

Advice and Information and The Care Act in North Tyneside

August 2018 Version 1.1

Document Review Date: August 2019

Contact details about this document: ruth.battey@northynteside.gov.uk

1. Purpose

This report is a position statement on the provision of advice and information services for the adult care and support system in North Tyneside.

The local advice and information offer is delivered to ensure North Tyneside meets the required duties set out in the Care Act 2014. This revised position statement provides an update on how this offer is delivered locally and how it is being further developed to meet our ambition to go further and to do more.

2. Introduction

North Tyneside Council and its partners recognise the increasing importance and value of providing access to good quality information and advice for care and support needs.

- 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.
- Not only does information and advice help to promote people's wellbeing by increasing their ability to exercise choice and control, it is also a vital component of preventing or delaying people's need for care and support.

Effective information and advice are a critical part of the social care agenda: they empower individuals to understand and choose the services and support that are right for their circumstances and needs as well as playing a significant role in prevention, market facilitation and developing social capital. However, well structured information and advice services can also create efficiency and more effective ways of working.

Effective information and advice services can:

- help individuals understand their responsibilities and live independently for longer by increasing take-up of universal services;
- reduce inappropriate and avoidable contacts and reduce 'return' episodes;
- provide increased access to lower level support preventing or delaying the need for higher cost intensive services;
- provide information and support on low cost adaptations reducing accidents in the home;
- produce efficiency savings through reducing gaps in delivery and increasing competition in the market place; and
- provide valuable data on supply and demand for services to inform commissioning and strategic planning.

2.1 Local Priorities

Advice and information services are at the cornerstone of the Council, local NHS services and partner plans for prevention and promotion of wellbeing.

The North Tyneside Health and Wellbeing Board oversee the local NHS and Social Care Integration projects. The review of the Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy in 2017 detailed the Boards vision around improving the health and wellbeing of people living in North Tyneside. The Work Plan of the Board includes;

- Improving the mental health and emotional resilience of the North Tyneside population.
- An integrated approach to identifying and meeting carer health and wellbeing needs (all ages)
- Reducing social isolation and increase cultural engagement across the population of North Tyneside to improve health and wellbeing.

The Council is also taking a more radical view of how and what it delivers and has fundamentally redefined its role, purpose and relationship with customers; the objectives of which are laid down in the Council's 'Our North Tyneside' Plan.

Advice and information play a critical role in supporting our people to:

- Be listened to
- Be ready for work and life
- Be ready for school
- Be cared for, protected and supported
- Be healthy and well
- Be more independent, volunteer and do more for themselves and their communities

3. The Care Act 2014 Duties

The Care Act 2014 places a statutory duty upon councils to provide information and advice that is both accessible and proportionate, to the whole population. This is to enable people to understand how the care and support system works, what services are available locally, and how to access those services. The Act provides for a universal information and advice service, which is available to all people who request it, and not just limited to those people with assessed care and support needs and their carers.

The changes that the new legislation introduced were wide ranging and at times complex. Clause 4 of the Act sets out the areas where we must provide information and advice, specifically in relation to:

- What types of care and support are available.
- What processes local people need to use to get the care and support that is available.
- Where local people can find information or advice about:
 - costs of care
 - advice regarding budget and debt issues and
 - how to access independent financial advice regarding finance products

- How people can raise concerns about the safety or wellbeing of someone who has care and support needs.

Local authorities do not have to **provide** all elements of this service but are expected to:

- Understand, coordinate and make effective use of **all** the information and advice resources that are available;
- Think about how they are reaching out and joining up with other providers of information and advice to ensure the coherence of the overall ‘offer’; and
- Signpost or refer people to relevant **independent and impartial** sources of information and advice.

3.1 Beneficiaries

Information and advice must be **open to everyone** who would benefit from it.

