

**Ambitions**  
Meeting today's needs  
for tomorrow's future



## Getting the best outcome from the Assessment Process

---

### A Carers Guide

written for carers by carers



#### **Mencap in Kirklees**

Brunswick House, 33 East Street,  
Lindley, Huddersfield, HD3 3ND  
Tel: 01484 340811 Fax: 01484 340822  
[www.mencapinkirklees.org.uk](http://www.mencapinkirklees.org.uk)

Registered Charity No 702494  
Company Registration No 2428994



#### **Ambitions**

89 Shillbank Lane,  
Mirfield. WF14 0QW  
Tel: 01924 491148  
[www.ambitions4kirklees.co.uk](http://www.ambitions4kirklees.co.uk)

Company Registration No 6629617  
(England and Wales)



# Getting the best outcome from the Assessment Process **a carers guide**

## Introduction

---

The guide has been developed by carers of people with learning disabilities in Kirklees, to sit alongside the wealth of information made available by the Council through their website or in written form from Gateway to Care.

The Council information gives a detailed factual account of the complete process. This guide therefore has no need to include this, but concentrates instead on helping you to be best prepared for using the process. It explains the vital role that you can play in making sure that the person you care for gets the best outcome from that process.



Because it has been written by and for carers of people with a learning disability who may lack the capacity to make decisions alone, we have assumed that the person-led assessment will invariably involve the carers – but we should make clear that it is the right of the person being assessed to choose who is present.

## What's the big issue?

The person-led assessment process is about describing in detail the needs of the person you care for.

From that list of needs, the Council decides which needs it has a duty to provide for. Some people won't be eligible for support, because their level of need falls outside the two categories which the Council will consider (critical and substantial needs).

Those whose needs are agreed as being within the critical or substantial categories will still be subject to decisions about which of those needs the Local Authority has a duty to meet, and at what level. It is only those needs which 'call for the provision of social care services' that will be considered.

If the person you care for is not eligible for support the Council should offer support in other ways – with information, advice, and perhaps a referral to other organisations.

The assessment process is about making the available resources stretch as far as possible. The Council must meet all of those needs that are eligible so it is essential that the description of needs is comprehensive and completely clear to the person carrying out the assessment.

It is important that you are prepared for the process, and have gathered as much evidence as possible, as the amount of support made available

for the person you care for may otherwise be far less than is needed.

Give the assessor a realistic picture. We are used to describing the abilities of the person we care for in a positive way, and minimising the demands that their disability makes on us and others. Don't do this – you may get far less support than you need if the real level of need is hidden from the assessor. Gather evidence. This could usefully include information from other people such as family members, doctors, other professionals. Some people keep a diary to show a true picture. Think about the worst days, not the best.

Throughout the whole process, it is vital to remember that the law does not place any duty on you to provide care and support. The National Assistance Act 1948, which is the basis for all of this, very specifically states that the responsibility for caring for adults does not fall upon the family. It falls upon public services. You have no duty of care to a family member. You cannot be put under pressure to provide anything. It is your choice entirely.

There are two parts of the process. The first is the 'Person-led Assessment' for the person you care for, through which their support needs are established. The second part is the 'Carers-led Assessment' through which your needs as a carer are described, and through which your needs for support if you are to continue caring are laid down.

## The Assessment Criteria

The criteria used by the Council in the assessment process are national criteria, often referred to as FACS criteria. (This stands for Fair Access to Care Services). There are four levels of need – Critical, Substantial, Moderate, and Low. Each Local Authority can decide which of the levels of need it will meet. Locally, it is only the top two levels that attract guaranteed support.

Do not be surprised if you read through this section and remain a little mystified. The criteria are really difficult to describe in theory. They're easier to understand when they are being applied – and your main role as carer is not so much to understand them as to provide the evidence that allows them to be applied.

The assessment centres on the notion of risks to independence. In terms of the person's needs, what effect could each risk have on the individual (the impact), and how likely is that risk to happen (the likelihood). A more serious impact and a higher likelihood that the risk will happen will increase the eligibility level.

