

## Personal care services to contribute towards someone's needs outside the home?

Usually, personal care assistance is provided in someone's own home. However, in order to meet particular needs, potentially the service user may require help outside of their home.

For instance, someone might need a care worker/personal assistant to help them get out and about and remain involved in the wider community, thus preventing them becoming isolated at home. This is recognised in Welsh Government guidance to also be an important aspect of someone's needs.

In recent years many local authorities have responded to financial cuts by concentrating mostly on care services to make sure that people can function – i.e. get up, get dressed, keep clean etc – and they have ignored these wider social needs. However, there is an emphasis in the *Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014* on various **wellbeing** factors, including that:

- people should be able to enjoy and maintain “positive relationships with family and friends”<sup>16</sup>; *and*
- other “social relationships and involvement in the community”, including “involvement...in leisure activities”<sup>17</sup>.

This should mean, in theory, that it will be harder for authorities to ignore these wider ‘quality of life’ social care issues.

It is also worth noting that Welsh Government guidance says that all the wellbeing factors listed in the Act “**have equal importance**”<sup>18</sup>.

Further information on these aspects of the Act can be found in Age Cymru's Factsheet 41w *Social care assessments for older people with care needs in Wales*.

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<sup>16</sup> Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014: The Essentials, Welsh Government, 2015

<sup>17</sup> Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014: Part 3 Code of Practice (assessing the needs of individuals), Welsh Government.

<sup>18</sup> Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014: Part 2 Code of Practice (General Functions), Welsh Government.

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**Note: Staff must be allocated sufficient time by the local authority to adequately carry out personal care tasks**

The Welsh Government's guidance to accompany the *Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014* makes reference to this issue that has received media coverage in recent years (i.e. care worker's having time windows that are too brief when visiting people in their own homes to provide adequate care services). The guidance says that:

**“Where [a] care and support plan involves visits to the person’s home for the purpose of providing care and support, those visits must be of sufficient length to ensure the appropriate delivery of the care and support identified to meet the assessed needs and contribute to enabling the person to meet their personal outcomes”.**

**“The length of these visits must be identified in the care and support plan” and this must then be stuck to by the authority, or by the care provider that the authority commissions to provide the service on their behalf<sup>19</sup>.**

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## 7.2 Home help / domestic assistance

Many older people may not require any assistance with personal care tasks, but need help with domestic tasks, such as general housework, shopping and cleaning.

In many areas, however, local authorities have reduced or discontinued domestic help in order to direct resources towards personal care. However, they still have a legal duty to meet assessed eligible needs, which may include elements of these services as part of an overall care package, where you have *other* eligible needs.

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<sup>19</sup> Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014: Part 4 Code of Practice (Meeting Needs), Welsh Government.

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### **Note: Information relating to domestic assistance in the Welsh Government’s Code of Practice guidance (to accompany the *Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014*)**

This guidance, in operation since April 2016, emphasises the importance of local authority social care services focussing on “**prevention and early intervention [including] increasing preventative services within the community to minimise the escalation of critical need**”<sup>20</sup> (i.e. people requiring greater services at a future point than would have been the case if lower-level help had been available sooner).

It could be said that this principle should support the provision of domestic assistance by the authority (with the aim of supporting people with lower-level needs, so that these needs are less likely to escalate).

Additionally, the guidance advises that issues that may demonstrate a need for care and/or support services include where someone is unable to carry out “**basic household activities and daily routines**”<sup>21</sup> (emphasis added).

If you feel that your local authority has not fully taken into account particular elements of your care and/or support needs, you could ask them to reconsider and, if necessary, use their complaints procedure – see section 12 below.

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## **Laundry**

Some social services departments and/or the NHS provide a laundry service for people with continence problems, or who cannot manage their laundry for other reasons. Arrangements are likely to differ around the country, but if you need this type of assistance you can make sure you mention it to the social services department when they carry out your care needs assessment.

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<sup>20</sup> Social care legislation in Wales: Information and Learning Hub - Overview: Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014, Social Care Wales website: <https://socialcare.wales/hub/sswbact> (last accessed 7 October 2024).

<sup>21</sup> Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014: Part 3 Code of Practice (assessing the needs of individuals), Welsh Government.

Alternatively, you could also speak to your GP, as they may be able to make a referral for you, particularly if provision is led by the NHS in your area.

### Other ways of getting help with domestic tasks

If you only need help with domestic tasks, but do not qualify for local authority assistance, some local Age Cymru organisations – or other voluntary agencies – may provide help with various household tasks (section 10 below has some further information on this).

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**Note:** You may also be able to purchase help at home from a private agency or employ someone directly yourself. If you are considering this, see section 9 of this factsheet for further details.

