

Adult Health & Social Care Eligibility Criteria

Implementation date: April 2026

Control schedule

Approved by Policy &
Sustainability Committee

Approval date 10 March
2026

Senior Responsible Officer

Author

Review March 2028

Version control

Version	Date	Author	Comment
V.1	11/09/2025		
V.2	15/12/2025		
V.3	24/12/25		
V.4	14/1/2026		

Committee decisions affecting this policy

Date	Committee	Link to report	Link to minute

Adult Health & Social Care Eligibility Criteria

Policy statement

- 1.1 This policy sets out how the City of Edinburgh Council (the Co) determines eligibility for adult social care services. Decisions are based on assessed needs, prioritising those at greatest risk to their independence, health, or wellbeing.
- 1.2 Eligibility criteria follow the Scottish Government's National Eligibility Framework, to ensure fairness, consistency, and transparency.
- 1.3 The eligibility approach aligns with the Edinburgh Integration Joint Board (IJB) Strategic Plan 2025–28, ensuring that health and social care services focus on:
 - Prevention and Early Intervention
 - Maximising Independence
 - Protecting our Most Vulnerable
 - Using our Resources Effectively

Scope

- 2.1 This policy applies to all adults aged 16 and over, who receive a Community Care Assessment undertaken by or on behalf of the Council.
- 2.2 Includes all Community Care Services.
- 2.3 This includes support via paid services or guidance to preventative and early intervention resources, community services, equipment and/or general advice.
- 2.4 Statutory services and support for people is available to those whose assessed needs have substantial or critical impact, meaning their independence, health, or wellbeing is at significant risk.
- 2.5 Adults with moderate or low assessed needs may receive advice, guidance, and community-based support but are not automatically eligible for statutory services. Support will be given to access universal and other community resources funded by the Edinburgh Health and Social Care Partnership.
- 2.6 This eligibility policy also applies to unpaid carers. Carers with a substantial or critical impact on their wellbeing or ability to care may receive support, while all carers are entitled to information, advice, and early intervention in line with the Carers (Scotland) Act 2016. The Council recognises the interaction care and support offered to a cared-for person and the experience of informal carers.

Definitions

- 3.1 **Eligibility** - The degree to which an adult's assessed needs require the provision of social care services, based on risk to independence, health, and wellbeing.
- 3.2 **Risk Levels** - Used to prioritise support; include Critical, Substantial, Moderate, and Low, reflecting severity and urgency of need.
- 3.3 **Assessment** - A structured evaluation of a person's needs, capabilities, goals, and risks, coproduced in partnership with the individual, families, carers, and other professionals.
- 3.4 **Prevention and Early Intervention** - Actions or services provided to prevent escalation of needs and reduce future demand on statutory services.
- 3.5 **Independent Living** - The ability of a person to manage daily life safely, maintain health, and participate in family and community life.
- 3.6 **Authorisers** – A manager within the Edinburgh Health and Social Care Partnership exercising delegated financial authority to purchase services.
- 3.7 **Assessors** – Staff including Social Workers, Occupational Therapists and Community Care assistants
- 3.8 **Services** – Services may refer to care and support funded and provided by the HSCP across a range of organisations including those delivered by the third sector.
- 3.9 **Immediate** – required now or within approximately one-two weeks
- 3.10 **Imminent** – required within six weeks
- 3.11 **Foreseeable future** – required within next six months

3.12 **Longer term** – required within next twelve months or subsequently.

Policy Content

- 4.1 Good quality assessment is central to achieving better outcomes for people with health and social care needs and to ensure consistency and transparency in decision-making.
- 4.2 Under Section 12A of the Social Work (Scotland) Act 1968, local authorities have a duty to assess any person who appears to need community care services and to determine whether the assessed needs require the provision of such services.
- 4.3 Eligibility criteria provide guidance on the circumstances in which the Council considers it necessary to provide services. In reaching these decisions, Assessors must have regard to the eligibility criteria, applying professional judgement in partnership with the individual and, where relevant, unpaid carers.
- 4.4 Eligibility for Health and Social Care services is determined by the degree of risk to a person's capacity for independent living, or health and wellbeing. These include risks relating to:
- physical or mental health
 - personal care, domestic routines or home environment
 - participation in family and community life
 - carers
- 4.5 Eligibility for services for people is fully in accordance with the Scottish Government's 2009 National Eligibility Framework which include four risk categories:

