



# Health and social care terms explained



## Health and social care terms explained

When seeking support, it can be difficult to understand the specialist jargon. With the help of carers, we have compiled some common terms that can cause confusion with explanations. If you have any further suggestions, please email [info@carersuk.org](mailto:info@carersuk.org)

<b>A</b> .....	3
<b>B</b> .....	6
<b>C</b> .....	7
<b>D</b> .....	14
<b>E</b> .....	18
<b>F</b> .....	19
<b>G</b> .....	20
<b>H</b> .....	21
<b>I</b> .....	23
<b>J</b> .....	25
<b>K</b> .....	26
<b>L</b> .....	26
<b>M</b> .....	29
<b>N</b> .....	32
<b>O</b> .....	34
<b>P</b> .....	35
<b>Q</b> .....	41
<b>R</b> .....	42
<b>S</b> .....	45
<b>T</b> .....	50
<b>U</b> .....	51
<b>V</b> .....	52
<b>W</b> .....	52
<b>X</b> .....	53
<b>Y</b> .....	53
<b>Z</b> .....	53

## A

**Access Ava (England only):** This is a tool designed by the organisation, Access Social Care that helps you to find specialist information and support on your rights relating to social care concerns. Read more at [carersuk.org/help-and-advice/helpline-and-other-support/access-social-care-for-advice-on-social-care-issues-in-england](https://carersuk.org/help-and-advice/helpline-and-other-support/access-social-care-for-advice-on-social-care-issues-in-england)

**Acquired impairment:** This is a disability or condition that arises due to external factors; it's not hereditary or present from birth.

**Acute care:** This refers to active immediate treatment where an injury or health issue requires urgent and usually short-term medical attention.

**ADHD (attention deficit hyperactivity disorder):** This is a common condition often affecting children and usually characterised by the inability to concentrate, short attention spans, hyperactivity and impulsive behaviour. Find out more at [adhd.foundation.org.uk](https://adhd.foundation.org.uk)

**Adult Carer Support Plan (Scotland only):** See 'Carer Support Plan' term below.

**Adult Disability Payment (Scotland only):** This is a financial benefit available in Scotland which is for people who are 16 or older with a disability or long-term physical or mental health condition (including terminal illness). A person may qualify if their ability to carry out day-to-day activities or to move around is limited by their physical or mental health condition or disability. You can find out more at [carersuk.org/scotland/help-and-advice/financial-support/benefits-if-you-are-disabled-ill-or-injured/adult-disability-payment](https://carersuk.org/scotland/help-and-advice/financial-support/benefits-if-you-are-disabled-ill-or-injured/adult-disability-payment)

**Adult social care:** This term is used to cover the range of professional support services provided to adults living with disabilities, physical or mental illnesses, or difficulties caused by old age, to maintain good health and independence.

**Advance Care Planning:** This is the process of setting out your wishes and preferences for your future care, medical treatments and end of life care. Find out more at [carersuk.org/help-and-advice/practical-support/end-of-life-planning](https://carersuk.org/help-and-advice/practical-support/end-of-life-planning)

**Advance Decision (see 'Advance Directive' below for Scotland):**

This is a way of formally recording which medical treatments you would not like to be given by medical staff should you be unable to communicate your wishes in the future. Also known as ADRT (Advance decision to refuse treatment) or a 'Living Will'. You must be aged 18 or over and have 'mental capacity' to make one. It can be legally binding if it meets certain requirements. Find out more at [carersuk.org/help-and-advice/practical-support/end-of-life-planning](https://carersuk.org/help-and-advice/practical-support/end-of-life-planning)

**Advance Directive (Scotland only):** This is similar to the equivalent of an Advance Decision in Scotland. You can fill in a form to define what you would refuse in terms of your future treatment and care, which can be used should you be unable to communicate your wishes in the future. An Advance Directive is not a legally binding document in Scotland but because it represents a person's wishes, it would be taken into account and would be very persuasive if there is any disagreement.

**Advance Statement:** This is a written statement that lays out your wishes, preferences, beliefs and values in relation to your future social or medical care. It provides a guide for anyone who may have to make decisions on your behalf if you're unable to in the future. It is not legally binding unlike an Advance Decision or Advance Directive and covers your care wishes more broadly than an Advance Decision which only covers refusals of medical treatment.

**Advocacy services:** These are services that aim to help people to understand and express their rights. Advocacy involves supporting someone to have their voice heard. Find our nation specific '*Being Heard - self-advocacy for carers*' guides at [carersuk.org/self-advocacy](https://carersuk.org/self-advocacy). There are also advocacy services for people to help them when accessing care and support services. You can find out more on the NHS website at [nhs.uk/conditions/social-care-and-support-guide/help-from-social-services-and-charities/someone-to-speak-up-for-you-advocate](https://nhs.uk/conditions/social-care-and-support-guide/help-from-social-services-and-charities/someone-to-speak-up-for-you-advocate) and from the Scottish government: [mygov.scot/advocacy](https://mygov.scot/advocacy). For advocacy services in Wales, you can speak to [ascymru.org.uk](https://ascymru.org.uk) and in NI: [inspirewellbeing.org/advocacy-for-all](https://inspirewellbeing.org/advocacy-for-all)

**After-care services:** After someone has been in hospital, they may need additional support at home for a period to help them recover as much as possible. This period is sometimes referred to as 'reablement care' or 'intermediate care'. It should be arranged with hospital staff as part of the discharge or care plan before they leave. Contact social services if you're concerned this hasn't been put in place. We have more information about coming out of hospital on our website:

[carersuk.org/help-and-advice/practical-support/coming-out-of-hospital](https://carersuk.org/help-and-advice/practical-support/coming-out-of-hospital)

**Aids and adaptations:** Adaptations are changes that can be made to the home to make it safer and easier to manage daily living. Specialist equipment is also available to help disabled people live at home more independently. We have lots of guidance under our 'Technology and equipment' webpage about how technology can also help:  
[carersuk.org/help-and-advice/technology-and-equipment](https://carersuk.org/help-and-advice/technology-and-equipment)

**Analgesics:** These are a type of painkiller - speak to your doctor for more information.

**Anticoagulant medicines:** This is medication that may be used to prevent or reduce the risk caused by blood clots. They are sometimes referred to as 'blood-thinners' and may for example, be used to reduce the risk of a stroke.

**Appeal:** An appeal in a legal sense is when your case is formally put to a higher authority to be reviewed to consider a change in the decision you are challenging.

**Assessment:** A carer's assessment is an opportunity to have your own needs as a carer reviewed to see if there is any support you need such as extra home help with cleaning or a break. This is not a test of your abilities. See our 'Carer's assessment' section on our website for more information: [carersuk.org/help-and-advice/practical-support/getting-care-and-support/carers-assessment](https://carersuk.org/help-and-advice/practical-support/getting-care-and-support/carers-assessment)

**Assistive technology:** This is the term given to technology aids or tools that are designed to help a person to understand or use information to perform daily activities.

**Asymptomatic:** This means showing no symptoms. You could still have a virus such as COVID-19 but not present with symptoms. This is why tests are important as you could spread an infection without knowing it.

**Attendance Allowance:** This is a financial benefit that may be available if you have reached State Pension age and require extra care and support or supervision because of a disability or because of a long-term physical or mental health issue. Find out more in our 'Attendance Allowance' section on our website at [carersuk.org/help-and-advice/financial-support/help-with-benefits/attendance-allowance](https://carersuk.org/help-and-advice/financial-support/help-with-benefits/attendance-allowance)

**Atrial fibrillation:** This is a heart condition that causes an unusually irregular heartbeat - it is important that this is treated quickly to reduce the risk of a stroke or other health complications.

**Autism (Autistic Spectrum Disorder):** This often affects how someone communicates and how they experience and interact with the world. There are varying degrees which means it affects people in many different ways. Having autism can pose challenges in terms of managing everyday activities, social interaction and engagement with others. See the NHS website for more details: [nhs.uk/conditions/autism](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/autism). We also have a conditions hub on our website which contains useful resources: [carersuk.org/help-and-advice/practical-support/conditions-hub](https://carersuk.org/help-and-advice/practical-support/conditions-hub)

## B

**Benchmarking:** This term may be used to refer to the act of comparing the quality of services or outcomes across different organisations offering similar services to ensure that quality standards are maintained or reached.

**Bereavement support:** There are organisations who offer emotional and practical support services and information to support people who are struggling with the loss of someone close to them. See our 'When caring ends' section on our website at [carersuk.org/help-and-advice/practical-support/when-caring-ends](https://carersuk.org/help-and-advice/practical-support/when-caring-ends)

**Biopsy:** This is a medical procedure involving the removal of a small amount of tissue in the body. This is then examined under a microscope to see if there are any abnormalities. The procedure can help to diagnose, treat and prevent certain health conditions or issues including cancer.

**Bipolar disorder:** This is a mental health condition that is often characterised by extremes in mood. Someone may have periods where they are severely affected by depression and feel very low and also have times when they experience mania where they feel very overactive and high. The charity, Mind offers some very helpful resources and guidance for anyone affected and for the people who support them: [mind.org.uk/information-support/types-of-mental-health-problems/bipolar-disorder/about-bipolar-disorder](https://mind.org.uk/information-support/types-of-mental-health-problems/bipolar-disorder/about-bipolar-disorder)

**Blood pressure readings:** These involve tests of your blood pressure to

see if there are any problems with your heart and cardiovascular system. Blood pressure measures the strength at which your blood pushes against your arteries as it circulates oxygen around the body. Read more on the NHS website: [nhs.uk/conditions/blood-pressure-test](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/blood-pressure-test)

**Blood tests:** A small sample of your blood may be taken to help assess your health, establish what may be wrong with you, identify an infection or help rule out certain illnesses or conditions. They are commonly undertaken and should be quick. Read more on the NHS website: [nhs.uk/conditions/blood-tests](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/blood-tests)

**Borderline personality disorder (BPD):** This is the name given to a mental health condition often characterised by strong impulses, intense feelings and a sense of emotional instability. Read more at [nhs.uk/mental-health/conditions/borderline-personality-disorder/overview](https://www.nhs.uk/mental-health/conditions/borderline-personality-disorder/overview)

The charity Mind has further information for those affected and for people supporting someone with BPD: [mind.org.uk/information-support/types-of-mental-health-problems/borderline-personality-disorder-bpd/about-bpd](https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/types-of-mental-health-problems/borderline-personality-disorder-bpd/about-bpd)

## C

**Capacity:** In reference to mental capacity, this means someone's ability to understand a situation and have the ability to make their own decisions independently at the time the decisions need to be made.

**Capital limits:** To qualify for certain welfare benefits, your capital must be below a certain amount. This is what is called the capital limit. Capital includes for example savings, investments, some lump sum payments and sometimes, land and property. But some capital can also be ignored such as the value of your home that you live in and in most circumstances, your personal possessions. If you are unsure whether your capital and income excludes you, contact a welfare rights adviser or check eligibility using a benefit calculator: [carersuk.org/help-and-advice/financial-support/benefits-calculator](https://www.carersuk.org/help-and-advice/financial-support/benefits-calculator)

In terms of accessing certain benefits, your income and capital must be below a certain amount for you to qualify for those benefits. These are called means-tested benefits. Each of these will have their own eligibility conditions including a capital limit. The amount of an award, if made, will depend on your personal circumstances and will also take into account the level of your income.

**Cardiologist:** This is a doctor who specialises in heart issues.

**Care Act 2014:** The Care Act 2014 is the law that defines how adult social care in England is provided. It places a duty on local authorities to prevent needs arising and promotes the wellbeing of unpaid carers.

**Care Act Advocacy:** Care Act Advocacy help people to understand their entitlements and rights as defined by the Care Act. They can be a professional advocate or can be someone you know. They help to support your rights and make sure you are fully involved.

**Care Act assessment:** This is also referred to as a needs assessment and is usually carried out by the local authority or health and social care trust (in Northern Ireland) to ascertain what level of support someone needs around their care and wellbeing requirements.

**Care home:** This is a place of temporary or permanent residence for someone who requires the support of professional carers on a regular basis for nursing and/or personal care. They also provide help with general day-to-day living needs including meals, cleaning and housekeeping services.

**Care needs:** Someone with care needs requires additional support to live comfortably and remain happy and well on a day-to-day basis. They may need extra care because of a medical condition or because of poor health or difficulties due to their age.

**Care package:** A number of health and social care services are co-ordinated and tailored to someone's needs as part of a combined plan put together by health and social care professionals. This may be the result of an assessment when someone moves from a stay in hospital to return home or because their needs have escalated due to an injury, accident or illness.

