

What are eligibility criteria?

Version 1. 15/01/02

Eligibility criteria

Eligibility criteria help you determine whether an individual is eligible for services. The aim is to ensure that the person's safety and their personal and social care needs are adequately met, while at all times enabling them to be as independent as possible. The needs of the service user will be balanced against their resources (resources, in this sense, includes mental resources, strengths and abilities, carer and support networks, as well as material resources).

4.1 Underlying criteria

- Services will be provided to people who are most in need through incapacity and/or vulnerability. (Therefore some people who experience a limited degree of disability or social isolation may not be eligible for a service).
- Services will generally be provided to people who:
 - are unable to perform one or more basic tasks of daily living or, in cases of mental health problems and learning disability, have substantially impaired social functioning and;
 - do not have access to sufficient sources of alternative support that could provide the level of care or assistance required and;
 - would be at significant risk of harm or deterioration if services were not provided
- Assessment should focus on the factors which are key to maintaining an individual's independence over time and represent a holistic view of a persons circumstances. It should also take possible future and immediate needs into account.

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Version 1. 15/01/02

4.2 Examples of how the criteria apply in practice

The following examples of what the criteria mean in practice are split into three categories, according to the level of need. These different categories are important in determining the level of assessment required and the speed with which an initial assessment will be undertaken. In all three categories, people are assessed as being eligible for a service, but the nature of the service provided varies.

■ People with critical needs

- are likely to have both medical and social care needs
- require intensive services because of an inability to carry out most daily living tasks
- be very mentally or physically frail
- need constant support and attention
- be at risk of seriously harming themselves or others

■ People with substantial needs

- are likely to need considerable assistance in carrying out basic daily living tasks
- be at risk of injury because of their current living arrangements
- lack informal care networks, or their carers, family and friends are under considerable stress
- be physically and/or mentally frail

■ People with other dependency needs

- are able to perform the majority of social care tasks for themselves, even if at times with a little difficulty, and are likely to need
- the provision of equipment and minor adaptations to make it easier for them to remain independent
- help with tasks outside the home such as shopping

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Version 1. 15/01/02

4.3 Fair Access to Care Services

Fair Access to Care Services is guidance from the Department of Health around our framework for assessment and eligibility for services. We are expected to have agreed and introduced this framework by April 2002 and until this time we are expected to operate on our current eligibility criteria as outlined in appendix two, page 14.7.

An outline of the forthcoming eligibility criteria can be found in appendix one on legislation and guidance.