

General Information about Adult Care

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In South Gloucestershire we aim to provide you with a wide range of care and support options to help meet your social care needs and help you stay independent and active for as long as possible.

This factsheet explains briefly how social care is provided to adults who may need help.

If I need some help, or someone I know needs some help, what should I do first?

A useful website called www.wellaware.org.uk is available to everyone in South Gloucestershire and the surrounding area. It lists over 5000 services that could help to improve your health and well being. Wellaware can also be contacted free by phone on **0808 808 5252**, and trained staff will help you find the support you need.

If after contacting Wellaware you still feel you need further help, advice or an assessment, please contact our Customer Services:

Phone: **01454 868007**

Email: csodesk@southglos.gov.uk

SMS text service: 07950 080111

Textphone: 01454 868010

If the request is straightforward someone will try and help you over the phone or with a return email. They may send you some information and a form in the post, or they will suggest that someone with experience and understanding comes to visit you to talk things over.

Who will visit me?

The person who visits will either be a Social Worker, a Social Work Assistant, or an Occupational Therapist.

What happens when someone comes to see me?

They will ask you some questions which will help them to identify with you how best we can help. You can have a friend or family member with you during the visit if you wish. After this visit you will receive a letter which will tell you whether the council can offer support. This letter will include a brief description of your aims, needs and outcomes, and an approximate cost of the care if the council can offer support (we call this the first personal budget).

Your Care and Support Plan

If it is agreed that you would benefit from some help you will need a care and support plan and we can help you with this if you want. You can have help from the person who has visited you, or we may be able to arrange for you to have help from an independent professional organisation, who may be able to suggest a variety of alternative ways to help you achieve your aims. You can, of course, ask a member of your family or a friend to help you with your care and support plan if you prefer.

Your Care and Support Plan is a very important document

It will tell us about your daily routine, about the things and people that are important to you, about your aims and what you would like to happen to help you achieve those aims.

A wide range of ideas may be suggested which could help you meet your aims. If there are any risk factors involved we will talk about these as well. (There is a separate booklet about this called 'Helping You to Plan your Support'. This will be given to you if you prepare your Care and Support Plan).

Once your Care and Support Plan is complete and fully agreed we may revise the costs involved and this amount is called your personal budget.

What will it cost, and who will pay?

Everyone can have free advice and information from us and all our assessments are free. However, most adult care have to be paid for and you will be expected to contribute toward the cost of services you may receive, if this is possible. The council may be able to help with these costs but to do this we need to take your financial circumstances into account. You don't have to tell us about your financial situation if you don't want to, but if this is the case, we will assume that you are able to afford to pay for your care yourself.

More about money

During the financial assessment we look at both income and capital i.e. savings and investments (but not those with life policies attached). If you own a second home or land, and/or holiday home, the value of this will be taken into account. If the total capital adds up to more than a certain level you will be asked to pay for the full cost of your care.

If your capital falls below the level you will be asked to pay a proportion of the care costs and this will be explained to you. Even if you pay the full cost yourself, you are still entitled to free help and support to set up the services that you need if those services are organised through the council.

You can request an estimate for the cost of your care services from the Finance and Benefits Team on 01454 864269. Please have all the available information about you and your partner's savings, investments and income. The estimate is subject to confirmation of the information you provide.

Now you have more choice and control

You have a choice over how your personal budget is used. Out of your personal budget you can choose to have some or all of it as a direct payment for your care.

A direct payment is a sum of money paid directly to you to be spent on your care. It means that you will have much greater control over who supplies your care. You don't have to have a direct payment and if you prefer the council can still organise and provide home care or day services just as it has always done.

Having a direct payment means the money to meet the aims in your support plan is in your control and is paid to you. Alternatively, you can have the money paid to someone who agrees to act on your behalf. This person, who acts like an agent, can be a close friend or family member, or a professional person.

A direct payment comes with responsibilities. While you will have much greater control over who supplies your care, you will also be responsible for arranging the services you want. This includes making sure that you pay for services on time, that you keep written records of what you spend, and that these are shared with us. And if you employ people to work for you, that you understand the legal obligations which come from being an employer. If you choose to have a direct payment you will have much greater control over who supplies your care.