**Care plan:** These are available to anyone who is assessed as needing care support. In UK-wide terms, a care and support plan should be created following a carer's assessment or a needs assessment for the person receiving care. Read more details on the NHS website at [nhs.uk/conditions/social-care-and-support-guide/help-from-social-services-and-charities/care-and-support-plans](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/social-care-and-support-guide/help-from-social-services-and-charities/care-and-support-plans)



**Care Inspectorate (Scotland):** This is the independent regulatory body that oversees quality of care in Scotland to ensure it meets high standards. They review the quality of care provided in care homes and other care services. Find out more: [careinspectorate.com](http://careinspectorate.com)

**Care Inspectorate (Wales):** This is the independent regulatory body that oversees the quality and safety of all care services in Wales. They inspect, rate and review care services run by care homes and care agencies. Find out more: [careinspectorate.wales](http://careinspectorate.wales)

**Care Quality Commission (CQC):** The CQC is the regulatory body that oversees all health and social care services in England. For example, they review standards of care delivered by care homes and care agencies in England. Find out more about the CQC: [cqc.org.uk](http://cqc.org.uk)

**Care worker:** We use the term carer worker to describe someone who is employed to care for someone with a disability, health condition, illness, injury or ageing needs. Other terms you might hear are professional carer, care professional or personal assistant.

**Carer:** We use the term carer to describe anyone who cares for someone with a disability, long-term condition, illness or ageing needs and who is not paid for doing this. Some carers look after several people at the same time.

**Carer's Allowance:** This is known as the main benefit for carers. There are a number of conditions to meet to be able to claim the benefit – for example the person you care for has to be receiving a certain disability benefit and you need to be earning below a certain amount each week if in paid employment. These amounts can change from year to year in April. Find out more on our website's 'Carer's Allowance' page: [carersuk.org/help-and-advice/financial-support/carers-allowance](http://carersuk.org/help-and-advice/financial-support/carers-allowance).

Also note that this is being replaced by Carer Support Payment in Scotland which is a very similar benefit. The Scottish Government website has more information about Carer Support Payment: [mygov.scot/carers-support-payment](http://mygov.scot/carers-support-payment), we also have information on our website: [carersuk.org/scotland/help-and-advice/financial-support/carers-support-payment](http://carersuk.org/scotland/help-and-advice/financial-support/carers-support-payment)

**Carer's Allowance Supplement (Scotland only):** This is an extra payment for carers receiving Carer's Allowance/Carer Support Payment

and is available in Scotland only. If you are a carer in Scotland, you may be able to gain this additional amount if you are receiving Carer's Allowance on specific days in April and October. It is an automatic payment, paid in two lump sums each year, usually in June and December. Read more: [carersuk.org/scotland/help-and-advice/financial-support/carers-allowance-carer-support-payment/carers-allowance-supplement-in-scotland](https://carersuk.org/scotland/help-and-advice/financial-support/carers-allowance-carer-support-payment/carers-allowance-supplement-in-scotland)

**Carer's Allowance Unit:** This government department processes and administers all Carer's Allowance applications and payments. If you claim Carer's Allowance, it is vital to keep them alerted to any change of circumstances that may affect your benefit claim, such as a change of job or change of income. You can find their contact details at [gov.uk](https://gov.uk)

**Carer's assessment:** If you are caring for someone, you may have a need for extra support. As long as it appears to the local authority or health and social care trust that there is, or will be a need for support, you can have an assessment no matter what your level of need is, the amount of care you provide or your financial means. This will look at how caring affects your life, including your physical, mental and emotional needs, and whether you want to carry on caring. They will use the assessment to see whether they are able to offer you any support. Read our guidance about requesting an assessment: [carersuk.org/help-and-advice/practical-support/carers-assessment](https://carersuk.org/help-and-advice/practical-support/carers-assessment)

**Carer's Credit:** Although Carer's Credit does not provide extra money, it is a useful benefit because it provides National Insurance credits. These credits help you to build up your record if you have been out of work for a while because of caring and can ensure you have the contributions you need to claim your State Pension at a later date. Read more: [carersuk.org/help-and-advice/financial-support/benefits-for-carers-who-are-working-age/carers-credit](https://carersuk.org/help-and-advice/financial-support/benefits-for-carers-who-are-working-age/carers-credit)

**Carer Support Payment (Scotland only):** This is gradually replacing Carer's Allowance across Scotland. It is very similar to Carer's Allowance. You can find out more information about the benefit at [carersuk.org/scotland/help-and-advice/financial-support/carers-support-payment](https://carersuk.org/scotland/help-and-advice/financial-support/carers-support-payment)

**Carer Support Plan:** A Carer Support Plan or an Adult Carer Support Plan is the name given to a carer's assessment in Scotland. In the same way, it offers an opportunity to discuss with the local council what support or services you need. This will look at how caring affects your

life, including your physical, mental and emotional needs, and whether you want to carry on caring and if so, how you can be supported.

**Catchment area:** This refers to the area that is the remit for a hospital's patients or a school's pupils.

**Catheter:** This is a tube that is connected to the bladder to enable someone to empty their bladder without having to go to the bathroom. It is sometimes used if someone has mobility problems – for example if they are recovering from an operation or very unwell. Read more on the NHS website: [nhs.uk/conditions/urinary-catheters](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/urinary-catheters)

**Chemotherapy:** Often abbreviated to 'chemo', this is a form of treatment that can help someone overcome cancer. It can stop cancer cells from reproducing - read more on the NHS website: [nhs.uk/conditions/chemotherapy](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/chemotherapy)

**Child Disability Payment (Scotland only):** This is a financial benefit in Scotland which is for families who have a child with a disability. You can find out more at [carersuk.org/scotland/help-and-advice/financial-support/benefits-if-you-are-disabled-ill-or-injured/child-disability-payment](https://www.carersuk.org/scotland/help-and-advice/financial-support/benefits-if-you-are-disabled-ill-or-injured/child-disability-payment)

**Child's needs assessment:** When they're assessing your child's needs, social workers should follow government guidance and local guidelines. They should review whether a child needs additional support to help improve their quality of life and meet their everyday needs. The process should directly involve the child and their family, respecting their religious and cultural beliefs.

**Children and Families Act 2014:** This act is a key piece of legislation that was brought in to provide greater protection to vulnerable children and provide further support for their families. It mainly relates to England, although some parts apply to Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales.

**Children's Services:** This is the department of social care that offers support and guidance to protect vulnerable children. You can find out more at [nhs.uk/conditions/social-care-and-support-guide/caring-for-children-and-young-people/children-and-young-peoples-services](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/social-care-and-support-guide/caring-for-children-and-young-people/children-and-young-peoples-services)

**Chiropractor:** A chiropractor is a practitioner (healthcare professional) who specialises in the treatment of neuromuscular disorders. They focus

on manipulating muscles and joints in the body to ease pain. You can read more on the NHS website: [nhs.uk/conditions/chiropractic](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/chiropractic)

**Citizenship:** Becoming a citizen of a country is a legal status that means a person has a right to live in a country and that country cannot refuse them entry or deport them. In some countries it also gives rights to vote, rights to welfare, education or health care. In the UK, citizenship enables you to live and work in the UK permanently, free from any immigration controls and to enjoy many important rights and benefits that might otherwise be restricted or not available. There are different ways to apply depending on the country you are applying for and various criteria to meet. You can find information about becoming a British citizen on the GOV.UK website: [gov.uk/british-citizenship](https://www.gov.uk/british-citizenship)

**Clinical trials:** Sometimes patients or healthy individuals are invited to take part in a clinical trial, which is a test of one treatment compared with another. They are designed to provide insights into new areas of medical research and are never compulsory. You can find out more on the NHS website: [nhs.uk/conditions/clinical-trials](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/clinical-trials)

**Cognitive behavioural therapy:** This is a specialist form of talking therapy that focuses on helping you to manage the way you think so that you can break negative thought patterns and change your behaviour or habits. It can help people cope with long-term conditions or mental health issues. There is more information on the NHS website: [nhs.uk/mental-health/talking-therapies-medicine-treatments/talking-therapies-and-counselling/cognitive-behavioural-therapy-cbt/overview](https://www.nhs.uk/mental-health/talking-therapies-medicine-treatments/talking-therapies-and-counselling/cognitive-behavioural-therapy-cbt/overview) and on the charity, Mind's website: [mind.org.uk/information-support/drugs-and-treatments/talking-therapy-and-counselling/cognitive-behavioural-therapy-cbt](https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/drugs-and-treatments/talking-therapy-and-counselling/cognitive-behavioural-therapy-cbt)

**Cognitive impairment:** Depending how severe this is, someone may have difficulties with remembering, understanding or communicating what they think or feel and making decisions about day-to-day life.

**Consent to treatment:** This means that as a general rule, someone must provide permission before receiving any type of test, examination, medical operation or procedure although there are some situations where this does not apply. You can read more about this on the NHS website: [nhs.uk/conditions/consent-to-treatment](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/consent-to-treatment)

**Coordinated care:** This is a term that refers to different care services (such as health and residential) supporting someone in a joined-up way

based on their individual and varied care needs.

**Co-morbidity:** This term is often referred to by health or medical professionals to describe a patient as having two medical or health conditions at the same time.

**Community Advocacy:** A service for those who need some assistance in getting across their views and case for support. This could help someone who is under strain, vulnerable or who has a disability for example. You could be referred to a community advocate by a health professional.

**Community care services:** These services are designed to help people live independently who may have extra support needs due to old age, a severe condition or a disability.

**Community health services (England only):** Community health services are led by health professionals who visit people in their homes to meet their care and support needs. Services are mainly delivered in people's homes but for example may also be in other settings such as in community hospitals, clinics and schools. Read more:

[england.nhs.uk/community-health-services](https://england.nhs.uk/community-health-services)

**Community Mental Health Team (CMHT):** Sometimes referred to as CMHTs, they provide a local service as part of the NHS to support people's recovery from severe mental health issues. They are led by health professionals in mental health care who may provide home visits or be based in a GP practice or other health centre.

**Continuing healthcare:** NHS Continuing Healthcare (NHS CHC) is a package of care for adults provided and funded by the NHS. You must be assessed as having a primary need to receive this. Read more on the NHS website: [nhs.uk/conditions/social-care-and-support-guide/money-work-and-benefits/nhs-continuing-healthcare](https://nhs.uk/conditions/social-care-and-support-guide/money-work-and-benefits/nhs-continuing-healthcare)

**Coronavirus Act 2020:** Legislation was brought in during the pandemic to provide the government with a broad range of temporary emergency powers to act as and when needed to protect the public, eg, by prioritising certain services, restricting certain activities or diverting resources where it felt necessary. Most of the provisions have now been revoked, expired or were left to expire in 2022.

**Counselling:** This is a psychological and emotional form of support

provided by a professional counsellor to help someone overcome problems. It is typically provided through means of talking therapy, either one to one or occasionally in a group.

**Court of Protection:** This is the court that handles decisions or matters relating to the Mental Capacity Act in England. You would need to apply to this court to be able to make decisions on someone else's behalf relating to their welfare or finances if you do not have power of attorney and the person has lost or is unable to make day-to-day decisions on their own.

**COVID-19:** This is the name given to the illness caused by the coronavirus virus. It was first identified in China in 2019 and was categorised as a pandemic in 2020.

**CT scan:** CT stands for 'computerised tomography'. In simple terms, this is the type of scan that uses x-ray images combined with computer processing to gain a more accurate picture of what is happening inside the human body, providing insights into your bones, soft tissues and blood vessels. Read more on the NHS website: [nhs.uk/conditions/ct-scan](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/ct-scan)

## D

**Day services:** Also known as 'respite services', day services are provided as a day or afternoon out away from the home and are designed to give carers a break from caring and the person they care for a change of scenery. They also provide the person being looked after the opportunity to learn new skills, discover new interests or socialise with others. Day services are usually provided by social services, the NHS and other voluntary organisations.

**Deafblindness:** This is a condition where someone has some degree of sight and hearing loss. Read more on the NHS website: [nhs.uk/conditions/deafblindness](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/deafblindness)

**Deferred payments:** Sometimes if you own your own home, it is possible to make an arrangement with the local authority so that you can meet your care home fees without having to sell your home during your lifetime to pay for your care. This may be referred to as a deferred payment scheme or arrangement. It is important to seek advice before applying. Read more at [payingforcare.org/taking-out-a-deferred-](https://payingforcare.org/taking-out-a-deferred-)



## payment-agreement

**Degenerative illness or condition:** A condition or illness that gradually worsens. In some cases, this may be a terminal illness, where someone only has a limited time left to live. If this is the situation, they can receive special allowances and claims for certain benefits can usually be fast-tracked.

**Delayed discharge:** This is when a patient is ready to leave hospital on a clinical basis but is unable to because care support to meet their needs is not ready or prepared for them, whether this is accommodation or professional assistance.

**Department for Communities (Northern Ireland):** This is the devolved Northern Ireland government department that has responsibility for law and decision-making over a number of key areas from benefits to housing.

**Department for Work and Pensions (DWP):** This UK government public service department looks after welfare, pension and child maintenance policy including the handling of welfare, disability and working age benefits.

**Deprivation of assets:** This is where you have intentionally given away your assets (such as money, property or income) in advance of paying for care to avoid contributing towards your care costs. When you have a financial assessment to see how much you can pay towards your care, if you have been found to have deliberately reduced your assets, you might no longer be entitled to council funding.

**Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DoLS) (England and Scotland only):** DoLS were extra measures that were put in place to protect people over 18 based in hospital and registered health and care settings. They were specifically for those who are unable to give their consent about their care arrangements to ensure that their best interests were considered in the light of their freedom of choice being restricted. These just applied in England and Wales and are an amendment to the Mental Capacity Act 2005. (They are being replaced by Liberty Protection Safeguards.) Read more at [pohwer.net/deprivation-of-liberty-safeguards-dols](http://pohwer.net/deprivation-of-liberty-safeguards-dols)

**Deputyship:** This is an option for gaining the legal ability to make

decisions on behalf of someone else who may have lost capacity or the ability to make their own decisions independently.

Read more on our website: [carersuk.org/help-and-advice/practical-support/managing-someone-s-affairs/tips-from-carers-managing-services-on-someone-s-behalf](https://carersuk.org/help-and-advice/practical-support/managing-someone-s-affairs/tips-from-carers-managing-services-on-someone-s-behalf) and on the government website: [gov.uk/become-deputy](https://gov.uk/become-deputy)

**Diagnosis:** When a doctor or medical specialist identifies an illness or a condition that someone has after examining their symptoms, it is usually referred to as a diagnosis.

**Dialysis:** If someone has trouble filtering their blood because of difficulties with their kidney function, they may be given a dialysis treatment which enables the blood to be filtered of waste products and any toxins through the use of a specialist machine. Read more on the NHS website: [nhs.uk/conditions/dialysis](https://nhs.uk/conditions/dialysis)

**Direct Payment (DP):** It may be possible to receive money from your local authority or health and social care trust (in Northern Ireland) to cover care support instead of care services in the form of a 'direct payment'. If you are eligible for community care services, this may be offered as an option to provide you with direct choice to arrange your own care services. Find out more on our 'direct payments' webpage: [carersuk.org/help-and-advice/practical-support/getting-care-and-support/direct-payments](https://carersuk.org/help-and-advice/practical-support/getting-care-and-support/direct-payments)

**Disability Living Allowance (DLA):** This is a disability benefit that is primarily for children aged under 16 who have additional care or/and mobility support needs. There may be older adults who are still receiving this benefit too, but most adults will have moved over to Personal Independence Payment instead. Find out more about DLA: [carersuk.org/help-and-advice/financial-support/help-with-benefits/disability-living-allowance](https://carersuk.org/help-and-advice/financial-support/help-with-benefits/disability-living-allowance). **In Scotland**, a similar benefit called Child Disability Payment is available instead: [carersuk.org/scotland/help-and-advice/financial-support/benefits-if-you-are-disabled-ill-or-injured/child-disability-payment](https://carersuk.org/scotland/help-and-advice/financial-support/benefits-if-you-are-disabled-ill-or-injured/child-disability-payment)

**Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG):** A Disabled Facilities Grant is a local authority grant to help towards the cost of adapting your home, or the home of the person you look after, to enable them to continue to live there. You can contact your local authority or local Health and Social Care Trust (in Northern Ireland) to find out how to apply. Read more on



our website: [carersuk.org/help-and-advice/practical-support/equipment-how-to-get-it](https://carersuk.org/help-and-advice/practical-support/equipment-how-to-get-it) and on the government website: [gov.uk/disabled-facilities-grants](https://gov.uk/disabled-facilities-grants)

**Discharge planning:** When someone you care for has been staying in hospital and is ready to leave, their needs must be supported by the medical team to come home or move into residential care or a hospice. This process should involve a team of health and social care professionals in collaboration with the wishes of the patient and you as their carer. Read more at [carersuk.org/help-and-advice/practical-support/coming-out-of-hospital](https://carersuk.org/help-and-advice/practical-support/coming-out-of-hospital)

**Discharge to assess (D2A):** To see if a patient is ready to leave hospital, their needs must be thoroughly assessed to ensure that they can get the support they need to recover fully, or as much as possible, after leaving hospital.

**Discretionary assistance fund (Wales):** This is a grant to help cover essentials such as food or energy costs and is available for those in most financial need: [gov.wales/discretionary-assistance-fund-daf](https://gov.wales/discretionary-assistance-fund-daf)

**Discretionary housing payments:** This is temporary extra financial support that you may be able to apply for from your local council if you are struggling to meet housing or rent costs and are experiencing severe financial hardship. Read more at [gov.uk/government/publications/claiming-discretionary-housing-payments/claiming-discretionary-housing-payments](https://gov.uk/government/publications/claiming-discretionary-housing-payments/claiming-discretionary-housing-payments)

**District nurses:** They often carry out home visits to support people who have disabilities, who are terminally ill or who have ageing needs. They are responsible for assessing the healthcare needs of the patient and their families and ensuring their healthcare needs are delivered.

**Do not attempt cardiopulmonary resuscitation (DNACPR) decisions:** These are forms that instruct healthcare professionals not to perform CPR (cardiopulmonary resuscitation) if your breathing or heart stops. Sometimes the abbreviations DNR (Do Not Resuscitate) or DNAR (Do Not Attempt Resuscitation) are used. Read more on the NHS website: [nhs.uk/conditions/do-not-attempt-cardiopulmonary-resuscitation-dnacpr-decisions](https://nhs.uk/conditions/do-not-attempt-cardiopulmonary-resuscitation-dnacpr-decisions)

**DNR/ DNAR (Do not resuscitate):** See above.

**Duty of care:** In social care terms, this is about a care professional's legal and moral obligation to safeguard the wellbeing and welfare of their patients, colleagues and employers to protect them from harm.

## E

**Early discharge planning:** Put in simple terms, this refers to the planning process that's undertaken by health professionals in the early stages to prepare for someone's health care needs for when they are ready to leave hospital.

**Early menopause:** This can occur if a woman's periods stop before the age of 45 - read more on the NHS website: [nhs.uk/conditions/early-menopause](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/early-menopause)

**Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP):** This is a document that may be used for a child who has additional special educational needs. It is legally binding and outlines their educational, health, and social care needs. There is more information on the charity Contacts website: [contact.org.uk/help-for-families/information-advice-services/education-start/education-learning/ehc-plans-assessments/what-is-an-ehc-plan](https://www.contact.org.uk/help-for-families/information-advice-services/education-start/education-learning/ehc-plans-assessments/what-is-an-ehc-plan). You can also contact your local authority to find out more.

**Eligibility criteria:** The specific conditions that have to be met for someone to receive a certain benefit are often referred to as the eligibility criteria.

**Eligible needs:** If someone has eligible needs, it means that they are entitled to certain forms of support because of their needs.

**Enablement:** A way of helping someone to learn or relearn skills that were lost due to ill health, disability or a period in hospital. The process is designed to help someone to live as independently as possible.

**End of life planning:** This is concerned with the options that will help someone formally express their wishes and how they wish their care to be delivered at the end of their life. See our website for more details: [carersuk.org/help-and-advice/practical-support/end-of-life-planning](https://www.carersuk.org/help-and-advice/practical-support/end-of-life-planning)

**Endoscopy:** This is a procedure used to take a look at the inside of your body to check if there are any issues or find the root cause of any problems. It involves inserting a tube into the body which includes a small camera. Read more on the NHS website:

[nhs.uk/conditions/endoscopy](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/endoscopy)

**Epidemic:** This refers to the wide spread of a disease or virus in a community at a particular time.

**Euthanasia:** In some countries, someone with a particular illness or terminal condition may be allowed to end their lives legally to end their suffering through medical intervention. (This may be referred to as 'assisted suicide'). Assisted suicide is the act of deliberately assisting another person to kill themselves. Both euthanasia and assisted suicide are illegal under UK law. There is more information about end-of-life care on the NHS website: [nhs.uk/conditions/end-of-life-care](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/end-of-life-care)

## F

**Fall prevention:** See the Carers UK animation on preventing trips and falls: [youtube.com/watch?v=Qm7-ik296YM](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Qm7-ik296YM) and the NHS website for ideas on how falls can be prevented for someone who is more prone to falling because of older age, a disability or health condition: [nhs.uk/conditions/falls/prevention](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/falls/prevention)

**Fast Track Pathway:** This is a tool whereby individuals who may have a deteriorating condition are identified as needing to be fast-tracked for ongoing health care after NHS treatment, especially when someone is reaching the end of their life.

**Financial assessment:** A financial assessment may be carried out by the local council or local Health and Social Care Trust (in Northern Ireland) when you are seeking social care support. This is a way of measuring how much you will need to contribute towards your care, if at all. It is free and usually happens after a carer's assessment: [carersuk.org/help-and-advice/practical-support/getting-care-and-support/carers-assessment](https://www.carersuk.org/help-and-advice/practical-support/getting-care-and-support/carers-assessment) or needs assessment: [carersuk.org/help-and-advice/practical-support/getting-care-and-support/needs-assessment](https://www.carersuk.org/help-and-advice/practical-support/getting-care-and-support/needs-assessment)

**Floor (income):** For Universal Credit and some council tax support schemes, if you are self-employed and your earnings are lower than a set amount, your award may be worked out using an amount called 'minimum income floor'. This figure can be used as your earnings and may be higher than your actual earnings. But if you earn above the minimum income floor, your actual earnings will be used to work out your

benefit. This does not apply in every situation and may not apply to some carers so, seek advice if you are affected.

**Formal patient:** This refers to someone who is detained in hospital under a section of the Mental Health Act.

**Formal care:** This refers to the professional care that is carried out by healthcare and social care professionals in hospital, in a residential or nursing care setting or at home.

**Functional ability:** This relates to whether an individual can carry out day-to-day living tasks independently such as washing, dressing, eating and preparing meals. This may be reviewed if they are being assessed for their ability to work for example.

**Furlough:** This is the name given to when employees are given temporary leave of absence, which may be short or long term. Although you are put on leave, you are kept on your employer's payroll. The UK operated a furlough scheme during the coronavirus pandemic from March 2020 until 30 September 2021.

## G

**General anaesthetic:** Someone is given a general anaesthetic if they require a surgical operation or a complex medical procedure. They are given anaesthesia to ensure they lose consciousness and therefore feel no pain or discomfort while the medical professionals are operating. Find out more on the NHS website: [nhs.uk/conditions/general-anaesthesia](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/general-anaesthesia)

**Gestational diabetes:** It is possible to develop this type of diabetes during pregnancy. This means that your blood sugar is high and that you need to take extra care of yourself and your developing baby during this time by eating healthily and keeping active. It usually goes away after the baby is born. There is lots of advice about this on the Diabetes UK website: [diabetes.org.uk/diabetes-the-basics/gestational-diabetes](https://www.diabetes.org.uk/diabetes-the-basics/gestational-diabetes)

**GP:** This is the abbreviation for 'General Practitioner' - referring to a general doctor who is responsible for helping to identify and treat what illness or health issue you have. They will provide relevant treatment or refer you to a specialist or for hospital treatment if you require specialist or urgent care.

**Graduated Retirement Benefit:** This is a form of additional State Pension payment which was used to top up your basic pension based on graduated contributions that you paid in addition to your pension contributions. It was replaced in 1978 by the State Earnings Related Pension Scheme (SERPS).

**Grant:** To an individual, this is usually a sum of money granted by an organisation, charity or public body to someone who requires assistance to achieve a certain agreed goal (linked to public benefit). It can also be in the form of products or services. As an unpaid carer, there are various grants you can apply for. See our 'Grants and schemes' information webpage: [carersuk.org/help-and-advice/financial-support/benefits-if-you-are-disabled-ill-or-injured/grants-and-schemes](https://carersuk.org/help-and-advice/financial-support/benefits-if-you-are-disabled-ill-or-injured/grants-and-schemes)

**Guardian's Allowance:** This is a tax-free benefit that can be paid to someone who cares for a child whose parents have died and, in some cases, where one parent has died. Read more and find out the current rate on the [gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk) website.

## H

**Haemorrhagic stroke:** This is the name given to a type of stroke that is caused by sudden bleeding in or around the brain and sometimes it's referred to as a brain haemorrhage. You can read more on the Stroke Association's website: [stroke.org.uk/what-is-stroke/types-of-stroke/haemorrhagic-stroke](https://stroke.org.uk/what-is-stroke/types-of-stroke/haemorrhagic-stroke)

**Health Action Plan:** These are provided for young adults or adults with a learning disability and are required by the Department of Health. It should be developed in consultation with a doctor or health professional and include tailored information to help individuals stay healthy and well.

**Health and Wellbeing Board (England only):** Sometimes abbreviated to HWBs, these were introduced by the Health and Wellbeing Act (2012) in England to provide a more integrated care service across health and social care.

**Healthcare screening:** This is a method by which people can be tested routinely, even if healthy, to help identify conditions early on if they are at higher risk of a condition or illness or for example to spot cancer in the early stages. Read more on the NHS website: [nhs.uk/conditions/nhs-screening](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/nhs-screening)

**Healthwatch (England only):** This is a body that champions the views of users of health and social care services to encourage higher quality care and improvements among service providers. It was established under the Health and Social Care Act, 2012 in England. You can find out more about their work and how they can help: [healthwatch.co.uk](http://healthwatch.co.uk)

**Holistic therapy/care:** Also known as complementary and alternative medicine, this falls outside of mainstream healthcare treatments. Holistic therapies and treatments aim to treat the whole body rather than isolating certain parts. Some people find they are beneficial alongside (complementary) or instead of (alternative) conventional medical treatments. Examples include acupuncture or aromatherapy.