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## 7.3 Meals at home

Individual local authorities will have their own arrangements for providing meals at home, sometimes called ‘meals on wheels’.

Some schemes provide a freezer for people at home and then deliver frozen meals so that people can heat their own, using a microwave or steamer (which may also be supplied), as and when they wish. Meals may be offered any number of days per week. What is available to you will depend on your assessed needs and on the policy of the local authority.

The type of meal provided for someone eligible for the service must be able to meet the specific requirements of the service user. For example, it would not be appropriate to only offer frozen food to someone who could not manage to prepare this, without also providing appropriate support services, or making sure there is a carer available who is able to assist with food preparation.

## 7.4 Day care / day centres

Day care is provided outside the home in a day centre or other establishment. The type of care offered could involve:

- a chance to meet other people – for example, to share activities; take up new interests that could improve wellbeing, or to enable someone to continue practising existing interests;
- provision of meals;
- respite care – i.e. the provision of services for the person with care needs, so as to enable their usual carer, such as a family member or friend, to have a break (also see section 7.9 below); *or*
- specialised care services – for people with particular conditions, such as dementia.

You can ask your local authority what is available in your area.

If social services run the day centre, or subsidise it financially, you might have to be assessed as needing the service under the local authority's eligibility criteria to be able to attend.

Other organisations, such as your local Age Cymru, may run day centres that are open to all older people.

You may be able to access community transport to attend a day centre – see below.

## 7.5 Community transport

Community transport allows people who are unable to use conventional public transport – because of a disability, for example – to access basic public services and facilities. It may also assist those who live in an isolated area which is poorly serviced by public transport.

Your local authority may arrange community transport – or assist you to access it – in order for you to visit a day centre as part of meeting your care needs (see section 7.4 above).

**The provision of transport to attend a day service cannot be charged for “where the transport is provided as part of meeting a person’s [assessed] needs”<sup>22</sup>** (for more, overall, information on charging for local authority social care services see Age Cymru’s Factsheet 46w *Paying for care and support at home in Wales*).

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<sup>22</sup> Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014: Part 4 and 5 Code of Practice (Charging and Financial Assessment) (version 7 – April 2023), Welsh Government.

If your local authority is not able to offer you community transport, you could contact your local Age Cymru, other voluntary organisations in your area, or the Community Transport Association to see if they are aware of local schemes (see section 13 for contact details).

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**Note:** There is a separate service that may be available for people who require non-emergency transport because they are unable, for medical reasons, to make their own way to hospital appointments or treatment centres. This is called the Non-Emergency Patient Transport Service (NEPTS) and is operated by the Welsh Ambulance Services NHS Trust. However, it should be noted that it is available in relation to NHS appointments and treatment **only**. Age Cymru's Factsheet 44w *Information on NHS services for older people in Wales* contains further details on NEPTS, or view the Welsh Ambulance Services website at:

<https://ambulance.nhs.wales/services/non-emergency-patient-transport-service-nepts/>

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## 7.6 Home adaptations, repairs, or specialised disability equipment

### Disability equipment

There is a wide range of specially designed equipment that assists people with disabilities to manage their daily living tasks more independently. For example:

- mobile hoists;
- commodes;
- bath lifts or seats; *or*
- specialist cutlery.

### Adaptations

Home adaptations also assist people with disabilities to manage daily living tasks and remain independent, but are generally attached to a property or permanently change its fabric in some way, as opposed to disability equipment which is usually 'standalone' in nature and thus removable or portable.

**Adaptations range from quite modest, low cost, alterations, to major works consisting of significant changes to the property.**

Examples of adaptations include:

- widening a doorway for a wheelchair;
- grab rails;
- a level access shower; *or*
- a stairlift.

### **Use of equipment or adaptations alongside other ongoing services**

Disability equipment and/or home adaptations are often provided alongside other services from the local authority, such as packages of home care or personal care support – see section 7.1 and 7.2 above for further information.

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**Note:** There are a number of funding streams which may be accessed by local authorities in relation to delivering equipment or adaptations.

This topic is not covered in this factsheet. However, further information – including where provision should be free of charge to the service user, or when you may be means tested in relation to contributing towards the cost – can be found in Age Cymru’s Factsheet 42w *Obtaining disability equipment and home adaptations in Wales*.

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## **7.7 Telecare (including personal alarms)**

Telecare involves using technology to remotely monitor and communicate with people in their own homes to help them manage their care needs and to promote independent living and wellbeing. This could be for short or longer periods of time during day or night.

Examples of telecare services could include fall detectors, chair and occupancy sensors, or a property exit sensor. However, probably the most common example is a personal alarm.

Personal alarm systems allow you to be linked up 24 hours a day to a central service that can offer help in an emergency. The link is usually either by telephone, a pull cord, a pendant that you wear around your neck, or a combination of these.

