**Care Act factsheet 3 - Personalising care and support planning**

**Introduction**

It's really important to highlight the importance placed on personal budgets in the Care Act. Without a clear legal basis for this important policy, local councils might not know what they have to do, and people might not be sure about what they're entitled to.

This factsheet explains how the Care Act, along with rules and guidance, gives people more control over how their needs are met.

**Understanding care and support planning**

Everyone has different care needs, so it's important to plan in a way that suits each person. Care and support planning helps figure out the best way to meet someone's needs. This includes looking at what the person needs and wants, what they can do themselves, what help is already there, and what other options are available locally.

Planning involves the local council, the individual, unpaid carers, and others who should be involved. If the person can't make decisions for themselves, others who care about their well-being should also be included. The local council and the individual agree on how the needs will be met, and this is written down in a detailed plan.

In this planning process, the local authority tells the person how much money they have for their care and support. This budget, which includes what the authority will pay, helps the person make decisions about their care.

With this budget information, the person can ask the local authority for a direct payment. This payment goes to the person or their representative, giving them control over arranging their own support.

**Provisions of the Care Act**

The Care Act says local councils must meet a person's care needs, and it outlines the process, even when it's not required. It makes it a legal requirement for local councils to provide a care and support plan, or a support plan for unpaid carers.

For the first time, the Act gives people a legal right to a personal budget as part of their care and support plan. This means people can ask for a direct payment, giving them control over the money allocated in the plan.

The Act says local councils must provide advice to individuals, even if they don't qualify for statutory support, to help them address their needs or prevent future ones. Individuals have to be involved in developing their plan, and they can get help from an independent advocate if needed.

Local councils also have to review the plan regularly to make sure it still meets the individual’s needs and goals. Individuals can also ask for a review whenever they want.