If you are thinking about employing staff or if you need support to set up or manage your direct payment, please see our Direct Payment Support Providers factsheet, which contains information about independent organisations who will give you the help you need. Our Direct Payments factsheet explains more about direct payments, and we also have information on the direct payments card, which makes managing your direct payment easier.

Some of the things that people ask about Direct Payments

What can I use a direct payment for?

You can only use direct payments to achieve the aims that have been agreed in your care and support plan. The choice of things can be extensive and varied but must always be safe and legal.

Who will check up to see that the money is being spent properly?

Your social worker, or social work assistant will check that everything is working for you after a couple of weeks. We will review your support after four to six weeks and we will look at your records of what you have spent the money on. We will continue to check how the money has been spent at regular intervals. Alongside this, your care and support plan will be reviewed once a year or more frequently if appropriate, for example, if your circumstances change. At each review we will check that your personal budget is still meeting your needs.

What happens if I am not happy with the care I am getting or if I don't like using direct payments?

In either case you should first contact your social worker or social work assistant and tell them. We are always ready to try and put things right if something has gone wrong.

If you don't want to carry on with direct payments, that's fine. You can have services provided and we will arrange them for you.

Supporting South Gloucestershire Carers

If you look after a loved one, friend or neighbour and provide unpaid support and care to them, this makes you a carer.

South Gloucestershire Council's fresh approach to the way we support our carers and the people you care for is aimed at encouraging more carers to identify themselves as early as possible. The approach is about making everyone carer aware and making it easier for carers to access support.

We have worked closely with carers' representatives' and organisations to develop 'Do you look after Someone? Getting help and Connected', a questionnaire and action plan that helps you as a carer to look at your needs and how caring affects you. Connecting carers is the new independent, free of charge and voluntary South Gloucestershire carers' register. It provides a two-way information exchange with GP practices and includes the Carers' Emergency Card scheme.

For more information on Connecting Carers' and Getting Help and Connected please contact the Carers Support Centre Carers Line on: 0117 965 2200

Real life stories

*identities have been changed for privacy purposes.

***Martin from Cadbury Heath has been blind since birth**

He currently employs a personal assistant and uses an agency. He said, "I like the continuity offered by personal assistants that you recruit yourself. I find that when I am out with an agency member of staff and they are wearing a uniform, people speak to the member of staff rather than directly to me, as they see the uniform and assume the person is in charge."

21-year-old *Gina has learning difficulties. At present Gina is at College on a Transition Life Skills course three days a week.

Gina's parents were worried about the transition from school into college and didn't know what help was available, nor what Gina would need for the future. When they were advised that direct payments could be used to help with transport to and from college and for out-of-home activities, it was a great relief for them as it made Gina more independent. She now attends a one day community inclusion course each week and does this independently with taxi transport.

Angela has 3 young children and looks after her mum Sybil who has dementia

Sybil has a care worker morning and evenings, but refuses short breaks and Angela is nervous about leaving her for more than an hour. The social work assistant persuades Angela to see a support worker from the Carers' Support Centre to complete the 'Do you look after Someone' form. After doing her weekly planner, Angela realises how much she is doing and how caring is

affecting her health and family life. She decides she needs to tell her mum that she and the kids need regular breaks and a holiday. They meet with the social work assistant again and Sybil agrees to 2 short breaks a year and 4 hours support a week.

***Lucy from Bradley Stoke is a disabled 24 year old woman with two young children under three years old.**

Lucy receives seven hours home care each week to help her to get her children up, dressed and ready for the day, do some housework, and push their buggy to nursery. She was also given a one-off direct payment to buy a computer and have a phone-line installed so that she can do her shopping online.

What if I am not happy with the service I'm getting?

In the first instance you should speak with the team or service involved. Most problems can be sorted out quickly this way. You can ask a friend or relative to do this on your behalf if you wish.

For Further information about making a complaint ask for Factsheet CCH82 - Your Experience counts. Or, you may wish to contact the Complaints and Freedom of Information Team:

Freepost RTCT-JXLE-EETT
South Gloucestershire Council
Children, Adults and Health - Complaints and FOI Team
Civic Centre, High Street
Kingswood
BRISTOL
BS15 9TR
Phone: 01454 865924
Fax: 01454 865940
E-mail: CAHfeedback@southglos.gov.uk