Considering your care needs

advice and support for older age
Independent Age

What are the key things that you have difficulty with?

Look at all the different areas covered by the needs assessment when thinking about this – see below. These are known as care outcomes. Be as detailed as possible. Don't leave out any problems you have because you think they are too minor. You may want to keep a diary to show how things affect you at different times.

What do your care needs stop you doing that you used to do, or would like to do in the future?

You need to be able to show the impact that your care needs are having on your wellbeing, and how you feel about it, so be honest.

What does wellbeing mean?

Wellbeing covers a lot of areas, including:

- your personal relationships – family and friends
- your physical and mental health and emotional wellbeing
- your safety
- your control over your daily life – which includes control over your care and support and the way it's provided
- being able to work, study, volunteer or take part in leisure activities
- your economic wellbeing – for example, whether there are any benefits you could be claiming
- where you live – how suitable it is for example
- feeling that you're contributing to society
- being treated with dignity and respect.

For each of the care outcomes, consider the following:

- Can you do this without help?
- Does it take you a long time or cause you pain or anxiety?
- Can you do it safely?
- Does anyone help you?
- What sort of help do you need?

Managing and maintaining nutrition

This is about preparing and eating food and getting enough to drink so you can stay healthy. It includes being able to shop for food and any physical difficulties you might have, such as problems swallowing.

Examples of things to consider:

You need to be able to show the impact that your care needs are having on your wellbeing, and how you feel about it, so be honest.

- Does your illness or the medication you take affect your eating and / or drinking?
- What do you eat? Do you have a healthy diet?
- Can you do your own shopping?
- Do you need help to prepare drinks and snacks?
- Do you need help to prepare main meals?
- Can you check use-by dates and tell if food is fresh?
- Do you need help with eating and drinking?
- Do you need someone to remind or encourage you to eat?
- Do you need any special equipment to help you in the kitchen?
- Do you have any kind of feeding aid such as a PEG feed?

My difficulties:	How this affects my wellbeing:

Managing and maintaining nutrition continued

My difficulties:	How this affects my wellbeing:

Maintaining personal hygiene

This is about whether you're able to wash yourself without help and keep your clothes clean.

Examples of things to consider:

- Can you wash your whole body – for example, can you reach your back and your feet?
- Can you get in and out of the bath or shower?
- Can you do your own laundry?
- Are you able to buy cleaning products?
- Do you have a washing machine?
- Does your medical condition mean that you have to do more laundry?
- Are you able to look after your personal appearance?
- Can you manage things like washing your hair / shaving / cutting your nails / looking after your feet?
- Do you have problems with your teeth / dentures?

My difficulties:	How this affects my wellbeing:

Maintaining personal hygiene continued

My difficulties:	How this affects my wellbeing:

Managing toilet needs

This is about being able to get to and use a toilet, and manage your toilet needs.

Examples of things to consider:

- Do you need help using the toilet?
- Do you need help managing continence?
- Does your medical condition affect your continence?
- Does your medication cause incontinence?
- Can you get to the toilet in time?
- Is your toilet accessible?
- Have you ever had a fall when trying to get to the toilet?
- Do you have to get up in the night?
- Do you need help to get out of bed?
- Do you need help changing bedding?

My difficulties:	How this affects my wellbeing:

Managing toilet needs continued

My difficulties:	How this affects my wellbeing:

Being appropriately clothed

This is about being able to dress yourself and wearing the right clothes for the weather or situation. Being inappropriately dressed could have an impact on your health or other care outcomes, for example accessing and engaging in work, training, education or volunteering.

Examples of things to consider:

- Can you get dressed and undressed by yourself?
- Do you need anyone to help you?
- Do you wear the right clothes for the weather?
- Do you wear warm clothes in the winter?
- Are there any things you find difficult – for example, buttons, laces, bending to put on socks and shoes?
- Are you able to dress in more formal clothes? Can you put on a tie or zip up a dress?
- Do you remember to wear a coat when it's cold or raining?
- Are you able to buy new clothes?
- Can you keep your clothes and shoes clean and in good condition?
- Do you have a sensory impairment (for example, sight or smell loss) that makes it difficult for you to tell if your clothes are clean / you're wearing the right clothes?

My difficulties:	How this affects my wellbeing:

Being appropriately clothed continued

My difficulties:	How this affects my wellbeing:

Being able to make use of your home safely

This is about moving around your home and includes getting up stairs, using kitchen facilities or accessing the bathroom and toilet, as well as the area around the home, for example steps leading up to your home. Your answers may prompt a referral to an occupational therapist to assess your home and advise you about aids and adaptations.

