



Personalisation A Guide for Carers

What you need to know



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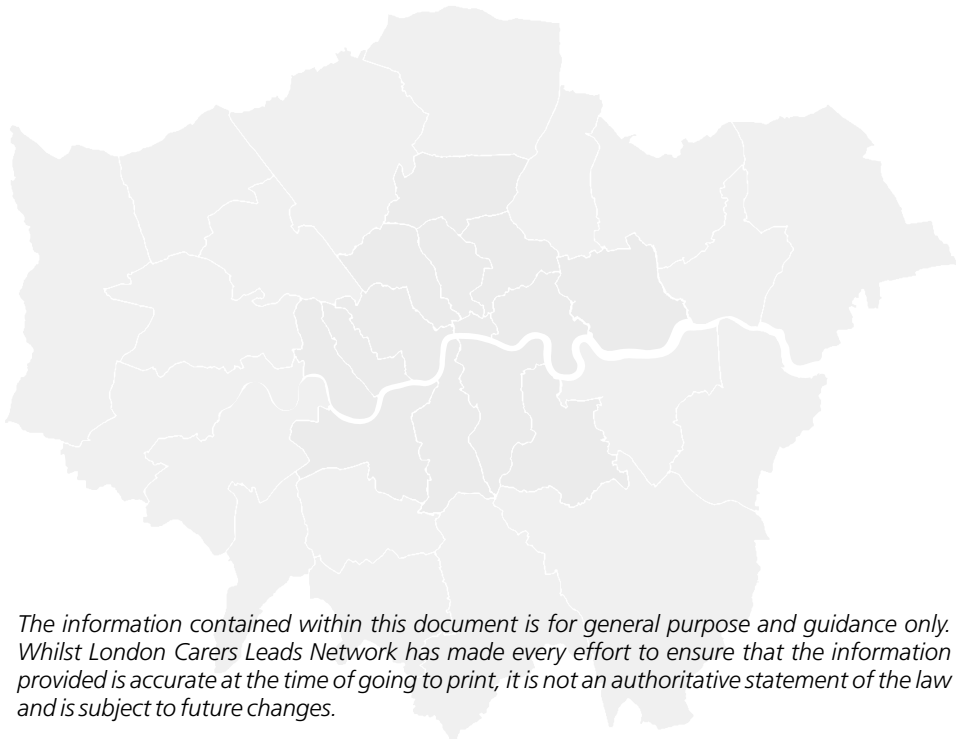
LONDON
COUNCILS

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Carers and Personalisation Working Group – London Carers Leads Network*

**The London Carers Lead Network brings together London Carers Leads from London local authorities and Primary Care Trusts. The groups meets quarterly to share good practice and drive the carers agenda across London.*



The information contained within this document is for general purpose and guidance only. Whilst London Carers Leads Network has made every effort to ensure that the information provided is accurate at the time of going to print, it is not an authoritative statement of the law and is subject to future changes.

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Terms you may come across

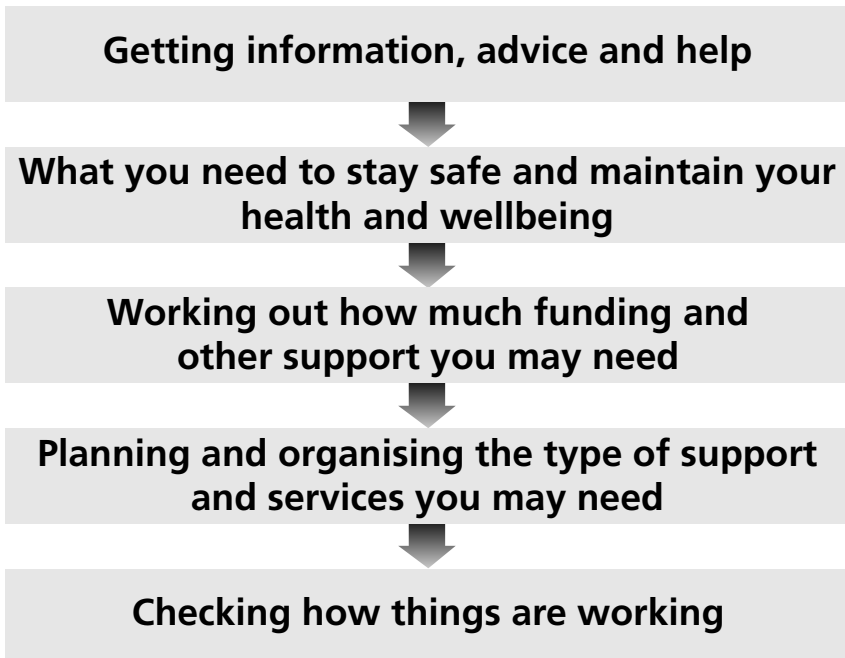
Carer	A carer spends a significant proportion of their time providing unpaid support to a family member, partner or friend who is ill, frail, disabled or has mental health or substance misuse problems.
Carer's Assessment	Many carers have a legal right to an assessment of their own needs. It is your chance to discuss with someone (usually from your local authority) what help you need with caring. You can discuss any help that would maintain your own health and balance caring with other aspects of your life such as work and family. Your local authority uses the assessment to decide what help they may be able to provide.
Personal Budget	The overall amount of money that is available to someone from their local authority to pay for their assessed support or care needs.
Direct Payment	People can choose to receive part or all of their personal budget as a direct payment. This is money that is paid directly to the person, or someone else they trust, to arrange their own support.
Indicative Budget	This is the amount of money the local authority has calculated that a person's care and support may cost. This is not necessarily the final amount of the personal budget.
Resource Allocation System	The system a local authority can use to decide how much money people get for their support. The system has clear, public rules, so everyone can see that money is given out fairly.
Self Directed Support	The concept of Self Directed Support involves finding out what's important to people with social care needs and their families and helping them to plan to use their personal budget to achieve their goals.
Young Carer	Young carers are children or young people under the age of 18 who look after someone in their family who has an illness, a disability, a mental health problem or a substance misuse problem. They may be taking on practical and / or emotional caring responsibilities that an adult would normally do.

