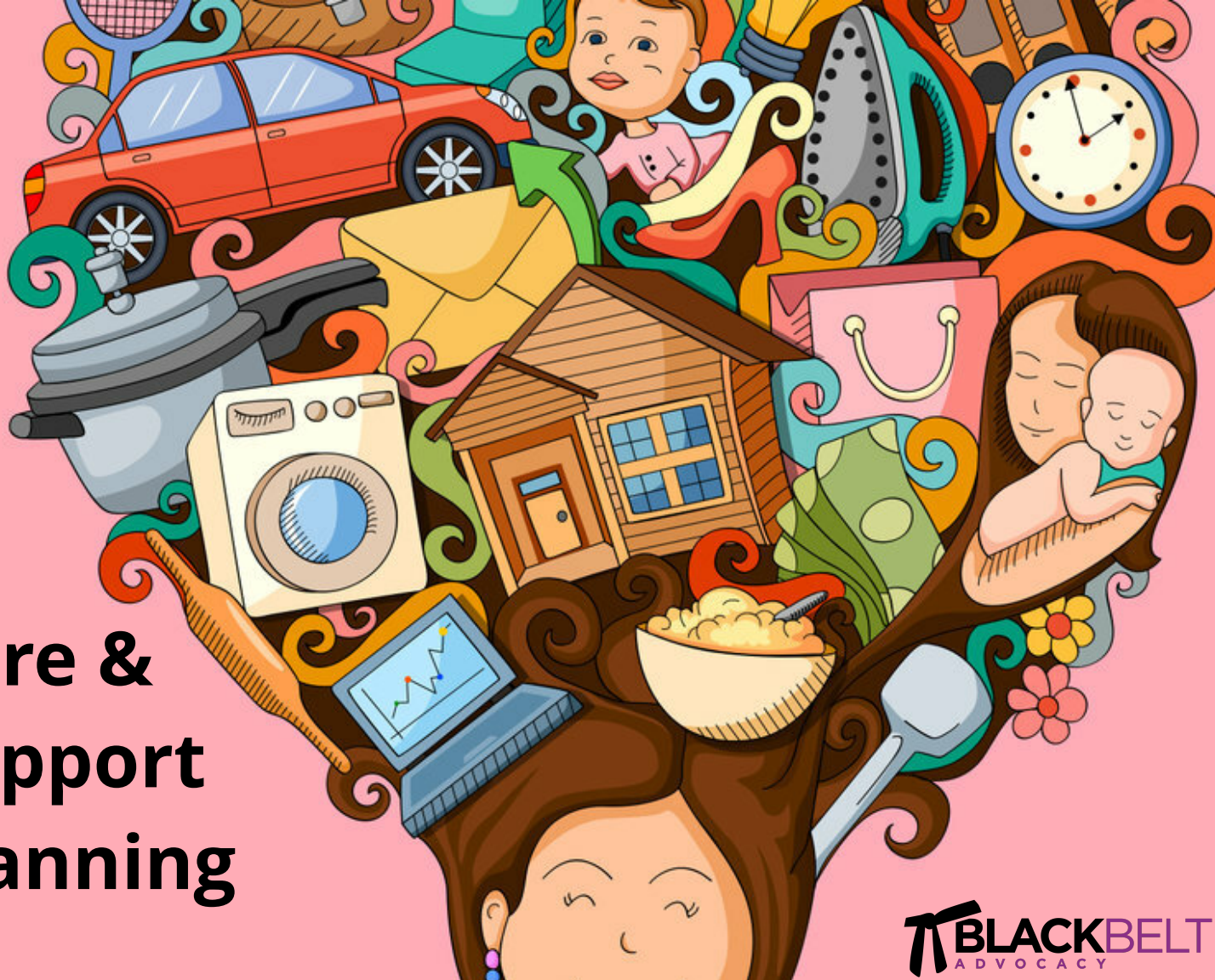


Care & Support Planning



Introduction

Wherever a person has been assessed as having needs that are being met by the local authority, they must agree a care and support plan (or support plan for carers) which outlines how their needs will be met.

Advocates are there to help and support the person to work out HOW they would like their needs to be met.

Introduction

Care plans must be unique to the individual - they are about them, their life, their goals, aspirations and what they want and need to live a great life.