**Home care workers:** Home care workers, also sometimes known as Personal Assistants or Professional Carers, are paid carers providing professional flexible care support in a home. Duties often include helping someone with personal care and housekeeping tasks. They may be employed through a care agency or self-employed.

**Home help:** Care agencies often offer 'home help' in the form of support for individuals requiring personal care or practical help at home. Often provided on a flexible basis, these services are usually paid for but may be partially or completely funded if arranged through the local council or NHS. Read more about arranging and receiving paid care on the NHS website: [nhs.uk/conditions/social-care-and-support-guide/care-services-equipment-and-care-homes/homecare](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/social-care-and-support-guide/care-services-equipment-and-care-homes/homecare)

**HMRC:** This is the abbreviation of His Majesty's Revenue and Customs. They deal with tax collection for the government and administer regulatory schemes such as the enforcement of the national minimum wage and some forms of state support. Be careful of scammers masquerading as HMRC to try to get personal information and/or money from individuals. More information can be found on the government website: [gov.uk/government/publications/phishing-and-bogus-emails-hm-revenue-and-customs-examples/phishing-emails-and-bogus-contact-hm-revenue-and-customs-examples](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/phishing-and-bogus-emails-hm-revenue-and-customs-examples/phishing-emails-and-bogus-contact-hm-revenue-and-customs-examples)

**Hypo or hypoglycaemia:** This is the medical term to describe when someone's blood sugar levels are too low. When this occurs, someone can experience a 'hypo' - a feeling of dizziness or faintness which can cause them to faint - symptoms can worsen if not treated quickly. Hypos



are more commonly experienced among people who have diabetes who take insulin. Read more on the NHS website: [nhs.uk/conditions/low-blood-sugar-hypoglycaemia](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/low-blood-sugar-hypoglycaemia)

**Hyperglycaemia:** This is the opposite of 'hypoglycaemia' above and refers to a situation where someone's blood sugar levels are too high. It is more common among people who have diabetes and can become dangerous if someone's blood sugar levels become very high or remain high for too long. Read more on the NHS website: [nhs.uk/conditions/high-blood-sugar-hyperglycaemia](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/high-blood-sugar-hyperglycaemia)

**Hysteroscopy:** This is a 'procedure used to examine the inside of the womb (uterus)', as explained on the NHS website: [nhs.uk/conditions/hysteroscopy](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/hysteroscopy)

I

**Immunosuppressed:** Someone is immunosuppressed if their immune system is compromised (for example because they are on certain medication) and therefore they are more susceptible to the effects of disease, illness and viruses.

**Immunotherapy:** This is a type of cancer treatment where the immune system is stimulated to help fight against cancer.

**Income Support:** This has been a benefit available to people on a low income or with no income in need of extra financial support. It is known as a 'legacy benefit' as you can no longer apply for it though some people may be still receiving it who were awarded it some time ago. Essentially though, it has been replaced by '**Universal Credit**' (see term below) but for those who still receive income support, there is information on our website: [carersuk.org/help-and-advice/financial-support/benefits-for-carers-who-are-working-age/income-support](https://www.carersuk.org/help-and-advice/financial-support/benefits-for-carers-who-are-working-age/income-support)

**Incontinence:** This is the condition of having a loss of bladder or bowel control. You can read more about how it affects people and what can be done to help on the NHS website: [nhs.uk/conditions/urinary-incontinence](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/urinary-incontinence)

We also have some guidance for carers on the Carers UK website: [carersuk.org/help-and-advice/practical-support/continence-care](https://www.carersuk.org/help-and-advice/practical-support/continence-care)

**Independent advocates:** They provide information to help you make informed decisions to improve your circumstances. They can help you

get your view across effectively or speak on your behalf if necessary. They can help, for example, if there is a dispute to be resolved with social care professionals. See '**Advocacy services**' term above.

**Independent living:** This refers to residential housing or flats that cater for adults (55+) who may wish to live independently but with support close to hand with care services and social activities available.

**Inheritance tax:** This is a tax that may be payable on the estate (money, property and possessions) of someone who has died. Find out more on the gov.uk website: [gov.uk/inheritance-tax](https://www.gov.uk/inheritance-tax)

**Integrated care:** This involves planned care between care professionals who use a coordinated approach to deliver care. They aim to fully understand the needs of the patient, and any carer they have, to ensure their needs are placed at the centre of decisions made.

**Intermediate care:** Intermediate care is short-term care, generally limited to six weeks, aimed at maximising a person's independence. It can be either 'step up' to prevent hospital admission or moving to a care home, or 'step down' to support recovery after a hospital stay and prevent readmission. Intermediate care can be provided in different places, such as community hospitals, residential homes, or people's own. It is usually provided free of charge. A team of health and social care specialists coordinate this support to ensure that the patient is able to adapt to living more independently again. You can find out more at [nice.org.uk/about/nice-communities/social-care/quick-guides/understanding-intermediate-care](https://www.nice.org.uk/about/nice-communities/social-care/quick-guides/understanding-intermediate-care) and take a look at Age UK's factsheet: [ageuk.org.uk/globalassets/age-uk/documents/factsheets/fs76\\_intermediate\\_care\\_and\\_reablement\\_fcs.pdf?dtrk=true](https://www.ageuk.org.uk/globalassets/age-uk/documents/factsheets/fs76_intermediate_care_and_reablement_fcs.pdf?dtrk=true)

**Intervention:** This can be used to refer to the planned act of becoming intentionally involved in a situation to address concerns with a person about their behaviour or with issues connected with a person's problematic behaviour. For example, relatives of a drug addict may confront them about their habit in a safe environment, but this kind of act is best planned and carried out with the advice and support of health professionals.

**Intravenous (eg drip):** Generally, this refers to giving medicines or fluids through a needle or tube inserted into a patient's vein. For example, an intravenous drip may be used to replace water, salt or sugar inside a person's body which may have been lost due to an



accident, infection, illness, dehydration or an operation. It is usually used temporarily if a person cannot eat or drink normally. It can also be used to administer medication.

**IV:** This stands for intravenous and is referred to when a fluid or medicine is passed through a tube into the veins. Some people refer to this as an 'intravenous drip' – it may restore lost nutrients and fluids to the body that may have been lost because of an accident, illness or operation. See '**intravenous**' term above.

## J

**Jaundice:** This is a condition that causes the whites of the eyes and the skin to turn a yellowish colour. Normally it is the result of an underlying health issue so it is important for someone with symptoms of this to have a health check. It can occur in people of all ages, although jaundice occurs most commonly among new-born babies and older people.

**Joint care assessments:** It is possible to have a carer's assessment to look at the carer's needs alongside a needs assessment which focuses on the needs of the person being cared for. This is usually arranged with social services through the local council or the local Health and Social Care Trust in Northern Ireland.

**Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI):** This independent advisory committee advises UK health departments on immunisation and vaccinations including timing, safety, process and delivery.

**Joint hypermobility syndrome:** This occurs when you have pain and stiffness from having very flexible joints. Read more on the NHS website: [nhs.uk/conditions/joint-hypermobility-syndrom/](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/joint-hypermobility-syndrom/)

**Judicial review:** This is a type of court proceeding that involves a judge reviewing whether a decision has been made lawfully by a public body. This may happen if someone wishes to legally challenge a decision. You can find out more at [publiclawproject.org.uk/content/uploads/2019/02/Intro-to-JR-Guide-1.pdf](https://publiclawproject.org.uk/content/uploads/2019/02/Intro-to-JR-Guide-1.pdf)

**Jury:** The group of people who have been selected randomly through the electoral register as members of the public to attend a trial and decide whether someone who is on trial is ultimately guilty or not guilty.

**Justice system:** The justice system sits alongside the executive or the government and the legislature as the third element making up the state. It is the collective body responsible for administering justice in the UK.

## K

**Keyhole surgery:** An invasive form of surgery used to look at the inside of the body. It involves the making of a small incision and usually requires less recovery time than open surgery.

**Keyworker:** This term was commonly used during the 2020 COVID-19 pandemic to refer to workers considered to be providing essential services such as doctors, shop assistants, teachers and rubbish collectors.

**Kin (ie, next of kin):** This means your relatives. Next of kin has no legal definition but commonly refers to your closest relative and may be cited on a form as this person may have certain obligations and may be kept informed in the event of something unexpected happening or a death occurring. If you are over the age of 18, it is possible to nominate a close friend or partner as your 'next of kin'. Being 'next of kin' does not automatically mean that you take on someone's legal rights and responsibilities.

## L

**Lateral flow test:** This test is recommended if you suspect you may have COVID-19. It provides a quick test result which can be seen soon after you've completed the test. These are no longer free of charge to the general public, but they are available from your local pharmacy if you have been identified as clinically most at risk.

**Laxatives:** Laxatives are a type of medication used to treat constipation. Find out more about the different types and treatment options on the NHS website: [nhs.uk/conditions/laxatives](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/laxatives)

**Learning disabilities:** An individual may have learning disabilities if they have difficulties understanding ideas or information and require assistance with learning new skills. There are many different types and levels and being diagnosed can help ensure they get support to cope with the learning disability they have.

**Legal responsibility:** This is a duty imposed on someone to do something which has been imposed by the law or created by a binding agreement. Friends, partners or relatives may have a specific duty to deal with someone's care and health interests and make decisions in their best interests, for example if they have power of attorney and the person has lost mental capacity.

**Legislation:** Law or a set of laws that have been passed by Parliament. It may also be used when a new law is being drawn up.

**Liberty Protection Safeguards (England and Scotland only):** In 2024, Liberty Protection Safeguards are likely to replace Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards, known as DoLS (described above). As with DoLS, Liberty Protection Safeguards are designed to protect vulnerable people who have lost their mental capacity (who are unable to make day-to-day decisions). They might enable someone else (with mental capacity) to make decisions and judgements on their behalf in their own best interests and for their welfare and safety. The new scheme extends to cover 16 and 17-year-olds and applies to all settings, including those outside of the scope of DoLS, such as supported accommodation and in people's homes. You can find out more about these, and other, changes here: [pohwer.net/lps](https://pohwer.net/lps) and here: [cqc.org.uk/publications/major-report/state-care/2022-2023/dols](https://cqc.org.uk/publications/major-report/state-care/2022-2023/dols)

**Lived experience:** This is a term used to refer to someone's first-hand experience of a situation, a condition or certain circumstances.

**Living will:** A living will is also sometimes referred to as an advance decision. It is generally legally binding. This allows you to refuse certain treatments in advance that you would otherwise be given in a medical scenario when you are unable to make decisions or might be unable to communicate your desires. This can be helpful to share with family members and close friends or partners. Read more on the NHS website: [nhs.uk/conditions/end-of-life-care/advance-decision-to-refuse-treatment](https://nhs.uk/conditions/end-of-life-care/advance-decision-to-refuse-treatment)

**Local anaesthetic:** Before undergoing a medical procedure, an area of the body can be made numb through use of anaesthesia so that the patient doesn't feel any discomfort or pain. You retain consciousness with a local anaesthetic unlike a general anaesthetic which is usually more complex or invasive. Read more on the NHS website: [nhs.uk/conditions/local-anaesthesia](https://nhs.uk/conditions/local-anaesthesia)

**Local authority:** In England, Scotland and Wales, this is your local

council responsible for providing local services and support. You can find yours here: [gov.uk/find-local-council](https://www.gov.uk/find-local-council). For Northern Ireland, the equivalent would be the local Health and Social Care Trust.

**Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO):** The final stage for complaints about councils, adult social care services, and some local service providers.

**Local Health and Social Care Trusts (Northern Ireland):** They offer a range of health and social care services in Northern Ireland (similar to councils and local authorities in England, Scotland and Wales). There are five altogether which cover different geographical areas of Northern Ireland. To find them, see our local directory: [carersuk.org/help-and-advice/get-support/local-support](https://carersuk.org/help-and-advice/get-support/local-support)

**Local Offer:** This relates to information that a local authority or council should provide for young people with a disability or a particular educational need about services in their area.

**Local welfare assistance (England):** This is the specialist local support that can be provided by your council. For Scotland, see ‘Scottish Welfare Fund’, for Wales see, ‘Discretionary Assistance Fund’ and in Northern Ireland, see ‘Social Fund’.

**Long COVID:** This refers to the long-term effects of COVID-19 that some people have. There are many different symptoms that can persist. Find out more on the NHS website: [nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/long-term-effects-of-coronavirus-long-covid](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/long-term-effects-of-coronavirus-long-covid) which also has sources of support: [gov.uk/guidance/find-help-and-support-if-you-have-long-covid](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/find-help-and-support-if-you-have-long-covid)

**Long-term care needs:** Some people have ongoing care needs after an illness, condition diagnosis or period in hospital – support is available to help cope with these needs. This might be arranged through a needs assessment, carer’s assessment, adult carer support plan (in Scotland) or/ and accessing certain benefits, so it is also important to arrange a benefits check.