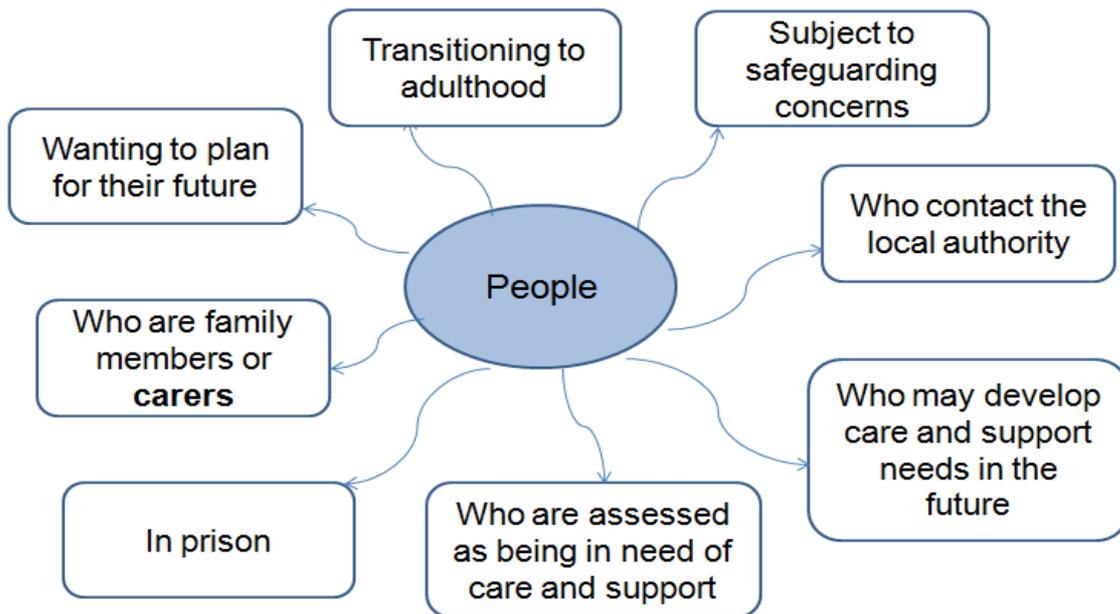


Figure 1 - Who Benefits from Advice and Information Services

The authority should ensure that:

- there are a range of delivery channels that are accurate and up-to-date;
- staff are aware of accessibility issues and are appropriately trained;
- websites meet accessibility standards;
- printed materials are clear and in plain English;
- materials are adapted as necessary e.g. easy read versions and translations; and
- Local information and advice providers have the information they need about the local care and support system.

In North Tyneside we do this in many ways.

- Residents can access consistent, accurate and up to date advice and information online, over the phone and face to face, depending on their needs
- Our teams identify any accessible support needs at the first contact with the resident and are trained in adapting their approach to meet those needs. We will also adapt materials to meet those needs.
- Our websites (My Care North Tyneside, SIGN Directory, NTC Council, SIGN Network) meet accessibility standards
- Our printable factsheets are written in clear, plain English and are regularly reviewed.
- We regularly engage with local information and advice providers in the borough to ensure they have the information they need about the care and support system. This is carried out via various networks including, SIGN North Tyneside and Working with the VCS events.

4. Definitions

For clarity, the definitions of information and advice in North Tyneside continue to be those from the Putting People First guidance (2011).

Information - The open and accessible supply of material deemed to be of interest to a particular population. This can either be passively available or actively distributed

Advice - Offering guidance and direction on a particular course of actions which need to be undertaken in order to realise a need, access a service or realise individual entitlements. Advice should be based on legal implications, be non judgemental and cover alternative options.

5. Access

The national Care Act Guidance explains that when establishing the information and advice services for care and support, 'this must be provided in a variety of different formats; that the 'duty in the Care Act will not be met through the use of digital channels alone' and that the mix of provision will be expected to include 'face-to-face contact'.

Increasingly information is only available on the internet and the effect of the so-called 'digital divide' is that significant sections of the population are thereby excluded – many of whom are disproportionately in need of care and support. Alternative channels are very important for these groups to be able to access services and information.

In North Tyneside our advice and information offer is designed to support all residents, regardless of their access to digital channels, their requirement for different formats or their need for face to face contact.

Figure 2 (page 6) visually describes the advice and information offer in North Tyneside and explains how residents of various need or ability can access it.

6. The Advice and Information Offer in North Tyneside

North Tyneside has many of the existing advice and information components detailed in the Care Act.

The offer was developed to ensure we delivered the required duties set out in the Care Act by 1 April 2015. However, our ambition was always to go further and to do more. Much work has been carried out since the Care Act was introduced and section 6 shows the work we have put in place to develop the offer further. Section 8 details how we plan to develop the offer further in the future.