If you need to summon help urgently and are unable to make a normal telephone call, you can use the pendant, pull the cord or use a special button on the telephone to contact a control centre.

This centre will be staffed by people who can talk to you, find out what you need and summon help as appropriate. In an emergency, the alarm operator gets in touch with the people you have agreed should be contacted in such circumstances – for example a trusted relative or neighbour – who will have a set of keys to your home. The alarm operator also contacts the appropriate emergency service if this is required.

## 7.8 Preventative services, reablement and rehabilitation

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**Note:** This section contains a brief introduction to these topics – for more detailed information, see Age Cymru’s Factsheet 76w *Reablement, intermediate care and preventative services in Wales*.

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### Preventative services

Welsh Government guidance to accompany the *Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act* advises that “when identifying levels of service necessary to meet need, local authorities must always have regard to the need to provide or arrange preventative services”.

The Welsh Government believes a focus on prevention and early intervention can help to make services sustainable into the future. Section 15 of the *Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act* places statutory duties on local authorities to provide or arrange the provision of preventative services to delay the development of care and support needs (or keep needs at lower levels and stop them from escalating).

Welsh Government guidance specifically states that “reablement can be a key element of preventative services”<sup>23</sup>.

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<sup>23</sup> Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 – Part 2 Code of Practice (General Functions), January 2016, Welsh Government.

## Reablement

Reablement services aim to encourage and support people to learn or re-learn skills necessary for daily living, following a period of illness or after a stay in hospital. Reablement support is about helping you to discover what you are capable of doing for yourself, and to give you confidence when moving around your home and with tasks such as washing, dressing and preparing meals.

Reablement services are most frequently delivered in your own home.

Reablement services are a 'time limited' intervention, provided **free of charge for any period up to and including six weeks**<sup>24</sup>.

Sometimes the period of time can be extended:

Local authorities "should have regard as to whether to extend this period in individual cases where a person's needs [are] such that their outcomes would benefit from a longer period of free reablement support"<sup>25</sup>.

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**Note:** Reablement has a number of similarities with an NHS service, 'intermediate care' – see section 8.7 below.

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## Rehabilitation services

Rehabilitation services can help if someone has had a serious illness, injury or operation and are likely to need support to get back on their feet. For example, if you've lost confidence to shower or bathe without help, or are fearful of falling (making it difficult to go shopping or to meet friends).

The services aim to promote your recovery and maximise your independence and potentially involve a combination of social services and NHS provision.

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<sup>24</sup> Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014: Part 2 Code of Practice (General Functions), Welsh Government.

<sup>25</sup> Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 – Part 4 and 5 Code of Practice (Charging and Financial Assessment) (version 7 – April 2023), Welsh Government.

## 7.9 Respite care (including night-sitting services)

Respite care services allow someone who cares on an informal basis for a family member or friend to have a break from their caring role. For example, if you are a carer, you may need to re-charge your batteries from time to time from what can often be a challenging role.

Respite care could be offered on a regular basis, or as an occasional requirement, depending on the levels of need of the carer and/or the cared for person. It could be for a night, or a day, or a longer period such as a week or two weeks.

Below is a non-exhaustive list of the different ways that respite care might be provided – which one will be most appropriate for your situation could be determined by how long the carer wants or needs for a break:

- A sitter service or replacement social care worker to look after the cared for person whilst the carer goes out (during the daytime) and/or to allow the carer to have free time at home;
- a night-sitting service (so a carer can get a good night's sleep);
- attendance at a day centre;
- arranging visits from a befriending service;
- a temporary stay in a care home, or other residential establishment.

If you are a carer and you need a break, you can ask social services for a **carer's assessment** (“a local authority must offer an assessment to any carer where it appears to that authority that the carer may have needs for support”<sup>26</sup>). Carers can request an assessment, even if the person cared for does not want one for their needs.

The charity, Carers Wales, may be able to offer additional, advice or support – see section 13 below for their contact details.

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<sup>26</sup> Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014: Part 3 Code of Practice (assessing the needs of individuals), Welsh Government.

## 7.10 Service options if someone's care needs are too great to be met at home

For some people with care needs who currently live at home, continuing to do so may become unsustainable. This might be because:

- they have been previously assessed by the local authority – and are receiving care and support services from them – but their needs have since increased; *or*
- they have sought a care needs assessment from the authority for the first time, but the authority judges that their needs are already too great to be met at home.

