

**DRAFT**

**Information and Advice  
Plan**

**2015-18**

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## Executive summary

The plan sets out Barking and Dagenham's strategic approach to meeting the requirements of the Care Act 2014 in relation to providing information and advice locally. It recognises that the need for accurate and timely information and advice is applicable to all residents aged 18 and over. This covers those needing care and support, unpaid carers including young carers, and people planning future care and their families, regardless of their ability to pay for care and support.

The plan covers all council provided and commissioned information and advice services, and other national and local sources of information and advice.

In developing this plan we:

- Analysed which residents are most likely to need information and advice about their care and support
- Undertook an initial mapping of local information and advice and evaluated it against the requirements and recommendations of the Care Act
- Collected the views of service users, providers, partners and staff
- Consult service users to help develop and monitor the plan
- Adopted the Think Local Act Personal principles for delivering information and advice services

### Proposed vision

***Delivering high quality<sup>1</sup>, impartial information and advice supporting health and wellbeing***

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<sup>1</sup> By quality information and advice we mean it should be: accurate, valid, reliable, timely, relevant and complete.

### Proposed priorities

- Ensure there is a **comprehensive range of information and advice about care and support** available locally
- Ensure all digital and face to face information and advice is **accurate, up to date, easy to understand, and consistent with other sources of information**
- Offer **tailored information and advice about care and support (in a variety of formats) whenever possible** to help individuals understand their range of options
- Work with key information and advice providers from all sectors to improve the **co-ordination of information and advice locally**
- Develop and promote the **Care and Support Hub** as the borough's web based local directory
- **Transform information and advice provision** in line with the council's 'digital by design' approach to ensure quick, efficient and localised signposting

**An action plan** for 2015-16 showing the key activities to deliver these priorities is included as Appendix 3. As a living document the action plan will evolve during the year and a new action plan for 2016-18 will be developed.

## 1. Introduction

From April 2015 the Care Act places a statutory duty on councils to provide information and advice (for details see section 1.1) to the whole population that is both accessible and proportionate.

Providing accurate and timely information and advice is *'fundamental to enabling people, carers and families to take control of, and make well-informed choices about their care and support and how they fund it.... It is also vital in preventing or delaying people's need for care and support.'*

### 1.1 The Care Act 2014

The aim of the Care Act is to enable people to understand how the care and support system works, what services are available locally, and how to access those services including those aimed at preventing need and improving wellbeing.

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.

Specifically the Act requires local authorities to:

*'empower people to be involved in decisions about their care by providing information and advice, and access to independent advice to support their choices'.*

**Section 4 of the Act** sets out the areas where local authorities must provide information and advice, specifically:

- What types of care and support are available e.g. specialised dementia care, befriending services, reablement personal assistance, residential care
- The range of care and support services available to local people, i.e. what local providers offer certain types of services

- What processes local people need to use to get the care and support that is available
- Where local people can find independent financial advice about care and support and help them to access it
- How people can raise concerns about the safety or wellbeing of someone who has care and support needs

### 1.2 What local authorities must do to provide information and advice

The Care Act requires local authorities to adopt a 'co-production' approach to their information and advice provision, involving individuals, user groups and, appropriate statutory, commercial and voluntary sector service providers.

The guidance states that there should be a plan covering the areas listed below (full details are shown in Appendix 1).

- Duty to establish and maintain a service
- Audiences for the information and advice service
- Access to and quality of information and advice
- What should be provided – information and advice content
- When information should be provided
- Accessibility of information and advice
- Proportionality of information and advice
- Financial information and advice
- Understanding care charges
- Money management
- Making informed financial decisions
- Facilitating access to independent financial information and advice
- Information and advice on adult safeguarding

### 1.3 Links with borough wide priorities

The provision of high quality reliable information and advice to residents will help the council deliver its vision of *'One borough; one community; London's growth opportunity'* and key priority of:

**Enabling social responsibility** which aims to *'support residents to take responsibility for themselves, their homes and their community'* and *'protect the most vulnerable, keeping adults and children healthy and safe'*.

The council is committed to delivering more public services online and making online options easier and more accessible for residents to use, recognising the need for reasonable adjustments under the Equality Act 2010. This is based on the belief that to be sustainable in the long term, digital self-service options need to be the first point of call for residents accessing public services. The council's *Digital by Design* programme will develop means to switch users from face-to-face contact and encourage uptake of online services. This approach will be integral to delivering information and advice in line with the Care Act.

### 1.4 Definitions of information and advice

The council has adopted the Care Act 2014 guidance description of information which includes self help information, assisted information, advice and, specialist advice and advocacy<sup>2</sup>. This plan focuses on information and advice and uses the Care Act definitions below.

**'Information'** means *the communication of knowledge and facts regarding care and support*. This can either be passively available or actively distributed.

**'Advice'** means *helping a person to identify choices and/or providing an opinion or recommendation regarding a course of action in relation to care and support*.

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<sup>2</sup> This plan does not cover advocacy services which are currently delivered through Voiceability, CAB, DABD and Royal Mencap.

