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| **Policy Library Pro Forma**  This information will be used to add a policy, procedure, guidance or strategy to the Policy Library. | | | | |
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| **Title:** Information, Advice and Advocacy Strategy for Adult Social Care | | | | |
|  | | |  | |
| **Aim / Summary:** The provision of information, advice and advocacy needs to be delivered through models where there is evidence that they are effective, cost efficient and ensure people have access to appropriate and proportionate information at the right time. | | | | |
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| **Document type** (please choose one) | | | | |
| Policy |  | | Guidance |  |
| Strategy | X | | Procedure |  |
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| **Please include any supporting documents** | | | | |
| 1.Adult Social Care Strategy | | | | |
| 2. Care Act 2014 | | | | |
| 3. Nottinghamshire Health and Wellbeing Strategy | | | | |
| **Review date** | | **Amendments** | | |
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**Information, Advice and Advocacy Strategy for Social Care**

**Contents**

[Foreword 3](#_Toc467755501)

[1. Context](#_Toc467755502) 4

[1.1 The Care Act 2014 5](#_Toc467755503)

[1.2 Nottinghamshire Health and Wellbeing Strategy 6](#_Toc467755504)

[1.3 Accessible Information Standard 7](#_Toc467755505)

[1.4 Nottinghamshire County Council ‘Channel Shift’ 7](#_Toc467755506)

[1.5 The Adult Social Care Strategy 7](#_Toc467755507)

[2. What does feedback and research tell us about how information and advice is provided currently and what people would like in the future? 7](#_Toc467755508)

[2.1 NCC Digital Development Plan, 2013 – 2017 8](#_Toc467755509)

[2.2 Adult Carers Survey 2014/15 8](#_Toc467755510)

[2.3 Annual Residents Satisfaction Survey 2014 - Information Provision 9](#_Toc467755511)

[2.4 Information and Advice for Older People Evidence Review, Age UK 2012 9](#_Toc467755512)

[3 Current delivery mechanisms 10](#_Toc467755513)

[3.1 Notts Help Yourself 10](#_Toc467755514)

[3.2 NCC Website 10](#_Toc467755515)

[3.3 Care Directory/Leaflets/fact sheets 10](#_Toc467755516)

[3.4 Customer Service Centre (CSC) 11](#_Toc467755517)

[3.5 Paying for care](#_Toc467755518)

[3.6 Grant Aid services 11](#_Toc467755519)

[3.7 Face to face provision 11](#_Toc467755520)

[3.8 Advocacy Model in Nottinghamshire 12](#_Toc467755521)

[3.9 Connect 12](#_Toc467755522)

[3.10 Information, Advice and Support for Carers 13](#_Toc467755523)

[3.11 Information on local accessible and adaptable accommodation 13](#_Toc467755524)

[4. Our strategy for Information and Advice 13](#_Toc467755525)

[4.1 Principles underpinning the strategy include: 14](#_Toc467755526)

[4.2 What we need to achieve 15](#_Toc467755527)

# Foreword

Proportionate, accessible, accurate and consistent information, advice and advocacy, is fundamental to all people making well informed choices about their health and wellbeing, as well as how to meet and fund any care and support needs they may have. It has an important role in promoting self-management, supporting a strategic shift towards early intervention and prevention and underpins self-direction and the delivery of personal budgets.

The Care Act 2014 recognised that the local authority has a critical role in the provision of advice, information and advocacy and to this end placed a duty on local authorities to be pro-active in the provision of information and advice for its residents. Importantly, the duty relates to the whole population of Nottinghamshire, not just those with care and support needs, or in some other way known to the system. It requires local authorities to pro-actively identify people with unmet needs and signpost them to preventative and early intervention services. Information and advice must not only cover basic information about care and support, but must also address finances, health, housing, employment and cases of abuse or neglect.

Nottinghamshire County Council is also facing unprecedented budget reductions, alongside a predicted increase in demand for vital care and services. The authority provided support and care for over 12803 vulnerable adults and older people up until March 2018. Home care was provided for 6631 people in 2017. It is therefore more important than ever that the Council is pro-active in ensuring that the right information and advice is available to people at the right time so that they can make informed choices about their own health and wellbeing and make best use of both public and personal money.

