13. Review of care and support plans

This chapter provides guidance on section 27 of the Care Act 2014.

This chapter covers:

- Review of the care and support plan, support plan;
- Keeping plans under review generally;
- Planned and unplanned review;
- Considering a request for a review of a care plan, support plan;
- Considering a review;
- Revision of the care and support plan, support plan;
- Timeliness and regularity of reviews.

13.1. Ensuring all people with a care and support plan, or support plan have the opportunity to reflect on what’s working, what’s not working and what might need to change is an important part of the planning process. It ensures that plans are kept up to date and relevant to the person’s needs and aspirations, will provide confidence in the system, and mitigate the risk of people entering a crisis situation.

13.2. The review process should be person-centred and outcomes focused, as well as accessible and proportionate to the needs to be met. The process must involve the person needing care and the carer where feasible, and consideration must be given whether to involve an independent advocate who local authorities are required to supply in the circumstances specified in the Act.

13.3. Reviewing intended outcomes detailed in the plan is the means by which the local authority complies with its ongoing responsibility towards people with care and support needs. The duty on the local authority therefore is to ensure that a review occurs, and if needed, a revision follows this. Consideration should also be given to authorising others to conduct a review – this could include the person themselves or carer, a third party (such as a provider) or another professional, with the local authority adopting an assurance and sign-off approach.

13.4. The review will help to identify if the person’s needs have changed and can in such circumstances lead to a reassessment. The review must not be used as a mechanism to arbitrarily reduce the level of a person’s personal budget.

13.5. In many cases, the review and revision of the plan should be intrinsically linked; it should not be possible to decide whether to revise a plan without a thorough review to
ascertain if a revision is necessary, and in the best interests of the person.

13.6. However, there are occasions when a change to a plan is required but there has been no change in the levels of need (for example, a carer may change the times when they are available to support). In addition, there can be small changes in need, at times temporary, which can be accommodated within the established personal budget. In these circumstances, it may not be appropriate for the person to go through a full review and revision of the plan. The local authority should respond to these ‘light-touch’ requests in a proportionate and reasonable way.

13.7. Where agreed local authority is satisfied that a revision is necessary, it must work through the assessment and care planning processes as detailed in sections 9-12 and 25 of the Act to the extent that it thinks appropriate (see chapter 6).

13.8. This chapter applies to people in need of care and support and carers equally, unless specifically stated. As many of the same principles apply to both care and support planning and reviews this chapter should be read in conjunction with the chapter on care and support planning.

Review of the care and support plan, support plan

Keeping plans under review generally

13.9. Keeping plans under review is an essential element of the planning process. Without a system of regular reviews, plans could become quickly out of date meaning that people are not obtaining the care and support required to meet their needs. Plans may also identify outcomes that the person wants to achieve which are progressive or time limited, so a periodic review is vital to ensure that the plan remains relevant to their goals and aspirations.

13.10. The Act specifies that plans must be kept under review generally. Therefore, local authorities should establish systems that allow the proportionate monitoring of both care and support plans and support plans to ensure that needs are continuing to be met. This system should also include cooperation with other health and care professionals who may be able to inform the authority of any concerns about the ability of the plan to meet needs (see chapter 14 on integration and cooperation).

13.11. The review should be a positive opportunity to take stock and consider if the plan is enabling the person to meet their needs and achieve their aspirations. The process should not be overly-complex or bureaucratic, and should cover these broad elements:

- have the person’s circumstances and/or care and support or support needs changed?
- what is working in the plan, what is not working, and what might need to change?
- have the outcomes identified in the plan been achieved or not?
- does the person have new outcomes they want to meet?
- could improvements be made to achieve better outcomes?
- is the person’s personal budget enabling them to meet their needs and the outcomes identified in their plan and is the current method of managing it still the best one for what they want to
achieve, e.g. should direct payments be considered?

• is the personal budget still meeting the sufficiency test?¹⁰²

• are there any changes in the person’s informal and community support networks which might impact negatively or positively on the plan?

• is the person, carer, independent advocate satisfied with the plan?

13.1.2. There are several different routes to reviewing a care and support or support plan including:

• a planned review (the date for which was set with the individual during care and support or support planning, or through general monitoring);

• an unplanned review (which results from a change in needs or circumstance that the local authority becomes aware of, e.g. a fall or hospital admission), and;

• a requested review (where the person with the care and support or support plan, or their carer, family member, advocate or other interested party makes a request that a review is conducted. This may also be as the result of a change in needs or circumstances).

Planned reviews

13.1.3. During the planning process, the person and their social worker, or relevant professional may have discussed when it might be useful to review the plan and therefore agree to record this date in the plan. This may be valuable to people in the care system so that they can anticipate when the review will take place, rather than the review being an unexpected experience. It also fits with the Government’s view of personalised care and support, as the person may have a view as to a suitable time-frame for the review to occur. Additionally, setting out anticipated review dates may help authorities with future workload planning.