### 1.5 Purpose of this plan

This plan sets out Barking and Dagenham's strategic approach to meeting the requirements of the Care Act in relation to information and advice described above. The plan:

- Reviews the information and advice needs of residents and where they currently access care and support information and advice
- Identifies improvements needed
- Sets out the principles and priorities for the provision of information and advice
- Provides the basis for a service specification for future services
- Incorporates an action plan

### 1.6 Scope of this plan

The document covers local care and support information and advice services aimed at all residents aged 18 and over, unpaid carers including young carers, people planning their future care and their families, regardless of their ability to pay for care and support.

### 1.7 How this plan was developed

This plan was developed by:

- mapping the range of existing information and advice services, including independent financial advice providers
- working with key stakeholders to understand how their needs can best be met. Workshops were held with service users, statutory and voluntary sector providers and their views fed into this plan
- discussing it with key statutory bodies with an interest in care and support, e.g. Health and Wellbeing Board members including the Clinical Commissioning Group and Healthwatch

## 2. Who is likely to need information and advice?

While there is a duty to signpost residents to general information and advice, local evidence shows that there is higher demand than the rest of London on local adult social care services and a corresponding need for information and advice about care and support services (see Appendix 2).

The key factors are listed below:

- Barking and Dagenham scores highly against the deprivation index making the borough one of the most deprived in London.
- There is a large number of people under 65 living with long term conditions needing care and support.
- In the next 20 years the number of older people 85+ is likely to grow increasing the need to enable this group to plan for their care and support.
- There is a high proportion of young adults with learning disabilities whose transition needs must be planned for.
- The ethnic mix of local residents is significantly changing becoming more diverse, some of whom may need information and advice in languages other than English. The top ten languages other than English are subject to constant change.
- From 2016 the council will need to raise awareness of what the cap on care means for self-funders.

## 3. The current position locally

### 3.1 Current information and advice provision

A wide range of people and organisations are involved in the provision of information and advice locally. Some are paid and others are volunteers. Local people get information and advice in many ways.

Information and advice is available online on the council's website and on the [Care and Support Hub](#) for adults, which includes information about care and support options, provides details of personal assistants and information about activities to keep people active and improve their wellbeing. Children and young people and their families can access information on the council's website through the [Local Offer](#).

National websites such as NHS Choices, Age UK, Money Advice (MA) and the BBC provide web links to quality information and advice.

Face to face information and advice is available through the one stop shops, the libraries, leisure centres, council contact centres, GPs as well as from local voluntary and community organisations. In addition, social workers and other care and support staff provide information and advice on care and support services. The council's Intake and Access Team provides information and advice over the telephone, by email and, from time to time, face to face.

Information and advice services commissioned by the council are shown below.

<b>Provider</b>	<b>Information and Advice provided</b>
Barking & Dagenham CAB	CAB Barking office, Heathway Centre in Dagenham) and children's centres deliver generic advice to 5,000 residents
	Hate Crime reporting and case work
	Targeted debt advice service to families
DABD UK	Enhanced Welfare Rights advice delivering to 1,000 residents (sub-contractual arrangement from Barking & Dagenham CAB)
Carers of Barking and Dagenham	A targeted benefits and welfare advice to portage families (families of children with disabilities aged under 3)
	Parents in partnership (PIP) service - independent advice to children with statements
SEN- Pre-school learning alliance	Inclusion advice service for nurseries, advice to practitioners and settings about children

### 3.2 Mapping local information and advice provision

An initial mapping of local information and advice provision against the requirements and recommendations of the Care Act was undertaken. It shows:

- There are a variety of organisations providing information across most of the areas identified in the Act.
- No single organisation provides the full range of information advice.
- Some providers have client group specific services, whilst others do not.
- Information is available online, through leaflets and face to face from both universal and targeted services.
- The Care and Support Hub is the most comprehensive source.
- Generally the area in most need of development is independent financial advice on matters relating to care and support.

A detailed mapping of local information and advice provision is underway and will be used to inform future service developments.

## 4. Key findings and implications

The key findings from the mapping and stakeholders' views show that:

- i) The Care and Support Hub fulfils many of the information and advice requirements set out in the Care Act including safeguarding, advocacy and the Mental Capacity Act. However, further development of it is needed to make it the definitive source of information for service users, residents, partners and council staff and to enable it to support self-service and possibly self-assessment.

### **Development areas include:**

- Financial advice i.e. capping, self-funders, independent financial advisers, access to befriending services
- Additional information about sheltered, supported and extra care housing
- Accessible information on how to raise safeguarding concerns
- Information on getting power of attorney, the court of protection, and becoming a deputy<sup>3</sup>
- Information on transition from children's to adult services and employment support for disabled adults
- More links to the information on Health and Wellbeing on the main website e.g. Culture and Leisure sections to the Care and Support Hub
- Information in a standardised format and ability to print directly from the Care and Support Hub

- ii) The council and partner organisations need to be aware of the information and advice each provide. A system needs to be put in place through which partners' information is signposted, linked and kept up to date.
- iii) Alongside digital provision, that there will be requests for face to face information and advice giving. Within the council, the Intake and Access Team and other services such as Libraries and Housing currently fulfil this role along with third sector providers such as CAB, DABD UK, Carers of Barking and Dagenham and others. It is important that these services provide accurate and relevant information and advice derived from one source.
- iv) As there are many providers of local information and advice, it is crucial that this is quality assured and accessible.