**In either of these scenarios, the following may be potential options:**

### Extra care sheltered housing

Sometimes a social care assessment will identify sheltered housing as a potential way to help people meet their needs. Regular sheltered housing may well not be appropriate for someone with higher level needs, but 'extra care' sheltered housing (also sometimes referred to as 'housing-with-care') might be a possibility. As the name suggests, in this type of housing, personal care services, such as help with bathing and dressing, are provided. Age UK's Factsheet 64 *Specialist housing for older people* contains further information on extra care sheltered housing.

### Moving into a care home on a permanent basis

Someone may need to enter a care home on a permanent basis – Age Cymru's Factsheet 10w *Paying for a permanent care home placement in Wales* and Factsheet 29w *Finding care home accommodation in Wales* have further information on this topic.

### If someone does not want to enter a care home?

Some people feel very strongly that they do not want to live in a care home environment and want to remain at home. Whilst people cannot be *made* to move into a care home against their will (as long as they have sufficient mental capacity to make this decision for themselves), they may be advised – following a care needs assessment – that a care home is the only safe and effective way of meeting their needs.

A local authority is **under a duty to meet a person's assessed eligible needs**; *however*, it is able to do so in the most cost-effective way.

Whilst this means the authority cannot choose a care package for you for the *sole* reason that it is cheaper than the alternatives – for example, you shouldn't be asked to move to a care home just because it is cheaper than the home care you would need (or vice versa) – if there were *two* options that would meet your needs **equally well**, the local authority can legitimately choose the option that is cheapest for it to provide or arrange.

However, having said this, the local authority would have to ensure that the cheaper option met *all* assessed and agreed needs.

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**Note:** As an example, it wouldn't be sufficient if the cheaper provision would meet your personal care needs (say, help with washing and eating), but was going to leave other personal outcomes unmet that were identified during the assessment (such as the service user being able to maintain family or other significant personal relationships; or involvement in the community – the care option/s that the local authority chooses must meet these sorts of needs too).

This is confirmed in the Welsh Government's guidance – namely, that people's personal outcomes must be identified during assessment and, although these will differ in each case, they must relate to the wellbeing definitions in the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act.

The wellbeing definitions in the guidance include statements about the maintenance of important relationships, as do the personal outcomes to which eligible care and support needs must relate (i.e. relationships and involvement in the community are mentioned alongside other 'practical' needs such as ability to carry out self-care and/or domestic tasks).

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In some circumstances it may be possible for someone to negotiate with the local authority social services department about the care it will provide or arrange – for example, you could explore the possibility of making an arrangement, whereby you receive a maximum homecare package from the authority and/or receive only the services which are deemed to be the most essential.

You would then need to make your own additional care provision for the remaining needs (for example, by arranging a private care agency to help with these other needs) – see Age Cymru’s Factsheet 41w *Social care assessments for older people with care needs in Wales* for some more information on this topic.

## 8 Your GP and community-based health services

Your GP should arrange community-based health services for you, where necessary. Services available may include those outlined in sections 8.1 to 8.9 below.

### 8.1 District nursing

The main focus of district nursing teams is on assisting people who are unable to travel to their GP surgery for nursing provision and/or when assessments or treatment in the home are more appropriate.

District nurses often oversee complex packages of care and work with a wide range of other professionals, such as local authority social services staff (i.e. as well as receiving NHS provision from the district nursing team, the person may also have a package of care from the local authority, such as the services outlined in section 7 above).

### 8.2 Chiropody

Chiropodists (also known as podiatrists) help people who have problems with their lower leg or feet. To receive chiropody as an NHS patient, you must meet local eligibility criteria. This usually means you must have a medical foot problem or health condition – such as diabetes, arthritis and circulatory problems – that puts you at risk of foot-related problems.

Age Cymru’s Factsheet 44w *Information on NHS services for older people in Wales* contains some further information on this topic.

### 8.3 NHS continence services

These services are staffed by specialist nurses and physiotherapists. They can assess your symptoms, identify the cause, and discuss what treatment or exercises may help tackle your continence problems.

If you wish, you may be able to refer yourself directly to your local NHS continence service for an assessment, without seeing your GP first.

Provided you meet local qualifying criteria, you can get incontinence products provided by the NHS free of charge.

Age UK's information guide, *Bladder and bowel problems*, has additional information. You can contact Age Cymru Advice to order a copy – see section 13.

## 8.4 Physiotherapists

Physiotherapists arrange treatment and rehabilitation following injury or disability affecting your joints, ligaments or muscles – for example, musculoskeletal conditions that could be as a result of trauma caused by a fall, or perhaps a specific condition such as arthritis.

They may be members of a multi-disciplinary team that offers rehabilitation support in a number of areas – for example, for someone who has had a stroke.

## 8.5 Mental health services

If you have been experiencing periods of anxiety, low mood, poor sleep or a loss of interest in things you used to enjoy on several days a week – and this has been going on for a month or more – it is important to speak to your GP.

