Who can get Community Care services?
Explaining the eligibility criteria for receiving help or support from Community Care.
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1 What is Community Care?

Community Care is about providing the right support and services to people with particular needs so they can live as independently as possible.

Community Care aims to make sure that:
- people can carry on living in their own homes whenever possible; or
- if remaining at home has become too difficult, a move into other, more suitable housing is considered. This may include sheltered, residential or nursing accommodation, whichever best meets the individual’s particular needs.

Community Care is provided through working in partnership between social services, health services, independent agencies and voluntary organisations.

2 Who can get Community Care services?

Community Care is available to any adult over the age of 18 who meets Merton’s eligibility criteria. People who may be able to receive Community Care Services include:
- Older people
- People with a physical disability
- People with a sight or hearing disability
- People with a learning disability
- People with mental health problems
- People with or affected by HIV/AIDS
- People who misuse drugs or alcohol
- People with chronic or severe health problems
- People with a terminal illness
- People providing ongoing care for another individual

3 How do you decide who is eligible?

The London Borough of Merton must make sure that we give priority to people with the greatest need. Therefore we use guidance from the Department of Health to decide who is able to receive Community Care services. This guidance is called Fair Access to Care Services (FACS).

FACS sets out national guidelines for deciding who can get Community Care services. This means that there is only one set of eligibility criteria for all adults seeking support from Community Care and is used by all councils, across the UK.

4 How will you assess whether I am eligible for services?

Once we receive a request for Community Care services, we carry out an assessment to work out what help or support you need. This assessment may be done over the phone or face-to-face during a home visit (called a Community Care Assessment). We may ask other professionals or family members to be involved too.

During the assessment we will consider all the problems and issues that you face and the risks to your:
- independence and freedom to make choices;
- health and safety;
- ability to manage personal care and other daily routines; and
- involvement in the family and wider community life.

When we have completed your Community Care Assessment we will place you in an eligibility band following the FACS guidelines on the level of identified risk (explained below).
5 What do you use to assess eligibility?

Under FACS there are four eligibility bands. These are:

• Critical needs
• Substantial needs
• Moderate needs
• Low needs

Critical needs
This band includes you if you have the most severe or urgent needs. Something has or will have a life threatening impact on your health, safety or continuing independence. This means:

• you need immediate help because you have suffered or are suffering from serious abuse or neglect;
• you are not able to manage your own personal care or complete vital daily tasks to maintain a safe and secure environment; and
• your situation is putting unacceptable strain on the people who are caring for you. Because of this, your support network could breakdown very soon.

Substantial needs
This band includes you if your needs are serious, but not critical. It is highly likely that something has or will have a significant impact on your health, safety or continuing independence. This means:

• you have suffered or are at risk of suffering from abuse or neglect;
• you need support with your personal care and help to complete the daily tasks required to maintain a safe and secure environment;
• there is a risk you will become less independent if you do not receive Community Care services; and
• there is risk of your support network breaking down due to additional strain being placed on those who provide care and support to you.

Moderate needs
This band includes you if your needs are not critical or serious and will only have a moderate impact on your health, safety or continuing independence. This means:

• you need support with two or three personal care or domestic tasks.

Low needs
This band includes you if your needs are not serious and have a very limited impact on your health, safety or continuing independence. This means:

• you need support once or twice a week with personal care or domestic tasks.

In Merton, people who are assessed with critical or substantial needs will be eligible for Community Care services.

6 What happens if I am eligible to receive Community Care services?

If you have been assessed as being eligible for Community Care services, we will make a decision as to the type and level of service that can be offered. These services will be listed in a written Care Plan. You will be given a copy of your Care Plan, along with a copy of the Community Care Assessment. We may purchase or provide these services directly for you or you may purchase them yourselves from a provider that you choose using the Direct Payments Scheme (we can give you more information on Direct Payments if you need it).

Once services are in place your Care Plan will be given to a Community Care team, who will complete regular reviews. You will also be able to contact your team and ask to be reassessed if you feel your needs have changed.
7 Will I have to pay for services that I receive?

There is never a charge for a Community Care Assessment. However, Community Care services that you receive normally carry a charge. This means that you may have to pay something towards the total cost of the services you receive. How much you pay depends on how much you can afford. We decide how much you think you can afford by carrying out a Financial Assessment to compare your income and savings with what you spend.

8 What happens if I am not eligible to receive services?

If you are assessed as having moderate or low needs and therefore not eligible for Community Care services, we will give you advice and suggest other sources of help and support. However, if in the future you feel that your situation has changed and that you may now be eligible for services, it is important that you ask for a reassessment.

9 What can I do if I do not agree with the decision made about my eligibility for services?

If you're not happy with the outcome of an assessment or with the service you receive, you can talk to the member of staff involved or ask to speak to their manager. If this does not sort out the problem you can ask for a copy of Merton Council’s complaint procedure. Copies of this leaflet are available at all Merton Council offices. Alternatively you can telephone the Customer Services Officer on 020 8545 3509 or write to: Customer Complaints
3rd Floor, Merton Civic Centre,
London Road, Morden SM4 5DX.
You can also send a complaint using the website: www.merton.gov.uk/complaints

10 How do I ask for an assessment of my needs?

If you are over retirement age (60 for a woman, 65 for a man) you can contact:
Social Services
Gifford House
76c St Helier Avenue
Morden SM4 6HY
Phone 020 8545 4430 or 020 8545 4431

If you have a physical disability, sensory impairment, learning disability or HIV/AIDS you can contact:
Social Services
42-44 Russell Road
Wimbledon SW19 1QL
Learning disability – Phone 020 8545 4490
Physical Disability or Sensory Impairment – Phone 020 8545 4493 or 020 8545 4494
HIV/AIDS – Phone 020 8545 4547

If you need the mental health services you can contact the Merton Community Health Team at:
The Wilson Hospital
Cranmer Road
Mitcham CR4 4TD
East Mitcham Team – Phone 020 8687 4714
West Mitcham Team – Phone 020 8687 4766
The Nelson Hospital
Kingston Road
London SW20 8DB
Morden Team – Phone 020 8254 1000
Wimbledon Team – Phone 020 8544 9799
If you need the substance misuse team you can contact:
The Wilson Hospital (for drug misuse)
Phone 020 8687 4666
White Lodge (for alcohol misuse)
Springfield Hospital
Glenburnie Road
Tooting
Phone 020 8682 6931

If you are unsure what team you need, contact:
Care Connect at Merton Civic Centre,
call them on 020 8545 4710 or visit www.merton.gov.uk/doitonline

11 Information sharing and data protection

Working in partnership with health and other agencies to provide a package of services means your personal information may be shared with other organisations involved in your care. If this is the case you will be asked to sign a form giving your permission for this information to be shared. However, on rare occasions for your own protection or for the protection of others information may be shared without your consent. You will be told if this has happened and be given a full explanation as to the reasons why.

All personal information that you provide will be handled in line with the Data Protection Act 1998 and will only be used for the purpose identified.
If you would like more information in your own language, please contact us at the address shown in the box below.

You can also get this information in large print, in Braille and on audio tape.

Public Information Officer
3rd Floor Merton Civic Centre,
Morden SM4 5DX Tel: 020 8545 3745