

## Introduction to the adult social care sector

This unit aims to introduce you to adult social care (ASC) in its various forms. You will find out how people with different support and care needs may achieve an extended quality of life within a variety of settings. You will also look at the role of informal care.

*On completion of this unit you will:*

- know about types of social care support available to adults
- know the range of jobs available in adult social care.



## 1.1 Know the types of social care support available to adults

There is a wide range of adult social care in England. When you work in social care the people you support may use several types of support, services and resources. You need to be aware of these so that you can support people appropriately.

### What is adult social care?

Adult social care (ASC) is the support and services used by people who need support to keep themselves healthy and safe, and to live as independently as possible. Its aim is to help people achieve the **quality of life** they choose.

People may need practical support to complete personal and daily living tasks. These include:

- washing and dressing
- preparing and eating meals
- housekeeping and shopping
- paperwork and personal finances
- laundry.

**Quality of life** A good quality of life is having a good standard of health and well-being, with opportunities to access education, work and leisure.

### Key Term

People sometimes need emotional as well as practical support. They may find it difficult to express how they are feeling. We will look at communication skills in Unit 4.

As a care worker it is very important that you work in **partnership** with the people you support. We will look at partnership working in Unit 5.

The Health and Social Care Bill (2007) says that adult social care should **enable** and **empower** individuals within a safe and supportive environment so that they can live the lives they choose.

This includes not only receiving support from care-based services, but also enabling people to access **community facilities**, education, work and social networks.



There are community facilities that may be available to people in your local area, for example:

- leisure centre
- church
- supermarket.

Think of a few more and how they benefit local people.

### Partnership

Working together with another person or an organisation.

**Enable** Support someone by providing them with the means, knowledge and opportunity to continue to do as much as possible for themselves for as long as they can.

**Empower** Enable someone to take control and make decisions about their life.

**Community facilities** Places within a community provided by local or national government for the local community's benefit. For example, schools, hospitals and community centres.

### Key Terms

Adult social care aims to provide a safe and supportive environment for **vulnerable adults**.

### Your questions answered

What does providing 'a safe and supportive environment' mean?

This does not mean keeping vulnerable people in secure buildings. It means providing a safe and welcoming place where individuals:

- have the maximum choice and control over their own lives
- are able to carry out **supported decision making** about their lives
- are helped to consider and deal with the risks they may face.

**Vulnerable adult** A person over the age of 18 'who is or may be in need of community care services by reason of mental or other disability, age or illness; and who is or may be unable to take care of him or herself, or unable to protect him or herself against significant harm or exploitation'.  
(from the 1997 Consultation Paper 'Who decides?', issued by the Lord Chancellor's Department).

**Supported decision making** Some people need support when making decisions. For example, deciding what to wear, what to eat, where to live or how to spend their money. When working with an individual you will need to find out how they express themselves when they make decisions, and help them to consider all the options.

**Key Terms**

The people you support will come from different backgrounds. You must always be respectful of their beliefs and preferences. You must treat everyone you support fairly, equally and without **discrimination**.



All social care support should meet the needs and rights of individuals. See Unit 2 for more information

### Discrimination

This is when people are treated differently, unfairly or unequally because of their disability, age, gender, race or sexuality.

### Key Term

## Types of social care support

The main types of social care support are listed below.

### Day services

Day services provide support for older people, adults with physical or learning disabilities, and adults with mental health needs. They can be drop-in centres, or centres where people can meet others who may have similar support needs. The supported adults take part in activities such as art or gardening.

Day services are referred to as 'day opportunities' or 'community support' when they take place in smaller community venues rather than in large buildings.



What rights does someone with a disability have?  
Answer: The same as you!



There are also specialist day services, for example for people who have a brain injury or high support needs due to a medical condition. Staff in these settings are often registered practitioners. These qualified professionals must register with a professional body in order to work. For example, a mental health nurse must be registered with the Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC).



Day services can provide people with the support to try activities like music and photography

### Residential support including respite care

This type of support includes group homes for a small number of people, or large residential homes with many bedrooms. Care homes provide accommodation and personal care. Some are registered for nursing care, and registered nurses cover and carry out certain aspects of care, such as administering medicines. Community nurses provide health care in residential homes not registered for nursing care.