Examples of things to consider:

- Do you have difficulties getting in and out of your home?
- Can you get up and down stairs?
- Can you access and use all the rooms in your home? Upstairs and downstairs?
- Can you access and use all your appliances safely, such as your cooker or heaters?
- Can you get in and out of bed without help?
- Can you get on and off the sofa or your armchair without help?
- Have you had any falls?
- Do you need / have you got any equipment, for example, hoists or walking aids such as a Zimmer or Delta frame, or any electronic devices (telecare) such as a red button alarm or sensors?
- Do you use a wheelchair? Are all the doors wide enough?
- Is it safe for you to be on your own at home?
- Is your home suitable for your needs?

My difficulties:	How this affects my wellbeing:

Being able to make use of your home safely continued

My difficulties:	How this affects my wellbeing:

Maintaining a habitable home environment

This is about keeping your home clean, safe and fit for living in, with access to amenities such as water, gas and electricity. For example, being unable to keep the kitchen clean may lead to problems with infestations.

Examples of things to consider:

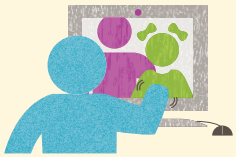
- Do you need help with the housework such as laundry and cleaning?
- Do you find it difficult to do chores?
- Can you keep your home free from clutter and mess?
- Have you got a lot of stuff that makes it hard to move around your home?
- Are you able to pay all your bills? Do you need support to do that?
- Can you pay your rent/mortgage?
- Do you sometimes forget to turn things off – for example, taps or the cooker?
- Do you have a sensory impairment (for example, sight or hearing loss) that may mean you're at risk of falls or fire?
- Is your home damp? Can you keep it warm?
- Are you able to keep it in good repair? Can you do things like take out the rubbish, change light bulbs, test and change batteries in your smoke alarm for example?

My difficulties:	How this affects my wellbeing:

Maintaining a habitable home environment continued

My difficulties:	How this affects my wellbeing:

Developing and maintaining family or other personal relationships



This is about meeting and staying in touch with new people or the people that you already know. Social contact is important for your wellbeing and isolation can lead to anxiety and depression. Some people are happy being on their own but others need more contact. It's also possible to have lots of social contact and still feel lonely. Think about how much contact you need and how it affects your mood.

Examples of things to consider:

- Do you have a social life?
- Do you feel isolated or lonely?
- Does your health condition make it hard for you to meet new people?
- Who do you go to if you need help or support?
- Do you feel you need more contact with people?
- Do you need support to help you have contact with other people – for example, making arrangements, help with transport?
- Do you need help when you're with other people? For example, help to communicate.
- How do you stay in contact with other people? By phone, doing activities, online (Skype, email, social networks)?

My difficulties:	How this affects my wellbeing:

Developing and maintaining family or other personal relationships continued

My difficulties:	How this affects my wellbeing:

Accessing and engaging in work, training, education or volunteering

This is about having a job, learning new skills, how you spend your leisure time, being able to pursue your personal interests and enjoying life. You may be asked if you're able to get involved in any opportunities that you want to and whether you need support.

Examples of things to consider:

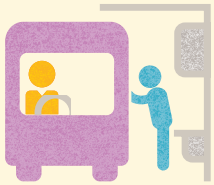
- Are you able to leave your home safely?
- Is there something you'd like to be able to do but can't?
- Could you do a course if you wanted to?
- Did you use to have a hobby that you can no longer do because of your condition?
- Would you need support to take part in activities?
- Do you have any difficulties communicating with other people?

My difficulties:	How this affects my wellbeing:

Accessing and engaging in work, training, education or volunteering continued

My difficulties:	How this affects my wellbeing:

Making use of necessary facilities in the local community, including public transport



This is about being able to get out in the community and use local services such as shops.

Examples of things to consider:

- Does your health condition make it difficult for you to get out?
- Can you get to the shops?
- Can you get out to other places you like to go such as the library, a café, the pub?
- Can you get out to meet your friends?
- Can you get to your place of worship?
- Can you use public transport?
- Do you have problems walking?
- Could you afford a taxi if you needed one?
- Do you need help getting to healthcare appointments?

My difficulties:	How this affects my wellbeing:

Making use of necessary facilities in the local community, including public transport continued

My difficulties:	How this affects my wellbeing:

Carrying out any caring responsibilities for a child

This is about the help you might need to carry out parenting or other caring responsibilities for a child. If you're caring for an adult and you need more support, ask for a carer's assessment.

Examples of things to consider:

- Do you look after your children, stepchildren or grandchildren?
- How often do you do this?
- Does your health condition make this difficult for you?
- Do you need support to do this?
- Do you need help to get them to school or to do homework?
- Can you help them take part in leisure activities?
- Can you prepare meals for them?
- Can you look after them if they are unwell?

My difficulties:	How this affects my wellbeing:

Carrying out any caring responsibilities for a child continued

My difficulties:	How this affects my wellbeing:

If you need more help preparing for your care needs assessment, you can call our Helpline on 0800 319 6789 and arrange to speak to an adviser.