

Some aspects of The Care Act came into force in April 2015 and other parts are still waiting to be implemented. It changes the way the social care system will work in the future.

The first parts of the Act came into effect in April 2015. Although the remaining changes were due to come into force in April 2016, [the government has announced that they are to be delayed until April 2020](#).

If you need care, or look after someone who does, you'll need to know how care is changing in the future and how it could affect you. You can find an overview below, or read our factsheet [Introduction to the Care Act 2014](#) for more detailed information.

Ways it may affect you from April 2015:

1. You will have a right to a free needs assessment from your council, even if it thinks your finances are too high or your needs are too low to qualify for help.
2. All councils will use a new national eligibility criteria to decide whether someone can get help from them.
3. If you get social care support, you will now have a right to request a personal budget if you're not offered one. This is a summary of how much the council thinks your care should cost. This might be useful if you want to pay for your own care.
4. If your needs assessment shows you don't qualify for help from the council, they must advise you how the care system works and how to pay for your own care. So if you just need a hand with housework, for example, the council should assist you in finding this.
5. You can defer selling your home to pay your care fees until after your death.
6. If you're paying for your own care, you can ask the council to arrange your services for you. It can only charge you as much as someone whose care they are funding.
7. If you're a carer, you have a legal right to a care assessment from the local council. You can also get support services if you qualify for them.
8. If you find it difficult to communicate or to understand the issues being discussed, the council must provide an advocate to help you when discussing your care. They will represent your interests if you don't have a friend or relative who can help.
9. The council must provide preventative services that could reduce or delay your need for care. For example, intermediate care at home after a hospital stay could help keep you independent for longer.

Ways it may affect you from April 2020:

1. There will be a cap on how much you have to spend on your care needs. Anything you or the council spend on your eligible needs will be added up in your care account. Once it reaches £72,000, the council will pay for all your eligible needs. This will exclude your daily living costs, which covers things like your food and accommodation in a care home. The proposed figure of £72,000 for the cap could change by 2020 due to inflation.
2. The council can reassess your care needs, even if you pay for your own care. This is because the council works out how much your care should cost to meet your eligible needs, and adds this up. It needs to check every so often that the amount it thinks you should be spending is still right.

3. New rules about top-up fees in care homes mean you may be able to pay them yourself. Top-up fees may apply if you move into a care home that costs more than the council can pay.
4. If you're not happy about a decision, you have a new right to complain and appeal it, and for this to be independently investigated.