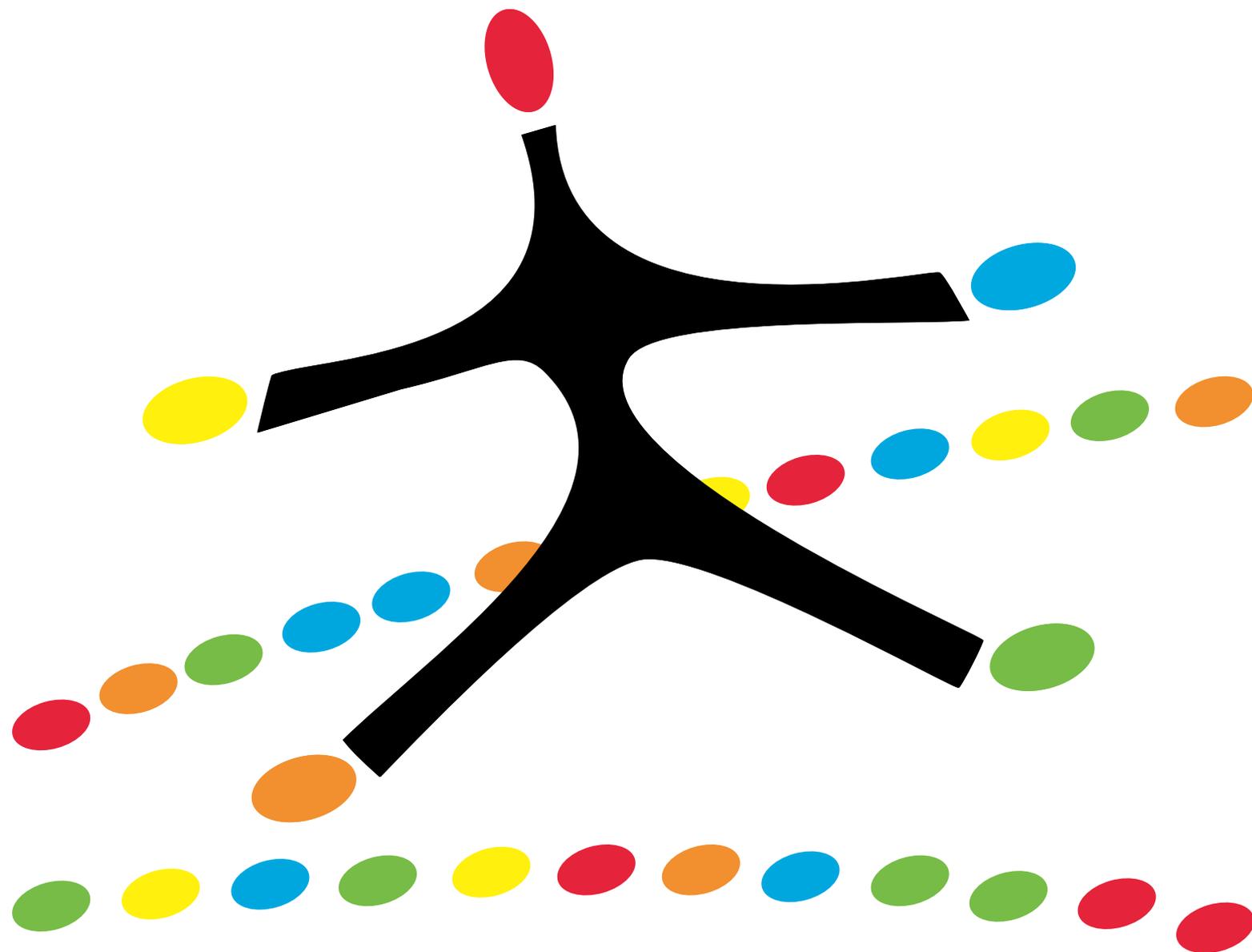


# Your health, your way

A guide to long term conditions and self care



## DH Information Reader Box

Policy	Estates
<b>HR / Workforce</b>	Commissioning
Management	IM & T
Planning /	Finance
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### For Recipient's Use

# About this booklet

This information booklet has been developed for healthcare professionals who are beginning to integrate the philosophies and goals of **'Your health, your way'** into clinical practice. Each section of the booklet has been developed to raise awareness of the different aspects of **'Your health, your way – a guide to long term conditions and self care'**, which was launched on NHS Choices in November 2008.