They can potentially refer you to a range of services depending on the cause of your mental health issue.

The NHS 111 Wales website has further information on mental health services at:

<https://111.wales.nhs.uk/encyclopaedia/m/article/mentalhealthservices>

Age UK's information guide, *Your mind matters*, may also be helpful. You can contact Age Cymru Advice to order a copy – see section 13.

## 8.6 Marie Curie and Macmillan nurses

These nurses support people with cancer to manage the physical and emotional aspects of their illness, particularly as people approach the end of their life. Age Cymru's Factsheet 44w *Information on NHS services for older people in Wales* contains some further information on end-of-life care.

## 8.7 Intermediate care

Intermediate care is an NHS led service aimed at:

- preventing admission to hospital;
- making it possible for an earlier discharge from hospital to take place (where a stay has been necessary); *and/or*
- preventing or delaying the need for a permanent residential care placement.

Intermediate care has a number of similarities with reablement (see section 7.8 above), including that it is provided free of charge for up to six weeks.

Further information on this topic can be found in Age Cymru's Factsheet 76w *Reablement, intermediate care and preventative services in Wales*.

## 8.8 NHS continuing healthcare (NHS CHC)

The NHS is responsible for meeting the full cost of care for those whose '**primary need**' for that care is health-based. This is called NHS continuing healthcare (sometimes also described as 'fully funded care').

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**Note:** Significantly, this does not mean you are eligible *simply* because you have a health problem. It is the nature of your care needs that arise from your illness or condition that are important, not the illness itself. They must be health-related needs that are not suitable to be met via social care, as they are beyond those that the local authority has a duty to meet (due to the *level* of the health-related element).

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If you receive an NHS CHC care package it will be **free** of charge (part of the overall package may include care and support more usually provided by local authorities – *however*, if it is provided by the NHS as part of continuing healthcare, it will be free).

More information on NHS CHC can be found in Age Cymru's Factsheet 20w *NHS continuing healthcare and NHS-funded nursing care in Wales*.

## 8.9 Care and support under the Mental Health Act 1983

If you receive after-care services under section 117 of the *Mental Health Act 1983*, following a period of detention and treatment in hospital under certain other sections of the Act, you cannot be charged for these services. Section 117 places a joint duty on health and social services authorities to provide these after-care services.

## 9 Getting help privately – finding a care worker or the private purchase of disability equipment

If you wish to organise your own care without local authority involvement in the process, you can find a care worker through an agency, or by employing someone directly – see below.

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**Note:** However, remember that if the local authority has assessed you as needing particular care and/or support services, it has a responsibility to ensure that those services are available to you. This means providing or arranging home care services for you if necessary.

Also, bear in mind that there is the maximum weekly charge for non-residential care services arranged via the local authority assessment procedure, so this could be cheaper for you than arranging services privately by yourself.

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### 9.1 Finding a care worker via an agency

Agencies that provide care workers who carry out personal care tasks must be registered with the **Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW)** – see section 13 for contact details. Agencies should be regularly inspected by the CIW to ensure that they comply with appropriate legislation and regulations.

The CIW website has a search facility where you can locate care agencies in your area:

**[www.careinspectorate.wales/service-directory](http://www.careinspectorate.wales/service-directory)**

You can search by local authority area or by inputting your postcode. If you don't have internet access, you could contact the CIW by telephone and ask them to provide you with a list. Alternatively, your local Age Cymru, or other similar voluntary organisation, may be able to help you access the search facility online. Your local authority social services department might also be able to provide a list of potential agencies which you could consider using.

### **Making sure the care is appropriate to your needs**

It is important to be clear about the type of help that you need in order to establish whether a particular agency and its staff can meet your needs.

**A local authority care needs assessment can be useful for this, even if you have decided from the outset that you want to organise your care services privately and don't wish for the authority to arrange them.**

Discuss with the agency how your needs can best be met. For example, depending on the level of care you need, it may not be possible for one person to provide it all. A planned rota of workers can help to minimise disruption and provide continuity.

## **9.2 Employing a care worker yourself**

**You can employ a care worker (or other help) directly, rather than go through an agency. However, this can be complicated, so it is important to be clear about the responsibilities you are taking on – i.e. particularly in relation to a contract of employment and other financial commitments such as National Insurance contributions.**

You may be able get help with various aspects of employment – including advice on recruitment, employment law, paying wages, dealing with tax etc – from a local voluntary organisation or a disability user group. For example, Disability Rights UK produces a range of information on employing care workers – see section 13 below for their contact details.

If you advertise for a care worker, it is advisable to take up references. You should carefully consider the duties you require and write a job description, so there is no misunderstanding by either of you about what is expected.