**Lumbar (puncture):** This is a medical procedure where a needle is inserted into the spinal canal (in the lower back) to gather fluid used to identify and diagnose a health issue, infection or disease. It is also sometimes referred to as a spinal tap.

**Lymphatic system:** This is part of the body’s immune system,

protecting us from infection and disease. Macmillan Cancer Support has a helpful explanation on their website: [macmillan.org.uk/cancer-information-and-support/worried-about-cancer/the-lymphatic-system](https://www.macmillan.org.uk/cancer-information-and-support/worried-about-cancer/the-lymphatic-system)

**Lymphocytes:** These are the white blood cells in our body responsible for fighting infection and disease as they are the body's main type of immune cells.

## M

**Malignant:** In a healthcare context, this word may be used to refer to a tumour or for example, to describe cancer cells that grow in an uncontrolled and harmful way. They can spread to other parts of the body so immediate treatment is likely to be needed.

**Malnutrition:** This is a serious health condition where someone is not getting all the necessary nutrients in the body to keep them healthy and well through their diet. It may, for example, affect someone with a condition like dementia and medical support from a doctor should be sought as soon as possible. Find out more on the NHS website about the symptoms, causes and treatment options:

[nhs.uk/conditions/malnutrition](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/malnutrition)

**Managed budget:** A managed budget may also be referred to as a personal budget. This refers to the amount of money a local authority has provided to support you with care costs, giving you more choice and control when paying for care services or equipment. You can read more about personal budgets on our website: [carersuk.org/help-and-advice/practical-support/arranging-care-and-support-for-someone/personal-budgets](https://www.carersuk.org/help-and-advice/practical-support/arranging-care-and-support-for-someone/personal-budgets)

**Mandatory reconsideration:** This is the first step in challenging a benefit decision. It's where you disagree with a decision and ask the DWP or HMRC to look at their decision again. Once they have reviewed the decision, you can then (should you wish) go on to appeal to an independent tribunal. There are time limits involved so you need to act promptly if you want to challenge a decision. If you request a reconsideration, they may decide you should get less benefit or no benefit at all, so you may want to seek advice if you are thinking of asking for a reconsideration. See our guide to challenging a benefits decision for more information: [carersuk.org/help-and-advice/guides-and-tools/your-guide-to-challenging-a-benefits-decision](https://www.carersuk.org/help-and-advice/guides-and-tools/your-guide-to-challenging-a-benefits-decision)

Citizens Advice also has further information:

[citizensadvice.org.uk/benefits/benefits-introduction/problems-with-benefits-and-tax-credits/challenging-benefit-decisions/challenging-a-decision-by-the-dwp-or-hmrc/challenging-a-benefit-decision-mandatory-reconsideration](https://citizensadvice.org.uk/benefits/benefits-introduction/problems-with-benefits-and-tax-credits/challenging-benefit-decisions/challenging-a-decision-by-the-dwp-or-hmrc/challenging-a-benefit-decision-mandatory-reconsideration)

**Maternity Pay:** If you need to leave work to have a baby, you may be entitled to Statutory Maternity Pay, which is the most common, Contractual Maternity Pay or Maternity Allowance. The Citizens Advice website outlines the different types and conditions:

[citizensadvice.org.uk/work/rights-at-work/parental-rights/maternity-pay-what-youre-entitled-to](https://citizensadvice.org.uk/work/rights-at-work/parental-rights/maternity-pay-what-youre-entitled-to)

**Means-tested benefit:** Certain benefits you apply for may be means-tested. This means that any income, capital or savings you or a partner has will be considered when the amount you are entitled to (if you are eligible) is decided.

**Mediation:** This is the term used to find a resolution where there is a disagreement between two or more parties, and it is conducted by an independent third party. There are different types of mediation services to help with different issues from work to personal relationships. You could contact your local Citizens Advice centre to find out more.

**Menopause:** This is the natural phase that occurs when a woman stops having periods. It usually occurs between the ages of 45 and 55 but can happen much earlier. It can be an emotionally and physically challenging time as it is often accompanied by side effects from hot flushes to feelings of anxiety. Read more on our guidance page: [carersuk.org/help-and-advice/health/looking-after-your-health/stress-and-depression](https://carersuk.org/help-and-advice/health/looking-after-your-health/stress-and-depression) and on the NHS website: [nhs.uk/conditions/menopause](https://nhs.uk/conditions/menopause)

**Mental capacity:** This means having the ability to make your own decisions.

**Mental health and wellbeing:** It is very important to look after your mental health and sense of wellbeing alongside your physical health as both are in many ways interrelated. For tips and guidance on doing this see the NHS website: [nhs.uk/mental-health](https://nhs.uk/mental-health) and our 'health and wellbeing' section: [carersuk.org/help-and-advice/your-health-and-wellbeing](https://carersuk.org/help-and-advice/your-health-and-wellbeing)

**MHOR:** Manual Handling Operations Regulations.



**Minimum income guarantee:** This is a guaranteed limit to ensure that people who are being charged to receive social care help and support provided by the council must not be charged above a certain amount to ensure that their income does not fall below a safe level, as defined by the Care Act 2014.

**Misdiagnosis:** A misdiagnosis is when you have been assessed by a health professional as having a particular illness, health issue or condition, but discover this is incorrect. In the rare instance of this happening, you may wish to follow steps to issue a complaint – see the NHS’s guidance: [nhs.uk/using-the-nhs/about-the-nhs/how-to-complain-to-the-nhs](https://www.nhs.uk/using-the-nhs/about-the-nhs/how-to-complain-to-the-nhs)

**Morbidity/mortality rate:** Morbidity relates to the health of a person, so the morbidity rate looks at the rate of illness or disease (or virus spreading) within a population. On the other hand, the mortality rate relates to the number of deaths within a population.

**Motor neurone disease (MND):** This is a rare condition that affects the functioning of someone’s brain and muscles, and gradually gets worse over time, but treatments can help reduce the effects. The NHS website lists some of the main symptoms: [nhs.uk/conditions/motor-neurone-disease](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/motor-neurone-disease) and certain charities like MND Association can provide support and information to help people affected: [mndassociation.org](https://www.mndassociation.org)

**MRSA:** This is a bacterial infection which is also known as a ‘superbug’. It is resistant to many antibiotics and therefore it can be difficult to treat. Find out more on the NHS website: [nhs.uk/conditions/mrsa](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/mrsa)

**Multi-agency working:** This is the act of different types of services working together to coordinate the support or care that is provided to an individual.

**Multidisciplinary team:** This is a team made up of different specialists who are working together to provide someone with the care or support they need – for example, doctors and social care workers should collaborate to provide a tailored support plan for a patient who is leaving hospital.

**Multimorbidity:** This is the medical term given to describe someone who has a number of different health conditions at the same time. Co-morbidity refers to having two conditions at the same time.

**Muscular dystrophy:** This is a progressive condition caused by a genetic disorder where the muscles gradually weaken leading to long-term disability. See the NHS website for guidance, support and further information: [nhs.uk/conditions/muscular-dystrophy](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/muscular-dystrophy)

## N

**National Health Service (NHS):** In England, Scotland and Wales, the National Health Service (NHS) provides publicly funded healthcare services while local councils provide social care services. In Northern Ireland these services are combined as Health and Social Care (HSC), while local Health and Social Care Trusts provide social care services.

**National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE):** This is the public body that oversees the quality of services provided by the NHS and public social care services. They provide evidence-based good practice guidelines for health and social care professionals and related service deliverers. This national guidance and advice aims to improve health and social care.

**National Insurance Contributions (NIC):** National Insurance Contributions or Credits are designed to help you maintain your National Insurance record. Over your working age life, you will regularly contribute these (if in employment) and they gradually add up over a number of 'qualifying years' to ultimately count towards your State Pension. If there are a number of years when you are not employed, your National Insurance record can still be protected with National Insurance Credits. You can still gain these credits, through claiming certain benefits such as Child Benefit, Carer's Allowance or Carer Support Payment. You might qualify for Carer's Credit if you do not qualify for Carer's Allowance or Carer Support Payment. Read more on the gov.uk website: [gov.uk/national-insurance-credits](https://www.gov.uk/national-insurance-credits)

**Needs assessments:** Needs assessments are for people who may need additional support due to having a long-term disability, condition or illness. A review of the person's needs is carried out by a health or social care professional to identify what extra support they may need. Read more on our 'Having a needs assessment' page: [carersuk.org/help-and-advice/practical-support/needs-assessment](https://www.carersuk.org/help-and-advice/practical-support/needs-assessment)

**Needs based:** Health and social care services often take a 'needs based' approach to assessment and support. A needs-based approach



involves evaluating the holistic needs of an individual and their families, identifying their concerns and priorities, and coordinating appropriate support. It means that your eligibility for a scheme or type of benefit is based on certain levels of income or capital or help you may need.

**Neglect:** When a dependant does not receive the care they need, it is called neglect which is a form of abuse even if the harm caused is unintentional. Signs of neglect should be taken very seriously as a safeguarding issue.

**Neurodiversity:** People's brains work and process information in different ways. This umbrella term is used to encompass positively the different ways individuals experience the world and interact with their environment, which may differ from neurotypical individuals. This covers conditions like autism and dyslexia, but many people have some kind of neuro difference.

**Neurological:** This refers to what affects the brain as well as the nerves in the body. Neurological problems or conditions result from changes to the functioning of the brain, spinal cord or nerves.

**NHS Continuing Care or Healthcare (NHS CHC):** This is a form of social care support arranged and funded by the NHS. This may be put together as a care package for people with long-term complex health needs who need ongoing care after leaving hospital or due to illness or an injury. Read more on the NHS website: [nhs.uk/conditions/social-care-and-support-guide/money-work-and-benefits/nhs-continuing-healthcare](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/social-care-and-support-guide/money-work-and-benefits/nhs-continuing-healthcare) and for further information and advice you can contact Beacon: [beaconchc.co.uk](https://beaconchc.co.uk)

**NHS screening:** This is a method of identifying any issues or risks of illness at an early stage so that treatments can be offered before any major health problems develop. Read more on the NHS website: [nhs.uk/conditions/nhs-screening](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/nhs-screening)

**Northern Ireland Public Services Ombudsman:** If you're unhappy with how you've been treated by a provider of public services, you can consider contacting this authority. You should have taken all reasonable steps and already complained to the service provider directly. They will only investigate your issue if you have exhausted all other options. You can find out more at: [nipso.org.uk](https://nipso.org.uk)

**Nurse (different types):** Most doctors' practices now have a *practice*

*nurse*. Their role differs from practice to practice, but they are often involved in routine health checks and nursing care. On the other hand, *district nurses* provide support to individuals and carers in their own homes. They are normally based in GP surgeries and your surgery or GP can provide more advice on accessing their support and assistance. *Palliative care nurses* specialise in providing care and support for someone who has a terminal illness or who is approaching the end of their life.

## O

**Obsessive Compulsive Disorder (OCD):** This is a common mental health condition that is characterised by obsessive thoughts or compulsive behaviours. Read more on the NHS website: [nhs.uk/mental-health/conditions/obsessive-compulsive-disorder-ocd/overview](https://www.nhs.uk/mental-health/conditions/obsessive-compulsive-disorder-ocd/overview)

**Occupational Therapist (OT):** The role of an Occupational Therapist is to work with people who need support to carry out their day-to-day living tasks and to assess what additional help they need to carry out those activities, for example with practical aids or equipment in the home, workplace or school.

**Occupational therapy:** The aim is to help people who are struggling with day-to-day living tasks. This involves assessing what people's practical needs are and putting in place practical solutions from arranging specialist equipment to making adaptations in the home. Read more on the NHS website: [nhs.uk/conditions/occupational-therapy](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/occupational-therapy)

**Ombudsman:** An Ombudsman is the person who is appointed to look into complaints about companies and organisations. They can normally only look into a case when all other options have been exhausted. The service they provide is free, independent and impartial. See our *Being Heard guides* for more information, guidance and contact details: [carersuk.org/help-and-advice/guides-and-tools/being-heard-a-self-advocacy-guide-for-carers](https://www.carersuk.org/help-and-advice/guides-and-tools/being-heard-a-self-advocacy-guide-for-carers) There is also information on and the Citizens Advice website: [citizensadvice.org.uk/consumer/get-more-help/how-to-use-an-ombudsman-in-england](https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/consumer/get-more-help/how-to-use-an-ombudsman-in-england)

**Oncologist:** A doctor who specialises in diagnosing cancer and treating patients with cancer.

**Orthodontics:** A specialist area of dentistry that deals with preventing or correcting poor alignment of teeth or jaws.