13.1.4. Even in cases with anticipated review dates, this should not reduce the requirement of the local authority to keep the plan under review generally. The first planned review should be an initial ‘light-touch’ review of the planning arrangements 6-8 weeks after sign-off of the personal budget and plan. Where relevant, this should also be combined with an initial review of direct payment arrangements. This will provide reassurance to all parties that the plan is working as intended, and will help to identify any teething problems. In addition, where plans are combined with other plans (for example education, health and care plans which are reviewed annually) the local authority should be aware of the review arrangements with these other plans and seek to align reviews together.

13.1.5. Local authorities should have regard to ensuring the planned review is proportionate to the circumstances, the value of the personal budget and any risks identified. In a similar way to care and support or support planning, there should be a range of review options available, which may include self-review, peer led review, reviews conducted remotely, or face-to-face reviews with a social worker. For example, where the person has a stable, longstanding support package with fixed or long term outcomes, they may wish to complete a self-review at the planned time, rather than have a face to face review with their social worker. This does not preclude their requesting a review at another time or a face to face review being

¹⁰² Link personal budget.
needed if there is an unplanned change in needs or circumstances.

13.16. In all instances, the method of review **should** wherever reasonably possible be agreed with the person and all appropriate measures taken to ensure their involvement and the involvement of other people they may identify, including an independent advocate where this is required by the circumstances specified in the Act.

13.17. Furthermore, if a person is recorded as having a mental impairment and lacking capacity to make some decisions, then the local authority **should** consider carefully when it will be appropriate for the next review to take place. In these instances, making appropriate use of a social worker as the lead professional should be encouraged. Where conditions are progressive, and the person’s health is deteriorating, reviews may need to be much more frequent. Similarly where a person has few or no family members or friends involved in supporting them, the risks are higher, and again reviews or monitoring may need to be more frequent. It may beneficial to put a ‘duty to request a review’ into commissioned services such as domiciliary care – domiciliary care workers **should** be required to ask for a review if they consider the person they are supporting is in need of one.

### Unplanned reviews

13.18. If there is any information or evidence that suggests that circumstances have changed in a way that may affect the efficacy, appropriateness or content of the plan, then the local authority **should** immediately conduct a review to ascertain whether the plan requires revision. For example this could be where a carer is no longer able to provide the same level of care, there is evidence of a deterioration of the person’s physical or mental wellbeing or the local authority receives a safeguarding alert. During the review process, the person the plan is intended for, or the person acting on their behalf **should** be kept fully involved and informed of what is occurring, the timescales involved and any likely consequences. This will help to alleviate anxiety at a time where things in the person’s life **may** have changed substantially.

### Considering a request for a review of a plan

13.19. In addition to the duty on local authorities to keep plans under review generally, the Act provides a duty on the local authority to conduct a review if a request for one is made by the adult or a person acting on the adult’s behalf. Local authorities **should** provide information and advice to people at the planning stage about how to make a request for a review. This process **should** be accessible and include multiple routes to make a request – phone, email, text for example. The information given to people **should** also set out what happens after a request is made, and the timescales involved in the process.

13.20. The request process **should** be accessible and streamlined. Consideration **should** also be given to the accessibility needs of the local population, for example this may include multiple language versions, and non-internet routes to request for people who may not have access to the internet, or in areas of digital exclusion. Local authorities **should** also consider the role that local

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103 A similar provision exists in the Children’s & Family Act, where those with Education, health and care (EHC) plans have a right to request a review of their EHC plan (as can others on their behalf). This will include any adult care components set out in the plan.
community and voluntary organisations can play to help people log requests.

13.21. The right to request a review applies not just to the person receiving the care, but to others supporting them or interested in their wellbeing. For example a person with advanced dementia may not be able to request a review, but a relative or a neighbour may want to draw a deterioration in the person’s condition to the attention of the local authority. The local authority should consider the request even if it is not made by the adult or their carer.

Considering a review

13.22. Upon receipt of a request to conduct a review, the local authority must consider this and judge the merits of conducting a review. In most cases, it is the expectation that a review should be performed unless the authority is reasonably satisfied that the plan remains sufficient, or the request is frivolous, inaccurate or is a complaint; for example this may be a where a person lodges multiple requests for a review in a short period of time. Local authorities should set out clearly the process that will be used to consider requests.

13.23. In considering whether to undertake a review the authority must involve the person, carer and anyone else the person requests to be involved where feasible. The local authority will need to identify those who may have significant difficulty in being fully involved in the decision to review and when there is no appropriate person who can represent or support their involvement and consider the duty to provide independent advocacy.104

Example 1
The local authority receives an email from a relative of an elderly person receiving care and support at home. The email provides details that the elderly person’s condition is deteriorating and supplies evidence of recent visits to the GP. The local authority decides to work with the person to review their care and support plan to ensure that it continues to meet their needs.