The provision of information, advice and advocacy needs to be delivered through models where there is evidence that they are effective, cost efficient and ensure people have access to appropriate and proportionate information at the right time. This requires different media approaches including digital, face to face and telephone. Although digital channels will be the main point of holding, maintaining and sharing information and advice, this information will be able to be accessed by anyone in different formats e.g. printed. The Council will also continue to provide information in different formats to respond to specific individual requirements.

Developing and implementing an Information, Advice and Advocacy Strategy is a complex and on-going piece of work which requires co-productive work and commitment from many areas of the Council, both departmentally and corporately as well as from partner and external organisations. For the purpose of this strategy, information, advice and advocacy are defined as follows:

**Information –** the open and accessible supply of material deemed to be of interest to a particular population. This can be either passively available or actively distributed.

**Advice**– offers guidance and direction on a particular course of actions which need to be undertaken in order to realise a need, access a service or realise individual entitlements.

Source: Margiotta et al 2003 Are You Listening (JRF)

**Advocacy *–*** aims to enable the voices of people, including the most excluded members of society, to be heard when decisions are being made about them or about the services that they need. The Council recognises that independent advocacy is an important service for the citizens of Nottinghamshire who are most likely to be excluded from society and least likely to have choice and control in their lives.

The definition of advocacy according to the Advocacy Charter 2002 states “Advocacy is taking action to help people say what they want, secure their rights, represent their interests and obtain services they need.  Advocates and advocacy schemes work in partnership with the people they support and take their side.  Advocacy promotes social inclusion, equality and social justice.”

The charter has been endorsed by the Association of Directors of Social Services and is supported by Nottinghamshire County Council.

This Adult Social Care and Health policy is subject to Corporate Policies and Procedures including, but not limited to, the following areas:

* Data protection and information governance
* Health and Safety
* HR

Existing Council policies and procedures can be viewed in the [Council's Policy Library](http://home.nottscc.gov.uk/working/policies-performance/policy/policy-library).

***‘Good quality information and advice will be available to all to help people plan for the future, reduce the need for care services and where possible maintain independence.’***

Guiding Principle from the Adult Social Care Strategy for Nottinghamshire.

## The Care Act 2014

S.4 of the Care Act contains the following requirements regarding information and advice:

1. *A local authority must establish and maintain a service for providing people in its area with information and advice relating to care and support for adults and support for carers.*
2. *The service must provide information and advice on the following matters in particular:*
   * + - 1. *the system provided for by this part and how the system operates in the authority’s area*
         2. *the* *choice of types of care and support, and the choice of providers available to those who are in the authority’s area*
         3. *how to access the care and support that is available*
         4. *how to access independent financial advice on matters relevant to the meeting of needs for care and support, and*
         5. *how to raise concerns about the safety or well-being of an adult who has needs for care and support.*

The Act requires each Local Authority to secure robust information and advice provision for all its residents. There is a requirement to identify people who have social care needs (including self-funders) and ensure people are provided with comprehensive information and advice about services in their local area, which is appropriate and proportionate to their circumstances and needs. This includes providing a written statement on universal and preventative services to prevent or delay the need for social care support and information to make informed decisions about social care and support, including access to independent financial advice.

**GDPR**

GDPR is about improved rights for citizens and requires greater transparency and accountability by organisations processing personal information. The Council will be required to obtain, process, store, protect and destroy personal information with the utmost professionalism and care and document that it does so. Existing Council policies and procedures on GDPR can be viewed in the [Council's Policy Library](http://home.nottscc.gov.uk/working/information-management/general-data-protection-regulation)

## Nottinghamshire Health and Wellbeing Strategy

The [Health and Wellbeing Strategy](http://home.nottscc.gov.uk/working/policies-performance/policy/policy-library/joint-health-and-wellbeing-strategy-2018-2022) incorporates the following key ambitions which are underpinned by the existence and accessibility of effective advice and information.