### *In Practice*

#### Support at Brook Dean

Thomas, Maggie and Anna live in a bungalow in Brook Dean. They have a contract with a support agency called 'My Life' and employ a staff team of 12 people. The team includes care assistants and support workers who provide Thomas, Maggie and Anna with support to live at home within their own community.

### Domiciliary support

Domiciliary care workers visit people in their own homes and support them with daily living tasks, such as washing and dressing. The workers may be agency staff or paid care workers.

### Community support

Currently, much of the support available is provided within a person's own community: in smaller meeting places or in a person's own home.

### Support purchased using personal budgets

This is when a person uses their **personal budget** to employ personal assistants to support them with everyday tasks.

**Respite** A short period of time when an individual or their carer can have a break. For example, the supported individual could go to a centre providing specialist care, or a care worker could stay with them in their own home.

**Personal budget** An amount of money provided by the local authority and given directly to an individual so they can arrange their own support. The individual is able to spend it in a way that makes sense to them and meets their assessed needs.

### Key Terms



find out!



- What other types of support and services are used in your local area? For example, laundry services, meals on wheels, sitting services.
- How person-centred are they? Can they be arranged to suit an individual?
- Research different types of service and support – look on the internet; gather leaflets from your local GP's surgery, Citizen's Advice Bureau and council offices.

## In Practice

### Maz and Julia

Maz: 'I was born with a physical disability which has meant that I have needed support all my life. I am an active campaigner for Disability Rights and train social care workers for the local council. I employ three personal assistants to support me every day.'

Julia is my personal assistant. She supports me with some personal care, such as washing my hair and cutting my nails. I use an electric wheelchair and Julia makes sure that this is always fully charged. Three days a week, Julia supports me at work. She helps me to carry equipment and paperwork, as well as manage my appointments diary.'



Maz – an Employer and Social Care trainer – with Julia, her personal assistant



## In Practice

### Ray

Ray lives by himself in his own home. He was recently widowed. His daughter and her family live about three hours away by car, but they try to visit Ray at least twice a month.

Ray had an assessment for care from his local county council. This showed that he needed support in the mornings to get washed and dressed, at mealtimes and to prepare for bed. He also needs support with his housekeeping, shopping and laundry.

Penny is Ray's neighbour. She shops for him and generally keeps an eye on him.

What support and services do you think could make a positive difference to Ray's life?



Ray – recent changes in his life mean that he now needs some support

## Users of service groups

**Review** When an individual and their support circle consider the support they have been receiving and whether or not it meets their support needs.

### Key Term

It is important to remember that some individuals will be included in more than one service group – for example, an older person who also has a physical disability.

Service group	People who need support
Older people	People over the age of 65
Individuals with disabilities	People with physical disabilities which may mean that their mobility is restricted or they need support to manage daily living tasks
Complex needs	People who may need support with medical conditions or have high-level care needs requiring 24-hour support People with mental health problems or learning disabilities may also have complex needs
Individuals with learning disabilities	People who may have difficulty communicating or making decisions and require guidance and support with daily living tasks
Individuals with mental health needs	People who have a mental health condition
Individuals with dementia	People who have dementia

Users of service groups

### Tip

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Think about any informal care that you may have provided in your life, to friends and family, or volunteering in the community. Make a note of anything you think of – this can be useful information when creating a CV for prospective employers.

## What is the role of informal care?

Informal care means care and support that is carried out by people who are not paid to provide it. For example, a family member or friend providing care at home, or a neighbour giving a lift to their church or mosque.

Many people with support needs live in their own homes with informal family support to carry out daily living tasks, such as washing, dressing and preparing meals.

It is important that informal carers are also offered support. Plans should be agreed and in place in case the carer is no longer able to continue their support.

Many other people receive informal support with their laundry and shopping. They have neighbours, family or friends who regularly 'check in' on them.

Informal carers are an important source of information for professionals as they know the individual and their support needs very well. When a care manager wants to **review** the support an individual receives, they work in partnership with the individual and their carers. The manager will meet them to talk about what is working well and what needs to change so that the person and their carers are better supported in the future.



What informal support do you receive on a daily basis?