Critical risk Major risks to a person's independent living or health and wellbeing likely to call for immediate or imminent intervention and/or provision of social care support.
Substantial risk Significant risks to a person's independence or health and wellbeing likely to call for immediate or imminent intervention and/or provision of social care support.
Moderate risk Some risks to a person's independence or health and wellbeing which may call for the provision of some social care support managed and prioritised on

an ongoing basis or be manageable over the foreseeable future without support with appropriate arrangement for review.
Low risk Some quality-of-life issues but low risks to a person's independence or health and wellbeing with very limited, if any, requirement for the provision of social care support. There may be some need for alternative guidance support or advice. <i>(For example, council, health, voluntary organisations or community groups).</i>

- 4.6 In line with the Carers (Scotland) Act 2016, carers will be offered the opportunity to receive an Adult Carer Support Plan. Eligibility for support is determined by the identified impact of the caring role, as outlined below:

Critical Impact Indicates that there are significant risks to a carer's capacity for independent living and health and wellbeing. Likely to require immediate provision of social care services.
Substantial Impact Indicates that there is major risk to a carer's capacity for independent living and health and wellbeing. Likely to require urgent provision of health and social care services.
Moderate Impact Indicates that there is some risk to a carer's capacity for independent living and health and wellbeing. This may call for provision of some health and social care services.
Low Impact Indicates that there may be some quality of life issues but low risk to a carer's capacity for independence or health and wellbeing. There may be some need for universal and/or preventative support or advice.

Implementation

- 5.1 The policy will be implemented by all staff involved in adult social care assessments and development of adult carer support plans.
- 5.2 Authorisers are responsible for ensuring that staff are trained in eligibility criteria and decision-making frameworks. The policy will be embedded into all

Community Care processes, with regular oversight to ensure compliance and consistency.

- 5.3 Assessors will use consistent tools, risk indicators, and assessment documentation to guide assessment recommendations and determine eligibility decisions.

Roles and Responsibilities

- 6.1 This policy is delivered on behalf of the Council by the Edinburgh Health and Social Care Partnership via services delegated to the Edinburgh Integration Joint Board and ensures resources are allocated according to policy and legal duties.
- 6.2 Assessment Staff: Conduct structured Community Care Assessments and recommend eligible services that will meet identified need/s and risks.
- 6.3 Assessors and Authorisers have a duty and responsibility to:
- o Comply fully with this Policy
 - o Undertake relevant level of training
 - o Ensure they know how to access this policy
- 6.3 Authorisers review assessment recommendations and make decisions, provide guidance, and ensure policy compliance.
- 6.4 People and Carers will be invited participate fully in the assessment process to identify needs, risks, and desired outcomes.

Related documents

- 7.1 Social Work (Scotland) Act 1968 [Social Work \(Scotland\) Act 1968](#)
- 7.2 Carers (Scotland) Act 2016 [Carers \(Scotland\) Act 2016](#)
- 7.3 Social Care (Self-directed Support) (Scotland) Act 2013 [Social Care \(Self-directed Support\) \(Scotland\) Act 2013](#)
- 7.4 Care Reform (Scotland) Act 2025 [Care Reform \(Scotland\) Act 2025](#)
- Standards, Guidance & Plans
- 7.5 National Health and Social Care Standards [Health and Social Care Standards](#)
- 7.6 National Eligibility Criteria [Eligibility Criteria](#)
- 7.7 Adult Carer Support Plan Guidance [Carers Statutory Guidance](#)
- 7.8 Social Care (Self-directed Support) Statutory Guidance [SDS Statutory Guidance](#)
- 7.9 Integration Joint Board Strategic Plan 2025–28 [IJB-Strategic -Plan 2025-2028](#)

Equalities and impact assessment

- 8.1 For details of the completed IIA Statement contact Matt Kennedy

Strategic environmental assessment

- 9.1 The provision of social care services under this policy is unlikely to have a significant environmental impact. Services are primarily delivered within localities in a person's own home and/or local community, minimising travel and carbon footprint.
- 9.2 Any commissioned or in person services will consider sustainability and environmental standards where applicable.

Risk assessment

- 10.1 Risks considered under this policy include:
- a. Legal – This policy ensures compliance with Scottish legislation, policy and related guidance.
 - b. Financial – This policy ensures fair and equitable use of budgetary resources available to EHSCP in the delivery of services to people.
 - c. Organisational – This policy ensures that the City of Edinburgh Council is able to meet organisational responsibilities and has the necessary framework to deliver statutory social care services.
 - d. Reputational and Professional risks – This policy ensures assessments and eligibility decisions meet quality standards and legislative frameworks.
- 10.2 Mitigations – The policy ensures that it reduces risk of inconsistency in assessment and decision making by ensuring all staff have access to relevant training and guidance relating to the application of eligibility criteria.

Review

- 11.1 Biennially unless required earlier.