About home care services

Home care services provide help to do some of the things that you may find difficult to manage in your own home in order to help you to keep your independence. This could be personal care or practical help.

This factsheet explains more about the home care services which are available for older and/or physically disabled people through Swansea Social Services and how to apply for a service.

Home care services may be provided by:

- staff from the Integrated Docimiliary Care Service who are employed by either Swansea Council or the NHS. This is usually referred to as Home Care.
- a private care agency or voluntary organisation contracted to work for Social Services, which is usually referred to as Domiciliary Care.

In this factsheet the term “home care” includes both Home Care and Domiciliary Care. The charges and standards for home care services are the same for all providers.

What help could I get from home care?

The support which is available through home care depends on people’s individual needs. It might include:

- help with personal care such as washing, dressing or using the toilet
- help with preparing meals and with eating
- support for carers.

We are not able to provide services such as housework and shopping. However, Social Services staff will usually work with you to find alternative ways of getting your housework and shopping done if you can no longer manage this for yourself.

How can I apply for home care?

You can apply directly to Social Services using the contact details at the end of this factsheet.

You can also ask a relative or carer, your GP, District Nurse or Health Visitor to get in touch on your behalf. If you are in hospital, please ask to speak to the hospital social workers.

Assessing your needs

If we think that home care might be useful to you, we will get in touch with you to carry out an assessment of your needs. This will help us to work out with you what support will suit you best, and whether you qualify for home care from Social Services. You can read more about this in our factsheet Social Services: Care and Support Assessments for Adults.

Unfortunately, we are not able to provide home care services to everyone who asks for them. If we aren’t able to provide you with home care, we will give you information and advice about how else you might be able to arrange practical help at home.

What will happen next?

If we are able to provide you with a home care service we will work with you to write a care plan and timetable of care. This will list all the help you will get from the home care provider. We will give you a copy of the assessment, the care plan and the timetable of care.

Some people may have to wait before they start receiving a service. We will let you know when the service is likely to start.
**Reablement support**

Some people, particularly those recovering after a period of ill health, will initially receive a short-term reablement service from the Integrated Domiciliary Care Service which will last for a maximum of six weeks. An integrated team of care workers, occupational therapists and health workers will visit you regularly at home and support you to become able to do things for yourself that you used to do. This may include the provision of specialised equipment to help you.

By the end of the reablement period many people are once again able to manage at home on their own or with the support of family and friends.

If, after receiving a reablement service, you still need regular care and support to manage at home, we will review your care plan and timetable of care. In most cases we will then make arrangements to transfer you to an independent sector care provider but if you have particularly complex needs the Integrated Domiciliary Care Service may continue to provide your care.

**Long-term care at home**

If you need long-term home care, we will make arrangements with a domiciliary care agency to provide the care you need.

Before you start receiving home care, staff from the service provider will arrange to meet you and give you a chance to ask any further questions you may have.

We, and the agencies that provide care on our behalf, employ both male and female care staff. We recognise that you may have a preference. If so, please let us know and we will do what we can to accommodate this. However if you will only accept care staff of one gender, this may mean you have to wait longer for your care service to start.

**When are care services provided?**

As there are a large number of people using home care and domiciliary care services, it is not always possible to provide your service at your preferred time. Care is generally delivered within the following time zones:

- **Morning** 7.00 am – 11.00 am
- **Lunchtime** 11.30 am – 2.30 pm
- **Teatime** 3.00 pm – 6.00 pm
- **Evening** After 6.00 pm

**Will I have to pay for home care?**

There is no charge for the first six weeks of any reablement services you receive. Such services include both the Integrated Domiciliary Care Service and our Residential Assessment Units.

For long-term domiciliary care the amount you would be expected to pay depends on how much money you have as income and savings, and how much care you are getting. Some people are not asked to pay anything.

You can find out more about how charges are worked out in a separate factsheet, *Charges for Care and Support at Home*.

We will discuss any charges with you before you start the service.

**What if I have to go into hospital?**

If you are in hospital for a week or longer, you may not be able to resume your package of care with your existing care provider and new care arrangements may have to be put in place before you can be discharged.

**What if my needs change?**

No matter who is providing your care, Social Services will carry out regular reviews of your needs to make sure that home care is continuing to meet your needs.

If you feel, at any time, that you may need more or less care, please ask us to review your needs. Either speak to the care staff who are providing your care, or contact the Social Services office.

Be aware that a change of needs, particularly if a hospital stay has been involved, may result in a change to your care provider.
Our standards in providing home care

- We will prepare a care plan for your particular needs. We will keep your care plan and timetable of care under review, and change it if your needs change.
- We will carry out a health and safety check to make sure that the care we provide in your home environment is safe for you and for care staff.
- Care staff will carry identification. This will also be available in large print format.
- Care staff will have received training in providing care.
- Care staff will receive regular professional supervision to make sure they are doing their job well.

When your care starts the provider will give you more detailed information about how the service operates and who to contact with any queries.

Arranging your own home care service

If you have been assessed by Social Services as being eligible for a home care service, you can choose whether to have a service arranged by Social Services, or to have a Direct Payment so that you can make your own arrangements.

With a Direct Payment you can choose to buy care from an agency or you can employ your own personal assistant (PA) or both.

If you have already been buying care privately from a care agency before being assessed as eligible for support by Social Services and you wish to continue with the same agency, and keep the care staff you already know, a Direct Payment can be given to you as a contribution to your costs. Be aware though that the Direct Payment may not cover the full cost of care from the agency you choose and you may have to pay a top-up yourself.

A Direct Payment may also be more suitable for you if you prefer to have your care provided at specific times, or you would only accept care staff of one gender.

There is more information in our factsheets

- Managing Your Support with Direct Payments
- Information about Domiciliary Care Agencies for People who use Direct Payments.

How to contact us

You can contact Social Services by letter, telephone or email.

Intake Team for Health and Social Care
Civic Centre
Swansea SA1 3SN
Tel: 01792 636519
SMS: 07796 275412
Email: Intake@swansea.gov.uk

To obtain copies of any of the factsheets mentioned in this document please ask your care manager or ring 01792 636902.

Other useful information

You can find other suggestions of local organisations that can help keep you independent on our website www.swansea.gov.uk/independentathome

Swansea Social Services and personal information

When you are in touch with Social Services, we will keep information about you in written records and computer files. We will keep this information confidential, except where we need to share it with people providing you with care, or to protect you or other people.

You have a right to ask to see records we keep about you.

We can give you more information about how we handle personal information. Phone 01792 636902 for a factsheet.
Comments and complaints
We welcome any comments about our services – good or bad. We are interested to hear how we could do things better, and we like to know when we are doing well.

If you are unhappy with the services you receive, we encourage you to make a complaint. Full details are given in the factsheet Making a comment, complaint or compliment about Social Services.

For more advice or information about making a complaint, you can contact our Complaints Officers on 01792 637345.

This information is also available in Welsh and in alternative formats, such as large print, on audio CD, in Braille, or electronically. Please phone 01792 636902 for copies.