The central focus of **'Your health, your way'** is to promote discussion between health and social care professionals and individuals with long term conditions about what options there are for self care and what support and information is available. Linked to **'Your health, your way'** is the commitment that, by 2010, everyone with a long term condition will be offered a personalised care plan. This will record the outcome of a care planning discussion between the individual and a professional that focuses on what the individual wants to do, their goals, and the choices they wish to make. These discussions present a valuable opportunity to support the self care aims of **'Your health, your way.'**

This **'Your health, your way'** information booklet does not represent a definitive guide to implementing self care or personalised care planning in clinical practice, but rather offers an introduction to the concept of supported self care and personalised care planning.

Information is offered to assist healthcare professionals to understand:

- **The philosophies and goals of 'Your health, your way' and how they fit in the broader context of personalised care planning and**
- **The five core elements of 'Your health, your way'**

Additional resources and information to supplement this booklet can be found at: [www.dh.gov.uk/yourhealth](http://www.dh.gov.uk/yourhealth)

## PLEASE NOTE

The term 'self care' as used in this information booklet includes both self care and self management

# The policy context

There are currently over 15 million people in England living with a long term or chronic medical condition and, as people live longer and are exposed to greater health risks, the prevalence and healthcare burden of long term conditions is set to rise.

To meet the predicted challenges associated with this increased healthcare burden, the pro-active management of long term conditions is a key priority for the Department of Health (DH), the NHS, and social care services.

Encouraging self care for people with long term conditions forms a foundation of this work, and, in the '**Our Health, Our Care, Our Say**' White Paper published in January 2006, the Department of Health committed to:

- **Do more to support people with long term conditions to self care**
- **Promote well-being and community engagement**
- **Focus more on prevention and early intervention**
- **Design services around the individual rather than forcing their needs to fit around the service**

### ***Self care support is...***

about supporting people in the decisions they make to manage their long term condition. It is also about offering individuals the right information and support at the right time, and empowering them to take a more active role in their health and well-being in order to improve their quality of life.

### ***Personalised care planning is...***

about having a discussion that addresses an individual's full range of needs and focuses on goal setting, information, and support for self care.

### ***Self care is...***

about people taking responsibility for their own health and well-being. It includes staying fit and healthy, taking action to prevent illness and accidents, using medicines effectively, treating minor ailments appropriately, and seeking professional help when necessary.

### ***A care plan...***

records the outcome of the care planning discussion between an individual and a professional.

### ***An Information Prescription...***

provides relevant, timely and individually-tailored information for people with long term conditions and their carers. People will be given information or signposted to advice and support on treatments, care services, benefits advice and local support groups.

# Introduction to self care in long term conditions

These pages outline the importance and value of self care for individuals living with a long term condition. They provide a summary of what self care might mean to the individual and what approaches to self care might be considered in a broader healthcare context.

## *What is self care?*

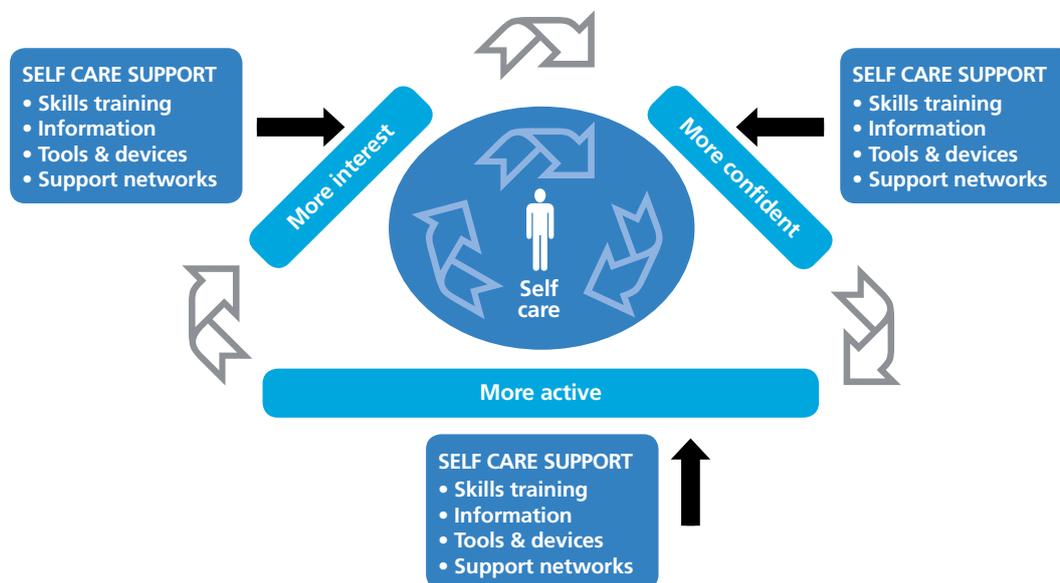
Self care is an integral part of daily life and is all about individuals taking responsibility for their own health and well-being with support from the people involved in their care. Self care includes the actions people take for themselves every day in order to stay fit and maintain good physical and mental health, meet their social and psychological needs, prevent illness or accidents, and care more effectively for minor ailments and long term conditions.