Introduction

Sometimes the local authority can go away and write the plan on behalf of the person and then present it to them for agreement.

As an advocate, you want to change this approach. Wherever the person wants to, tell the local authority that the person would like to write their care and support plan and then bring it back for agreement. Supporting the person to be in control of how their needs are met is your number 1 priority!

What must go into the plan?

When developing the plan, there are certain elements that **must** be incorporated:

- the needs identified by the assessment
- the outcomes the individual is looking to achieve to maintain or improve their wellbeing
- the person's strengths
- HOW the needs will be met
- the personal budget, direct payments and the amount which the person must pay towards the cost of meeting the needs
- where needs are being met via a direct payment, the needs to be met via the direct payment and the amount and frequency of the payments

Meeting needs

'Meeting needs' is not about the local authority providing or arranging a service.

It is about the local authority supporting the person to think how they would like their needs to be met and then agreeing how they can arrange this.

it's not about providing services....
....it's about meeting needs

Meeting needs - an example

Lets think about a common need people might need support with.... managing nutrition (shopping, preparing, cooking and eating meals).

In the past, the local authority may have simply arranged a meals on wheels type service to deliver ready prepared meals or arranged for a domicillary service to send in carers 3 times a day. But this might not be what the person wants. Instead of thinking about what 'services' are available, lets think about the different ways a person may want support in meeting their nutritional needs.

Pause for a moment and ask yourself - if you needed help with shopping, preparing, cooking or eating food, HOW and WHO would you want to support you with this?

Meeting needs - an example

Having pre-prepared meals delivered is one possible way of meeting this needs. But there are countless others which the person may want to explore (and countless combinations):

- Family supporting
- Friends supporting
- Domicillary care
- Personal assistants
- Pre prepared meals delivered
- Take away food
- Eating out
- Equipment to help with preperation and cooking
- Training to learn new skills

The point here is to think creatively about what the person wants

Meeting needs

Your role as the advocate is to start with what the person would ideally like. The local authority should consider this and agree this wherever it is reasonable and a suitable way of meeting needs. Cost will be taken into account - its very unlikely that a local authority will pay for 7 meals dining out at the local pub each week! But they need to consider each request on its own merits.

Local authorities should not have a lists of things that are acceptable (or are unacceptable). Nor should they present a list of services to choose from.

They should also not assume that carers and friends can be relied on indefinitely to offer support.

Needs met by a carer

Lots of people will receive informal care and support from loved ones - family and friends. Local authorities are not under a duty to meet any needs that are being met by a carer.

However, the local authority must identify, during the assessment process, those needs which are being met by a carer at that time, and determine whether those needs would be eligible.

Any eligible needs met by a carer are not required to be met by the local authority, for so long as the carer continues to do so. The local authority should record in the care and support plan which needs are being met by a carer, and should consider putting in place plans to respond to any breakdown in the caring relationship or changes that impact on the carer's ability to offer the support.

Personal Budgets

A personal budget is an amount of money that the local authority will provide to a person they assess as eligible to enable them to meet their unmet care and support needs.

Personal budgets are considered key to making care and support personalised - the preferences and wishes of the person are at the forefront throughout the process in how they would like their care and support arranged.

Personal Budgets

The personal budget details the cost of the care and support that was drawn up in the support plan and identifies the amount that the local authority will pay towards it. It can come from a variety of different funding streams such as the NHS, Education or Social Services depending on the person's needs.

Everyone whose needs are met by the local authority, whether those needs are eligible, or if the authority has chosen to meet other needs, must receive a personal budget as part of their plan.

Calculating the Personal Budget

Care Act guidance tells us that it is important for local authorities to have a consistent method for calculating personal budgets that provides an early indication of the appropriate amount to meet the identified needs to be used at the beginning of the planning process.

Local authorities should also:

- not have arbitrary ceilings to personal budgets that result in people being forced to accept to move into care homes against their will.
- make their allocation processes publicly available as part of their general information offer, or ideally provide this on a bespoke basis for each person the authority is supporting in a format accessible to them.
- provide a budget that is 'sufficient' in meeting the person's needs
- give consideration to how choice could be increased by people pooling their budgets together. For example, this may include pooling budgets of people living in the same household, or pooling budgets of people within a community with similar care and support needs, or aspirations.

