

Social Care Jargon Buster

52 of the most commonly used social care words and phrases and what they mean



TERM	DEFINITION
1) Abuse	<p>Harm that is caused by anyone who has power over another person, which may include family members, friends, unpaid carers and health or social care workers. It can take various forms, including physical harm or neglect, and verbal, emotional or sexual abuse. Adults at risk can also be the victim of financial abuse from people they trust. Abuse may be carried out by individuals or by the organisation that employs them.</p>
2) Adult social care	<p>Care and support for adults who need extra help to manage their lives and be independent – including older people, people with a disability or long-term illness, people with mental health problems, and carers. Adult social care includes assessment of people’s needs, provision of services or allocation of funds to enable you to purchase your own care and support. It includes residential care, home care, personal assistants, day services, the provision of aids and adaptations and personal budgets.</p>
3) Advocacy	<p>Help to enable you to get the care and support you need that is independent of your local council. An advocate can help you express your needs and wishes, and weigh up and take decisions about the options available to you. They can help you find services, make sure correct procedures are followed and challenge decisions made by councils or other organisations.</p> <p>The advocate is there to represent your interests, which they can do by supporting you to speak, or by speaking on your behalf. They do not speak for the council or any other organisation. If you wish to speak up for yourself to make your needs and wishes heard, this is known as self-advocacy.</p>
4) Aids and adaptations	<p>Help to make things easier for you around the home. If you are struggling or disabled, you may need special equipment to enable you to live more comfortably and independently. You may also need changes to your home to make it easier and safer to get around. Aids and adaptations include things like grab rails, ramps, walk-in showers and stair-lifts.</p>
5) Assessment See also: Pre-assessment Self-assessment	<p>The process of working out what your needs are. A community care assessment looks at how you are managing everyday activities such as looking after yourself, household tasks and getting out and about. You are entitled to an assessment if you have social care needs, and your views are central to this process.</p>
6) Benefits	<p>Payments from the Government that you may receive because of your age, disability, income or caring responsibilities. Some benefits are universal – paid to everyone regardless of their income. Others are paid to people who have particular types of needs, regardless of their income. And others are means-tested – only paid to people whose income or savings fall below a certain level. Benefits in England are paid by the Department of Work and Pensions, not your local council.</p>

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7) Broker (also called 'care navigator') See also: Advocacy Signposting	Someone whose job it is to provide you with advice and information about what services are available in your area, so that you can choose to purchase the care and support that best meets your needs. They can also help you think about different ways that you can get support, for example by making arrangements with friends and family. A broker can help you think about what you need, find services and work out the cost. Brokerage can be provided by local councils, voluntary organisations or private companies.
8) Care plan See also: Support plan	A written plan after you have had an assessment, setting out what your care and support needs are, how they will be met (including what you or anyone who cares for you will do) and what services you will receive. You should have the opportunity to be fully involved in the plan and to say what your own priorities are. If you are in a care home or attend a day service, the plan for your daily care may also be called a care plan.
9) Carer	A person who provides unpaid support to a partner, family member, friend or neighbour who is ill, struggling or disabled and could not manage without this help. This is distinct from a care worker, who is paid to support people.
10) Care Worker	A person who is paid to support someone who is ill, struggling or disabled and could not manage without this help.
11) Client contribution See also: Self-funding	The amount you may need to pay towards the cost of the social care services you receive. Whether you need to pay, and the amount you need to pay, depends on your local council's charging policy, although residential care charges are set nationally. Councils receive guidance from the Government on how much they can charge.
12) Client group	A group of people with social care needs who fit within a broad single category. Client groups include older people, people with physical disability, people with learning disability, people with mental health problems, and so on.
13) Commissioner	A person or organisation that plans the services that are needed by the people who live in the area the organisation covers, and ensures that services are available. Sometimes the commissioner will pay for services, but not always. Your local council is the commissioner for adult social care. NHS care is commissioned separately by local clinical commissioning groups. In many areas health and social care commissioners' work together to make sure that the right services are in place for the local population.
14) Community care services	Social care services that can help you live a full, independent life and to remain in your own home for as long as possible.
15) Community health services	Health services that are provided outside hospitals, such as district nursing.