The North Tyneside offer is based on five key blocks of service and support;

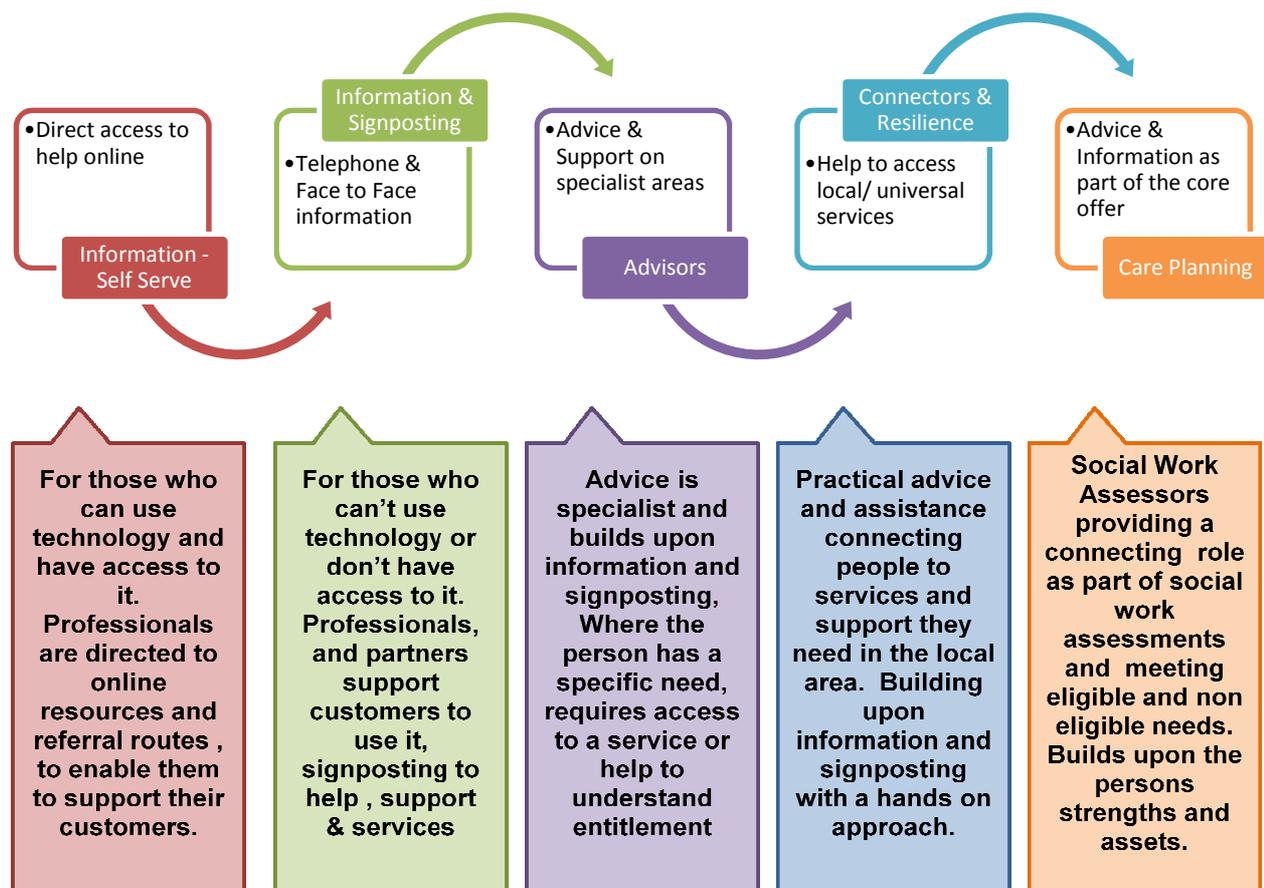
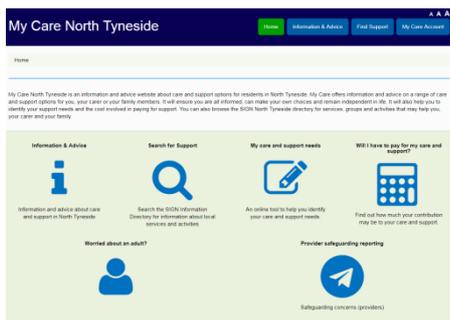


Figure 2 – The advice and information offer

6.1 Information – Self Serve

Information and self serve to access information and advice is aimed at those residents who have access to and the skills to use technology. Health and social care professionals within the area are also directed to self serve options so they can better support the people they are working with.



