

Self-directed support

Fair Access to Care Services – **FACS**

Fair Access to Care Services is a Government document. It tells local authorities how they can set eligibility for social services – who can get a social service and who can't.

If someone wants support from social services, the council assesses their needs.

Then the council uses their FACS criteria to decide if the person can have a service. This fact sheet tells you about FACS.



To get more help
contact In Control.
Tel: **0121 4745900**
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help@in-control.org.uk

Find more fact sheets at:
www.in-control.org.uk/factsheets



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The basic facts

Local authorities follow the Government's **FACS** guidelines to decide who is eligible for social care support – who can get a social service and who can't.

Each year, local authorities decide what levels they will set for someone to be eligible.

They have to decide who has priority for a service. This depends mainly on how much money the council has.

There are four levels:

1. Critical
2. Substantial
3. Moderate
4. Low

When a local authority is deciding if someone is eligible, they look at someone's:

- autonomy – their independence and their freedom to make choices
- health and safety – can they stay safe from harm, abuse and neglect?
- personal care and other daily routines
- involvement in family and community life – including leisure, hobbies, unpaid and paid work, learning and volunteering.

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More information about Fair Access to Care Services

Critical, substantial, moderate and low – who can get social care support?

A small number of local authorities in England only meet the needs of people in the Critical category.

Most local authorities meet the needs of people in the Critical and Substantial categories.

Some local authorities meet the needs of people in the Moderate category, too.

Most local authorities try to meet the needs of people in the Low category through prevention services. Some councils have special prevention services. Most refer people to the community services that are available to everyone.

How do local authorities decide who has critical, substantial, low or moderate needs?

The needs and risks in FACs criteria are the same in each category. It depends on how serious the needs and risks are.

Critical

Someone who has a critical need for social care:

- is in immediate danger or is at risk of significant harm – perhaps because of ill health, serious abuse or neglect; or
- can't carry out vital personal care or domestic routines; or
- can't take part in vital aspects of work, education or learning; or
- can't keep vital social and personal relationships, roles and responsibilities.

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Substantial

Someone who has a substantial need for social care:

- might have experienced abuse or neglect that wasn't serious; or
- can't carry out most of their personal care or domestic routines; or
- can't take part in many aspects of work, education or learning; or
- can't maintain most of their social and personal relationships, roles and responsibilities.

Moderate

Someone who has a moderate need for social care:

- can't carry out several of their personal care or domestic routines; or
- can't take part in several aspects of work, education or learning; or
- can't maintain several of their social and personal relationships, roles and responsibilities.

Low

Someone who has a low need for social care:

- can't carry out one or two of their personal care or domestic routines; or
- can't take part in one or two aspects of work, education or learning; or
- can't maintain one or two of their social and personal relationships, roles and responsibilities.



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More detail about FACS

A local authority's assessment should be person-centred.

That means the assessment should:

- consider all aspects of someone's life
- treat someone's difficulties in a sensitive way
- treat each person as an individual and take into account how they choose to live their life
- recognise that people are experts on their own situation.

The assessment should consider the risk of someone losing their independence – either now or in the future.

The assessment should also think about what will happen if someone doesn't get help – does that create a risk?

Once a council has decided someone has an 'eligible need', it has a duty to offer a service or personal budget.

Emergencies and crises

If someone asks for social care help in an emergency or crisis, the council should help immediately.

Once the crisis has passed, the council must carry out an assessment and decide if someone is eligible for an on-going service.

Everyone can have an assessment

Everyone is entitled to a full assessment of their needs. It doesn't matter whether the local authority ends up paying for a service or not.

If the assessment says someone is eligible for a service, the council carries out another assessment – a financial assessment. This means that the council finds out if someone should pay for some or all of their care.

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There is a lot of information about self-directed support on In Control's website:
www.in-control.org.uk

Information about Fair Access to Care

You can download the Government's Fair Access to Care Services documents from the Department of Health's website:

www.dh.gov.uk

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About the **In Control and Me** project

A three-year project to produce accessible information for everyone who wants to direct their own support, funded by the National Lottery through the BIG Lottery Fund. You can find out more at www.mencap.org.uk/incontrol or www.in-control.org.uk/icandme

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