

Your Questions Answered:

Community Care Needs Assessment

This Frequently Asked Question sheet explains a “needs assessment”. A needs assessment is the starting point to obtaining social care in Northern Ireland.

For advice tailored to your circumstances about any aspect of this FAQ or any other aspect of social care, please call (028) 90 24 4401 and ask to speak with the Health and Social Care legal hub.

What is a ‘needs assessment’?

A needs assessment is a process by which a Health and Social Care (HSC) Trust will identify the specific needs of a person who would benefit from community care services. The assessment could be as brief as a single conversation with a social worker or be more complex involving the gathering of information from one or more health/social care professional.

How can I get a ‘needs assessment’ for me or someone I am caring for or for a family member or friend?

You could request a needs assessment from your social worker or other health care professional. If you are caring for someone or have a family member or friend who may benefit from social care services and are not able to act on their own behalf, you could contact your local social services office for an appointment or your GP could refer you to social services.

Does the HSC trust have a legal duty to carry out a needs assessment?

The HSC Trust will have a legal duty to carry out an assessment of need if you have become known to the HSC Trust. This will happen if you contact the HSC Trust or someone contacts the HSC Trust on your behalf.

The Trust is refusing to carry out a needs assessment, what should I do?

The HSC Trust should give you reasons for refusing the assessment and you should request the HSC Trust to confirm its decision in writing. You should also seek advice from Law Centre NI.

What happens once the needs assessment is completed?

The HSC Trust should prepare a care plan which will include details of your needs and which should also identify which of those needs are eligible for services from the Trust. You should be provided with a copy of the care plan as soon as possible after the completion of the assessment.