Who to send it to

Adult social care at the council where the person lives: the county council or unitary council, not the district council. Most councils have an online request form, a phone line and an email address on their website. If you phone, send this letter or email as well, so there is a written record.

The letter

Replace everything in [square brackets], keep a copy, and note the date you sent it.

[Your name]
[Your address]
[Your phone number]
[Your email address]

[Date]

Adult Social Care
[Council name]
[Council address or email address]

Dear Sir or Madam,

Request for a care needs assessment: [full name], date of birth [date of birth], [address]

I am writing to ask for a needs assessment for [name] under section 9 of the Care Act 2014. [I am writing for myself. / I am [his/her] [son/daughter/other relationship], and [name] has agreed to me making this request. / I hold a registered Lasting Power of Attorney for [his/her] health and welfare, and a copy is enclosed.]

[Name] appears to need care and support. In particular:

- [for example: needs help to wash, dress and get to the toilet]
- [for example: has fallen [number] times since [month], most recently on [date]]
- [for example: does not eat or drink enough without prompting]
- [for example: cannot manage medicines safely]

At the moment [describe who helps and how often, for example: I visit three times a week, but I work full time and cannot do more].

I understand that the duty to assess applies whatever the council's view of the level of

[name]'s needs or of [his/her] finances. Please:

1. confirm that you have received this request, and give me the name of the person dealing with it;
2. tell me when the assessment is likely to take place, bearing in mind [the falls / the recent hospital stay / the risks described above];
3. involve me [and (name of any other carer)] in the assessment, as [name] wishes;
4. consider whether [name] needs an independent advocate, if [he/she] would have substantial difficulty taking part; and
5. send [name], and me with [his/her] agreement, a written record of the assessment and of the decision about eligibility.

[I also help to care for [name], and I would like a carer's assessment for myself.]

Thank you for your help. I would be grateful for a reply within 10 working days.

Yours faithfully,

[Your signature]
[Your name]
[Your relationship to the person, if you are writing for someone else]

Tips

- If things are urgent, phone first and say so, then send this letter or email on the same day. Keep a copy and note the date and the name of anyone you speak to.
- Describe how things vary, with a good day and a bad day, and give dates: falls, missed meals, hospital stays, nights without sleep. Real examples carry more weight than general statements.
- The assessment is free, and savings above £23,250 are no reason not to ask. Someone who pays for their own care at home can also ask the council to arrange it, although the council may charge an arrangement fee.
- If the person can make their own decisions, get their agreement before you ask on their behalf. If they cannot, explain who you are and mention any Lasting Power of Attorney or deputyship.
- If you know the name of the social worker, begin 'Dear Ms Smith' (for example) and end 'Yours sincerely' instead of 'Yours faithfully'.
- If nothing happens, chase in writing. If there is still unreasonable delay, use the council's complaints procedure (see the complaint letter).

The law behind it

Section 9 of the Care Act 2014: the council must assess any adult who appears to need care and support, whatever it thinks about the level of their needs or their money (section 9(3)), and must involve the person, any carer and anyone else the person asks it to involve (section 9(5)). Section 12(3) of the Act and paragraph 6.98 of the Care and Support Statutory Guidance: the person must be given a written record of the assessment. Paragraph 6.29: the assessment should happen within a reasonable time, taking account of urgency, and the council should give an indicative timescale. Section 67: the council must arrange an independent advocate if the person would have substantial difficulty taking part and has nobody suitable to help. Paragraph 8.60: there is no charge for a needs assessment. Eligibility is decided under the Care and Support (Eligibility Criteria) Regulations 2015.

Read more in our guide: Care assessments and care plans: what to expect.

Other letters

- Asking the council for a carer's assessment
- Asking for the written financial assessment and a disability-related expenditure review
- Asking for a review or reassessment of care and support
- Asking for an NHS Continuing Healthcare Checklist
- Asking the ICB to review a Continuing Healthcare decision (local resolution)