My Care North Tyneside is the advice and information website about care and support options for residents and professionals in North Tyneside.

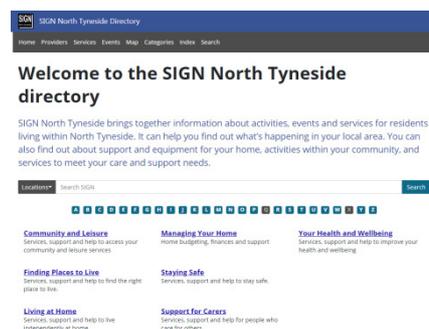
My Care offers information and advice on a range of care and support options for residents, their carers or their family members. It will ensure everyone is informed, can make their own choices and remain independent in life. It also helps residents to identify their own support needs and the cost involved in paying for their support.

My Care North Tyneside also features information about:

- the local care and support system;
- the different ways people can ask for help and speak to the other organisations who can offer information and guidance;
- a directory of activities, support and services available locally, including the North Tyneside Personal Assistant (PA) Register;
- Information about care charges and an interactive calculator to understand individual care charges;
- how to find and choose independent financial advice;
- information and signposting for adult safeguarding concerns; and
- how to request a social care assessment and an interactive questionnaire to explore your own care and support needs

My Care North Tyneside holds a series of printable customer information leaflets and links to many other local and national web sites, including NHS Choices; the UK's biggest health website providing a comprehensive health information service to help people make informed choices about their health, such as advice about smoking, drinking and exercise and finding and using NHS services in England.

It also features the **SIGN North Tyneside Directory**; a directory of activities, support and services available locally, which residents can browse for services, groups and activities that may help them. It was developed and designed by SIGN North Tyneside to ensure that residents could easily find out about local services, events, activities and groups to engage with.



The directory includes information about formal care and support services like homecare providers and care homes, as well as the North Tyneside Personal Assistant (PA) Register. It also includes information about activities, groups and services that are for all residents, not just those with care and support needs.

Link to My Care: mycare.northtyneside.gov.uk

6.2. Information & Signposting

Information and sign posters within North Tyneside play an important role in supporting residents to access information and advice; this may be because they don't have access to or the skills to use technology.

SIGN North Tyneside is a network of Council and community and voluntary sector providers of free, independent and confidential information. The Network aims to put people in need of practical or emotional help and guidance in touch with those local organisations best able to provide it.



SIGN currently has 22 members with plans for more to join. The Network meets regularly to ensure the quality and consistency of the information and signposting they provide.

Current SIGN members are:

- Age UK North Tyneside
- Community and Healthcare Forum
- Disability North
- Independent Advocacy North East
- Learning Disability North East
- North Tyneside Carers Centre
- Citizens Advice Bureau North Tyneside
- North Tyneside Coalition of Disabled People
- Skills for People
- Healthwatch North Tyneside
- North Tyneside Council Adult Social Care Gateway.
- Care & Connect
- Healthwatch North Tyneside
- VODA
- North Tyneside Libraries
- North Tyneside Clinical Commissioning Group
- Northumbria Healthcare NHS Trust
- Mind Tyneside and Northumberland
- The Golden Guide
- Patient Advice Liaison Service
- Safe and Healthy Homes
- North Tyneside Business Forum

Information and sign posters are able to support residents who don't have access to IT or the skills to use IT to access My Care North Tyneside and its interactive tools, including the SIGN Directory. This ensures that regardless of IT ability or access, all residents receive consistent support to access information and advice.

Care Navigators, who are based within each North Tyneside GP Practice, are also part of our signposting offer, and can support patients to access support and services locally to support them with areas of their life.

Link to SIGN North Tyneside: www.sign-nt.co.uk

6.3 Advisors



Advice providers build on information and signposting, providing specific guidance and direction on a particular course of action.

Advice providers sometimes specialise in a particular issue, need or client group and offer more intensive, prolonged types of support.

