

Care and support for older people with multiple long-term conditions – what you should expect

Information for the public

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About this information

NICE guidelines provide advice on the care and support that should be offered to people who use health and care services.

This information explains NICE's advice on the social care and support that should be offered to older people with multiple long-term conditions. It tells you about the care you should expect and helps you think of questions to ask.

To read the advice itself see the [older people with social care needs and multiple long-term conditions](#) guideline.

Does it apply to me?

Yes if you have more than one long-term condition (these can include both physical and mental health conditions) and you need social care and support. It may also be useful for your family and carers.

What is a long-term condition?

A long-term condition usually lasts a year or longer and has an impact on your life. The effect of long-term conditions and their symptoms often change over time and you may need to take medicines or other therapies to manage them. It is common now for older people to be living with more than one long-term condition. Examples are arthritis, breathing disorders, cancer, dementia, diabetes and high blood pressure.

Your support team

You may already get some care or support from relatives or friends, but a team of professionals will also support your needs. These could include care workers, GPs, social workers, nurses and people from local support groups.

Your care coordinator

You should be given the name of one person in your team who will be your care coordinator. Your care coordinator will be the main contact for everyone involved in your care. They should know about all of your needs and you can go to them with any worries or questions.

Your care coordinator should support you to manage your conditions and live as you choose. They can help you decide what care you need and find out about local services that could help you. They can make any appointments you need so that you're seen as quickly as possible. If you are receiving personal care and support, they should make sure that, whenever possible, this is provided by care workers who you and your carer are familiar with.

Your care coordinator should let you know what to do and who to contact at any time of day or night if you need urgent help. They should make sure you get help quickly if something goes wrong.

Questions you or your carer might want to ask

- Who will be involved in my care?
- Who should I go to if I have any questions or problems?
- Who is my main contact and how do I get in touch with them?

Deciding what you need

You should always be included in discussions about your care and support needs. Your carer should also be able to take part if you agree. Your care coordinator should make sure that your needs are agreed, and should involve any other professionals who give you care and support.

If you can't go to a meeting about your care you should still be given the chance to be involved. This could be in a separate meeting or you may want to ask for an advocate (an independent person who helps you put your views across).

Questions you or your carer might want to ask

- I need somebody to help me express my views – can you help?
- If I want my carer or family member to attend this meeting is this possible?

Your care plan

A care plan is a written record of the care you have agreed to meet your needs.

You should be involved in writing your care plan if you want to be. Your care plan is unique to you and you should feel in control. You can choose what to put in it and can add a summary of your life story if you want your team to know more about you.

Your care plan should contain all of your needs, not just your medical needs. It could include equipment that you need in your home or advice about managing your money. It could include help with hearing aids or glasses, support if you feel low, or advice about

getting involved in your community and meeting new people.

Your care plan should be checked regularly to make sure it still meets your needs. This is called a review. You should have a care plan review at least once a year and whenever your needs change. Any changes should be written into the plan.

Questions you or your carer might want to ask

- How do I get a copy of my care plan?
- What happens if my needs change?

Helping you look after your health

Your care coordinator should make sure you and your carer have the information you need to manage your conditions. This will help you to stay independent and in control of your health.

They should ask you regularly if you, or your carer, need more information and support. This is important because many long-term conditions change over time and your needs might change.

If you need specialist help to manage your conditions, your care coordinator should organise this for you.

Questions you or your carer might want to ask

- What should I do if I am finding it difficult to cope with my conditions?
- Can you give me some written information, like a booklet, about managing my conditions?
- Can you give my carer some information?

Helping you stay involved with your family

and community

You might sometimes feel alone, whether you are in your own home or a care home. The people involved in your care should check whether you are feeling isolated. They can help you stay involved with your family, friends and community or meet new people. For example, they can put you in touch with people who can help you start a new hobby or interest, or keep up with ones you already do.

Activities you would like to take part in should be written in your care plan. These can be anything you choose, like doing your own shopping, meeting up with friends or volunteering in your community.

You should be given opportunities to meet up with people who have similar conditions as you, if you would like to. You should also be given help to use support groups and other activities. These could be in your local area or by joining a group online.

Questions you or your carer might want to ask

- Can you put me in touch with groups or local activities that I could get involved in?

Sources of further information and support

For information and concerns about care, contact the [Care Quality Commission](#) (03000 61 61 61) or the [local government ombudsman](#) (0300 061 0614).

For support contact:

- [Age UK](#) (0800 169 2081)
- [Carers Trust](#) (0844 800 4361)
- [Carers UK](#) (0808 808 7777)
- [Contact the Elderly](#) (0800 716 543)
- [Independent Age](#) (0800 319 6789)

- [The Relatives and Residents Association](#) (020 7359 8136).

[NHS Choices](#) has lots of information about health conditions and social care.

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Accreditation

