

**National Eligibility Criteria announced by Welsh Government on 11th
May 2015**

**New rules to put people in control of their care and support needs
unveiled**

Major changes to the way people's needs are assessed to decide if they need a package of care and support in Wales have been unveiled by Health and Social Services Minister, Mark Drakeford.

Under the changes to the eligibility criteria for social care, which have been laid before the National Assembly for Wales, the rules will be simplified so that people receive the right care, in the right place, at the right time, that's appropriate to their circumstances and needs.

The current approaches to eligibility and assessment of people across Wales are often inconsistent. The new model is designed to bring these processes under one framework while recognising the different needs of children and adults

The new eligibility model will remove the current cliff-edge decisions where people receive care and support services only when their needs are at or near crisis point. This will be replaced with a more individualised approach that will require local authorities to put in place an appropriate and wherever possible, preventive response for each individual.

The new arrangements will focus on local authorities working with people and their carers and families to identify strengths, capacity and capability to maximise an individual's wellbeing and independence. This approach will ensure that people can stay in control of decisions made about their care and support.

The changes are being introduced as part of the most wide-ranging reforms to social care law in Wales in 60 years, when the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 comes into force in April 2016.

Mark Drakeford said:

"The new Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act does not just change a few rules here and there. The changes being outlined today will ensure people have much stronger control over the care and support they need to live their lives. This is not simply a case of adjusting what we do now.

"It replaces and rewrites the legislative basis for care and support in Wales. It represents a new social care landscape in Wales. It is a wide-ranging reform of which Wales should be proud.

“At its core is an approach that focusses on people, in a way which strengthens their voice and gives them more control over their lives. It focuses on people’s abilities as well as needs – acknowledging that people themselves want to stay in control of what happens to them.

“The proposed changes are crucial to enable current and future generations to live their lives as fully as possible, providing the correct level of support to promote their wellbeing and to help sustain them in their families, networks and communities.”

The new approach will reduce the number of people who require a care and support plan by introducing opportunities to help people retain independence, and access early intervention and prevention services, without the need for a formal plan. Intervening in the right way, at the right time will mean that many people can be supported in their own communities outside the formal social care system, and families can be supported to stay together.

Policy detail

How the new eligibility criteria will work

- When someone needs help from social services, local authorities will need to begin by understanding what matters to that person, what their circumstances are and what they are trying to achieve.
- The first part of the eligibility process is to assess if care and support intervention can address the need, risk or barrier, or enhance the resources that will enable the individual to achieve their personal well-being outcomes.
- The second part of the process is the determination that the individual’s well-being outcomes cannot be met, or cannot be sufficiently met, solely through care and support co-ordinated by themselves, their family or carer, or others. If this is the case, the individual requires support through a care and support plan, to co-ordinate their care and support or to manage it completely.

Other provisions

For many people there will be community-based services that can help, often run by voluntary agencies or by people themselves, and the assessment might show that the person can achieve the outcomes they want by accessing services like these. There are many examples in place already.

People may not know about these services so during the assessment local authorities will be required to provide information, advice and assistance to help people access the support they need.

People will be able to use **direct payments** to pay for the care and support they consider is right for them. The rules will mean that the use of direct payments will be extended to other forms of care and support (for example for long term residential

care) and to individuals who are currently excluded from receiving direct payments (for example people with drug or alcohol problems).