Direct Payments

A Direct Payment is an amount of money that can be paid directly to the person (or their representative) so that they can take full control of arrangement the support they need.

They allow the person to receive a cash payment from their local authority instead of care services. It gives the person much more flexibility and greater control of their support package.

Direct Payments

In developing the plan, the local authority must inform the person which, if any, of their needs may be met by a direct payment. In addition to this, the local authority should provide the person (and/or their independent advocate or any other individual supporting the person, if relevant and if the person wishes this) with appropriate information and advice concerning the usage of direct payments, how they differ from traditional services, and how the local authority will administer the payment (for example an explanation of the direct payment agreement or contract, and how it will be monitored).

Direct Payments

This advice should also include detail such as:

- the ability for someone else (such as a carer) to receive and manage the direct payment on behalf of the person
- the ability to request to pay a close family member to provide care and/or administration and management of the direct payment
- the difference between purchasing regulated and unregulated services (for example regarding personal assistants)
- explanation of responsibilities that come with being an employer, managing the payment, and monitoring arrangements
- signposting to direct payment support and support organisations available (for example, employment, payroll, admin support, personal assistants, peer support)
- that there is no curtailment of choice on how to use the direct payment (within reason), with the aim to encourage innovation
- local examples and links to people successfully using direct payment in similar circumstances to the person (providing these groups agree)

Advocacy & the planning process

**Lets recap on some of the things
you will be doing**

Advocacy role

Get a copy of the assessment!

Before you begin to offer support to the person through the planning process, you **MUST** have a copy of the assessment, Without this, you cannot understand what the person's eligible needs are.

Provide information

If this is the first time your partner is having a plan created you will probably need to explain what they can expect through the planning process.

Advocacy role

How much do they want to lead?

Early in the process, check out with your partner how much they want to lead the creation of their plan. Do they want to take a full lead with your support or would they prefer to feed into the process.

Making choices

Working out HOW the person would like their needs to be met is the whole point of the planning stage. You will need to spend time exploring options, making choices and working out what are acceptable (and unacceptable) ways to meet needs. If your partner lacks capacity to make these decisions your role is to find out what is important to them so you can represent their likely wishes and preferences and make sure these are reflected in the plan

Advocacy role

You should spend time supporting your partner to identify/explore:

- What is important to them?
- What are their likes and dislikes?
- How do they like to spend their time and are they able to do this at the moment? If not, what are the obstacles in the way or what is preventing them from doing this? How can this be integrated into their life?
- What makes them feel supported as well as independent?
- What is their ideal day like? What makes them happy?
- Is anything concerning them about their current arrangements? For example have there been any incidents such as falling, burning themselves, getting lost or choking that may need to be addressed and discussion of how these can be reduced as much as possible.
- How can others or their community support them e.g. volunteers or support organisations etc

Advocacy role

Fluctuating needs

Lots of people find that their impairment affects them differently - there may be times when they need more support. Other people may find that their needs increase because informal care or support is less available at certain times (such as weekends and holidays). Part of the planning process is to work this out. You can suggest to your partner that they agree some flexibility or a contingency plan. For instance they may want to ask to 'bank' hours or a portion of direct payments that they can use when needed.

Financial planning

As the advocate you can support your partner to make decisions about financial planning. A good starting point is to ask the local authority to provide information and advice that you can use to work out what the person wants to do.

Advocacy role

Direct payments

Part of the planning process is to work out which needs (if any) the person can meet with the use of a direct payment. Your partner may want your support to weigh up the pros and cons between a direct payments or local authority managed service to find out what suits them best. Do they fully understand what these different options are and what is involved to manage these in their day to day life? What is their experience of agencies or arranging respite or transport? Are they confident even with some assistance to manage a direct payment? How could they access some support with this, if they chose a direct payment?

Advocacy role

Final checks

Once the plan has been written and agreed by the local authority you will want to check the final contents with your partner (or on their behalf if they lack capacity) to make sure it accurately reflects how the person wants to use support to live their life.

If it doesn't, use your usual badass advocacy skills to challenge this until it meets your partner's needs!

Please return to your
e-learning for the
next section of
learning