People living with a long term condition can benefit enormously from being supported to self care. They can live longer, have less pain, anxiety, depression and fatigue, have a better quality of life, and be more active and independent.<sup>1</sup>

The **'Your Health, Your Care, Your Say'** consultation demonstrated clearly that people with long term conditions want to participate more fully in self care.

<sup>1</sup>Department of Health. *Self Care – A Real Choice; Self Care Support – A Practical Option.* Published January 2005.

## How supporting self care can improve the quality of people's lives



Successfully embedding the principles of self care support into clinical practice – which is a longer-term goal for the NHS – should mean that each individual with a long term condition:

- Understands the nature of their condition, including risk factors and comorbidities
- Understands their treatment options and can make informed choices about their treatment
- Understands their medication, what it does, and how and when to take it
- Actively participates in decision-making with healthcare professionals
- Follows a treatment or care plan that has been negotiated and agreed with their healthcare providers
- Monitors signs and symptoms of change in their health condition and has an action plan to respond to identified changes
- Manages the impact of the condition on their physical, emotional and social life
- Adopts a lifestyle that reduces risk and promotes health through prevention and early intervention
- Has confidence in their ability to use support services and make decisions relating to their health and quality of life

This booklet has been developed to help begin this process.

## *Different approaches to self care support*

A wide range of approaches can be used to develop and support self care. Self-help and internet-based resources, telephone counselling, mentoring, and peer-based support have all been applied to helping people with long term conditions develop skills of problem solving, decision making, planning and self-tailoring health actions and interventions, with considerable success<sup>2</sup>.

*The ability of individuals to self manage will depend to some extent on what stage of their 'healthcare journey' they are on. Someone who has just been diagnosed with a long term condition will have very different self care support needs to someone who understands and has accepted their condition or someone requiring support for end-of-life issues.*

Individuals most receptive to the concept of self care are likely to be those who recognise that they have an important role to play in managing their own health and have the confidence to fulfil that role. An individual's willingness to engage in self care may also be affected by the quality of the relationship with their healthcare professional. So, good communication skills are essential for optimising self care.

The Common Core Principles to support self care have been developed to reflect the skills and behaviours required by healthcare professionals to effectively support people to self care<sup>3</sup>.

<sup>2</sup>Lorig KR, Holman H. Self-management education: history, definitions, outcomes and mechanisms. *Annals of Behavioral Medicine* 2003; 26: 1–7.

<sup>3</sup>[www.skillsforhealth.org.uk](http://www.skillsforhealth.org.uk)