**Osteoarthritis:** This is a condition that causes the joints to become stiff and painful. It's a common form of arthritis. Read more about the condition on the NHS website: [nhs.uk/conditions/osteoarthritis](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/osteoarthritis)

**Osteopath:** This is a healthcare specialist who manipulates and stimulates the muscle tissue of the body and joints to identify, prevent and promote healing of any issues or injuries. Read more on the NHS website: [nhs.uk/conditions/osteopathy](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/osteopathy)

**Overpayments:** This is an amount of money that you have been paid but were not entitled to receive. It can feel very stressful to be alerted about an overpayment. To avoid this happening, when claiming certain benefits, it is important to keep the benefits offices that deliver your benefits up to date and notified as your circumstances change. Find out more about this on the Citizens Advice website:

[citizensadvice.org.uk/benefits/benefits-introduction/problems-with-benefits-and-tax-credits/benefit-overpayments](https://citizensadvice.org.uk/benefits/benefits-introduction/problems-with-benefits-and-tax-credits/benefit-overpayments) and on the gov.uk website: [gov.uk/benefit-overpayments](https://www.gov.uk/benefit-overpayments). You can also find out more about Carer's Allowance overpayments on our website. See [carersuk.org/help-and-advice/financial-support/carer-s-allowance/carer-s-allowance-and-overpayments](https://carersuk.org/help-and-advice/financial-support/carer-s-allowance/carer-s-allowance-and-overpayments) and [carersuk.org/help-and-advice/financial-support/carer-s-allowance/support-with-overpayments-carers-allowance](https://carersuk.org/help-and-advice/financial-support/carer-s-allowance/support-with-overpayments-carers-allowance)

## P

**Pacemaker:** This is a small device that can be fitted inside the body and may be recommended if your heartbeat is very low or irregular. It helps to regulate the heart by sending electrical impulses to it. Read more: [nhs.uk/conditions/pacemaker-implantation](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/pacemaker-implantation)

**Palliative care:** If someone has a terminal illness (one that cannot be cured and that they are likely to die from), they may be offered palliative care. This type of care aims provide as much physical, practical and emotional comfort and support as possible. It can be offered at any point after the diagnosis of a terminal illness and is broader than end of life care. Read more on Marie Curie's website: [mariecurie.org.uk/help/support/diagnosed/recent-diagnosis/palliative-care-end-of-life-care](https://mariecurie.org.uk/help/support/diagnosed/recent-diagnosis/palliative-care-end-of-life-care)

**Palpitations:** If you experience a fast beating, fluttering or pounding heart rate, this could be described as having palpitations. Read more:

[nhs.uk/conditions/heart-palpitations](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/heart-palpitations)

**Paralysis:** This refers to the loss of ability to move some parts of or all of your body. It can affect any part of the body and can be temporary or permanent. To find out more, see the NHS website:

[nhs.uk/conditions/paralysis](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/paralysis)

**Parkinson's disease:** This is a degenerative condition where the brain becomes damaged gradually over many years. However, advances in treatments can allay many of the effects and help people with the condition live a more normal life for longer. Read more about the condition and the support available on the NHS website:

[nhs.uk/conditions/parkinsons-disease](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/parkinsons-disease)

**Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman (PHSO) (England only):** This is the government official responsible for dealing with complaints about state services. See the website: [ombudsman.org.uk](https://www.ombudsman.org.uk)

**Pandemic:** This is the spread of an infectious disease affecting a large proportion of people across wide areas of the world, ie across different countries or continents or worldwide.

**Passport (carer's):** A carer's passport is a record of identity for a carer, as part of a scheme, to enable them to receive recognition and support from services or work where needed. See our webpage for more details:

[carersuk.org/news-and-campaigns/our-campaigns/carers-passport-scheme](https://www.carersuk.org/news-and-campaigns/our-campaigns/carers-passport-scheme)

**Paternity Pay:** You may be entitled to time off and pay for a limited period if your partner's having a baby or you are adopting a child or having a baby through a surrogacy arrangement. Read more on the gov.uk website: [gov.uk/paternity-pay-leave](https://www.gov.uk/paternity-pay-leave)

**Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) (England only):** Their officers can provide confidential support and advice on health matters to NHS patients and their families. They can provide information about the NHS, the NHS complaints procedure as well as support groups. They can also record feedback to help improve NHS services. You can find your nearest PALS service on the NHS website: [nhs.uk/service-search/other-services/Patient-advice-and-liaison-services-\(PALS\)/LocationSearch/363](https://www.nhs.uk/service-search/other-services/Patient-advice-and-liaison-services-(PALS)/LocationSearch/363)

**PCR test (polymerase chain reaction):** This is an accurate way of

testing if you have COVID-19. The results are analysed in a lab and this is known to be the most reliable way of proving if you have COVID-19.

**Peer support services:** These are designed to put people with similar conditions or experiences in touch with one another to share experiences, connect with one another and receive emotional and practical support. They can also help to reduce feelings of isolation by fostering friendship and new relationships.

**Pension (Basic State):** State Pension is a regular payment from the government that many people can claim when they reach State Pension age. You can check your State Pension age: [gov.uk/state-pension-age](https://www.gov.uk/state-pension-age). The basic state pension applies to men born before 6 April 1951 or a women born before 6 April 1953. How much you get depends on your National Insurance record. Check your State Pension age: [gov.uk/state-pension-age](https://www.gov.uk/state-pension-age). You can check your state pension forecast on the government website: [gov.uk/check-state-pension](https://www.gov.uk/check-state-pension)

**Pension (New State):** If you were born after the dates given above and have reached State Pension age, you will need to claim the new State Pension if you're eligible: [gov.uk/new-state-pension](https://www.gov.uk/new-state-pension). Check your State Pension age: [gov.uk/state-pension-age](https://www.gov.uk/state-pension-age). You can also check your State Pension forecast on the government website: [gov.uk/check-state-pension](https://www.gov.uk/check-state-pension)

**Pension Credit:** This is financial support in the form of a benefit that is available to those who have reached State Pension age and have a low income or limited savings. Read more on the gov.uk website: [gov.uk/pension-credit](https://www.gov.uk/pension-credit). To check if you might qualify, use the government calculator: [gov.uk/pension-credit-calculator](https://www.gov.uk/pension-credit-calculator)

**Personal assistant:** The title 'personal assistant' may be used in a social care context to describe someone who helps to provide professional care for someone to help them to live independently. They are employed to provide regular personal and practical support to someone who requires extra help because of an illness, condition, disability or old age.

**Personal budget:** This can be defined as the amount of money your local council or Health and Social Care Trust (in Northern Ireland) has allocated for your care and support needs. Find out more on our online 'Personal budgets' page: [carersuk.org/help-and-advice/practical-](https://carersuk.org/help-and-advice/practical-)

[support/arranging-care-and-support-for-someone/personal-budgets](#)

**Personal care:** This refers to someone's private care needs and covers help with getting dressed or undressed, going to the toilet, maintaining one's personal hygiene and showering and bathing needs.

**Personal health budget:** A personal health budget may be planned with NHS professionals to help you manage your health and medical matters or that of someone you care for. Read more on the NHS website: [nhs.uk/nhs-services/help-with-health-costs/what-is-a-personal-health-budget](#)

**Personal Independence Payment (PIP):** This is a disability benefit that provides extra money to someone who has a disability, long-term health needs or a condition that means that they require support with everyday living activities. To find out more about eligibility and how to apply, visit our webpage: [carersuk.org/help-and-advice/financial-support/benefits-if-you-are-disabled-ill-or-injured/personal-independence-payment](#).

**In Scotland,** a similar benefit called Adult Disability Payment is available instead: [carersuk.org/scotland/help-and-advice/financial-support/benefits-if-you-are-disabled-ill-or-injured/adult-disability-payment](#)

**Personal Protective Equipment (PPE):** This refers to protective clothing, items and accessories to reduce someone's ability to be exposed to harm from an injury or a virus. This can include gloves, masks and helmets as examples. During the COVID-19 pandemic, having PPE was vital for frontline workers, especially those working in health and social care.

**PET scan:** These types of scans are used to take 3D images of the inside of the body and can provide more detailed information about how your body is working or responding to treatment. Read more on the NHS website: [nhs.uk/conditions/pet-scan](#)

**Placebo:** This is used to refer to the psychological benefit of taking medication or having a procedure rather than there being any evident physiological benefit.

**Policymaker:** Someone who has the role of helping to plan, shape and create policy for the government or for a business or other organisation.

**Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD):** Often shortened to PTSD, this refers to a condition where someone experiences intense bouts of



anxiety or other symptoms after a distressing and traumatic event. Read more on the NHS website: [nhs.uk/mental-health/conditions/post-traumatic-stress-disorder-ptsd/overview](https://www.nhs.uk/mental-health/conditions/post-traumatic-stress-disorder-ptsd/overview). There is also more information on the Mind website: [mind.org.uk/information-support/types-of-mental-health-problems/post-traumatic-stress-disorder-ptsd-and-complex-ptsd/about-ptsd/?gad\\_source=1&gclid=EAlaIQobChMlo7WTsp\\_qhwMV\\_kr\\_AR3n0RpREAYASAAEgK15fD\\_Bw](https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/types-of-mental-health-problems/post-traumatic-stress-disorder-ptsd-and-complex-ptsd/about-ptsd/?gad_source=1&gclid=EAlaIQobChMlo7WTsp_qhwMV_kr_AR3n0RpREAYASAAEgK15fD_Bw)

**Postnatal depression:** After having a baby, some people experience intensely low feelings that persist. It is very common and can affect men and partners as well as those who have given birth. Find out how to recognise the symptoms and where to find support on the NHS website: [nhs.uk/mental-health/conditions/post-natal-depression/overview](https://www.nhs.uk/mental-health/conditions/post-natal-depression/overview)

**Power of attorney:** This offers written legal authorisation to make decisions on behalf of someone else who is unable to make their own decisions. You can see our web guidance if you're considering appointing someone as your attorney and for other ways in which you can help someone manage someone's affairs: [carersuk.org/help-and-advice/practical-support/different-ways-of-managing-someones-affairs](https://www.carersuk.org/help-and-advice/practical-support/different-ways-of-managing-someones-affairs) There are different terms and rules that apply across the nations.

**Practitioner:** One who practises a profession or works in a skilled job or activity and has usually had a great deal of training to become expert in their field. The Professional Standards Authority for Health and Social Care allows you to check a healthcare practitioner is regulated or on an accredited register: [professionalstandards.org.uk/check-practitioners](https://www.professionalstandards.org.uk/check-practitioners)

**Presence and residence tests:** There are certain requirements to fulfil to claim certain benefits in the UK. For some benefits to be applicable, you need to show that you have been present or residing in the UK for a particular time. For more guidance, see our website page: [carersuk.org/help-and-advice/guides-and-tools/your-guide-to-rules-on-residence-and-presence-conditions](https://www.carersuk.org/help-and-advice/guides-and-tools/your-guide-to-rules-on-residence-and-presence-conditions)

**Pressure sores or ulcers:** This refers to the damage to the skin caused by prolonged pressure to it. They can be caused particularly by being restricted in certain positions in a bed or a wheelchair. See the NHS website for information about symptoms and when to seek medical advice: [nhs.uk/conditions/pressure-sores](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/pressure-sores)

**Preventive services:** These include routine check-ups, vaccinations, screenings, and patient counselling to help prevent or identify any health issues early on and prevent serious illnesses or conditions (such as cancer) from developing.

**Primary care:** This is generally the first point of contact in the healthcare system. It covers services such as general practice, community pharmacy, dental and eye health services.

**Private carer:** A private carer is a paid professional who you may find to employ yourself or hire via an agency. This is an option you might pursue if you want to control and pay for your own care services. Although if eligible, direct payments allow you to choose and buy services yourself: [carersuk.org/help-and-advice/practical-support/arranging-care-and-support-for-someone/direct-payments](https://www.carersuk.org/help-and-advice/practical-support/arranging-care-and-support-for-someone/direct-payments)

Read more about arranging paid help at home on the NHS website: [nhs.uk/conditions/social-care-and-support-guide/care-services-equipment-and-care-homes/homecare](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/social-care-and-support-guide/care-services-equipment-and-care-homes/homecare)

**Professional Carers:** These are paid carers who provide professional and sometimes flexible care support in a home. Duties often include helping someone with personal care and housekeeping tasks. They may be employed through a care agency or self-employed.

**Prognosis:** A prediction of how a patient's health condition or issue will develop based on medical expertise and experience.

**Property disregard:** When your local council assesses your contribution to care support needs, the value of your home may be disregarded. This may happen under certain circumstances – contact your local council in England, Wales or Scotland to find out more or seek advice at [advicelocal.uk](https://www.advicelocal.uk).