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<sup>3</sup> Deputies manage the personal welfare or the property and affairs of another person, who lacks the mental capacity to manage them themselves.



## 5. Ensuring good quality local information and advice

### 5.1 Vision and aim

Our **proposed vision** is:

#### ***Delivering high quality, impartial information and advice supporting health and wellbeing***

The **aim** of our approach is *‘to ensure that people who need help get the right help at the right time in a style that suits their needs’*.

Service users need to be able to access information and advice at crucial points in their care pathway. As part our approach to prevention we need to provide residents with information and advice to prevent, reduce and delay any care and support needs.

Key to this is ensuring that people get the ‘right’ information and advice at the ‘right time’.

### 5.2 The future of Information and Advice locally

Information and advice will continue be available online as set out in section 3.1 above. The council is developing the Care and Support Hub as the borough’s local directory alongside its Community Network Strategy which builds on the ‘digital by design’ approach providing local access points where it is intended that residents can find a wide range of information. The community network should include:

**Community hubs:** using buildings where the community comes together to deliver localised services and advice, with the support of the council. Each developing hub will be responsible for meeting the

specific needs of their local geographical area and promoting community self-help. Services may include: a children’s centre, library, sports facilities, job centre plus, benefits and housing advice. As part of this strategy options may include:

**Community checkpoints:** linked through community hubs, so that all residents are within walking distance (one mile) of community support. A checkpoint is any building or organisation that is willing to help local people to access information and services.

**Community champions** – at least one in each checkpoint – helping local people to access digital information and guidance from the checkpoint. Champions will be able to help meet the needs of different communities by signposting to relevant services.

[CommunityConnect](#) which aims to provide relevant and accurate signposting to appropriate services including benefits, local agencies and other support organisations.

Care and Support staff will continue to provide tailored information and advice as part of the assessment and review process.

### 5.3 Financial advice

A key requirement of the Care Act 2014 is that each council must make sure that people are able to access financial information and advice which help them to plan and pay for their care.

To do this the council will ensure that its staff can actively describe the general benefits of getting independent financial information and advice and will direct people to sources of information and advice with appropriate expertise to deal with complex cases and issues such as debt, benefits, employment and housing.

Sources of independent financial information and advice will be signposted on the Care and Support Hub. Web links to approved national websites and regulated advisors will be listed.

### 5.4 Ensuring quality standards

As part of our approach to quality assurance, the Care and Support Hub will include information about the standard each individual information and advice provider meets. It is proposed that each provider listing will include reference to the following classifications:

- Care Quality Commission rating
- East London Solutions quality mark
- Subject to London Borough of Barking and Dagenham contract monitoring
- Council service
- Not rated

### 5.5 Principles

In developing our plan and any new information and advice service, Barking and Dagenham will apply the following principles<sup>4</sup> taken from the *Think Local, Act Personal (TLAP)*<sup>5</sup> programme.

#### Principles

- Involve people who use services and carers in determining what is needed and how it is provided
- Be available at the right time for people who need it, in a range of formats and through a range of channels
- Meet the needs of all groups
- Be clear, comprehensive and impartial
- Be consistent, accurate and up-to-date
- Meet quality standards
- Be based on a detailed analysis of the needs of the local population served by the council
- Be commissioned in tandem with advice, support and advocacy services.
- Avoid reinventing the wheel
- Signpost people to sources of further information
- Be used to inform future planning

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.thinklocalactpersonal.org.uk/library/AllPrincipalsFINAL.pdf>

<sup>5</sup> TLAP is a national partnership transforming health and care through personalisation and community-based support and is working to help councils prepare for the introduction of the Care Act.

## 5.6 Priorities

Following an analysis of local need and a review of current information and advice provision the local priorities below have been identified.

### Proposed priorities

- Ensure there is a **comprehensive range of information and advice about care and support** available locally
- Ensure all digital and face to face information and advice is **accurate, up to date, easy to understand, and consistent with other sources of information**
- Offer **tailored information and advice about care and support (in a variety of formats) whenever possible** to help individuals understand their range of options
- Work with key information and advice providers from all sectors to improve the **co-ordination of information and advice locally**
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**An action plan** for 2015-16 showing the key activities to deliver these priorities is included as Appendix 3. As a living document the action plan will evolve during the year and a new action plan for 2016-18 will be developed.

## 6. Monitoring the plan

The Care Act says that:

*"Information and advice should only be judged as clear if it is understood and able to be acted upon by the individual receiving it."*

This information and advice plan covers the period 2015-18. It will be monitored through additional questions to the annual adult social care user survey. Information will be collected as part of regular contract monitoring of services commissioned by the council.

## Appendices

Appendix 1: Information and advice must dos

Appendix 2: Demographic facts and social care need

Appendix 3: Information and advice action plan 2015-2018