Some of our advisors include:

- North Tyneside Citizens Advice – free, independent and confidential advice to everyone covering, benefits, debt, care issues, finance, housing, employment and discrimination etc. Advice is provided through, web, telephone, face to face contact and borough wide drop in sessions.
- North Tyneside Age UK - tailored advice for those 50+ years. They provide free information and advice to help you on topics as diverse as claiming benefits, housing options to care homes.
- North Tyneside Council Adult Social Care Gateway - advice, screening and assessment for social care support.

Advisors are able to support residents who don't have access to IT or the skills to use IT to access My Care North Tyneside and its interactive tools, including the SIGN Directory. This ensures that regardless of IT ability or access, all residents receive consistent support to access information and advice.

6.4 Connectors & Resilience



Connectors provide practical advice and assistance to connect people to the services they need in their local area. Support may involve an opportunity to look at the needs and goals of an individual and provide time limited help over several weeks.

Some of our connectors include:

- Care and Connect – the service support adults by providing advice and support to stay independent. Support is telephone or face to face in community settings. The service offers tailored and detailed knowledge of the local care and support system and information and access to the Council's adult social care system, where needed.
- North Tyneside Council Adult Social Care Gateway – the team can support people to navigate My Care North Tyneside and identify any needs that can be met by universal services in the local authority. They can also undertake assessments under the Care Act and respond quickly if people need support to resolve an issue or require an intervention to keep a person safe.

Connectors are able to support residents who don't have access to IT or the skills to use IT to access My Care North Tyneside and its interactive tools, including the SIGN Directory. This ensures that regardless of IT ability or access, all residents receive consistent support to access information and advice.

6.5 Care Planning

Social work assessors provide a connecting role as part of adult social care assessments to meet both eligible and non eligible social care needs. They will offer or and signpost people to advice and information to help them to reduce or delay their social care needs from increasing.



This means they will look at a range of services, activities and support to ensure that people are adequately supported, but are also enabled to take part in every day activities, connected to their community and supported to improve their wellbeing.

Much of this will be done by working with the person to identify their strengths and assets; these are the person's abilities, skills, or knowledge, or the abilities, skills and knowledge of their social networks, like friends and family. It can also relate to community resources that the person lives near or could access with help.

Social work assessors are able to support residents who don't have access to IT or the skills to use IT to access My Care North Tyneside and its interactive tools, including the SIGN Directory. This ensures that regardless of IT ability or access, all residents receive consistent support to access information and advice.

7. Communicating the Offer

It is acknowledged that we need to clarify and increase awareness about the advice and information services available and how and when people can access them. Since the launch of the advice and information offer and My Care North Tyneside we have worked hard to promote them to residents in North Tyneside, including:

- Promotion to frontline Council staff who will also act as sign posters to residents accessing libraries and customer service centres
- Promotion to community and voluntary sector organisations who will also act as sign posters to residents accessing their services
- Regular articles in every North Tyneside Residents magazine
- Posters and leaflets distributed to libraries and customer first centres, with on screen promotion at key locations within these buildings
- Bridge banner and digital displays at key transport points within the borough
- Posters and leaflets distributed to all GP practices in North Tyneside
- Promotion on social media via Twitter and Facebook

- Development of e-learning awareness training package

8. Development of the offer

Since the introduction of the Care Act in 2015 a significant amount of development work and engagement has taken place to ensure the offer is fit for purpose and that residents are able to access the information they need.

This includes:

