



FACTSHEET 11

The Care Act – transition for children to adult care and support

“Services at transition should be aimed at moving a person into work/adult life in such a way as to promote their independence and so reduce their long term needs for care and support”

Care and Support Alliance

This factsheet describes how the Care Act supports people moving from children’s to adult care and support services.

We know that the transition to adulthood is a time when young people and their families are thinking about their aspirations for the future. If people are likely to have care and support needs when they are 18, they need information and advice so that they can make the necessary plans.

Planning for transition

The Act says that if a child, young carer or an adult caring for a child (a “child’s carer”) is likely to have needs when they, or the child they care for, turns 18, the local authority **must** assess them if it considers there is “significant benefit” to the individual in doing so. This is regardless of whether the child or individual currently receives any services.

When either a child or a young carer approaches their 18th birthday, they may ask for an assessment. A parent or carer may also ask for an assessment as the child they are caring for approaches 18.

As in all assessments, local authorities will need to consider the needs of the person, what needs they are likely to have when they (or the child they care for) turn 18, and the outcomes they want to achieve in life. They should consider what types of adult care and support might be of benefit at that point, and also consider whether other options beyond formal services might help the individual achieve their desired outcomes.

What information will someone receive?

The Act says that when an assessment is carried out, information should be given about whether the young person, child’s carer or young carer is likely to have eligible needs for care and support when they turn 18 (see **factsheet 3**). The person should receive advice and information about what can be done to meet or reduce the needs they are likely to have, as well as what they can do to stay well, and prevent or delay the development of future needs.

This information will give young people, child’s carers and young carers an indication of the sort of support they can expect. This will remove some of the uncertainty caused by having to wait and see what will happen when they turn 18.

If a person asks for an assessment but the local authority decides not to carry out an assessment, it must explain in writing why it has reached that decision. In any event, it must also provide information and advice about what the person can do to prevent or delay the development of care and support needs.

When does planning start?

The Act does not say that the child or young person has to be a certain age to be able to ask for an assessment. It says that local authorities must consider, in all cases, whether there would be a “significant benefit” to the individual in doing an assessment.

This means the local authority is able to take each individual's circumstances into account when deciding whether to assess them. This is instead of having a blanket rule that means everyone has to be assessed at the same age. This flexibility recognises that the best time to plan the move to adult services will be different for each person.

Ensuring there is no gap in services

When a local authority assesses a child (including a young carer) who is receiving support under legislation relating to children's services, the Act requires them to continue providing him or her with that support through the assessment process.

This will continue until adult care and support is in place to take over – or until it is clear after the assessment that adult care and support does not need to be provided. These changes will mean there is no “cliff-edge” where someone reaching the age of 18 who is already receiving support will suddenly find themselves without the care and support they need at the point of becoming an adult.

Working with other organisations

A successful transition to adult care and support needs the young person, their families and professionals to work together. This is crucial. The Act gives local authorities a legal responsibility to cooperate, and to ensure that all the correct people work together to get the transition right.

The Act makes clear that the local authority can combine any of these “transition” assessments with any other assessment being carried out for some other person (provided all parties agree). If an external organisation (such as a hospital) is carrying out an assessment of the individual or a relevant person, for example, the individual's carer or someone the individual cares for, around the same time as the local authority's assessment, the local authority can carry out that assessment jointly with the other organisation or on behalf of the other organisation. This allows for sensible and flexible combinations of assessments, which is in everyone's interest. Transition assessments could also potentially become part of a child or young person's Education, Health and Care plan (see below).

The Care Act (and the special educational needs provisions in the Children and Families Act) requires that there is cooperation within and between local authorities to ensure that the necessary people cooperate, that the right information and advice are available and that assessments can be carried out jointly.

The Children and Families Act

The Children and Families Act creates a new ‘birth-to-25 years’ Education, Health and Care Plan (EHC) for children and young people with special educational needs, and offers families personal budgets so that they have more control over the type of support they get. In some cases, where a person is over 18, the “Care” part of the EHC plan will be provided for by adult care and support, under the Care Act.

The Children and Families Act also improves cooperation between all the services that support children with special educational needs and their families. This requires local authorities to involve children, young people and parents in reviewing and developing care for those with special educational needs. Local authorities will also need to publish information about what relevant support can be offered locally.