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16) Continuing health care	Ongoing care outside hospital for someone who is ill or disabled, arranged and funded by the NHS. This type of care can be provided anywhere, and can include the full cost of a place in a nursing home. It is provided when your need for day to day support is mostly due to your need for health care, rather than social care. The Government has issued guidance to the NHS on how people should be assessed for continuing health care, and who is entitled to receive it.
17) Co-production	When you as an individual are involved as an equal partner in designing the support and services you receive. Co-production recognises that people who use social care services (and their families) have knowledge and experience that can be used to help make services better, not only for themselves but for other people who need social care.
18) Direct payments See also: Personal budget	Money that is paid to you (or someone acting on your behalf) on a regular basis by your local council so you can arrange your own support, instead of receiving social care services arranged by the council. Direct payments are available to people who have been assessed as being eligible for council-funded social care. They are not yet available for residential care. This is one type of personal budget.
19) Eligibility	When your needs meet your council's criteria for council-funded care and support. Your local council decides who should get support, based on your level of need and the resources available in your area. The eligibility threshold is the level at which your needs reach the point that your council will provide funding. If the council assesses your needs and decides they are below this threshold, you will not qualify for council-funded care.
20) Home care	Care provided in your own home by paid care workers to help you with your daily life. It is also known as domiciliary care. Home care workers are usually employed by an independent agency, and the service may be arranged by your local council or by you (or someone acting on your behalf).
21) Independent living	The right to choose the way you live your life. It does not necessarily mean living by yourself or doing everything for yourself. It means the right to receive the assistance and support you need so you can participate in your community and live the life you want.
22) Integrated Care	Joined up, coordinated health and social care that is planned and organised around the needs and preferences of the individual, their carer and family. This may also involve integration with other services for example housing.

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23) Occupational therapist	A professional with specialist training in working with people with different types of disability or mental health needs. An OT can help you learn new skills or regain lost skills, and can arrange for aids and adaptations you need in your home. Occupational therapists are employed both by the NHS and by local councils.
24) Older people	Older people are the largest group of people who use adult social care services. Many councils define people over the age of 50 as 'older', but social care services for older people are usually for people over the age of 65 – unless you have particular needs that make you eligible before this age.
25) Outcomes	In social care, an 'outcome' refers to an aim or objective you would like to achieve or need to happen – for example, continuing to live in your own home, or being able to go out and about. You should be able to say which outcomes are the most important to you, and receive support to achieve them.
26) Personal assistant	Someone you choose and employ to provide the support you need, in the way that suits you best. This may include cooking, cleaning, help with personal care such as washing and dressing, and other things such as getting out and about in your community. Your personal assistant can be paid through direct payments or a personal budget.
27) Personal budget	<p>Money that is allocated to you by your local council to pay for care or support to meet your assessed needs. The money comes solely from adult social care. You can take your personal budget as a direct payment, or choose to leave the council to arrange services (sometimes known as a managed budget) – or a combination of the two.</p> <p>An alternative is an individual service fund, which is a personal budget that a care provider manages on your behalf. A personal health budget may also be available: it is a plan for your health care that you develop and control, knowing how much NHS money is available.</p>
28) Personalisation	A way of thinking about care and support services that puts you at the centre of the process of working out what your needs are, choosing what support you need and having control over your life. It is about you as an individual, not about groups of people whose needs are assumed to be similar, or about the needs of organisations.
29) Pre-assessment	The point at which you make contact with your local council and a decision is made about whether a full assessment is necessary. This is based on the information given by you or the person who refers you to adult social care. It is often conducted over the phone.

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30) Preventive services	Services you may receive to prevent more serious problems developing. These include things like reablement , telecare , befriending schemes and falls prevention services. The aim is to help you stay independent and maintain your quality of life, as well as to save money in the long term and avoid admissions to hospital or residential care.
31) Primary care	The part of the NHS that is the first point of contact for patients. This includes GPs, community nurses, pharmacists and dentists.
32) Reablement	A way of helping you remain independent, by giving you the opportunity to relearn or regain some of the skills for daily living that may have been lost as a result of illness, accident or disability. It is similar to rehabilitation, which helps people recover from physical or mental illness. Your council may offer a reablement service for a limited period in your own home that includes personal care, help with activities of daily living, and practical tasks around the home.
33) Referral	A request for an assessment of a person's needs, or for support from a social care organisation. A referral to adult social care may be made by your GP, another health professional or anyone else who supports you. You can also refer yourself, or a member of your family, by contacting the adult social care department at your local council.
34) Residential care	Care in a care home, with or without nursing, for older people or people with disabilities who require 24-hour care. Care homes offer trained staff and an adapted environment suitable for the needs of ill, frail or disabled people.
35) Resource Allocation System	The system some councils use to decide how much money people get for their support. There are clear rules, so everyone can see that money is given out fairly. Once your needs have been assessed, you will be allocated an indicative budget – so that you know how much money you have to spend on care and support. The purpose of an indicative budget is to help you plan the care and support that will help you meet your assessed needs – it might not be the final amount that you get, as you may find that it is not enough (or is more than enough) to meet those needs.
36) Respite care	A service giving carers a break, by providing short-term care for the person with care needs in their own home or in a residential setting. It can mean a few hours during the day or evening, 'night sitting', or a longer-term break. It can also benefit the person with care needs by giving them the chance to try new activities and meet new people.
37) Review	When you receive a re-assessment of your needs and you and the people in your life look at whether the services you are receiving are meeting your needs and helping you achieve your chosen outcomes. Changes can then be made if necessary.