Introduction

Personalisation means making sure that everyone has access to the right information and advice to help them make decisions about care and support. It is also about making sure people make their own decisions about what care and support they would like to lead a full and independent life.

At the heart of personalisation is the commitment to giving more choice and control about the type of care and support you and the person you care for receive, regardless of whether it is funded by your local authority or by you.

This diagram summarises the five main stages to getting the support you need.



Getting information, advice and help

If you would like information and advice about services and support which may be available that could make a difference to you or the person you care for, there are a range of different places you can go.

These include your:

- local voluntary and community organisations;
- GP practice or health centre;
- faith or community leader.

Things you might want information about:

- **your health;**
- **your housing;**
- **your finances;**
- **help with caring;**
- **support for the person you care for;**
- **and anything else that is important to you.**

Many carers find it useful to talk to other carers. Your local carer's organisation may be able to put you in touch with someone you can talk to.

Approaching your local authority

You can also approach your local authority who will give you information about organisations that can support you. The local authority may offer to look at your circumstances in more detail.

The following sections describe what happens if the local authority offers to look at your circumstances in more detail.

What you need to stay safe and maintain your health and wellbeing

Each local authority will have a different way of working out with you and the person you care for what you both need to stay independent, safe and well. This is often referred to as an "assessment".

The assessment will usually include looking at:

- the needs of the person you care for;
- your needs as a carer, including what you are willing and able to provide.

It is really important that you are clear about the amount of care you are willing and able to provide and what support you need to enable you to continue this role. This is not a judgement of your ability to care, but aims to help the local authority understand what you do and help them work out, with you, what might make a difference to you as a carer.

If you share the caring role, with a relative or friend, you should both be asked questions about the type of support you provide and are willing to provide in the future. This should be taken into account when considering how best to provide support to the person you care for.

Carer's Assessment

Some carers are also entitled to their own separate carer's assessment. This includes questions relating to family commitments, work, education, training or leisure activities, as well as any aspirations in life you may have.

Choosing to have a separate carer's assessment is useful for carers who may find it difficult to speak freely in front of the person they care for.

Young carers under 18 years of age who are providing care and support to an adult should have the opportunity to contribute

to the assessment of the person they care for. However, every effort should be made by the local authority to make sure that young carers do not continue to provide support at the expense of their health, education or opportunities for leisure. Some young people between 16 and 18 years old who are looking after and are willing to continue looking after an adult, are also entitled to have their needs assessed. Your local authority will talk through the best way to do this.

If you are already receiving services

If either you, or the person you care for, are already receiving support from your local authority, you may be offered a re-assessment of your needs. This is a chance for you to talk through what you need and the choices you have in how those needs are met. This does not necessarily mean the support you currently receive has to change if you do not want it to.

Questions to ask:

- How are we assessed for the support we need and who will do it?
- If I, or the person I care for, am entitled to support from the local authority, how long will it be between when I first contact the council to when the support starts?
- Who can I talk to about what I need?
- What other support or information can I have as a carer?
- If the person I look after refuses to answer questions about their needs or refuses services, can I still get support?
- Do we have to be assessed at the same time?
- Is there anything I / we can do to prepare for my / our assessment?
- Will I, or the person I care for, have to pay towards the support and if so, how will this be decided and when will we know how much?

Working out how much funding and other support you may need

The answers to the set of questions you and the person you look after give at the assessment allows the local authority to work out roughly how much support they believe you need to keep safe, well and live as independently as possible.

To make things as fair as possible, each local authority can use a system to decide how much money the care and support is likely to cost. They may do this using a **Resource Allocation System (RAS)**. This uses the information about care and support needs from the assessment and calculates the approximate cost of the care and support for the person you care for. Your role as their carer will have been taken into consideration.