**•** To give everyone a **good start in life**

**•** To have **healthy and sustainable places**

**•** To enable **healthier decision making**

**•** To **work together to improve health and care services**

## Accessible Information Standard

NHS England’s Accessible Information is a standard for NHS and social care organisations across England to record the information and communication support needs of disabled patients, service users and carers. It ensures action so that the needs of disabled patients are met. It is being implemented through changes to IT and administrative systems to enable consistent recording of such needs. The organisations will be required to provide personal correspondence such as appointment letters ,patient information and leaflets in alternative formats such as Braille and ‘easy read’ format. Assistive technology such as providing British Sign Language interpreters via a live video linked system can also be used to engage with the deaf community.

More information is available on their website [www.england.nhs.uk/accessibleinfo](http://www.england.nhs.uk/accessibleinfo).

## Nottinghamshire County Council ‘Channel Shift’

The strategy should be considered along with the current corporate and departmental channel shift towards encouraging people to help themselves, rather than needing to ask someone where they can find the information they need. By providing information in a variety of ways we have speeded up the process for both user and provider. Ongoing web developments will enable users to complete e-forms, make appointments and payments online. The principles of Digital First are referenced in the NCC Digital Development Plan. [www.gov.uk/designprinciples](http://www.gov.uk/designprinciples)

## The Adult Social Care Strategy

The [Adult Social Care Strategy](http://home.nottscc.gov.uk/working/policies-performance/policy/policy-library/adult-social-care-strategy) is available in the Policy Library on the public website and on the intranet. The strategy makes the following commitment: to *“*Connecting people with support and information they can access in their local communities and helping them to make the best use of their existing networks*”.* The aim of the Information, Advice & Advocacy Strategy is to ensure that this commitment becomes a reality.

# 

# What does feedback and research tell us about how information and advice is provided currently and what people would like in the future?

Modern technological development allows greater access to technology via a range of methods. As a council we continue to make informed choices on when, where and how we communicate with our citizens to ensure it remains effective.

## NCC Digital Development Plan, 2013 – 2017

Increasing numbers of people (residents, employees and partners) want to complete transactions online wherever possible. Use of, and engagement with digital channels have risen consistently so online is the ‘channel of choice’ for many.

* 85% of Nottinghamshire’s population has access to the internet [[1]](#footnote-1)
* The equivalent of 27% of Nottinghamshire’s population accesses [www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk](http://www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk) each month. In 2014 approximately half of these visitors did so using a mobile or tablet at a cost of £0.09 per transaction. Each face to face transaction would cost £9.14.[[2]](#footnote-2)
* The NCC ICT Service Plan 2014 to 2017[[3]](#footnote-3) contains the following Channel Shift objectives:

1. Support the continued development of the County Council web presence and user journeys
2. Implement new Contact Centre solutions for the CSC to improve public access to Council services and efficiencies

## Adult Carers Survey 2016/17

## The Carers Survey is a national survey that is run every other year and is used to determine how well services are meeting user and carer needs and whether or not these services have improved carers’ ability to care and live a life outside this role.

## In October 2016, a random sample of 758 carers was selected to receive the questionnaire. These carers were aged 18 or over, helped or looked after someone aged 18 or over, and had been assessed or reviewed by Social Care workers in the previous 12 months.

A key result was:

71.0 per cent of carers who received support or services were extremely, very or quite satisfied with the support or services they receive

## Annual Residents Satisfaction Survey 2017 - Information Provision [[4]](#footnote-4)

Half (51%) of respondents felt either very well informed (9%) or fairly well informed (42%) by Nottinghamshire County Council about its services. This is similar to last year’s survey (52%), but a bit lower than 2015 (54%). Overall 44% did not feel well informed, which is a 2% decrease since last year (46%).

Seven in ten (71%) Rushcliffe respondents felt that they were well informed by the County Council, in comparison to 51% of the overall sample. Those living in Ashfield and Bassetlaw were less well informed, with 44% and 40% respectively indicating that they were not well informed. Respondents who had a long term health problem or disability were more likely to not feel informed (49%) compared to those who did not (42%).