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38) Rights	What you are entitled to receive, and how you should be treated, as a citizen . If you have a disability or mental health problem, are an older person or act as a carer for someone else, you have the right to have your needs assessed by your local council. You have a right to a service or direct payment if your assessment puts you above the eligibility threshold your council is using. You and your carers have a right to be consulted about your assessment and about any changes in the services you receive.
39) Risk assessment	An assessment of your health, safety, wellbeing and ability to manage your essential daily routines. You might also hear the term risk enablement , which means finding a way of managing any risks effectively so that you can still do the things you want to do.
40) Safeguarding	The process of ensuring that adults at risk are not being abused, neglected or exploited, and ensuring that people who are deemed 'unsuitable' do not work with them. If you believe that you or someone you know is being abused, you should let the adult social care department at your local council know. They should carry out an investigation and put a protection plan in place if abuse is happening. Councils have a duty to work with other organisations to protect adults from abuse and neglect. They do this through local safeguarding boards .
41) Self-assessment See also: Pre-assessment	A form or questionnaire that you complete yourself, either on paper or online, explaining your circumstances and why you need support. A social care worker or advocate can help you do this. If your council asks you to complete a self-assessment form, it will use this information to decide if you are eligible for social care services or if you need a full assessment by a social worker.
42) Self-directed support See also: Personalisation	An approach to social care that puts you at the centre of the support planning process, so that you can make choices about the services you receive. It should help you feel in control of your care, so that it meets your needs as an individual.
43) Self-funding	When you arrange and pay for your own care services and do not receive financial help from the council.
44) People who use services	Anyone who uses care services, whether you are in your own home, in residential care or in hospital. The NHS is likely to describe you as a 'patient', while the council and other care providers may also describe you as a 'client' or 'service user'. You may also be described as a 'cared-for person', in relation to your carer.
45) Signposting See also: Broker	Pointing people in the direction of information that they should find useful. Your local council should signpost you towards information about social care and benefits through its helpline or call centre (if it has one), website and through local services such as libraries and health centres.

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46) Single assessment process	An attempt to coordinate assessment and care planning across the NHS and councils, so that procedures aren't repeated and information is shared appropriately. It was introduced because people sometimes have a wide range of needs and can end up being assessed more often than necessary, and information can end up getting lost. The single assessment process is widely used for older people, and increasingly for other adults with care needs.
47) Social worker	A professional who works with individual people and families to help improve their lives by arranging to put in place the things they need. This includes helping to protect adults and children from harm or abuse, and supporting people to live independently. Social workers support people and help them find the services they need. They may have a role as a care manager , arranging care for service users . Many are employed by councils in adult social care teams; others work in the NHS or independent organisations.
48) Support plan	A plan you develop that says how you will spend your personal budget to get the life you want. You need to map out your week, define the outcomes you hope to achieve, and show how the money will be used to make these happen. Your local council must agree the plan before it makes money available to you.
49) Telecare	Technology that enables you to remain independent and safe in your own home, by linking your home with a monitoring centre that can respond to problems. Examples are pendant alarms that you wear round your neck, automatic pill dispensers, and sensors placed in your home to detect if you have fallen or to recognise risks such as smoke, floods or gas-leaks. The monitoring centre is staffed by trained operators who can arrange for someone to come to your home or contact your family, doctor or emergency services.
50) Universal services	Services such as transport, leisure, health and education that should be available to everyone in a local area and are not dependent on assessment or eligibility .
51) Voluntary organisations	Organisations that are independent of the Government and local councils. Their job is to benefit the people they serve, not to make a profit. The people who work for voluntary organisations are not necessarily volunteers – many will be paid for the work they do. Social care services are often provided by local voluntary organisations, by arrangement with the council or with you as an individual. Some are user-led organisations, which means they are run by and for the people the organisation is designed to benefit – e.g. disabled people.
52) Wellbeing	Being in a position where you have good physical and mental health, control over your day-to-day life, good relationships, enough money, and the opportunity to take part in the activities that interest you.

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