List five examples of informal care and support that you receive. For example:

- other parents collecting your child from school
- a colleague giving you a lift to work
- a neighbour feeding your cat when you are on holiday
- your partner cooking you a meal.



Use the internet to research local organisations that provide support for informal carers. What kind of support do the organisations offer?

- Carers UK: [www.carersuk.org](http://www.carersuk.org)
- Carers Direct: [www.nhs.uk/carersdirect](http://www.nhs.uk/carersdirect)
- The Carers Trust: [www.carers.org](http://www.carers.org)

## In Practice

### Penny

Penny lives next door to Ray, whose wife Pamela died recently. Penny helps Ray by asking him if he needs any groceries when she goes shopping, and sometimes she cooks Ray a meal and takes it round to him. When her husband mows their lawn, he also mows Ray's for him. Penny is good friends with Ray's daughter, Jane, and often phones her if she is at all concerned about Ray.



Penny provides informal care to her elderly neighbour

## 1.2 Know the range of jobs available in adult social care

### What jobs will be available to me?

There is a wide range of jobs within adult social care (see pages 14 and 15). A career in social care is very rewarding; it is satisfying to know that you have helped make a positive difference to someone's life.

#### *In Practice*

Gavin – care worker

'I recently cared for my elderly uncle who had lots of health problems. He is now living in Extra Care Housing with support. I chatted to his carer one day and she said that her agency was looking for staff, so I applied and got the job! I now support people with lots of different support needs, helping them to get washed and dressed, prepare meals or do the vacuuming and dusting. I get to know some of the people I support really well.'



## Jobs offering direct support

Job role	Setting	Key tasks
Residential care and support worker	Works in residential homes supporting the people who live there Works shift patterns that include waking nights and sleeping in shifts	Personal care Meal preparation Cleaning Administering medication Maintaining relationships with families and friends
Day care officer	Works in a day service, Monday to Friday	Completing person-centred reviews Accessing the community Supporting personal care needs
Domiciliary care worker	Works with people in the community	Personal care Shopping and preparing meals Accessing community facilities Developing and maintaining social networks Supporting individuals to take medication
Personal assistant	Employed directly by an individual to support them with their everyday life Paid out of the supported individual's personal budget	Personal care Shopping and preparing meals Cleaning and laundry Supporting with paperwork and finances

The range of jobs offering direct support

## Jobs offering indirect support

Role	Key tasks
Managers	Planning and organising the service and support Responsibilities for staff, including recruitment, supervision and training Responsibility for the health and safety of people and buildings Administrative duties, including answering the telephone, using a computer and filing
Housekeeping staff	Cleaning and laundry
Trainers	Providing support and training to staff

The range of jobs offering indirect support

## Jobs requiring medical-based training and qualifications

Role	Key tasks
Psychiatric or mental health nurse	Provides specialist nursing care to people in health care settings, such as surgeries or hospitals, mental health units and day services, or out in the community
Registered nurse	Provides medical specialist care, advice and support to individuals living in their own homes or in residential and nursing homes
Occupational therapist (OT)	Works with individuals to find out what activities will help them to remain healthy and well Provides advice about equipment that will increase a person's mobility and independence, such as wheelchairs, bath and shower equipment as well as equipment to support eating and drinking
Physiotherapist	Uses physiotherapy to increase a person's mobility which may be restricted due to illness or disability Aims to improve someone's quality of life by limiting pain and increasing independence
Clinical psychologist	Diagnoses mental illness and works with the person to understand, prevent and relieve the symptoms
Psychiatrist	Specialises in the diagnosis and treatment of mental disorders Authorised to prescribe psychiatric medication

The range of jobs requiring medical training and qualifications

### Tip

Think about the range of jobs available (you could look in [reed.co.uk](http://reed.co.uk) to see examples of jobs in your area), and begin to research which of these would best suit your skills. If you are able to do voluntary work in these areas, this will dramatically increase your chances of securing a position later on.

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Regardless of what level or type of job you work in, always ensure the people you support are fully involved in any planning or decision making about things that directly affect them and their support.



## In what settings is adult social care delivered?

We have previously looked at the types of support available. Let's now look at where that support may be provided.