For more information on eligibility criteria you can visit the Council website

[www.kirklees.gov.uk/ldpb](http://www.kirklees.gov.uk/ldpb) or call Gateway to Care on 01484 226050





## Ground rules for the Person-led Assessment (PLA) process

It is the choice of the person you care for if they want you to be involved in their assessment, except in situations where they are unable to make decisions. Even if they choose for you not to be involved, the assessor should still ensure that your views are captured to ensure a true picture of the level and type of support they need.

Meeting the needs of the person you care for will often depend on your ability to make things work. If you are unable or do not wish to continue providing the same level of support quite a different package of support will be needed. Particularly as you get older, or your health deteriorates, the assessment must take account of your decreasing ability to provide. Your needs and abilities and the needs of the person you care for are clearly inter-dependent.

This is a really difficult balance to get – but an assessment should be free of the emotional component if it is to provide a genuine account of the needs of the person concerned.

The golden rule is therefore to write yourself out of the script. You should remove yourself from the picture completely, and describe the person you care for in that context i.e. without any family support of any kind. Only then will a true picture of their needs emerge. You may be happy to continue to meet many of the needs afterwards, but do not hide those needs from the assessor – otherwise the assessment will not be describing the full picture, and the support offered could be far less than is genuinely required.

Throughout, give examples of the worst days, not the best, and describe what happens if / when the support is not available.

A review should be completed every 12 months, and it is your right to have one if you request it. You may be offered a reassessment or review over the phone, but remember it is your choice and you have a right to a face-to-face assessment.

You are entitled to have the forms in advance, and to fill in as much or as little as you want in advance. Many carers find it easier and safer to be familiar with the forms in their own good time, rather than to rely on the assessor guiding them through. So request the forms, and fix the date for the assessment at a time and date that suits you, when you know you can do it justice.

Then gather the evidence. It can be really helpful to get other people who know the person you care for to give you something in writing which you can add to your own observations. The assessor is only in your house for a short time, and has to rely a lot on you for the description of the needs of the person you care for. The more information you can provide about their needs and challenges, the better – and if this evidence comes from many different sources, so much the better.

When the time comes to meet with the assessor, you can choose to have somebody else there to support you. This could be a friend, a relative, an advocate or another carer.

Ensure that all needs and the extent of each need are clearly identified. Otherwise they may not be fully assessed. Be sure to talk about the future as well as the present.

Once the assessment of needs has been completed, the assessor should work together with you and the person you care for to draw up a support plan which shows how the assessed needs will be met. The person you care for is entitled to a copy of this as well as a copy of the assessment.

If you disagree with the outcome of the assessment, you should make the assessor aware of any information that they may not have taken into account or have not included in the assessment.

If you are still not happy with the outcome of the review or reassessment you can appeal.

**If you wish to appeal you should contact the Customer Services Unit,  
T: 01484 225115 or  
email [sscu@kirklees.gov.uk](mailto:sscu@kirklees.gov.uk)**

A person's assessed needs that meet the eligibility criteria must be met, regardless of budget pressures. Once the package of support is agreed, it cannot lawfully be changed or reduced without a reassessment.

## Ground rules for the Carers Assessment

Whilst the person-led assessment and the carers assessment are two separate processes, they are so closely linked that they should happen together, in our view (although this is your choice)

A carers assessment should be offered to you automatically when the person you care for has an assessment by the Council. This is a legal duty for the Council.

The Council should send the paperwork in advance of the assessment meeting. It is your choice how, where and when you want to complete it.

You have a right for it to be carried out in private (ie away from the person you care for). You must be able to talk honestly and openly about the impact that caring has on you.

As carers, we carry out much of what we do routinely, and are often unaware of what we actually do. This can mean that we lose sight of the consequences of our role on our own lives. The Carers assessment is a chance to take stock of this, and put it down in writing.

The object of the Carers assessment is to determine what the carer is willing or able to do, and also the likelihood of crisis and breakdown of the caring role if support is not provided. It should look not just at the present, but at the future. Your willingness and ability may well decline as you get older, for example.

As with the assessment of the person you care for, it is essential to prepare in advance. Some people try to keep a diary for a week to pinpoint the demands on them as carers. You will also need to highlight other responsibilities you have. You should look at your physical and emotional health, your finances, your ability to maintain employment if you wish etc. At the end of this document we have included some useful information gathering evidence for the assessments.

Don't feel guilty about this exercise, and be realistic about the demands on you, their impact, and what the future holds.