It is also a sensible safeguard to obtain a criminal record check beforehand. You can ask your local authority to make the application on your behalf. The Disclosure and Barring Service carries out checks and they keep a list of anyone who has been barred from working with vulnerable adults or children.

### 9.3 Purchasing disability equipment or adaptations

If you intend to buy disability equipment privately, it is advisable to try it out first, if this is possible. There might be a disabled living centre in your area where this can take place and where you can obtain impartial advice. Living Made Easy may also be a useful source of information on this topic – see section 13 below for their contact details.

Reputable companies that sell disability equipment, or carry out home adaptations, will usually belong to a trade association such as the British Healthcare Trades Association, which requires them to maintain a high level of ethical standards.

Also see Age Cymru's Factsheet 42w *Obtaining disability equipment and home adaptations in Wales* for further information.

## 10 Getting help from a charity or voluntary organisation

Some charities or voluntary organisations may be able to offer assistance with the following:

- domestic cleaning, gardening or shopping;
- help with nail cutting;
- befriending services for older people who are socially isolated;
- provision of disability equipment; *and/or*

- practical assistance with minor repairs and improvements to your home, through a handyman scheme (this could include things like fitting smoke alarms or carbon monoxide detectors; home security measures such as door chains and door viewers; putting up shelves, or tacking down loose carpets).

**There may be charges for some services.** The following organisations might directly provide some of these services in your area, or be able to advise you of other similar local provision:

- your local Age Cymru;
- the British Red Cross;
- the Royal Voluntary Service (RVS); *or*
- Care & Repair Cymru.

Contact details for all the above can be found in section 13.

## 11 Welfare benefits that could help towards care costs

### Non-means tested disability benefits

If you need personal care or have other disability related problems, you may be eligible for one of the following non-means tested benefits:

- Attendance Allowance (paid to people over State Pension age); *or*
- the Personal Independence Payment (for people below State Pension age).

See the following Age UK factsheets for further information:

- Factsheet 34 *Attendance Allowance*
- Factsheet 87 *Personal Independence Payment and Disability Living Allowance*.

### Means-tested benefits

Depending on your financial situation, you might also be able to claim benefits to assist with general living costs, including costs associated with care needs. The following information resources provide further details:

- Age Cymru's *More money in your pocket* information guide
- Age UK Factsheet 48 *Pension Credit*
- Age UK Factsheet 17 *Housing Benefit*
- Age Cymru's Factsheet 21w *Council Tax in Wales – information about the tax and help you might get towards your bill.*

## 12 Problems and complaints regarding social care assessments or services

### 12.1 Local authority complaints procedures

You may wish to complain to the local authority social services department about a number of issues around obtaining care at home. For example:

- the authority has decided that your needs do not meet its criteria (so you are not being provided with services);
- you are receiving services, but feel that they are inadequate or inappropriate for your needs;
- you feel the charging procedures have not been properly administered;
- you are unhappy with the conduct of social services and/or care staff.

Age Cymru's Factsheet 59w *How to resolve problems and make a complaint about social care in Wales* has further information on this topic, including:

- local authority social services complaints procedures and how they should operate;
- how to submit a complaint;
- what to expect when you do;
- information on organisations that may be able to assist you to make a complaint (such as Llais – a body that represents the voices and opinions of the public in regard to social care and health services); *and*
- the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales (who you may be able to elevate your complaint to if the local authority's response is not satisfactory).

## 12.2 Support from an advocacy service

A local Age Cymru organisation, or other charitable or voluntary group, may offer an advocacy service that could offer you support or assistance with a complaint – see section 13 below for details about contacting your local Age Cymru (if they don't run one themselves, they may be able to provide contact details for a similar service in your area).

You can also find a list of advocacy services (within each local authority area) on our website at:

**[www.ageuk.org.uk/cymru/our-work/advocacy/hope---helping-others-participate-and-engage/advocacy-services-in-wales](http://www.ageuk.org.uk/cymru/our-work/advocacy/hope---helping-others-participate-and-engage/advocacy-services-in-wales)**

The Public Services Ombudsman for Wales website also has a list of organisations that may be able to offer advocacy services at:

**[www.ombudsman.wales/advice-advocates](http://www.ombudsman.wales/advice-advocates)**

## 13 Useful organisations

### Age Cymru Advice

Free and confidential information and advice on matters affecting the over 50s in Wales.

**Tel: 0300 303 44 98**

**E-mail: [advice@agecymru.org.uk](mailto:advice@agecymru.org.uk)**

**Website: [www.agecymru.org.uk/advice](http://www.agecymru.org.uk/advice)**

### Age Cymru organisations (local)

Your local Age Cymru may be able to provide advice and support on a range of issues. **Age Cymru Advice** can provide details of your local Age Cymru (see above), or visit the Age Cymru website at:

[www.agecymru.org.uk/local](http://www.agecymru.org.uk/local)

## **Alzheimer's Society**

Provides information and factsheets about all types of dementia. They may also operate services in your area to support people with dementia, along with their families and carers.

