



## What measures have the Government taken to manage the effects of the Coronavirus pandemic to support the public?

- The Care Act 2014 sets out how people's care and support needs should be met, ensuring local authorities place people's wellbeing at the centre of all it does. The COVID-19 pandemic has placed considerable pressures on Adult Social Care making it necessary for the **Government to introduce Care Act Easements as part of the Coronavirus Act 2020.**

**The Coronavirus Act 2020** came into force in March to enable the Government to respond to an emergency and manage the effects of a Covid-19 pandemic. The effects of the pandemic could infect up to 80% of the population leading to a reduced workforce, and increased pressure on health and social care services.



### Coronavirus Act 2020

- The Coronavirus Act 2020 is a **temporary measure** and designed to amend existing legislation to mitigate the effects of Covid-19. These changes are referred to as **easements** which in its simplest terms will make it easier for key services to be delivered by providing some flexibility in how they are provided.

During these unprecedented times, the council may have to make some difficult decisions about the type and level of care and support it can continue to provide. This is to ensure the right level of care and support will be available for those people in greatest need.



## What are the easements and how might they affect me?

There are four easements that your Local Authority can decide to enact. The easements will only be enacted under extreme cases where the infection rates have severely impacted on the ability to deliver the service safely.



Easements	What the change is	What this might mean for you
Easement 1- Assessments	Local Authorities will not have to carry out detailed assessments of people's care and support needs	Normally an assessment would plan with people for the future and help people with social and community activities, but this is clearly not a priority right now. Instead assessments will concentrate on the here and now to meet people's needs during the pandemic.
Easement 2 – Financial Assessments	Local Authorities will not have to carry out Financial assessments in the same way they normally would	Financial assessments are normally carried out as early as possible, so people know the cost of the care they are provided with. Financial assessments will now be delayed and carried out at a more suitable time. However, the local authority will be responsible for discussing contributions and charging with people and should make you aware of the potential for charging.
Easement 3 - Reviews	Local Authorities will not have to prepare or review care and support plans in the same way as usual	Local Authorities would normally carry out regular reviews of your care and support plan, however there may be delays in these reviews, they may be conducted over the phone, or less detail may be involved. However enough information will be recorded to make sure people are safe and well now and their carers can continue to provide support. Also, if the Local Authority decides to revise your plan, they must continue to involve you and your family/carers.
Easement 4 – duties replaced with a power to meet needs	In the event of increased people needing support, Local authorities will be able to prioritise the most pressing needs	If the Local Authority find themselves not being able to meet eligible care and support needs, they will be able to prioritise the most pressing needs, for example enhanced support for people who are ill or self-isolating, and to temporarily delay or reduce your care provision. Only essential reductions in care and support will be made and services will be resumed or reinstated at the earliest opportunity.

## What measures your Local Council have taken so far?



It is important to point out that to date your Local Council have not enacted the easements. They have been working hard to ensure the people who already receive care and support continue to do so, and those people entering the care system receive assessments, care and support where needed.

Over the past few months your Local Council and voluntary sector have been working together to support you and your local community by:

Developing three Community Hubs all strategically placed across the City. The Hubs have been working closely with their local community to support those people who are vulnerable including the shielded group and those people who are self-isolating and do not have the support of family and friends.



**The hubs have been helping by providing support and advice on the following:**

- **Food**
- **Fuel**
- **Housing**
- **Money**
- **Payment of bills**
- **Collection of your medication**

To access the Hubs your Council have put into operation an urgent telephone number that the public can call **01482 300307**

The Council have also been working closely with care providers and offering advice and support to allow a more flexible approach to delivering care and support to the local community.



## What can I expect if the council decide to enact the easements?

It is important to reiterate that the easements will only be enacted if the rate of infection increases to such a level that the delivery of your services or support from your family becomes untenable. If this is the case your Local Authority will:

- Keep you informed of any decisions they may have to take prior to them enacting the easements.
- If you receive social care, a representative from the council will contact you to discuss your care and support plan and any concerns that you may have.



The outcome of the discussion may mean.

- You or your family members care, and support needs are delivered by an alternative provider or delivered in a different way; or reduced or suspended temporarily.
- You or your family member will not receive a review of your care and support plan during this period.
- You or your family member who are new to social care services will not receive a full assessment or financial assessment, but the Council will still respond to any requests in a reasonable timescale to ensure any urgent needs are met.

## What can I and/or my family do to prepare should the Council enact the easements?

You and your family could start to prepare by looking at your current care and support plan and consider the following.

- What aspects of your care could be delivered in a different way if any?
- Who else would be able to support you to deliver your care and support plan?
- What aspects of your care and support plan are important to you.

### Healthwatch and Public Engagement

Healthwatch will soon be conducting some engagement about the easements, it's important to capture the public's views on this, so please look out for our survey and/or focus groups that we will be conducting.