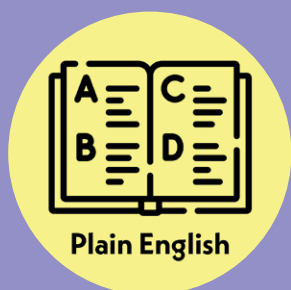


# Customer Journey: what to expect when working with your social worker



## Introduction

This guide helps to explain the support offered by a member of the Social Work Team. This could be a Social Worker or an Independence and Wellbeing Practitioner.

In this guide, we will use the term 'Social Worker'. This guide can help you to know what to expect, as well as the kind of the things a member of the team might talk to you about.

## Supporting Lives, Connecting Communities

Suffolk County Council's Social Care model is called Supporting Lives, Connecting Communities. Suffolk County Council wants to support people to live independently in their communities.

The team will also work with you to plan ahead so that you can stay independent. It is a 3 tier model:

- Help to help yourself
- Short term support when you need it
- Ongoing support for those who need it

Supporting Lives, Connecting Communities



## Preparation

Your Social Worker should prepare to work with you. This could include reading your records so they know a little bit about you.

Your Social Worker might also want to talk to other people who know you well, such as a Support Worker, family member or a friend.

Your Social Worker will also be thinking about a law called the Care Act. This law tells councils what help they should provide to people that need it.

Your Social Worker will also want to know whether or not you can make decisions about some things. This is called mental capacity.

Your Social Worker will also want to find out about where you live, who you live with and the things that you like to do. Your Social Worker should ask you how you like to communicate.

If you have technology that supports your communication, you should let your Social Worker know. When a Social Worker is working with you, they should make sure you are fully included.

It is important that you feel comfortable. This includes having the right support around you. You might want to ask someone to be with you when talking to your Social Worker.

Before your Social Worker talks to you, they should make sure you know what is going to happen and when. If you think you might forget things after a meeting, you can make notes.

You could also ask your Social Worker to send you their notes. Or, you can ask your Social Worker to include other people who can take notes, or remember things for you.

## Advocacy Support

When working with your Social Worker, an Advocate can support you. Advocacy is about your voice being heard. Advocates support you to speak up and can speak up for you if you need them to. In Suffolk, a partnership of organisations called Total Voice Suffolk work together to deliver advocacy services locally.

You can find out more about advocacy by clicking this link:

<https://www.voiceability.org/about-advocacy>

You can refer for an advocate by filling in a form. The forms are on this link:

<https://www.voiceability.org/about-advocac/advocacy-referral-forms>

## The different levels of support

After they have all of the information they need, your Social Worker will decide which Tier of support will best meet your needs.

Tier 1 is 'Help to Help Yourself'

This is short-term support to help you do as much as you can for yourself.

Your Social Worker should: Offer you good information and advice.

Information should be given to you in a format that suits you. This could be large print or easy-read.

Your Social Worker might offer you some advice. This might be ideas to do things differently.

Your Social Worker should: Offer you the opportunity for peer support.

Peers could mean people of a similar age or similar needs, or could be people who can relate to each other's experiences.

"It is important for me to come to groups and meet with people who I understand and people who understand me." Steven, self-advocate

## Tier 1: help to help yourself

Your Social Worker should: Offer signposting to other services.

Signposting means giving information about support that might be available to you.

"It is helpful when people tell me things. It could be something like a new course that I might not have heard about otherwise." Steven, self-advocate

Your Social Worker should: Tell you about community support.

Community support might also be online, for example, an online course.

Your Social Worker should: Talk to you about digital support and assistive technology.

Digital support means using technology to support you. This could be using video calling software to keep in touch with other people. Or alarms to remind you to do things.

Assistive technology is any device, software, or equipment that helps people work around their challenges. An example of assistive technology is text-to-speech software. Assistive technology includes low-tech tools too, like pencil grips.

Your Social Worker should: Talk to you about your strengths.

Your Social Worker should ask you about the things that you are good at. They should also talk to you about how you use these skills.

Your Social Worker should: Talk to you about support on offer from charities, or similar organisations.

Support from these organisations is usually free, or less expensive. It is a good idea to talk to your Social Worker about the organisations near you and what they offer.

## **Tier 2: Short term support when you need it**

Tier 2 is 'Short term support when you need it'.

**Tier 2 builds on support offered in tier 1, but with more support in place.**

Your Social Worker should: **Talk to you about services that are quick and effective.**

**This means services that support you well for a short amount of time.**

Your Social Worker should: **Talk to you about how you could become more independent.**

**This could be working with you on ways you could be a more independent person and how you can do more things for yourself.**

Your Social Worker should: **Talk to you about your support network.**

**Your support network is the people in your life that help and support you. Your network could include family members, friends, a partner or a support worker.**

Your Social Worker should: **Talk to you about the support that can be offered to carers.**

**Your Social Worker should: Always involve people who work for other organisations that support you.**

**This could include people who support your health. For example an Occupational Therapist or mental health support worker.**

## **Tier 3: Ongoing support for those who need it**

**If short term support isn't enough, your Social Worker will talk to you about long term support, this is called an assessment.**

Your Social Worker should: **Support you to complete a care and support plan if you need one.**

Your Social Worker should: **Talk to you about direct payments and whether this is right for you.**

**Direct Payments let you choose and buy the services you need yourself, instead of getting them from Suffolk County Council.**

Your Social Worker should: **Support you to complete a care and support plan.**

Your Social Worker should: **Talk to you about digital care.**

**Digital care could include something like supporting you to use a tablet so you can keep in touch with people.**

Your Social Worker should: **Always involve people who work for other organisations that support you.**

Your Social Worker should: **Talk to you about new things you can do and how you can learn new skills.**

Your Social Worker should: **Talk to you about transport and ways you can get out and about in your community.**

## Paying for your care and support

You will have to pay for most sorts of care and support if you have enough money. The council will check to see how much money you have and ask you to pay what you can afford.

The Care Act guidance explains:

- How councils must decide what you pay towards your care and support
- Your right to choose a care home if you need one and to sometimes pay towards this if it costs more than the council want to pay
- How councils work out what money you have.

## Personal budgets

A personal budget is the money used to buy your care.

The Care Act guidance:

- Explains how councils should work out your personal budget
- Gives information about personal budgets for carers
- Gives information about what to do if you are not happy with what the council decides
- If you are not happy with your care and support. If your social worker cannot sort things out for you and you are still unhappy they will let you know how to complain.

## Review

If you have a new support plan, your Social Worker should offer you a light touch review around 7 weeks after working with you.

Light touch is a quick check-in to see how things are going. It could be a phone call or video call.

Your Social Worker should: **Arrange a date for your annual review.**

This will be around a year after the support from your Social Worker. You should then have a review every year after that.

You are at the centre of this process. Things should work around you and your needs.

Your Social Worker should: **Invite the right people to your review, if you want them to be there. This could be a Support Worker, a friend or a family member.**

Your Social Worker should: **Work with you to support you to achieve your outcomes.**

Your Social Worker should: **Talk to you about how things are going and checking you have the right support in place.**

## For more information:



e-mail: [customer.first@suffolk.gov.uk](mailto:customer.first@suffolk.gov.uk)



Phone: **0800 917 1109**



Online: [Click here to visit the Suffolk County Council website](#)

## This document was made in co-production with:

Experts by experience: people with a learning disability

Experts by experience: people with autism

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