

## **Self Directed Support**

A Supported Self Assessment Questionnaire (SSAQ) is a document which records your needs and what support you might need to carry on living independently in the community.

Completing the questionnaire enables social care workers to assess your needs and determine whether you are eligible for social care support. Government guidance helps staff decide who can and can't receive funded support from social care. Making sure there is a fair and equal service to everyone.

The questionnaire asks you about your life, what kind of support you need and what you would like to achieve. Your social worker will agree your completed Questionnaire with you and from your answers, will work out a Personal Budget for the support you need. For example, you may be assessed as needing someone to help you get dressed for one hour a week. Social care can arrange this or give you a "personal budget" the money to buy this service yourself.

You can fill in the questionnaire by yourself, with assistance from your family, a friend or carer, your Supporting Officer, or someone else you trust. We can arrange for an advocate (this is someone independent that can speak on your behalf) to assist you if necessary. A Supporting Officer from Adult Social Care will then visit you to complete their assessment. You can complete the form on Darlington Borough Council's website or have someone to support you to complete it.

Information about what is included on the questionnaire is included on video clip number 5. The questionnaire asks you to tell us what your situation is and complete the "what I think" part. The social worker will discuss your assessment with you and complete the "what my supporting officer thinks" part. There is a box after each question for you to tell us anything else about your answer that you think is important.

### **Will I have to pay anything?**

Social Care work out what people over the age of 18 have to pay for the support they receive to make sure that everyone is treated fairly. To do this a financial assessment will need to be completed

to see what money and benefits for example Disability Living Allowance (DLA), Personal Independence Payment (PIP), Attendance Allowance to work out how much you can afford towards the cost of your support.

To work out the amount Social care will look at your income, expenditure and savings. If you have savings over £23,250 you will be expected to meet the full cost of your support. If you have to make a contribution towards your support you will be sent a bill every 4 weeks from the Council and you will need to pay this amount.

## **Eligibility Criteria**

This means the rules to see if you will be able to qualify for support from social care. Eligibility Criteria is graded into four bands, which describe the seriousness of the risk to your independence and well-being if your needs are not met.

The four bands are Critical, Substantial, Moderate and Low. You will qualify to receive funded support from Darlington Borough Council if your needs are assessed as Substantial or Critical.

When working out your eligibility social care look at the following areas of your life that are central to your independence and well-being. They are:

- How free you are to make choices
- Your health and safety
- Your ability to manage personal and other daily routines
- Your involvement in family and wider community life

When you are answering the questions, think about the types of support that will help you:

- be healthy and safe
- have the best quality of life possible
- be as active and independent as possible
- make decisions about your own life
- live safely, free from being treated badly or harassed
- have enough money to live on, including being able to work or get all the benefits available
- to be respected by others

As you complete the form you will see some pages titled 'For Supporting Officer Use Only'. These are reminders for your Social worker to make sure that everything that you may need support with is included in your assessment. You do not need to fill these in.

If you are eligible for support from the Council, we will then use the answers from your assessment to work out the likely amount of your Personal Budget. This is an estimated amount of money social care think your support will cost.

### **Support Plan**

The next step is to work out how you want to organise your support. This is known as your Support Plan. A Support Plan describes how you will use your Personal Budget to achieve the things you have identified to help improve the quality of your life. You can provide information for your Support Plan yourself, or ask family, friends or carers to contribute. Local independent organisations will also be able to help you.

### **Personal budget**

Your Support Plan will be produced by Darlington Borough Council with your agreement. It will set out the actual cost of your support. This is known as your **actual Personal Budget**.

A Personal Budget can be taken as a Direct Payment for you to arrange and manage services yourself, or, if you prefer, you can ask the Council to arrange services on your behalf using your budget. Your Social worker will explain more about this when they visit you.

### **Supported Self Directed Review.**

Within 3 months of when you received your Personal Budget, and then each year after that, an appointment will be made with you to carry out your **Supported Self Directed Review**. This is because social care want to know how your personal budget is working for you. Sometimes, reviews might happen more often, depending on your circumstances.

Supported Self Assessment Questionnaires are also available from Adult Social Care, Central House, Gladstone Street, Darlington, DL3 6JX. Tel: 01325 346200.

E-mail: [ssact@darlington.gcsx.gov.uk](mailto:ssact@darlington.gcsx.gov.uk)

If you would like to know what questions are asked in the Supported Self Assessment Questionnaire - see video clip 5.