



# Fair Access to Care Services (FACS)

## Your questions answered

## 1. What does Fair Access to Care Services mean?

Fair Access to Care Services (FACS for short) is a system for deciding how much support people with social care needs can expect, to help them cope and keep them fit and well. It applies to all the local authorities in England. Its aim is to help social care workers make fair and consistent decisions about the level of support needed, and whether your local council should pay for this.

## 2. What is an assessment?

This is when a social care worker collects information from you and, if appropriate, your family or carers. The worker may ask your permission to contact other people, such as your doctor, who support you. The aim is to get a full picture of the things you can manage and the support you get from others, before deciding what you may need from adult social services. In the assessment you, with the worker, will decide the outcomes you want to achieve, how you want to achieve them, and what kinds of support best fit your way of life.

## 3. What is self assessment?

If you wish, you can assess your own strengths and support needs as part of the overall assessment of your social care needs.

## 4. Who has a right to an assessment?

Assessment is available to anyone who approaches adult social services or is referred to them, regardless of their age, circumstances or social care need. This right includes carers, and young people who are in the process of transferring from children's services to adult services. Your social care needs must always be assessed before there is any discussion about your finances. If you do not agree with your assessment you have the right to complain using local complaints procedures.

## 5. What is eligibility?

Eligible needs are needs for which you may be entitled to state-funded social care and support. There are four bands of eligibility: critical, substantial, moderate and low. They are defined in

detail in the table at the end of this leaflet.

A decision will be made by adult services, based on the information you and others provide, about which of these bands is the best fit with your level of needs. Each council must decide for which bands it is able to provide services, and publish this information. In most local authorities, if your needs fall below the critical or substantial bands, the council is unlikely to pay for you to receive a service.

## 6. What do I have to pay for?

After your social care needs have been assessed, and if you are eligible for social care support, councils which have decided to make charges will conduct a financial assessment. This will decide whether or not you have sufficient money to pay towards some or all of the cost of the support you need.

## 7. What happens if I am not eligible?

If your level of needs means you are not eligible for publicly funded social care, you will be given information about alternative sources of support, and advice about how to access them. You may qualify for help from a range of other services, including health, housing, benefits, education, training, employment, transport and leisure. Local community groups and networks may be able to provide the specific support and advice you need. You should also be given information about how to get back in touch with adult social care services if your difficulties get worse.

## 8. How do I find out more?

You can contact your local authority for information about being assessed for social care support or local information and advice centres such as the Citizen's Advice Bureau. Useful website addresses are:

**Citizens Advice Bureau** – information on local advice services: [www.citizensadvice.org.uk](http://www.citizensadvice.org.uk)

**Directgov** – directory of public services: [www.directgov.uk](http://www.directgov.uk)

**Department of Health** – information on social care: [www.dh.gov.uk/en/SocialCare](http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/SocialCare)

# If you don't understand the terms workers use, ask them what they mean.

## Here are a few that are specific to FACS 2010:

### Outcomes

These are results people want to achieve. They are identified in your assessment and will be reviewed if you need future support. The ones that are specifically important to FACS assessments are:

your ability to have control and choice over your life; your health and wellbeing; your dignity and respect; your quality of life; tackling discrimination or harassment; how you are able to contribute to family and community life; your economic wellbeing; and protection from the risk of harm, abuse and neglect. No outcome is more important than any other when assessing your social care needs, except when there is a risk to your safety.

### Prevention and early intervention

This involves giving information and advice, and identifying community and other support at an early stage, so that difficulties don't become overwhelming. The aim is to prevent or lessen the things that have a negative impact on your quality of life or that of your family or carers.

### Direct Payments and personal budgets

**Direct Payments** involve giving an agreed amount of money to someone who is eligible for publicly funded social care, so that the individual can use it to arrange support that meets their needs in ways that best fit their circumstances. For people who prefer not to receive cash and manage their own support, a **personal budget** gives them scope to say how they would like the money used to design the support service that suits them best. The arrangements are then made on their behalf by the local council, a relative or someone else acting on their behalf.

### Personalisation

This policy puts people at the centre of the assessment process. It focuses on the outcomes people want to achieve and the solutions that best fit their lives. Personalisation recognises that support from family, friends and adult social services can be enhanced by support from neighbourhoods and communities. It requires staff and services to be as flexible as possible in responding to people's individual circumstances. It also calls for very effective coordination and communication between people requiring support, their carers and all the services involved.

# FACS bandings and eligibility criteria for individuals

## Critical – when:

- life is, or will be, threatened; and/or
- significant health problems have developed or will develop; and/or
- there is, or will be, little or no choice and control over vital aspects of the immediate environment; and/or
- serious abuse or neglect has occurred or will occur; and/or
- there is, or will be, an inability to carry out vital personal care or domestic routines; and/or
- vital involvement in work, education or learning cannot or will not be sustained; and/or
- vital social support systems and relationships cannot or will not be sustained; and/or
- vital family and other social roles and responsibilities cannot or will not be undertaken

## Substantial – when:

- there is, or will be, only partial choice and control over the immediate environment; and/or
- abuse or neglect has occurred or will occur; and/or
- there is, or will be, an inability to carry out the majority of personal care or domestic routines; and/or
- involvement in many aspects of work, education or learning cannot or will not be sustained; and/or
- the majority of social support systems and relationships cannot or will not be sustained; and/or
- the majority of family and other social roles and responsibilities cannot or will not be undertaken

## Moderate – when:

- there is, or will be, an inability to carry out several personal care or domestic routines; and/or
- involvement in several aspects of work, education or learning cannot or will not be sustained; and/or
- several social support systems and relationships cannot or will not be sustained; and/or
- several family and other social roles and responsibilities cannot or will not be undertaken

## Low – when:

- there is, or will be, an inability to carry out one or two personal care or domestic routines; and/or
- involvement in one or two aspects of work, education or learning cannot or will not be sustained; and/or
- one or two social support systems and relationships cannot or will not be sustained; and/or
- one or two family and other social roles and responsibilities cannot or will not be undertaken.

**Social Care  
Institute for Excellence**  
Goldings House  
2 Hay's Lane  
London SE1 2HB

tel 020 7089 6840  
fax 020 7089 6841  
textphone 020 7089 6893  
[www.scie.org.uk](http://www.scie.org.uk)

Registered charity no. 1092778  
Company registration no. 4289790