

Handout: Wellbeing

Introduction

The core purpose of adult care and support is to help people to achieve the outcomes that matter to them in their life. Underpinning all individual 'care and support functions' (that is, any process, activity or broader responsibility that the local authority performs) is the need to ensure that doing so focuses on the needs and goals of the person concerned.

Local authorities must promote wellbeing when carrying out any of their care and support functions in respect of a person. This may sometimes be referred to as "the wellbeing principle" because it is a guiding principle that puts wellbeing at the heart of care and support.

The wellbeing principle applies in all cases where a local authority is carrying out a care and support function, or making a decision, in relation to a person. It applies equally to adults with care and support needs and their carers. In some specific circumstances, it also applies to children, their carers and to young carers when they are subject to transition assessments.

Definition of wellbeing

Wellbeing is a broad concept, and the statutory guidance defines it as relating to the following nine areas in particular:

- personal dignity (including treatment of the individual with respect)
- physical and mental health and emotional wellbeing
- protection from abuse and neglect
- control by the individual over day-to-day life (including over care and support provided and the way it is provided)
- participation in work, education, training or recreation
- social and economic wellbeing
- domestic, family and personal relationships
- suitability of living accommodation
- the individual's contribution to society.

Promoting wellbeing

A local authority can promote a person's wellbeing in many ways. How this happens will depend on the circumstances, including the person's needs, goals and wishes, and how these impact on their wellbeing. There is no set approach – a local authority should consider each case on its own merits, consider what the person wants to achieve, and how the action which the local authority is taking may affect the wellbeing of the individual in relation to the nine areas listed in the definition of wellbeing. During the assessment process, for instance, the local authority should explicitly consider the most relevant aspects of wellbeing to the individual concerned, and assess how their needs impact on them.

It is likely that some aspects of wellbeing will be more relevant to one person than another. Local authorities should adopt a flexible approach that allows for a focus on which aspects of wellbeing matter most to the individual concerned.

Although the wellbeing principle applies specifically when the local authority performs an activity or task, or makes a decision, in relation to a person, the principle should also be considered by the local authority when it undertakes broader, strategic functions, such as planning.