Dementia support line:

0333 150 3456 (English)

03300 947 400 (Welsh)

General enquiries: 0330 333 0804

E-mail: [enquiries@alzheimers.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@alzheimers.org.uk)

Website: [www.alzheimers.org.uk](http://www.alzheimers.org.uk)

## **British Red Cross (The)**

Offer a range of services, such as disability equipment and wheelchair loans, domiciliary care, home from hospital support and transport services. Some services may only be available in certain geographical areas.

Tel: 0344 871 11 11

Website: [www.redcross.org.uk/get-help](http://www.redcross.org.uk/get-help)

## **Care & Repair Cymru**

Care & Repair Cymru work to ensure all older people have homes that are safe, secure and appropriate to their needs. There is a network of local Care & Repair Agencies across Wales.

Tel: 02920 107580

E-mail: [enquiries@careandrepair.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@careandrepair.org.uk)

Website: [www.careandrepair.org.uk](http://www.careandrepair.org.uk)

## **Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW)**

CIW inspects and regulates care and social services in Wales.

Tel: 0300 7900 126

E-mail: [ciw@gov.wales](mailto:ciw@gov.wales)

Website: [www.careinspectorate.wales](http://www.careinspectorate.wales)

## Carers Wales

A charity providing information, advice and practical and emotional support for carers.

Tel: 029 2081 1370

E-mail: [info@carerswales.org](mailto:info@carerswales.org)

Carers UK Helpline: 0808 808 7777

Website: [www.carerswales.org](http://www.carerswales.org)

## Citizens Advice

National network of free advice centres offering confidential and independent advice, face to face or by telephone.

Tel: 0800 702 2020

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

## Community Transport Association

A national charity that represents and supports providers of community transport.

Tel: 0161 351 1475

E-mail: [wales@ctauk.org](mailto:wales@ctauk.org)

Website: [www.ctauk.org](http://www.ctauk.org)

## Dewis Cymru

This is a website owned and funded by local authorities across Wales. The site was set up by the Welsh Government to assist in the delivery of certain provisions in the *Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act*. The Dewis Cymru site contains an extensive database of a wide variety of services that can help people with their well-being.

[www.dewis.wales](http://www.dewis.wales)

## **Disability Rights UK**

An organisation run by and for disabled people working on campaigns and policy. They have a 'Guidance & Resources' section on their website which contains a range of information.

Tel: 0330 995 0400 (for general enquiries)

E-mail: [enquiries@disabilityrightsuk.org](mailto:enquiries@disabilityrightsuk.org)

Website: [www.disabilityrightsuk.org](http://www.disabilityrightsuk.org)

## **Living Made Easy**

A charity that provides information on disability equipment.

Website: [www.livingmadeeasy.org.uk](http://www.livingmadeeasy.org.uk)

## **Llais**

A body that represents the voices and opinions of people in Wales in regard to health and social care services.

Tel: 029 20 235558

E-mail: [enquiries@llaiscymru.org](mailto:enquiries@llaiscymru.org)

Website: [www.llaiswales.org](http://www.llaiswales.org)

Contact details for your local Llais team: [www.llaiswales.org/in-your-area](http://www.llaiswales.org/in-your-area)

## **NHS 111 Wales**

NHS 111 Wales can provide contact details for local services – such as dentists, doctors, pharmacists, and support groups – as well as telephone and web advice on general health issues and common illnesses.

Tel: 111

Website: [www.111.wales.nhs.uk](http://www.111.wales.nhs.uk)

## **Older People's Commissioner for Wales**

Independent champion for older people across Wales.

Tel: 03442 640 670

E-mail: [ask@olderpeople.wales](mailto:ask@olderpeople.wales)

Website: [www.olderpeople.wales](http://www.olderpeople.wales)

## Public Services Ombudsman for Wales

The Ombudsman looks to see whether people have been treated unfairly or have received a bad service from a public body, such as a local authority or the NHS. People who fully self-fund their care also have the right to escalate a complaint about those services to the Ombudsman.

Tel: 0300 790 0203

E-mail: [ask@ombudsman.wales](mailto:ask@ombudsman.wales)

Website: [www.ombudsman.wales](http://www.ombudsman.wales)

## Royal Voluntary Service (RVS)

RVS operate various services in Wales to help older people stay independent at home.

Website: [www.royalvoluntaryservice.org.uk](http://www.royalvoluntaryservice.org.uk)

## United Kingdom Homecare Association

A professional association of home care providers in the UK whose members comply with a Code of Practice.