## Information and Advice for Older People Evidence Review, Age UK 2012

This review, commissioned by Age UK, indicated that information and advice for older people is best provided through a range of channels and formats. For example, a combination of face-to-face and telephone presence might be preferable, supported by some form of written literature (to cater for those who prefer that format).

This perspective is further supported by OFCOM Adults' media use and attitudes report 2018 which identified, older people and those in the DE socio-economic group are more likely to be non-users of the internet, and the proportion of non-users of the internet is unchanged since 2014. Specifically it was identified that Twelve per cent of adults in the UK are non-users of the internet, unchanged since 2014. Non-use of the internet is more likely among those aged 55 and over (18% for 55-64s, 35% for 65-74s and 47% for those aged 75+).

Both reviews of research suggest that there is an over whelming need to ensure a strategic methodical approach to reaching the older population with advice and information.

# Current delivery mechanisms

## Nott’s Help Yourself

The [NottsHelpYourself](http://www.nottshelpyourself.org.uk/kb5/nottinghamshire/directory/home.page) website provides information across a variety of topics and for various audiences, not just for people who are in need of social care services. It brings together a number of information sources in addition to the information and advice systems from communities, libraries, health and children's and family services (including SEND), ensuring that it is a one-stop shop for information and advice around the county. The website has a multi-faceted search facility allowing residents to access the information they need quickly and easily whether they choose to search by key word, topic, age, condition or geographical location.

In accordance with Care Act requirements there is information for self-funders, personal budget holders, carers and the general population in a directory where providers can publicise their services free of charge. The website also provides an area for providers to promote assistive equipment and technology. Through the use of the [Equipment and Living Aids](http://www.nottshelpyourself.org.uk/kb5/nottinghamshire/directory/products_home.page) module we are able to pull together catalogues from a variety of companies to help people to purchase equipment that may assist them with living at home for longer without relying on social care services. The [Personal Assistant (PA) Network](http://www.nottshelpyourself.org.uk/kb5/nottinghamshire/directory/pa_home.page) provides an area for self-funders or those in receipt of a personal budget to find PA's who have undergone Nottinghamshire County Council's Support with Confidence checks and training. The website utilises the latest technology to enhance accessibility for all users. The Browse Aloud plug-in provides translation to over 70 languages and reads in over 30 of these. There are instructional videos for using the site and services, and British Sign Language to support those for whom that is their primary language.

## NCC Website

The adult social care pages of the NCC website are designed to help people find information that is relevant to their current circumstances and delivers the best outcome for them. Visitors to the site are invited to consider community based and preventative options, with links to more detailed information relevant to their search. Subject headings have been designed following user testing to ensure that people understand the language used.

## Care Directory/Leaflets/fact sheets

The [Care Choices Directory](http://www.carechoices.co.uk/region/east-midlands/nottinghamshire) is available in print or online and contains details of care homes in Nottinghamshire. Leaflets and fact sheets are available on the NCC website for downloading at the point of need. This approach ensures that they are quick to update and cheaper to produce.

## Customer Service Centre (CSC)

The Customer Service Centre provides information and advice over the phone for people who need it. The **Adult Access Service** based at CSC offers a first point of contact for all adult social care enquiries made over the phone. There is also a specialist **Benefits Advice Team** based in the Adult Access Servicewhich provides advice, support, information and training to the Council and voluntary organisations on benefit matters. A **Carers’ Support Team** is also based within the Adult Access Service and provides quick access to information, advice and signposting for carers.

## Paying for care

The aim of this initiative is to ensure that self-funders and their families can access specialist financial information and advice to assist them with making informed choices about their care pathways and how they pay for their care.  A list of independent financial advisors can be found on the [NottsHelpYourself](https://www.nottshelpyourself.org.uk/kb5/nottinghamshire/directory/home.page) website or be accessed by calling the Customer Service Centre.  Further information can also be found in our [Self Funder Guide.](http://www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/care/adult-social-care/social-care-publications/self-funders-guide)

## Grant Aid services

NCC supports several voluntary advice and information giving organisations through Grant Aid. Details of these organisations can be found on [Notts Help Yourself](http://www.nottshelpyourself.org.uk/kb5/nottinghamshire/directory/home.page). Where appropriate information will be provided in an accessible form, for example the Nottingham Deaf Society delivers signed information sessions.

