

Information and Advice

Context

This funding stream will provide specialist, generalist and children's specific information and advice.

The [Care Act](#) acknowledges that information and advice is fundamental to enabling people, to take control of, and make well-informed choices about, their care and support and how they fund it. It helps to promote people's wellbeing by increasing their ability to exercise choice and control and is vital in preventing or delaying people's need for care and support.

Under the Children & Families Act 2014, local authorities are required to provide information advice and support to families of children with special educational needs and disabilities. Parents and carers of children with SEN, disabilities or complex health needs require specialist additional support within the community that provides advice and guidance practically and emotionally to help come to terms with and deal with the many challenges that they face.

Accessible information, advice, signposting and customer representation service is vital, as it empowers people to take control of their personal situation, can lead to reduced anxiety and improved health and wellbeing; and ultimately results in less intervention and less unnecessary referrals to statutory services.

Note: Advocacy is contracted separately outside of this programme. Customer representation is a less formal support service, however is just as vital for people who find it difficult to understand or use information given; and need support communicating their views and needs; as well as help to liaise with formal services to access the best support.

Budget

The proposed budget for the provision of information and advice services is £0.547m per year for 4 years (2023/24 to 2026/27) subject to annual approval.

Proposed funding priorities

For **adults**, the priority is information, advice, signposting and customer representation to support people to keep independent, safe and well.

There is a Care Act requirement to meet the information, advice and customer representation needs of the following groups:-

- people with sensory impairments, such as visual impairment, deafblind and hearing impaired
- people who do not have English as a first language
- people who are socially isolated
- people whose disabilities limit their physical mobility
- people with learning disabilities
- people with mental health problems

The services will provide information and advice on adult social care and health provision, housing issues, welfare benefits, money management, debt, counselling, consumer protection, education, employment, family and domestic issues, immigration, carers' services and benefits, accessing independent financial advice, including supporting people with the completion of appropriate forms for other national and local services.

For children, the priority is targeted information and support services for **families of children with disabilities and complex health needs**. The service will target all families of children with disabilities providing proactive and preventative services such as brief information on welfare benefits and housing, focusing on sign posting to other services. The services will also provide information and support to parents regarding their child's diagnosis and disability via the development of peer and self-advocacy groups and training sessions.

It is proposed that funding for specialist information and advice for children will continue as a grant. The service will be required to work in partnership with the wider generalist information and advice services.

Main changes from 2019/23 funding arrangements

No changes proposed.