Example 2
The local authority receives a phone call from Mr X who is angry as he feels that he has needs that have not been identified in his plan. The authority has on a separate recent occasion reviewed his plan, and came to the conclusion that no revision was necessary, and informed Mr X of the decision and reasons for taking this. Therefore, in this case the local authority declines the request and provides a written explanation to Mr X, with an anticipated date of when the authority will be formally reviewing the plan as well as information on the local authority’s complaints procedure.

13.24. Where a decision is made not to conduct a review following a request, the local authority should set out the reasons for not accepting the request in a format accessible to the person, along with details of how to pursue the matter if the person remains unsatisfied. In most cases, it would be helpful for this to set out that the authority will continue to monitor the plan to ensure that it remains fit for purpose, and that the decision does not affect the right to make a future request for review. Although not mandatory, it may also be prudent for the local authority to set out when the person can expect a formal review of the plan.

104 Link advocacy.
Revision of the care and support plan, support plan

13.25. Where a decision has been made following a review that a revision is necessary, the authority should inform the person, or a person acting on their behalf of the decision and what this will involve. Where the person has substantial difficulty in actively involved with the review, and where there are no family or friends to help them being engaged, an independent advocate must be involved.

13.26. When revising the plan the local authority must involve the person, their care and any other person, their advocate if they qualify for one, and to take all reasonable steps to agree the revision. In this way, the revision should wherever possible follow the process used in the assessment and care planning stages. Indeed, the local authority must if appropriate carry out an assessment and financial assessment, and then revise the plan and personal budget accordingly. The assessment process following a review should not start from the beginning of the process but pick up from what is already known about the person and should be proportionate.

13.27. Therefore, when revising the plan the authority should follow the stages of the care and support planning process (see chapter 10). In some cases a complete change of the plan may be required, whereas in others minor adjustments may be needed.\(^\text{105}\)

In either case, the following aspects of care planning should be followed:

- the person’s wishes and feelings should be identified as far as possible and they should be supported to be involved;
- the revision should be proportionate to the needs to be met;
- where the plan was produced in combination with other plans, this should be considered at the revision stage;
- the person, carer or person acting on their behalf should be allowed to self-plan where appropriate;
- the development of the revised plan must be made with the involvement of the adult/carer, their representative or independent advocate;
- any additional elements that were incorporated into the original plan should be replicated in the revised plan where appropriate and agreed by all parties; and
- there needs to be clarity on the sign-off process, especially where the revised plan is developed by the person.

13.28. Particular attention should be taken if the revisions to the plan proposes increased restraints or restrictions on a person who has not got the capacity to agree them. This may become a deprivation of liberty, which requires appropriate safeguards to be in place. The local authority should have policies to address how these are recognised and responded to, and the social worker, occupational therapist or other relevant social care qualified professional or Mental Capacity lead should be involved, as well as an advocate.

13.29. The local authority must consider in all cases whether an independent advocate may be required to support the person through the revision of the plan. Where the
plan was produced with the assistance of an independent advocate, then consideration should be given to whether an independent advocate is also required for the revision of the plan. In these scenarios, the advocate would ideally be the same person to ensure consistency and continuity with the case details. Likewise, where a specialist assessor has been used previously in the care and support journey, the local authority should have regard whether they need to employ the expertise of the assessor in the review.

**Timeliness and regularity of reviews**

13.30. In the absence of any request of a review, or any indication that circumstances may have changed, the local authority should conduct a periodic review of plan. As stated earlier, this could be indicated at the planning stage by including an anticipated review date to allow for future planning. In addition, local authorities may wish to align the periodic review of the plan, with the compulsory review of the direct payment arrangements, where this is appropriate.

13.31. It is the expectation that authorities should conduct a review of the plan no later than every 12 months, although a light-touch review should be considered 6-8 weeks after agreement and sign-off of the plan and personal budget, to ensure that the arrangements are accurate and there are no initial issues to be aware of. This light-touch review should also be considered after revision of an existing plan to ensure that the new plan is working as intended, and in cases where a person chooses a direct payment, should be aligned with the review of the making of the direct payment (see chapter 12 on direct payments).

13.32. The periodic review should be proportionate to the needs to be met, and the process should not contain any surprises for the person concerned. Periodic reviews and reviews in general must not be used to arbitrarily reduce a care and support package. Such behaviour would be unlawful under the Act as the personal budget must always be an amount appropriate to meet the person’s needs. Any reduction to a personal budget should be the result of a change in need or circumstance.

13.33. The review should be performed as quickly as is reasonably practicable. As with care and support planning, it is expected that in most cases the revision of the plan should be completed in a timely manner proportionate to the needs to be met. Where there is an urgent need to intervene, local authorities should consider implementing interim packages to urgently meet needs while the plan is revised. However, local authorities should work with the person to avoid such circumstances wherever possible by ensuring that any potential emergency needs are identified as part of the care and support planning stage and planned for accordingly.

**Links to external resources**


**From a person-centred review to a person-centred plan**, HSA, 2009: [http://bit.ly/1nX5XtE](http://bit.ly/1nX5XtE)