

## Fact Sheet 2

# Community Care

### What is Community Care?

The term “community care” comes from the NHS and Community Care Act 1990. The main principle of this Act is that services for people in need of care should be provided in their own homes as far as possible, rather than in institutions and care homes.

### Who is Community Care for?

Community care services are for adults who need assistance to live at home or who are no longer able to live in their own homes. For example they may have a physical or learning disability, have mental health problems, alcohol or drugs related problems or be homeless. Anyone is entitled to request a community care assessment. The assessment will establish somebody's care needs, and what help might suit them best.

Help may include:

- Personal care such as washing and dressing.
- A frozen meal delivery service.
- Shopping, cooking, housework etc.
- Alarm systems to get help, especially for people living alone.
- Support to make use of social and leisure facilities.
- Equipment to assist with daily living e.g. ramps, handrails, adapted cutlery.
- Respite breaks.
- Supported or care home accommodation when someone is no longer able to live at home.

### Getting Help and Services for the Person You Care For

The person you care for might be happy for you to continue caring for them without any outside help, but this can cause problems and put you under a lot of pressure. Caring for someone is very demanding and the help that you give may increase as time goes on. You will need to take a break every so often to keep

your own life and health intact. You may also need to have back up for the times that you can't be there. There may also be tasks that you can't do.

Sometimes the person you care for might be reluctant to think of a stranger helping them with things like personal care, and people's feelings about their privacy and dignity need to be handled very carefully. However, it is sometimes a good idea for the person to get used to someone else helping them without waiting for a crisis. Often people who are initially worried about accepting help from paid carers find that having someone else coming into the home can provide a bit of interest and companionship, especially if they are housebound.

If you feel that the person you care for needs more or different help than you can offer, then contact the Community Care Access Team on 0845 6031576. Ask to speak to the duty worker for community care and give them as much information as you can about the needs of the person that you care for. The waiting time will depend on the urgency of your situation and unfortunately, this can take some time. This is one of the reasons why it is a good idea to ask for help before you are in desperate need. The community care worker will contact you, or the person you care for, and arrange to carry out a community care assessment.

If you do not wish to contact the Access Team yourself, then you can ask your GP, district nurse etc to do this for you. You should also ask for a separate “carers' assessment” for yourself at this point or at any time. This will be covered later.

## **The Community Care Assessment**

A community care worker will arrange to see the person that you care for to carry out an assessment of their needs. Quite often there will be specific health issues to be assessed as well, in these cases an appropriate health worker will also attend to carry out a "single shared assessment". You and anyone else providing care for that person may wish to be present to contribute to the assessment.

Before the assessment, it is a good idea for you and the person you care for to spend some time thinking about the kinds of things that they need help with and any equipment that might make life easier in the home.

The community care worker will ask the person you care for a lot of questions about their health and how they cope with day-to-day living. Depending on the person's state of health, memory etc you may need to help answer the questions.

The information will be written on an assessment form and the person you care for will be asked to sign it. They should only sign if they agree with what has been written. The community care worker will use the community care assessment to write a care plan. This will describe the kind of help that the person has been assessed as needing and how the social work department, any other agency involved and you will provide this help. The person you look after should get a copy of both the assessment and the care plan, and with their agreement, you can request a copy too.

The care plan should be reviewed after six weeks to check that arrangements are working. How often it is reviewed after this will depend on individual situations. However, if at any time the needs of the person change, or your wish or ability to assist alter, you can ask for a review by contacting the community care duty worker.

## **Paying for Community Care**

Once the community care assessment has been done, the person you care for will be asked to complete a financial assessment to find out how much they will have to pay towards the services.

If the person you care for needs practical help at home, this could be domiciliary care (also known as personal care) or a home help service (help with shopping and household tasks) or both. Under the terms of the Community Care and Health (Scotland) Act 2002 personal care will be provided free of charge for those over the age of 65.

The person you care for will usually have to make a contribution towards the cost of home help services. The amount will depend on a financial assessment and will be a set amount, i.e. if they need more help at home in the future, the payments would stay the same.

Day centre places are free, although the person may have to pay towards the cost of lunch.

## **Things worth bearing in mind...**

The person you care for has a right to refuse any community care services offered to them.

If the person you care for has been assessed as having a need for a certain service or piece of equipment covered by legislation, the council has an obligation to provide this directly or to buy it in from elsewhere. They cannot use lack of resources as a reason for not providing the help that is needed. The legislation is called the "Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act 1970."

This law also states that once a service has started, the council cannot reduce or stop this service without reviewing the situation.

\*NB if you need emergency help from the social work department, there is an out of hours service which operates during the night and at weekends. The phone number is 0800 7316969.

## **Direct Payments**

The community care worker should talk to you and the person you care for about "direct payments". In brief, the direct payments scheme means that once someone has been assessed as needing care, they can choose to employ staff themselves, rather than use social

work services. There are rules about who the person can employ – partners and close relatives living in the same household are not usually allowed for example. There is also help available regarding recruitment and employment issues.

For more information about direct payments, talk to the community care worker or contact Direct Payments Scotland (see “Useful Contacts”).

### **Services for People Who Have Been Discharged from Hospital**

The Discharge Response Team is a hospital based community care team. They take referrals from any hospitals which are discharging a patient to East Lothian.

After a stay in hospital, extra care may be needed either temporarily (e.g. while convalescing), or on a long term basis (e.g. following a major stroke). A patient can be referred to the service just prior to discharge or up to five days after they get home. The Discharge Response Team can provide occupational therapy and all care services for up to four weeks at no cost. If the person continues to need care, they will then be referred to the appropriate Community Care Team where the usual procedures and charges will apply.

If you are worried about how you will cope when the person you care for comes home from hospital, ask a member of the ward staff about a referral to the Discharge Response Team. Alternatively, you can phone the team themselves by contacting the Haddington Social Work Department.

### **The Carers’ Assessment**

Under the Community Care and Health (Scotland) Act 2002, carers have a right to assessments irrespective of the needs of the person they care for. Previously a carer’s needs could only be assessed if the person they cared for had had a community care assessment. Thankfully things have moved on and it is recognised that carers have needs of their own and may wish to discuss these independently of the person that they care for.

A carers’ assessment is your chance to talk about any issues in your caring role, how they affect your life and health and discuss any help that you need. You may want to arrange for someone else to take on some of the caring to let you work or study. You may want to have a holiday or to talk about what the future holds for you. You may also have health problems of your own which need to be assessed. Remember that as a provider of a service you are entitled to time off.

It can be difficult to talk to someone about your needs if you are caring for someone and more used to putting their needs first. You might find that some of the questions require a lot of thought. You could ask the community care worker to send you a blank Carers’ Assessment form well in advance of your assessment to allow time to think about your answers. You have a right to have anybody you wish with you during your assessment and you might find it easier to talk about your needs, without the person you care for being there.

The community care worker may complete the carers’ assessment with you. Only sign it if you agree with what has been written.

### **What Can a Carers’ Assessment do for You?**

Following a carers’ assessment, these are some of the things that might be available to you:

- Support in your caring by knowing who to speak to if your situation becomes more difficult.
- Information about welfare benefits.
- Breaks from caring.
- Information about organisations and services which can help.
- Practical support such as equipment and advice, help in the home and help in an emergency.
- Help to look after your own health and wellbeing.
- Help to plan for future changes in your caring role.