

improving care for people with
long term conditions

information sheet 4

assessment of need and managing risk



an 'at a glance' guide for healthcare professionals

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About this information sheet

It describes the links between assessment and personalised care planning and considers the risk involved in supporting individuals with complex health and social needs to achieve their goals and manage their condition(s) better.

Who should read it?

Anyone involved in the delivery of healthcare to people with long term conditions, including doctors, nurses, allied health professionals, those delivering personal health budgets and health trainers.

How does assessment link to personalised care planning?

Personalised care planning is a collaborative process based on an assessment of an individual's needs, which determines the level and type of support required and the objectives and potential outcomes to be achieved. Assessment and care planning are therefore part of one process. Care planning should result in a care plan being agreed for the individual who should be supported to participate as much as they can in the process.

Assessment should:

- be a joined-up process between health and social care, facilitating joined-up care planning and delivery of care;
- have a named professional leading the process and coordinating services;
- be person centred;
- be collaborative;
- be holistic and recognise potential conflicts;
- be based on outcomes;
- simplify the processes.

Existing assessment processes and care planning

The Single Assessment Process for older people and the Care Programme Approach in mental health are person-centred approaches to assessment and personalised care planning for adults with complex health and social care needs. The aim of both is to support agencies in working together so that assessment and care planning are effective and coordinated. It also brings together all the information from the staff contributing to an individual's care into a single overarching care plan, accessible to all staff involved in the individual's care delivery.

How does management of risk support people to make informed choices?

The management of risk can have a major impact on individuals achieving their goals and managing their condition better. Risk management should be integral to the care planning process.

Many people want choice and control for themselves and those they care for, but sometimes the decisions they make may seem to others as too risky. Individuals need to understand the consequences and take some responsibility for the choices they make. Healthcare professionals can support individuals by promoting a culture of choice that entails responsible and supported decision making.

Risk needs to be considered in the context of (i) risky behaviours such as smoking; and (ii) risks associated with goals, such as wanting to live independently.

Good approaches to choice and risk

The governing principle behind good approaches to choice and risk is that individuals have the right to live their lives to the full as long as it does not stop others from doing the same, and does not cause harm to themselves. However, a fear of supporting individuals to take reasonable risks in their daily lives can prevent them doing the things most people take for granted. What needs to be considered is the consequence of an action and the likely harm it may cause.

By taking account of the benefits in terms of independence, well-being and choice, it should be possible for an individual to have a care plan that enables them to manage identified risks and to live their life in the way that best suits them.

Fundamental to providing support for individuals with long term conditions is the understanding that they are responsible for their own actions. It is the role of healthcare professionals to discuss risk and inform people of the possible consequences.

Skills and behaviours to support choice and risk

Consider communication approaches and techniques – are they person focused, empathetic, non-judgmental and supportive?

Approach risk assessments in a way which:

- understands that risk should not be seen as a reason not to do something;

- understands that some risks cannot be completely removed or managed, however much support the individual may have;
- ensures that the right balance is struck between enabling individuals to lead independent and dignified lives and that procedures for safeguarding are implemented if there is a need for protection;
- looks for flexible and innovative solutions that can support people to be independent while minimising risk;
- ensures that the potential impact of any risks is fully assessed, and accurate information is recorded, including the type of risk, its nature and context, and any actions required/taken to manage the risk;
- supports individuals who want to make the choice to manage the risk;
- supports individuals to understand that with rights come responsibilities and the implications of their choices, including any risks;
- ensures that a clear distinction is drawn between putting an individual at risk and enabling them to manage risks appropriately;
- works with other healthcare professionals and across disciplines to develop a common approach to risk taking;
- works with policies and procedures to support age appropriate decision making and risk taking;



- works with more complex situations to seek agreed solutions where there are different views about risk held by the individual, the family carers and other staff;
- works to achieve a balance between managing the risks posed to the carer's own well-being against the impact of their caring role and the needs and rights of individuals;
- knows and understands the legal implications of individuals' choices and risk taking, and seeks advice when needed.

Further information for healthcare professionals

More information on assessment processes is available at the following links:

Common Assessment Framework

The Common Assessment Framework (CAF) for Adults is not a new assessment process. Its aims are to provide a framework that updates the principles for good assessment, taking account of the developments in personalisation and in health and social care, and to support this with effective approaches to information sharing between health, social care and the third sector.

The CAF for Adults is currently being developed, tested and evaluated at 12 demonstrator sites. Learning from the sites is being shared at www.dhcarenetworks.org.uk/CAF

Health needs assessment tool

A health needs assessment (HNA) tool developed by NHS Kirklees helps healthcare professionals to identify the needs of the individual and target resources more effectively, offering more personalised support to individuals with long term conditions. For more information on the HNA tool in Kirklees, please visit www.kirklees.nhs.uk/your-health/helping-yourself-to-better-health/self-care-toolkit/overview-of-self-care-options/health-needs-assessment

Well-being Star™

The Well-being Star™ for long term conditions is another free tool that can support healthcare professionals in their care planning discussions. The tool works by encouraging the person to consider a range of factors that impact on their quality of life. These are not restricted to health, but cover a broader range of issues including lifestyle, looking after themselves, managing symptoms, work/volunteering/other activities, money, where they live, family/friends and feeling positive.

The PDF version of the tool is free to download and use within your organisation. To register please go to www.outcomesstar.org.uk

Personalised Care Planning and Information Prescription e-learning toolkits*

NHS Employers has produced two e-learning packages to help develop the skills and knowledge needed to produce personalised care plans and Information Prescriptions.

www.nhsemployers.org/PlanningYourWorkforce/LongTermConditions/Pages/LongTermConditions.aspx

Supporting Self Care e-learning toolkit*

This is designed for healthcare staff supporting people with long term conditions.

www.e-lfh.org.uk/projects/supportingselfcare/index.html

End of Life Care for All e-learning toolkit*

Enhances the training and education of all those involved in delivering end of life care.

www.e-lfh.org.uk/projects/e-elca/index.html

More information on personal health budgets can be found at:

www.personalhealthbudgets.dh.gov.uk

Publications and other resources on long term conditions management are available at:

www.dh.gov.uk/longtermconditions



*Please note you will need to register with the site provider to access these toolkits

The series of information sheets is available to download at www.dh.gov.uk/longtermconditions and covers the following topics:

Information sheet 1: Personalised care planning

Information sheet 2: Personalised care planning diagram

Information sheet 3: Care coordination

Information sheet 4: Assessment of need and managing risk

Information sheet 5: What motivates people to self care

Information sheet 6: Goal setting and action planning as part of personalised care planning

Information sheet 7: How information supports personalised care planning and self care

Information sheet 8: End of life care and personalised care planning

Look out for further information sheets covering other relevant topics.

Your feedback is extremely important to us. Please send your comments/suggestions for this information sheet, or good examples of personalised care planning and supported self care within your area, to

longtermconditions@dh.gsi.gov.uk