The amount calculated by the RAS is sometimes called an **indicative budget**. Following your assessment, the local authority will work out how much your indicative budget is and will let you know.

Questions to ask:

- How do you work out how much our care and support needs are going to cost?
 - * Is there a maximum amount?
 - * What if I / we feel this is not enough?
- How long will it be before we are told what our indicative budget is?
- If I, or the person I care for, already receive support, will or can it stay the same?

Planning and organising the type of support and services you need

Once you have been told approximately how much money your local authority believes you need for care and support, you will be able to plan the type of care and support you would like. You and the person you care for will be asked to develop a support plan, which shows how you plan to meet your care and support needs. You can develop the support plan yourself or you can ask for assistance from social care staff or from other support organisations such as your carers centre.

The support plan could include:

- care and support services for the person you care for;
- carer breaks and services for you, the carer;
- plans for what will happen in an emergency if you are unable to provide care.

The support plan will be agreed with your local authority and the final amount of your budget will be confirmed.

The budget will then be known as your **personal budget**.

Choosing the support and services you need

When the support plan and personal budget is agreed it will be time for you and the person you care for to choose the type of service or support you would like to meet your needs. There are different ways that you and / or the person you care for can manage the personal budget:

- the local authority can manage the personal budget on behalf of the person you care for and arrange the care and support;
- the person you care for may choose to manage all or some of the personal budget themselves. They will receive the budget as a **direct payment**;

- the person you care for may nominate you or someone else (who is willing to do this) to receive and manage the personal budget as a direct payment on their behalf;
- there may be local organisations available that assist with the management of direct payments. your local authority will have information about this.

If you, or the person you care for, decide to have some or all of the personal budget as a direct payment, your local authority will offer to work with you and help you to make choices about which services / support you wish to buy. They will also advise you on what you may or may not be able to spend it on and how frequently the money is paid.

Questions to ask:

Support planning:

- Who can help me, or the person I care for, create our support plan?
- How are emergencies and crises planned for and dealt with?
- Is there an emergency scheme?

Managing the personal budget:

- We currently receive services arranged by the local authority, can we carry on the way we are?
- Do you assess the person I care for to see if they are capable of managing their own budget?
- As a carer, can I have a personal budget?

Direct payments:

- If we decide to have a direct payment,
 - * how is this arranged?
 - * where can we go to find local services?
 - * how will we know what we can spend it on and what records to keep?
- Can a direct payment be used to pay for me and / or family members to provide support?

Arranging support:

- What happens if the person I care for refuses to buy support as agreed?

Making a change:

- What should I do if things are not working or our circumstances change?
- We currently use a private company or agency, can we change and use someone else?

Checking how things are working

Your support plan and needs should be re-assessed (sometimes called a “review”) at least once a year. However, if the situation or your needs change, you do not have to wait until the re-assessment is due, you can contact your local authority and ask to have it sooner.

A re-assessment is an opportunity for you and / or the person you care for to talk with social care staff about the support plan.

A re-assessment should include:

- seeing how things are going and checking that the support plan is working or, if not, what needs to change;
- letting people (who need to) know if there have been any changes to the help and support you and / or the person you care for get;
- making sure you and the person you care for are keeping safe and well;
- checking that you and the person you care for have the right amount of support;
- a chance for you and the person you care for to think about and discuss anything else that you both might need and an opportunity to set new goals.

If you want to make any big changes to the support plan, you should ask your local authority about it first.

Questions to ask:

- Will you contact me or the person I care for to set up the re-assessment?
- How will you check that I / we are spending the money appropriately and what will you do if you find that we are not?
- Who do I contact if I am unable to continue in my caring role?
- Is there anything I / we can do to prepare for my / our re-assessment?

Useful help line and website links

➤ **Your local authority**

➤ **Your local Carers' Organisation/s (if there are any)**

There may be a range of voluntary and community groups in your local area who provide services and support, including ones that are specifically for you as a carer, or for the person you care for. Ask your local authority for more information.

➤ **Carers Direct**

www.nhs.uk/carersdirect

A practical and comprehensive information, advice and support service for carers.

0808 802 0202

➤ **Carers UK**

www.carersuk.org

A national organisation that provides information for carers and campaigns for carers rights.

0808 808 7777

➤ **Princess Royal Trust for Carers**

www.carers.org

A national organisation that provides information, services and support as well as campaigning for carers rights.

0844 800 4361

➤ **Young Carers Net**

www.youngcarers.net

Part of the Princess Royal Trust for Carers, this is service specifically for young people, under 18 years old, providing advice and support in a range of different ways.

0844 800 4361

➤ **National Survivor Users Network**

www.nsun.org.uk/

For carers looking after someone with a mental illness.

0845 602 0779

➤ **National Family Carer Network**

www.familycarers.org.uk/

For carers looking after someone with a learning disability.

0774 746 0727

➤ **In-Control**

www.in-control.org.uk/

For further information about personalisation.

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