## *Strategies for effective self care*

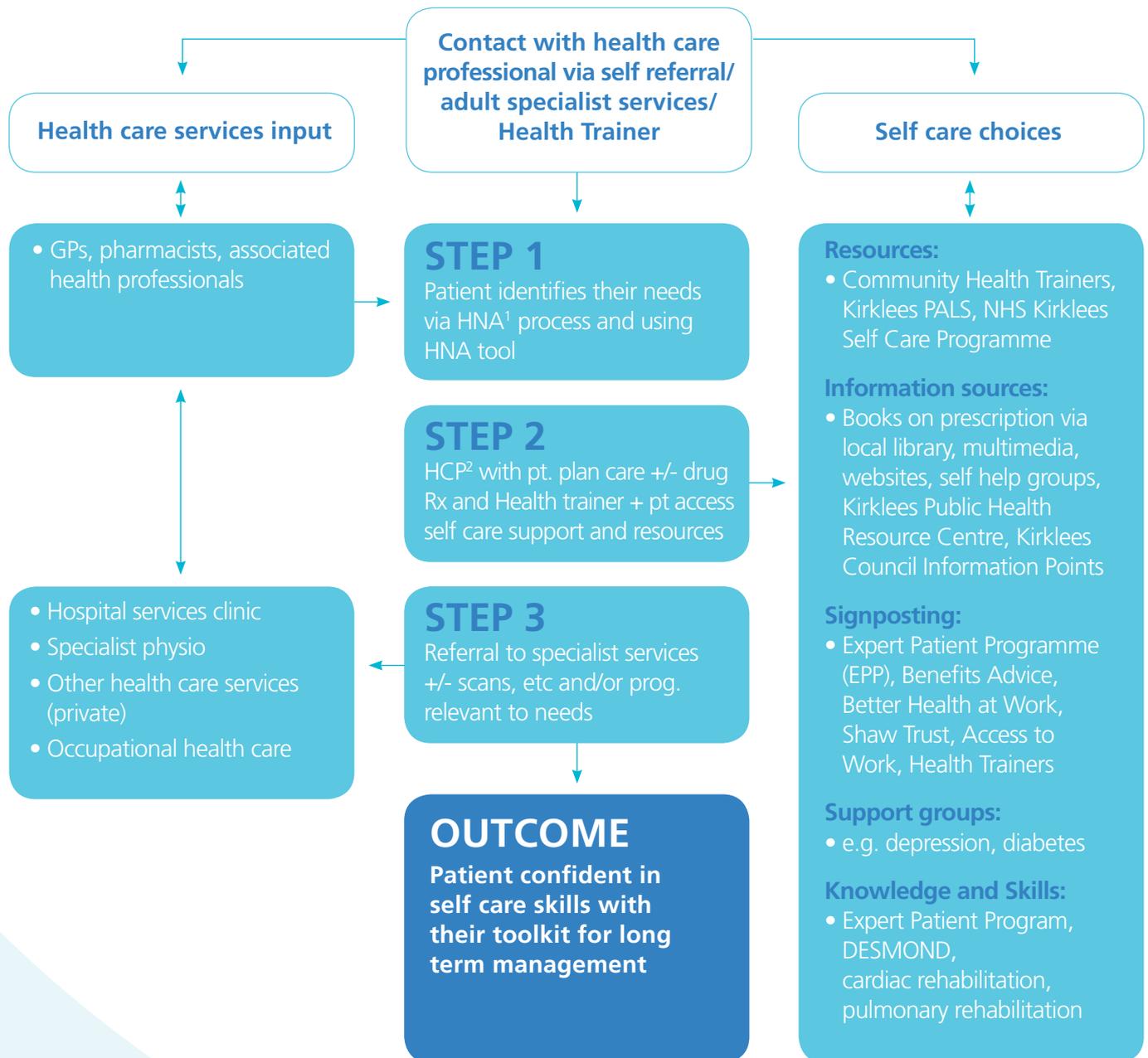
Effective self care requires more than just providing information to individuals and their families and carers.

It requires developing a supported process whereby people who live with long term conditions work to appraise their current lifestyle choices, think about important goals for them as individuals, and work towards gaining the confidence to attain those goals. A wide range of different healthcare professionals may be involved in that process, depending on the complexity of the individual's needs.

The illustration overleaf of a self care support model developed by NHS Kirklees<sup>4</sup> shows the range of professionals and the process that may be involved in developing effective self care support for individuals with long term conditions.

<sup>4</sup>NHS Kirklees. *Self care toolkit*. Published March 2009. Available at: <http://www.kirklees.nhs.uk/your-health/self-care-programme/self-care-toolkit/>

## An example self care pathway for practitioners working with people with long term conditions



<sup>1</sup>HNA= Health Needs Assessment

<sup>2</sup>HCP= Health Care Professional

# Introduction to 'Your health, your way'

These pages outline the background to, and rationale for, the launch of **'Your health, your way'** in 2008. They also describe the principal aims and the five core elements of **'Your health, your way'**.

In January 2008, the Prime Minister committed to putting in place a Patient's Prospectus setting out how the 15.4 million people living with long term conditions in England could access a choice of self care services. **'Your health, your way – a guide to long term conditions and self care'** was launched on NHS Choices on 2 November 2008\*, setting out the support that patients should expect to receive from their Primary Care Trusts and local authorities.

**'Your health, your way'** is not new policy, but provides an opportunity to draw together all the strands of work and information that already exist. It is primarily a generic product – applicable to all long term conditions – and covers five pillars – four of which are existing DH policy for self care, plus healthy lifestyle choices.

