**Care Act factsheet 1 - What local councils do - preventing problems, giving information and advice, and making care services better**

**Introduction**

This factsheet explains the Care Act 2014 and its supporting guidelines, outlining the additional duties and responsibilities given to local councils about the care and support of adults in their area.

**The role of local councils in care and support**

Under the Care Act, local councils have new responsibilities to help people in their area. They must make sure that:

* People get help to stop their care needs getting worse.
* Individuals get the necessary information and advice to make informed decisions regarding care and support.
* Individuals can access a range of high-quality, services to suit their needs.
* They are preventing care and support needs.

The Care Act aims to help people be more independent and maintain their well-being. Local councils must give or arrange services to stop care needs from happening or getting worse. They need to:

* Look at what help is already there, such as community groups or local charities.
* Find out what care needs people have that aren't being met.
* Find out what support unpaid carers need and provide suitable services.
* Work with the community to find out what help is around and help people use it.

**Improving information and advice**

Local councils must tell people about all the care and support services in their area. They must explain:

* The different types of care and support available, like help for dementia or personal care.
* What local services there are available
* How to access the available care and support services.
* Where to get independent financial advice regarding care and support.
* This information should be easy to understand for everyone and provided in accessible formats.

**Enhancing the range and quality of services**

The Care Act says local councils much help develop a market that offers a wide range of sustainable, high-quality care and support services to their communities. When creating new services, councils must consider their impact on individuals' well-being, fostering approaches that support and enhance the well-being of service recipients.

Local councils should work with care providers to plan for the future and think of new ways to help. This requires active involvement with the community to understand their needs and aspirations.

With more and better services, people can choose the care that's right for them. This means they get the care that suits them best.