## 

## Face to face provision

Nottinghamshire County Council Work in partnership with other local councils, NHS and police to offer customers a 'one stop' service. Services. Provide information in different formats including the opportunity to access information in libraries either face to face or using the internet facilities.

Advocacy in Nottinghamshire

‘Your Voice, Your Choice’ provides a single point of access to advocacy services. This service provides all NHS and local government advocacy services across the City and County together in one contract including NHS Complaints Advocacy or ICAS. The model provides Access to Advocacy (A2A) via a single point and a telephone number which can be called via the CSC, or directly by members of the public, agencies or organisations. Where a statutory service is required by practitioners, the model is designed to ensure that it can be undertaken directly with local teams as this may be linked to safeguarding processes or the use of statutory powers. The following types of statutory advocacy are delivered:

* Independent Mental Capacity advocacy (IMCA)
* Independent Mental Health advocacy (IMHA)
* Paid Representatives
* NHS Complaints Advocacy
* Care Act Advocacy

POWhER also deliver a limited amount of non-statutory advocacy; a hospital based non statutory IMHA advocacy service for informal patients in mental health or learning disability establishments and a service as part of the Transforming Care fast track programme.

Non-statutory advocacy support can be sourced from the online information directory [www.nottshelpyourself.org.uk](http://www.nottshelpyourself.org.uk)

## Connect

Connect is a countywide NCC service to provide information, advice and short term support for people who are at risk of deteriorating health and independence as a result of age, mobility, disability, long term health condition or bereavement. The service is aimed at people living at home who might be struggling with keeping active or managing personal affairs, or who might be feeling lonely.

Connect provides information about local services, activities and opportunities. It can also provide support with money issues, housing problems, health management and other related issues. This support will be tailored to each person and will focus on achieving what they want in a way that suits them. Connect is a commissioned service, delivered on a district level by local organisations.

## Information Advice and Support for Carers

The Carers Trust operates the Carers Hub, commissioned by the county council, which provides free access to a range of support and services for carers and their families across the County:

* Information, advice and guidance
* Signposting to other organisations
* Short break accommodation
* Access to Carers support groups
* Free gym memberships
* Access to Carers breaks
* Free training and caring support
* Carers ‘Smart’ benefits and discounts
* Carers’ grants
* Peer support

Carers can register to access the service – over the phone or by email.

Go to [www.carerstrustem.org/hub](http://www.carerstrustem.org/hub) for more details.

* 1. Information about local accessible and adaptable accommodation

[Notts Help Yourself](http://www.nottshelpyourself.org.uk/kb5/nottinghamshire/directory/home.page) has details of the District and Borough Councils’ customer service contact numbers which can be used to access current information about all types of housing. The [NCC website](http://www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/) gives information about [Extra Care housing provision](http://www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/care/adult-social-care/somewhere-to-live/extra-care-housing) and details of care homes for older people thinking about alternative types of accommodation.

# Our strategy for Information and Advice

The vision for information and advice provision is based on having one online point of contact that individuals, as well as staff who support them, can go to for information. They may then be signposted to other places or to specialist face-to-face advisors. Updating information in one place is more economically efficient, guarantees up-to-date, quality information and offers better access to information for individuals.

When providing information and advice we need to take a holistic view of the lives of individuals and ensure that partners are pro-active in opening up points for information through partnerships that are appropriate to people’s needs and circumstances. We will deliver content that flows across traditional public sector boundaries, wherever and however it is delivered, so that customers experience streamlined access to information and advice that is relevant and helpful to their current situation.

The continuing development of Notts Help Yourself ensures a clear, streamlined information pathway, making it easier for people to go to one place first, and reducing duplication of information directories and sites. It also provides signposting and access to independent financial advice, to ensure this will be available to people, including self - funders, at the right time within the new assessment and financial processes developed as part of implementing the Care Act.

The direction of travel described nationally in the Care Act, and locally in the Digital Development Plan, encourages people to help themselves where possible.

