

A Summary of the Care Act

The Care Act updates over 60 years of law around adult social care in England. The changes are wide-ranging and cover all adults with care and support needs (whether they get support from the Council or not) and carers. Some of the changes strengthen the ways that councils already work and some of them are new responsibilities.

Information & Advice

Councils have a new responsibility to make sure people have access to timely information and advice. This includes preventative services and service wider than adult social care that help people to stay well. Councils must also help people to access independent financial advice.

Prevention

The Care Act gives local authorities a new responsibility to help prevent, reduce and delay people in the community (including carers) having care and support needs. Councils should work with partners including local community services and support to do this in the best way.

Assessment

If a person appears to have care and support needs, councils must offer an assessment that is proportionate for that person (supported self-assessment might be best for some people, for example). The assessment should focus on outcomes. People who fund their own care are entitled to an assessment.

National Eligibility Criteria

The introduction of a national eligibility criteria for Adult Social Care means that people with similar needs will have the same eligibility for support, regardless of where they live. This is likely to be similar to Reading's current thresholds but will use different criteria.

Care Planning

Care and support planning should also focus on outcomes to improve a person's wellbeing and prevent or reduce needs. It should be developed with the person involved and, if they consent, should cover the whole family. There should be yearly reviews available.

Carers

The Care Act puts carers on an equal footing to those they care for. Carers have the same entitlement to support to continue in their caring role whilst maintaining their wellbeing. There is a new duty to involve carers in developing a person's support plan.

Safeguarding

The law is strengthened around safeguarding, introducing new requirements to work with partners to safeguard people against harm, abuse or neglect as far as possible through a multiagency approach and ensuring it is 'everyone's business'.

Independent Advocacy

If someone needs support to be involved in assessment, review or care planning and a family member can't provide this, councils must arrange an independent advocate who is trained to enable them to be part of this process.

Supporting local services

Councils must work with organisations that provide care and support services to make sure people have a choice of high quality services in their local area. If a care business fails, the Council must make sure people using the service are supported.

Transitions

When assessing a child, young carer or adult caring for a child, councils must plan for adulthood and ensure services are in place to support this.

Moving between areas

Councils have a new duty to provide continuity of care when a person moves to a new local authority.

Paying For Care

Councils have new powers to decide what services are charged for, if people can afford to pay. The Deferred Payments Scheme (for people who don't wish to sell their home in their lifetime to pay for care) is expanded to be more widely available. From April 2020, the amount that people pay for their care will be capped, so that councils pay for any further care costs once the cap is reached.