Tel: 020 8661 8188

Website: [www.ukhca.co.uk](http://www.ukhca.co.uk)

## Welsh Government

The devolved government for Wales.

Tel: 0300 060 4400

E-mail: [customerhelp@gov.wales](mailto:customerhelp@gov.wales)

Website: [www.gov.wales](http://www.gov.wales)

# 14 Further information about Age Cymru

## 14.1 Who we are

**Age Cymru is the national charity for older people in Wales.**

**Our vision** is a society which offers all people in Wales the best experience of later life. Older people are valued, included and able to shape decisions affecting their lives.

**Our mission** is to improve the lives of older people by delivering trusted advice, support and services. We use our knowledge, insight and experience to influence policies and decisions affecting older people.

Together with our local partners:

- we provide information and advice;
- we deliver wellbeing programmes;
- we provide independent advocacy;
- we support carers; *and*
- we campaign and research.

### **Age Cymru**

Mariners House  
Trident Court  
East Moors Road  
Cardiff  
CF24 5TD

029 2043 1555

[www.agecymru.org.uk](http://www.agecymru.org.uk)

Registered Charity 1128436

## 14.2 **How we can help**

### **Age Cymru Advice: our information and advice service for matters affecting people over 50 in Wales**

Age Cymru Advice is committed to being the foremost information and advice service to older people in Wales. We aim to provide effective, accessible, high-quality information and advice while offering a free, impartial and confidential service. Age Cymru Advice can assist older people themselves, their family, friends, carers, or professionals. All of our guides and factsheets are available to download from our website, or you can contact our advice line to have copies posted to you for free.

## Local support

Age Cymru Advice also acts as a gateway to our local services. Face to face support via local offices and home visits may be available to people requiring additional or more specialised support.

## Getting in touch

If you want to talk to one of our expert advisers, in Welsh or English, call us on **0300 303 44 98**. Our advice line is open between 9am and 4pm, Monday – Friday.

(Calls are charged at the same rate as a call to a standard 01 or 02 number. They will also be automatically included in any landline or mobile inclusive minutes package).

You can also:

- email us at [advice@agecymru.org.uk](mailto:advice@agecymru.org.uk); *or*
- visit our website at [www.agecymru.org.uk/advice](http://www.agecymru.org.uk/advice)



Gwasanaeth Cwbl Achrededig sy'n cynnwys  
adolygu gan gymheiriad  
Fully Accredited Service with peer review



darparu gwybodaeth a chyngor o safon i bobl Cymru  
a hynny mewn modd sy'n gyson  
providing a consistent approach to quality information  
and advice for the people of Wales





[www.facebook.com/agecymru](https://www.facebook.com/agecymru)



[www.x.com/AgeCymru](https://www.x.com/AgeCymru)



[www.youtube.com/agecymru](https://www.youtube.com/agecymru)

### Sign up to our newsletter

Our quarterly newsletter contains details of our campaigns, services and how you can support our work. Sign up today by visiting:

[www.agecymru.org.uk/agematters](https://www.agecymru.org.uk/agematters)

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## 14.3 How you can help

All the information and advice we provide is free and completely impartial. In many cases our timely intervention can be life changing. We are an ageing population and more people than ever are coming to us for support. You can help us be there for those that need us most.

### Make a donation

No matter how small or large, donations make a massive difference and help us continue our important work.

Call: **029 2043 1555**

Visit: **[www.agecymru.org.uk/donate](http://www.agecymru.org.uk/donate)**

Every donation we receive helps us be there for someone when they need us.

- £10 helps towards a fully trained expert advice worker to respond to queries from people who need the support of our information and advice service.
- £20 helps towards the cost of us producing free information guides and factsheets that provide useful advice on issues affecting people over 50.

### Fundraise

Whether it is having a bake sale, running a marathon or knitting small hats for the Big Knit, there are so many ways to raise vital funds to support our work.

Call: **029 2043 1555**

Visit: **[www.agecymru.org.uk/getinvolved](http://www.agecymru.org.uk/getinvolved)**

### Volunteer with us

You can support us to make a difference to the lives of older people by helping us in a variety of ways. However you'd like to get involved, we'd love to hear from you.

Call: **029 2043 1555**

Visit: **[www.agecymru.org.uk/volunteer](http://www.agecymru.org.uk/volunteer)**

## Leave us a gift in your will

With a gift to Age Cymru in your will, you can do so much to make sure older people have the support they deserve in the years to come. Leave a world less lonely.

Call: **029 2043 1555**

Visit: **[www.agecymru.org.uk/legacy](http://www.agecymru.org.uk/legacy)**