**It raises awareness to patients and the public about what support they can expect if they choose to self care.**

## Core aims of 'Your health, your way'

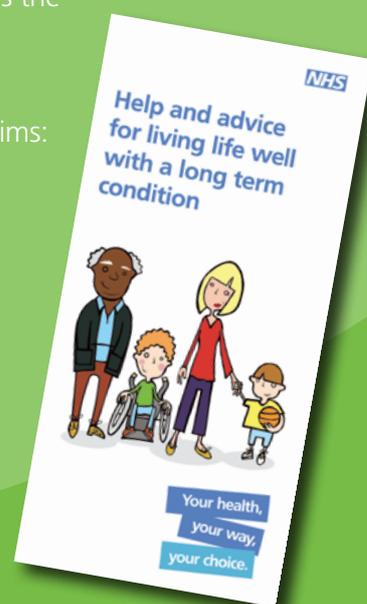
The core aims of **'Your health, your way'** are to empower and support people with long term conditions to understand their own needs and be able to make an informed choice about the self care support they wish to access from the resources available. These aims should be achieved through a process of collaborative dialogue during which the individual leads the discussions based on the goals that are important to them.

Five areas of self care have been identified as being key to achieving these aims:

1. Information
2. Skills and knowledge training
3. Tools and self-monitoring devices
4. Healthy lifestyle choices
5. Support networks

These are now discussed in more detail.

\*[www.nhs.uk/YourHealth](http://www.nhs.uk/YourHealth)



## Information

While information on its own is not enough to change people's behaviour, quality of life, or clinical outcomes, there is good evidence to suggest that a better understanding of a long term condition can positively affect a person's understanding of their symptoms and long term health, empowering them to take action when needed.<sup>4</sup> Individuals will differ in their information needs according to the stage of their 'healthcare journey' and they may differ in their preferred method for receiving that information. Many people would rather have a face-to-face meeting with a healthcare professional than be given written information. Ideally, therefore, an individual's preferred method of being informed should be established as early as possible in any self care discussions.

People can find information about general well-being issues and specific conditions from many different sources. Local libraries, adult education facilities, workshops and courses may have books and leaflets, videos and audiotapes available.

Self care support networks and local and national charities also offer a range of information. The internet can be a good information source, however, it is recommended that only 'quality assured' sites (for example, those ending in nhs.uk or ac.uk) are used.

### THINK

Do you know what information sources are available locally or nationally?

Do you consider how you provide information, and whether you offer the right information at the right time?

Can you direct individuals easily to the resources they might be interested in using?

Would an Information Prescription be of value?  
Is one already available?

<sup>4</sup>Department of Health 2006. Supporting people with long-term conditions to self care. A guide to developing local strategies and good practice.

## *Do you know about Information Prescriptions?*

The NHS Constitution sets out a commitment to offer easily accessible, reliable and relevant information to enable people to participate fully in healthcare decisions and to support them in making choices. Information Prescriptions aim to provide people with long term conditions with timely, relevant and reliable information to empower them to make decisions about the care and services they receive. They are not just about providing information on health needs, but also about offering information on wider aspects of health and wellbeing, including access to benefits and social care services. This fits with a more personalised, holistic and integrated approach to care delivery, supporting optimal health and well-being and increased choice. Information is tailored to individual needs, provided via appropriate delivery channels and in accessible formats.

Currently, people can generate self-prescribed Information Prescriptions for 18 long term conditions on NHS Choices at **[www.nhs.uk/informationprescriptions](http://www.nhs.uk/informationprescriptions)**. These provide excellent and comprehensive information on specific conditions and their treatment; they signpost people to where to obtain further advice and support – both locally and nationally – and how to network with others with a similar condition. From the end of 2009, supported information prescribing (where a professional works with an individual to help them select information) should be available and can be offered as part of the care planning process.

Information Prescriptions have been piloted across 20 health and social care sites in England. The evaluation report can be found at: **[www.dh.gov.uk/en/Publicationsandstatistics/Publications/PublicationsPolicyAndGuidance/DH\\_086889](http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/Publicationsandstatistics/Publications/PublicationsPolicyAndGuidance/DH_086889)**.

For more information for healthcare professionals about Information Prescriptions, please visit: **<http://www.informationprescription.info/resource/index.html>**.

**An Information Prescriptions e-learning tool will be available later in 2009**

## Skills and knowledge training

In order to participate optimally in taking care of their own health and well-being, every individual with a long term condition should understand the role they can play, and have the confidence to take an active part in any decision making. **'Your health, your way'**, highlights that individuals may choose to try and improve their confidence, communication skills and knowledge about their specific condition or conditions by participating in local or national education/training programmes.