**Protected characteristics:** There are nine characteristics that have been identified as being protected against discrimination when accessing services for health, education and care as well as employment opportunities. They are part of the Equalities Act 2010. They are listed and discrimination against any is considered unlawful: [acas.org.uk/discrimination-and-the-law](https://www.acas.org.uk/discrimination-and-the-law)

**Psychiatric services:** These are services that specialise in treating people with mental health conditions such as anxiety and panic attacks, schizophrenia, and depression. Read more on the NHS website:



[nhs.uk/mental-health/talking-therapies-medicine-treatments/medicines-and-psychiatry/psychiatry](https://www.nhs.uk/mental-health/talking-therapies-medicine-treatments/medicines-and-psychiatry/psychiatry). There is more information about seeking help for a mental health problem on the charity Mind's website: [mind.org.uk/information-support/guides-to-support-and-services/seeking-help-for-a-mental-health-problem/where-to-start](https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/guides-to-support-and-services/seeking-help-for-a-mental-health-problem/where-to-start)

**Psychosis:** This is a mental health condition that can lead to some loss of contact with reality so that a person for example, sees or hears things that are not there, experiences hallucinations or may believe things that are not true. There are a range of treatments and forms of support that can be offered. Read more on the NHS website: [nhs.uk/mental-health/conditions/psychosis/overview](https://www.nhs.uk/mental-health/conditions/psychosis/overview) and on the charity Mind's website: [mind.org.uk/information-support/types-of-mental-health-problems/psychosis/about-psychosis](https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/types-of-mental-health-problems/psychosis/about-psychosis)

**Public sector:** This is the part of the economy that's concerned with local and central government public services from public transport, housing and social care to healthcare, education and the emergency services. Public sector organisations are owned and controlled by the government.

**Pulse:** This is the movement of blood through your body and is a way of measuring your heart rate. Your pulse is the number of times your heart beats per minute and moves blood through your body. If it is irregular or too fast or too slow, it could be an indication of a health issue. Check your heart rate: [nhs.uk/common-health-questions/accidents-first-aid-and-treatments/how-do-i-check-my-pulse](https://www.nhs.uk/common-health-questions/accidents-first-aid-and-treatments/how-do-i-check-my-pulse)

## Q

**Qualitative data:** This refers to descriptive information that can be observed and recorded but is not represented by numbers. It could be information gathered from text, audio or a form of images like photographs or focus groups (that cannot be easily expressed in terms of numbers). This data can provide helpful insights into people's feelings, views or emotions.

**Quality Outcomes Framework (QOF):** This summarises what GPs should do for patients and what outcomes can be expected. It's a voluntary annual reward and incentive programme that rewards good practice. An example is ensuring vulnerable people receive their annual flu jabs.

**Quality standards:** These are guidelines, systems, and specifications followed by an organisation to ensure consistency and maintain and improve quality. The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) provides evidence-based quality markers in the form of statements to highlight what good care looks like for a particular condition or type of need, and how health and care providers can measure their progress towards providing better care for people.

**Quantitative data:** This is information that can be measured, counted and evaluated in numbers, for example, using percentages as statistics through the use of surveys or questionnaires. It's data that can be counted, measured or given a numerical value.

## R

**Radiologist/ radiology:** A radiologist is a medical doctor who specialises in identifying and treating medical conditions or injuries using medical imaging technology such as X-rays, MRIs and CT scans.

**Rapid lateral flow tests:** These are tests that you can undertake at home or away from a clinical setting to find out quickly whether you have the COVID-19 virus. You can no longer get free tests from the NHS but if you're eligible for COVID-19 treatment, you may be able to pick up free rapid lateral flow test kits from your local pharmacy. You can find out more here: [nhs.uk/nhs-services/covid-19-services/testing-for-covid-19/who-can-get-a-free-covid-19-rapid-lateral-flow-test](https://www.nhs.uk/nhs-services/covid-19-services/testing-for-covid-19/who-can-get-a-free-covid-19-rapid-lateral-flow-test)

**Reablement services:** These services are temporary and are specifically aimed at helping someone return to daily-living tasks like cooking or washing. You can receive this care for free following a fall, operation or period of illness if needed for a period of six weeks under the NHS. Read more on the NHS website: [nhs.uk/conditions/social-care-and-support-guide/care-after-a-hospital-stay/care-after-illness-or-hospital-discharge-reablement](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/social-care-and-support-guide/care-after-a-hospital-stay/care-after-illness-or-hospital-discharge-reablement)

**Reasonable adjustments:** These are changes that organisations, employers or certain public service providers have a duty to make if you have a disability that places you at a disadvantage compared with other service users or employees who are not disabled.

**Reassessment/review:** Your circumstances and the impact of health conditions may well change over time. If any changes are likely to affect the benefit award that you have or the level of your award, you need to

report them to the relevant benefits office(s). If your benefits are reviewed, they may remain the same, go up, decrease or be lost altogether so you may want to seek advice before seeking a review.

**Redundancy:** A form of dismissal from your job. You may become redundant if an employer is looking to reduce its workforce – and provides you with notice that you will be dismissed. You do have certain rights if this happens. See the gov.uk website: [gov.uk/redundancy-your-rights](https://www.gov.uk/redundancy-your-rights) and Citizens Advice for guidance: [citizensadvice.org.uk/work/redundancy/check-your-rights-if-youre-made-redundant/if-youre-being-made-redundant/if-youre-facing-redundancy/](https://citizensadvice.org.uk/work/redundancy/check-your-rights-if-youre-made-redundant/if-youre-being-made-redundant/if-youre-facing-redundancy/)

**Referral:** In a professional health or social care context, a referral is when a professional recommends someone to a professional service or consultation usually for further action, support or a specific or specialist purpose.

**Registered:** This means being recorded on an official directory or file. We recommend unpaid carers register their role with their GPs so that extra support and contingency plans can be put in place if needed for you. See our ‘talking to your GP’ guidance: [carersuk.org/help-and-advice/your-health-and-wellbeing/talking-to-your-gp](https://carersuk.org/help-and-advice/your-health-and-wellbeing/talking-to-your-gp)

**Registrar:** In health terms, a registrar is a junior doctor who has not yet qualified as a consultant (a doctor who is in the middle of their training).

**Regulator:** This is the body, organisation or person that oversees how something is run, such as a service provider or a company, and checks that it is operating legitimately, effectively and correctly.

**Regulation and Quality Improvement Authority (RQIA) Northern Ireland:** This is the independent body that has responsibility for inspecting and regulating the quality of health and social care services in Northern Ireland. They also have a duty to recommend improvements where necessary.

**Rehabilitation services:** These could be recommended to help someone with their physical recovery from injury or illness or with their mental health recovery. They are designed to help someone live as independently as possible and return to daily-living tasks again. They may include occupational therapy, speech therapy, physio, cognitive therapy and other specialist support.

**Replacement care:** Also known as ‘respite care’, this is a professional care service that offers family carers or unpaid carers for a friend, a break from their caring responsibilities so that they can recharge and continue caring. If provided by the local authority or Health and Social Care Trust, this would be arranged following a carer’s assessment: [carersuk.org/help-and-advice/practical-support/carer-s-assessment](https://carersuk.org/help-and-advice/practical-support/carer-s-assessment) and a needs assessment: [carersuk.org/help-and-advice/practical-support/needs-assessment](https://carersuk.org/help-and-advice/practical-support/needs-assessment) for the person you care for. There may be charges and if you or the person you care for qualifies for respite care, the Social Care Services team will do a financial assessment to work out whether it will pay towards funding it. Some services, however, may be provided by local authorities free of charge.

There are details about having a break and respite care on our website: [carersuk.org/help-and-advice/your-health-and-wellbeing/taking-a-break](https://carersuk.org/help-and-advice/your-health-and-wellbeing/taking-a-break)

**Residential care:** This is ongoing day-to-day care that you might receive in a care home. Accommodation and 24-hour care are provided to someone who is no longer able to care for themselves independently.

**Respite:** This is a term that some people use to describe the temporary formal care that can be put in place to provide an unpaid carer with time out to have a break and recharge.

**Respite services:** These are services that can provide professional care cover while you take a break from your caring role. You can find out how to access these through your local council or local Health and Social Care Trust in Northern Ireland or request a carer’s assessment – which may lead to extra support in the long term.

**Rights:** Legal, ethical and social entitlements that exist to ensure that you are safe, healthy, protected and treated fairly and equally among other members of society. Read more about your rights as a carer: [carersuk.org/help-and-advice/practical-support/what-are-your-rights-as-a-carer](https://carersuk.org/help-and-advice/practical-support/what-are-your-rights-as-a-carer)

**Risk assessment:** In health and social care terms, a risk assessment is a review of someone’s needs and behaviour to see what level of support they might need or how independent they can be, for example after an operation, fall or period of illness. They are designed to identify potential hazards and keep the person receiving care safe from harm as well as individuals looking after them.

## S

**Safeguarding:** This is a system of intervention and support put in place by organisations to protect people who may be in a vulnerable situation experiencing abuse or neglect. Safeguarding aims to prevent serious situations escalating by identifying risks or dangers being exhibited and taking appropriate action to intervene with the help of professional and specialist services when necessary.

**SARS (severe acute respiratory syndrome):** This is an airborne virus that affects the respiratory system. See the NHS website for more guidance: [nhs.uk/conditions/sars](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/sars). A link is not currently available – there's something on NHS 111 Wales:

[111.wales.nhs.uk/sars/#:~:text=SARS%20has%20flu%2Dlike%20symptoms,a%20high%20temperature%20\(fever\)](https://111.wales.nhs.uk/sars/#:~:text=SARS%20has%20flu%2Dlike%20symptoms,a%20high%20temperature%20(fever)) or WHO: [who.int/health-topics/severe-acute-respiratory-syndrome#tab=tab\\_1](https://www.who.int/health-topics/severe-acute-respiratory-syndrome#tab=tab_1)

**Schizophrenia:** This is a long-term mental health condition, and the person affected can experience a range of psychological effects from hallucinations to delusions or hearing voices. Read more about the condition, treatments and how to cope with it on the NHS website: [nhs.uk/mental-health/conditions/schizophrenia](https://www.nhs.uk/mental-health/conditions/schizophrenia) and on the charity Mind's website: [mind.org.uk/information-support/types-of-mental-health-problems/schizophrenia/about-schizophrenia](https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/types-of-mental-health-problems/schizophrenia/about-schizophrenia)

**The Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO):** This is the final stage for complaints about public service organisations in Scotland. You can visit their website: [spsoscot.org.uk](https://www.spsoscot.org.uk)

**Scottish Welfare Fund:** You must live in Scotland, be over 16, on a low income or receiving certain benefits to apply for this grant. See: [mygov.scot/scottish-welfare-fund](https://www.mygov.scot/scottish-welfare-fund)

**Secondary care:** This relates to second stage or specialist care that someone will receive where you would be supported by someone with specialist expertise in your health concern. This link from Mind's website provides a helpful explainer: [mind.org.uk/information-support/legal-rights/health-and-social-care-rights/about-healthcare/#WhatArePrimarySecondaryAndTertiaryCare](https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/legal-rights/health-and-social-care-rights/about-healthcare/#WhatArePrimarySecondaryAndTertiaryCare)

**Self-advocacy:** The practice of making your views heard by asserting your views effectively through good communications and negotiation skills. This may involve, for example, highlighting your rights. See our

'Being Heard' guides for carers for more guidance: [carersuk.org/help-and-advice/guides-and-tools/being-heard-a-self-advocacy-guide-for-carers](https://carersuk.org/help-and-advice/guides-and-tools/being-heard-a-self-advocacy-guide-for-carers)

**Self-care:** The practice of consciously looking after yourself both physically and mentally. For support with your wellbeing while caring, see our guidance pages: [carersuk.org/help-and-advice/your-health-and-wellbeing](https://carersuk.org/help-and-advice/your-health-and-wellbeing)

**Self-funder/self-funding:** Either term is given to someone who is paying the full cost of their care either in a residential or nursing home or at home with the support of professional carers.

**Self-harm:** This is where someone intentionally hurts or injures themselves. This is an indicator of someone who is struggling with their mental health. You can find sources of support if you suspect someone is self-harming on the NHS website: [nhs.uk/mental-health/feelings-symptoms-behaviours/behaviours/self-harm/getting-help](https://nhs.uk/mental-health/feelings-symptoms-behaviours/behaviours/self-harm/getting-help)

**Sepsis:** This is a serious health issue where the body is responding in an extreme way to an infection. It should be treated as a life-threatening emergency and can trigger a chain reaction of effects in the body, with vital organs closing down, if not treated quickly. It can be hard to identify initially. The NHS website has a list of symptoms and explains what to look out for: [nhs.uk/conditions/sepsis](https://nhs.uk/conditions/sepsis)

**Service user:** This is the term that may be used to describe a person who makes use of a public service being provided. Other terms used may be patient, customer or client (the latter two might apply if they are paying for a particular service for example).

**SEND:** This stands for Special Educational Needs or Disability. You can find a detailed description in the SEND Code of Practice (SEN on page 15 and disability on page 16): [dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/documents/35024/283056/SEND+Code+of+Practice.pdf/62536e53-2e7b-380e-5821-f399bad5d1d5?t=1619384249838&download=true](https://dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/documents/35024/283056/SEND+Code+of+Practice.pdf/62536e53-2e7b-380e-5821-f399bad5d1d5?t=1619384249838&download=true). Or you can read the easy-read version of the SEND Code of Practice from Mencap: [mencap.org.uk/sites/default/files/2016-08/FINAL%20DESIGNED%20Easy%20read%20SENDreforms%20parents%20v11.pdf](https://mencap.org.uk/sites/default/files/2016-08/FINAL%20DESIGNED%20Easy%20read%20SENDreforms%20parents%20v11.pdf)

**Severe Disability Premium:** There are disability premium payments



that can be added to certain benefits (eg, Income Support, income-based Jobseeker's Allowance [JSA], income-related Employment and Support Allowance [ESA] and housing benefit). You can find out more about the eligibility criteria on the gov.uk website: [gov.uk/disability-premiums/eligibility](https://www.gov.uk/disability-premiums/eligibility)

**Sheltered housing:** This is a type of housing with some support offered which can be rented or bought. It's sometimes referred to as retirement housing and may be suitable for people in the later stages of their life looking for some additional support whilst wanting to remain as independent as possible. Age UK provides useful information on their site: [ageuk.org.uk/information-advice/care/housing-options/sheltered-housing](https://ageuk.org.uk/information-advice/care/housing-options/sheltered-housing)

**Signposting:** In health and social care terms, signposting is when a client or service user is given the reference or contact details of another organisation with more specialist services or information that may help them with the matter they are dealing with.