### Sheltered housing

This is a group of independent and self-contained flats or bungalows. Some will have a manager or warden living on site or nearby to provide support.

**Extra care** This is similar to sheltered housing. Domiciliary care workers are on site and there are set times for visits. Additionally there are staff to help with emergencies. Support is available 24 hours a day.

**Community hub** A centre managed by three or more community groups which work to improve the quality of life for the whole community. It is similar to a drop-in centre.

### Key Terms

Setting	Care delivered
Residential and housing settings	Homes for older adults including <b>sheltered housing, extra care</b> and warden-controlled housing Care homes – with and without nursing Rented property where people have a tenancy agreement with a private landlord, support organisation or housing association Group settings for adults with learning disabilities Specialist residential homes, for example for people with dementia
Community-based settings	Day services, <b>community hubs</b> and community groups held in, for example, a mosque or a village hall Day care for older adults Life skills training centres or colleges for younger adults with learning disabilities Any setting based in the community, such as a café, pub or leisure centre

Settings in which adult social care is provided



A young man being supported to ice-skate. Always think 'out of the box' when it comes to community-based settings!

## What qualifications do I need? What career pathways are there?

Opportunities to gain qualifications include:

- apprenticeships, which are nationally recognised schemes combining work with learning and training
- competency-based qualifications which demonstrate that you are able to perform the skill, trade or occupation
- knowledge-based qualifications to help you gain the understanding and knowledge you need to carry out your role
- higher qualifications, which depend on the route you wish to follow and include management qualifications.

There are various career pathways available to you within the different sectors. For example, if you wanted a career in residential care, you could begin as a support assistant and work your way up to becoming a support worker, then senior support worker, then assistant manager and then manager.

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### A local authority

We have a range of jobs available within social care, so we look for a real variety of people to work with us. If the first job you try doesn't suit you, don't give up on social care as a whole – often there is something different you can try which you might enjoy far more. Gaining qualifications and shadowing senior workers is a good way to open doors to new positions.

@work

### Tip

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It's always worth thinking about what route you might take to get to your desired position. It may be that you need to gain further qualifications along the way – some employers will sponsor you for these.

find out!



Look on the internet or in your local newspaper and find examples of social care jobs advertised in your area.

## Quick Quiz

- 1 What is social care?
  - a. Practical support and care for a range of people in need of care and assistance
  - b. Support with household chores only
  - c. Support and care to just attend social occasions
  - d. Support and care just for people with disabilities
- 2 What is 'informal care'?
  - a. Support from a care agency
  - b. Care and support from someone who is not paid a wage
  - c. Support from a community health visitor
  - d. Care from a registered nurse
- 3 What is 'respite'?
  - a. An assessment for equipment
  - b. A break for the carer or supported person
  - c. A community funding programme
  - d. A technique for pain management
- 4 Which of the following is NOT a community facility?
  - a. Mosque
  - b. Leisure centre
  - c. Private swimming pool
  - d. Village hall
- 5 Which of the following is NOT a type of social care support?
  - a. Day centre
  - b. Community hub
  - c. Visit to the cinema with a community support worker
  - d. An ambulance service to an out-patient appointment at a hospital
- 6 Which activity would a personal assistant NOT support someone with?
  - a. Planning their support
  - b. Performing medical procedures such as injections
  - c. Cooking a meal
  - d. Opening and responding to post
- 7 Which of the following is NOT a job in adult social care?
  - a. Support worker
  - b. Residential care worker
  - c. College support assistant
  - d. Medical supplies salesperson
- 8 What is NOT an apprenticeship?
  - a. An opportunity to study for a qualification while working
  - b. An opportunity to earn a small wage whilst learning
  - c. An opportunity to study at college to gain a qualification before starting work
  - d. An opportunity to observe and shadow people in the area you want to work in
- 9 Which of the following is NOT a quality required to work in adult social care?
  - a. Unreliability
  - b. Flexibility
  - c. Sensitivity
  - d. The ability to maintain confidentiality
- 10 Which of the following activities would you NOT support someone to undertake if you were a support worker?
  - a. Brushing their teeth
  - b. Rock climbing
  - c. Organising a taxi to town
  - d. An illegal activity, for example theft