In order for people to be able to find information about services in their local area, the Council needs to ensure that the information is up to date. This means the work underway to manage and update websites and other associated information, such as fact sheets, leaflets, policies, information directories and scripts at the Customer Service Centre will continue.

## Principles underpinning the strategy include:

* Information and advice will be **proportionate, accurate and consistent** to promote early resolution of need.
* There will be support for people’s involvement in their assessment, care and support planning and review process through the provision of **advocacy services**
* **Online** information will be the main way of maintaining and sharing information. It will be available in different formats e.g. printed, text to speech, BSL, symbols and different languages.
* Face-to-face facilitation and **support** will be available to people who require it.
* The provision of information and advice will be **readily available to meet specific needs** where necessary,
* The **communication channels will be appropriate** to the needs of different adult groups
* All communications will meet [**Accessible Information**](http://home.nottscc.gov.uk/working/policies-performance/policy/policy-library/accessible-communication-policyhttp:/home.nottscc.gov.uk/working/policies-performance/policy/policy-library/accessible-communication-policy) Standard requirements
* Access to information and advice will include **signposts to other sources** where appropriate to ensure connectivity between local and national systems
* Working in **partnership** with wider public and local advice and information providers is essential to achieve better outcomes for people

## What we need to achieve

1. **For the public**

* The public can **easily find information** on services and financial information from one place online and via assisted services at the appropriate time
* Information is **open and transparent** and customers are able to make informed decisions on service choice and influence future services
* There is a **single point of access for information** via telephone, online and face to face
* Information is also available in **alternative formats** for those that need it.

1. **For staff**

* Information management principles and practices to be embedded in the organisation through **training, culture and effective system design; e.g.** how calls to the CSC are dealt with
* It is **easy to find** the information in Notts Help Yourself and the NCC Intranet.
* Sensitive information will be emailed to any third parties external to the council using Cryptshare, a secure email service which is available to all corporate council email users. All procedures will be in line with [GDPR](http://home.nottscc.gov.uk/working/policies-performance/policy/policy-library/information-rights) legislation as stipulated within the council’s policy.

1. **For our partners including providers**

* We share information and resources where appropriate in order to **work co-productively.**
* Staff from different agencies can access and use the same information when it is appropriate to do so
* We ensure that our **partners are kept up to date** with our services on a regular basis
* We share information to deliver a **more streamlined service** to the public and improve their outcomes
* Whenever possible we **share information** with **stakeholders** in order to plan services and organisations to deliver new services

1. **Information quality standards**

* Information is **fit for purpose**, **accurate and reliable**.
* Information is delivered in a way that is **accessible, and in different forms**, which may be online, by phone, written or face to face.
* Information is owned and managed by a **defined asset owner** who is responsible for its management.
* Information is **stored and managed in one place** not duplicated in different locations or systems.
* Information is **deleted when there is no longer a need for it,** but retained for legal or business reasons according to retention and disposal policies described in the NCC archiving policy.

1. **Market management and value for money**

* **Notts Help Yourself, is** an online directory of services that are available to people living within Nottinghamshire. This can range from a community activity through to National organisation.
* The website enables providers to publicise their products and services in order to be able access the individuals who would benefit from their service which includes both self-funders and those in receipt of a health or social budget.
* The website also has a market development functionality within the Provider Corner where Providers can access information on where there are potential gaps in services. This information can then be used by the providers to shape their future service delivery in line with local need.
* Providers can also access useful resources such Market Position statement and attender and funding information to help grow the provider market as well as reducing duplication of service provision.
* The information on the website is co-produced and can be updated directly by providers to ensure that information is accurate and up to date.
* Although the website is an online resource, members of the public can access the information by calling the Council’s Customer Service Centre, visiting local libraries or community voluntary organisations who will use the site to access the required information on the individual’s behalf. The website is regularly monitored and evaluated to ensure it is fit for purpose.

1. ONS 2016 [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. CSC figures [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. http://beta.nottscc.gov.uk/working/ict/strategies-plans [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. NCC and Office for Notts Police and Crime Commissioner Final Report 2014 [↑](#footnote-ref-4)