**Sitting service:** A sitting service usually involves a professional coming to look after someone in their home while their unpaid carer takes a few hours away. Usually, personal care is not provided as part of the service. You could enquire at your local authority or Local Health and social Care Trust (in Northern Ireland) about this.

**Slipped disc:** This is where the soft tissue between the bones in the spine are pushed outwards, causing pressure on the nerves. Read more on the NHS website: [nhs.uk/conditions/slipped-disc](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/slipped-disc)

**SNOMED codes:** This stands for 'Systematized Nomenclature of Medicine Clinical Terms'. These are used in electronic medical records so information can be included and understood easily. They can be used to record important information such as diagnosis and procedures, symptoms, family history, allergies or observations. They can also be used to identify unpaid carers and register their status on GP clinical records.

**Social care and support guide:** This guide offers a useful starting point for anyone who needs to find out more about ongoing support with day-to-day living if they or someone they care for has a long-term condition, disability, medical issue, ageing needs or a complex illness:

[nhs.uk/conditions/social-care-and-support-guide](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/social-care-and-support-guide)

**Social Fund:** This term covers a number of government one-off payments and loans managed by the DWP to cover specific expenses or circumstances. It includes, for example, cold weather payments, funeral expenses payments (non-repayable) and budgeting loans which are interest free but will need to be repaid. Each payment has its own eligibility conditions and are designed to offer extra financial support for those in certain situations who are finding it hard to make ends meet.

**Social Security Scotland:** This is the official government organisation in Scotland that delivers and manages the benefits that are devolved to Scotland: [socialsecurity.gov.scot](https://www.socialsecurity.gov.scot)

**Social services:** They have a care department with a duty to provide support to children and vulnerable adults to protect and promote their welfare as well as carers'. They can offer various services, and every local authority has a social services team. In Northern Ireland, you would access them through your local Health and Social Care Trust.

**Social worker:** The role of a social worker is to protect adults and children who are vulnerable, to keep them safe from harm or abuse and to help them achieve independence.

**Special educational needs (SEN) or Special educational needs and disabilities (SEND):** This is a legal term recognising that some children need additional support to help them to learn if they have learning difficulties or certain disabilities. There may be a SEN or SENCO (see below) who can be contacted at your local school or through your local authority if the child is not in school or nursery. There is more information here: [gov.uk/children-with-special-educational-needs](https://www.gov.uk/children-with-special-educational-needs)

**Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCO):** This role is responsible for coordinating extra support for a child who needs some additional help with learning to fulfil their potential at school or nursery. There are also Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Information, Advice and Support (SENDIAS) services that can provide advice on matters relating to SEND. You may be able to find your local IAS service via: [councilfordisabledchildren.org.uk/about-us-0/networks/information-advice-and-support-services-network/find-your-local-ias-service](https://www.councilfordisabledchildren.org.uk/about-us-0/networks/information-advice-and-support-services-network/find-your-local-ias-service)

**Standard Operating Procedure (for carers):** This is the term, used

largely by health and social care professionals, to refer to an overarching guidance framework and approach for standard processes that should be undertaken in support of carers (an example was how the COVID-19 was to be rolled out to unpaid carers during the COVID-19 pandemic).

**State Pension:** This is a regular payment you may be able to receive from the government once you reach retirement age. There are certain requirements you will need to meet to be eligible – for example, you will need to have made a regular number of qualifying National Insurance contributions or have National Insurance Credits covering periods when you were unable to work because of caring responsibilities, a disability or illness. See our pensions guidance: [carersuk.org/help-and-advice/financial-support/benefits-for-carers-who-are-pension-age](https://www.carersuk.org/help-and-advice/financial-support/benefits-for-carers-who-are-pension-age)

**State Pension age:** In the UK, this is the age when you may become eligible to retire and draw on all of your State Pension. You can check your State Pension age on this gov.uk website page: [gov.uk/state-pension-age](https://www.gov.uk/state-pension-age) and read more at [carersuk.org/help-and-advice/financial-support/benefits-for-carers-who-are-working-age/planning-ahead-pension-help](https://www.carersuk.org/help-and-advice/financial-support/benefits-for-carers-who-are-working-age/planning-ahead-pension-help)

**Stroke:** This happens when the blood supply to the brain is suddenly cut off. It can be life-threatening and urgent medical attention must be sought. See the Stroke Association's website for guidance: [stroke.org.uk/stroke/symptoms](https://www.stroke.org.uk/stroke/symptoms)

**Support plan:** A support plan, in health and social care terms, is what is put in place by health and social care professionals to help someone with their ongoing care needs for the foreseeable future. It is usually put in place after an assessment before someone leaves hospital. In Scotland, an adult's carer's assessment is called an Adult Carer Support Plan (ACSP).

**Support worker:** A support worker is sometimes known as a caregiver or care worker. They provide additional support with day-to-day tasks to help someone with mental or physical needs live more independently.

**Supported living accommodation:** This is an alternative option for people who don't want to live in full-time residential care but require extra support to help with their living needs due to ageing, a disability or health condition.

**Symptoms:** These are physical signs as indicated by your body (or how

you feel) to suggest that you may have a health issue, virus or illness. They can be used to diagnose or identify a health problem.

## T

**Talking therapies:** This is a treatment that allows you to talk through any issues or emotional difficulties you're facing without fear of judgement in a safe space. There are different types and some people find this a very helpful form of counselling. See the Mind charity website for more details: [mind.org.uk/information-support/drugs-and-treatments/talking-therapy-and-counselling/about-talking-therapies](https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/drugs-and-treatments/talking-therapy-and-counselling/about-talking-therapies)

**Tax Credits:** The financial benefit, Universal Credit has replaced these for most people. However, there are two main types someone may be receiving including child tax credits and working tax credits. It's possible to receive either or both depending on one's circumstances. You can read more about them on the gov.uk website: [gov.uk/topic/benefits-credits/tax-credits](https://www.gov.uk/topic/benefits-credits/tax-credits)

**Tinnitus:** This is the experience of hearing sounds that are not coming from an external source. Sounds can vary from ringing to throbbing. Read more about how to seek support on the NHS website: [nhs.uk/conditions/tinnitus](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/tinnitus)

**Transient Ischaemic Attack (TIA):** This is also sometimes referred to as a mini stroke. It happens when the flow of blood to the brain is temporarily disrupted causing a lack of oxygen to reach the brain. To find out more about symptoms, effects and treatments, go to the NHS website: [nhs.uk/conditions/transient-ischaemic-attack-tia](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/transient-ischaemic-attack-tia). It is vital to seek medical attention when experienced to reduce your risk of having a life-threatening stroke.

**Transition:** This is often used to describe the move from one set of services to another in health or social care – for example when your child reaches adulthood and needs to be transferred to different support services or another type of benefit. See our guide: [carersuk.org/media/1sfdgwzm/carers-uk-moving-from-child-to-adult-care-services-web.pdf](https://www.carersuk.org/media/1sfdgwzm/carers-uk-moving-from-child-to-adult-care-services-web.pdf)

**Treatment centre:** Urgent treatment centres are an alternative to A&E (Accident and Emergency units) and can be used for certain medical issues that are not seen as a medical emergency or life-threatening. Find out more on the NHS website: [nhs.uk/nhs-services/urgent-and-](https://www.nhs.uk/nhs-services/urgent-and-)

[emergency-care-services/when-to-visit-an-urgent-treatment-centre-walk-in-or-minor-injury-unit](#)

**Type 1 diabetes:** This means that your blood sugar level is too high and that you're unable to produce the hormone, insulin to control it. Treatment will usually involve taking additional insulin to help manage it. It is often diagnosed during childhood but can affect someone at any age and your risk may be higher if your parent or sibling has the condition. Find out more on the Diabetes UK website: [diabetes.org.uk/diabetes-the-basics/types-of-diabetes/type-1](#)

**Type 2 diabetes:** This is the most common form of diabetes and is linked to the body not being able to create enough insulin to keep high blood sugar levels in check. Or, sometimes, the insulin that your body produces is just not working as it should. It can sometimes be treated through changes in lifestyle such as changes to your diet and activity levels, but some people may also need to take insulin medication. Find out more about diabetes on the Diabetes UK website: [diabetes.org.uk/diabetes-the-basics/types-of-diabetes/type-2](#)

## U

**Unconscious bias:** This is when we make judgements or decisions based on prior experiences or inner beliefs rooted in the society or culture in which we live and are not aware that we are doing it. Sometimes these beliefs are linked to stereotypes and can result in prejudice and discrimination. Acas has a useful explanation on their website: [acas.org.uk/improving-equality-diversity-and-inclusion/unconscious-bias](#)

**Understanding the needs of children in Northern Ireland (UNOCINI):** This is a common assessment framework used to assess the needs of children in Northern Ireland. A UNOCINI assessment is carried out by social services and the Health and Social Care Trust (HSCT) then has a duty to provide any services necessary to meet the needs of the child. The National Autistic Society has some useful guidance on this: [autism.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/topics/social-care/social-care-northern-ireland-children/assessments-and-care-plans](#)

**Universal Credit:** This is a type of benefit that may be available for someone to claim who is on a low income or unemployed with limited

savings (currently under £16,000) or who is unable to work because of a disability or caring responsibilities. You can find out more on our web page: [carersuk.org/help-and-advice/financial-support/benefits-for-carers-who-are-working-age/universal-credit](https://carersuk.org/help-and-advice/financial-support/benefits-for-carers-who-are-working-age/universal-credit)

**User involvement:** This is a term used frequently in workplaces and social care settings. It means that the voices of those who have lived experience of the condition or issue being addressed are heard and involved in influencing project outcomes, decisions, products or services. For example, the people who use services are consulted and seen as experts to help shape and improve these services.

**UTI:** A UTI is the shortened abbreviation for a urinary tract infection. Symptoms may include needing to urinate a lot or experiencing a painful or burning sensation when passing urine. For guidance to help, see the NHS website: [nhs.uk/conditions/urinary-tract-infections-utis](https://nhs.uk/conditions/urinary-tract-infections-utis)

## V

**Valuation tribunal (England and Wales):** The Valuation Tribunal deals with taxation appeals, mainly relating to Council Tax and business rates:

England: [valuationtribunal.gov.uk/about-vts](https://valuationtribunal.gov.uk/about-vts)

Wales: [valuation-tribunals-wales.org.uk/home.html](https://valuation-tribunals-wales.org.uk/home.html)

**Virtual wards:** This is a relatively new form of service and a possible option for people who would prefer to receive short-term care treatment in their home as opposed to in hospital. It involves healthcare professionals monitoring someone's health and care needs remotely over a limited period of time. You can read more about this on this page: [carersuk.org/help-and-advice/practical-support/virtual-wards](https://carersuk.org/help-and-advice/practical-support/virtual-wards)

## W

**Will planning:** It is always advisable to consider writing a will well in advance of when it will be needed, but this can feel like a daunting task. Fortunately, there is a lot of guidance available to help. There are some useful practical steps on the gov.uk site: [gov.uk/make-will/writing-your-will](https://gov.uk/make-will/writing-your-will) and the charity, 'Compassion in Dying' offers some very helpful free services and resources: [compassionindying.org.uk](https://compassionindying.org.uk)



## X

**X-ray:** This is the name given to the type of scan used to photograph tissues and bones inside the body. It may be undertaken if you have had an accident and medical professionals need to examine whether you have any internal injuries and have fractured or broken any bones. The NHS website offers further information: [nhs.uk/conditions/x-ray](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/x-ray)

## Y

**Young Carer Grant (Scotland):** This is a yearly payment that is available to young carers in Scotland. You can find out more here: [mygov.scot/young-carer-grant](https://mygov.scot/young-carer-grant)

**Young carers:** Caring responsibilities can be taken on from a young age. If you are a young carer for someone or several people, it is important to seek additional support and specialist services to make sure that you are still able to plan for your future and realise your potential. The Carers Trust has some useful guidance on their site: [carers.org/about-caring/about-young-carers](https://carers.org/about-caring/about-young-carers)

## Z

**Zika virus:** This is a virus that is primarily spread by mosquitoes and is particularly dangerous to anyone who is pregnant as it can cause birth defects. For more information and guidance, see the NHS website: [nhs.uk/conditions/zika](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/zika)