- Developing and launching the new My Care North Tyneside website in July 2017, offering an improved and more accessible website for residents to access information and advice on a range of care and support issues. The new website also provides increased interactivity through questionnaires about care and support needs and a financial calculator, to understand how much people may need to pay for their care and support services.
- The SIGN North Tyneside Directory was also launched in July 2017 with My Care North Tyneside, following much work to ensure it was easy to use and contained the right information to support residents. Significant user engagement was undertaken in developing the directory with residents, carers, council partners and the community and voluntary sector to inform the design and feel of the Directory. The Directory holds information wider than just care and support services, and is relevant for all residents to find out about local activities, groups and events.
- My Care North Tyneside was further developed in December 2017 to allow people to report concerns of suspicion about harm, abuse or neglect towards them self or others. An additional care provider safeguarding tool was also developed to allow an easier reporting method for formal care providers to report incidents or concerns.
- As detailed in Section 7, there has been a great deal of promotion around My Care and the SIGN North Tyneside Directory. This has included promotion to frontline Council staff and to community and voluntary sector organisations who will also act as sign posters to residents accessing their services, regular articles in every North Tyneside Residents magazine, and posters and leaflets distributed to libraries and customer first centres, and all GP practices in North Tyneside.
- All council commissioned care and support providers have also received direct information about the Advice and Information offer so they can support the people they work with. In addition they have been engaged to add their services and support to the SIGN North Tyneside Directory so that residents can find relevant care and support services to meet their needs.
- During 2016 the SIGN network began developing a SIGN Mobile phone App to allow residents to navigate to a SIGN member for help and support relevant to their problem or issue. The App was launched in June 2016 and was welcomed by residents and SIGN members who could use the App as referral tool to other members when looking for relevant support. The App has since been re-designed following feedback and is due to be re-launched during summer 2018.
- The SIGN network have continued to support the Advice and Information offer locally and there have been 15 face to face customer events where residents have been able

to interact with the new websites and find out more about the advice and information offer locally. This has helped to increase awareness across the borough.

- 20 sessions have been held with customer facing council workforce, including libraries, customer service teams, social workers, occupational therapists, and the Care Call team, to ensure they are aware of My Care North Tyneside and the SIGN Directory and can support residents to access them effectively.
- The SIGN network has attended all 4 Care Navigation Training workshops since they began in April 2017. The workshops aim to support the Care Navigators, who are based in each GP practice in North Tyneside, to understand the support and services that exist locally to support residents on a range of issues. The Care Navigators can signpost patients from their practice to a range of support locally once their training is complete.

9. Future Priorities and Next Steps

We are clear that people need access to responsive, good quality and up to date advice and information about the local care and support system. We are equally clear that we have much of what is need but want to go further and make it the very best we can.

What we will do next:

- Continue to engage with customers and the community and voluntary sector to ensure we have a clear understanding of need; understanding how local people prefer to access advice and information support and identify any gaps in the current offer.
- Promotion of My Care North Tyneside to residents and professionals within the borough; ensuring that people are aware of where they can access advice and information to support them.
- Ensure the quality and accuracy of the offer by regularly reviewing the information on My Care North Tyneside and the SIGN Directory. This takes place every 3 months.
- Ensuring feedback and user experience of the offer is acknowledged and acted upon, so the offer continues to be relevant and fit for purpose. This includes any internal or external reviews of the offer as part of regular review processes, inspections and service re-design.
- Further development of My Care North Tyneside; ensuring that the website offers more self service options and is a trusted point of contact for residents and other information and advice providers. Introduction of My Care 'Accounts' for people to access information about their care and support assessments and support plans, and the ability to interact with their social care worker online. Increasing information, advice and signposting about equipment for the home to keep people independent.
- Further development of SIGN North Tyneside Directory; encouraging more local services, groups and organisations to sign up to the directory and promote their offer to local residents. Identifying gaps within the borough by working with services and residents. Increasing the number of activities, groups and organisations on the directory that support children and families locally.

- Further promotion of the SIGN North Tyneside Directory; ensuring that residents are aware of the activities, groups and services available to them locally. Promoting the Directory as part of the End Loneliness in North Tyneside campaign.
- Increase the membership of the SIGN North Tyneside network; ensuring that the local advice and information offer reflect the needs of residents and the issues they face.
- Exploring funding opportunities through SIGN North Tyneside to expand on the support already provided and to develop new ideas and approaches to supporting residents locally with advice and information.
- Promotion and support to local campaigns that help residents get involved and stay active in their communities. This includes the End Loneliness in North Tyneside campaign which began in April 2018, the annual North Tyneside SAFE Week, as well as Libraries Week, Self Care Week, and Domestic Violence and Abuse Week, to name a few. Campaigns led by SIGN network members are also fully supported.

Appendix A

North Tyneside Care and Support Advice and Information Pathway

North Tyneside has a number of key points with which to access advice and information about the local care and support system.

Our longer term aim is to develop, simplify and communicate these options as clearly as possible.

The pathways and the services below are NOT exhaustive but give a useful guide as to the type of advice and information services that are available.