Many different skills and knowledge training programmes and approaches exist, including lay-led generic courses for anyone with a long term condition(s) (e.g. the Expert Patients Programme) or condition-specific courses that are designed for people with a single condition (e.g. DESMOND, DAFNE) which are often professionally led. Both types of approaches have been shown to be effective ways of encouraging self care and improving health and well-being for people with long term conditions.<sup>5,6,7,8</sup>

<sup>5</sup>Barlow JH, Wright CC, Turner AP, Bancroft GV. A 12-month follow-up study of self-management training for people with chronic disease: are changes maintained over time? *Br J Health Psychol* 2005; 10: 589–599.

<sup>6</sup>Powell H, Gibson PG. Options for self management education for adults with asthma. *Cochrane Database Syst Rev* 2003; (1): CD004107.

<sup>7</sup>Norris SL, Lau J, Smith SJ et al. Self-management education for adults with type 2 diabetes: a meta-analysis of the effect on glycemic control. *Diabetes Care* 2002; 25: 1159–1171.

<sup>8</sup>Warsi A, LaValley MP, Wang PS et al. Arthritis self-management education programs: a meta-analysis of the effect on pain and disability. *Arthritis Rheum* 2003; 48: 2207–2213.

### THINK

When people learn more about **'Your health, your way'**, they may ask how they could develop their general or specific health knowledge and self management skills.

Do you know what courses are available in your area?

## Tools and self-monitoring devices

Tools and self-monitoring devices play an integral role in helping people to monitor their condition and take their medicines correctly, and one of the aims of **'Your health, your way'** is to ensure that individuals are aware of the availability of appropriate monitoring equipment and assistive technologies, and are informed and supported in their use.

The voluntary and community sector has an important role in terms of providing advice and information about equipment and tools to help people self care and maintain their independence. Housing and care services, such as home improvement agencies, will install aids and adapt and repair people's homes to help them live independently. The value of these services should not be underestimated and close links with social services can offer great benefits for many individuals living with long term conditions.

### THINK

Do you know what self-monitoring devices and tools people currently use?

Do they know how to use them properly?

Is there new equipment that might improve their quality of life?

Do you know how individuals might gain access to such equipment?

## Healthy lifestyle choices

Although many people successfully self manage their long term conditions on a day-to-day basis, some may still need extra support to understand the potential benefits associated with stopping smoking, losing weight, cutting down on alcohol, increasing physical activity, and eating more healthily. Achievable healthy lifestyle goals may be agreed during personalised care planning discussions, but these goals should always be set by the individual – not the healthcare professional.

### THINK

If individuals decide they would like to adopt a healthier lifestyle, how could you support them to do this?

Are you addressing health and lifestyle issues in your care planning discussions?

Could you help to encourage and support individuals using coaching skills or motivational interviewing techniques?

## Support networks

Community and voluntary groups play an important role in boosting people's confidence, providing practical and emotional support, and encouraging them to learn more about their condition and what might help them. A wide range of local and national patient-led groups operate in the UK; many providing expertise beyond traditional healthcare services. Patient support groups can offer:

- **Specific and detailed advice and information on individual conditions**
- **Condition-specific education and training**
- **Respite care and support for carers and relatives**
- **Peer support with people in similar circumstances**
- **Advocacy support, lobbying for service change and improvements**

Support groups and networks may be particularly important for people from ethnic minority communities, where language and culture can be a significant barrier to long term self care.

### THINK

Have you discussed whether individuals might find belonging to a support group helpful?

Do you know what support groups operate in your locality?

Do you know what sort of support these groups offer?

## Personalised care planning and supported self care

*Personalised care planning starts with a discussion with the individual and aims to assess their full range of needs, taking into account their health, personal, family, social, economic, educational, and cultural circumstances.*

It recognises that many different issues can impact on an individual's overall health and well-being. The process should always be supportive, individualised, flexible, and non-judgemental.

Personalised care planning should be built around a holistic process that puts the individual at the centre of their own care and focuses on helping them (and their carers) achieve the outcomes they want for themselves. Care planning discussions should not be clinician-led, but should focus on encouraging the individual to tell their story and set their own agenda through collaborative goal setting and action planning, problem solving, negotiation, and shared decision making.

For some healthcare professionals, this may represent a significant cultural shift that could require the development of new skills, such as motivational interviewing skills.

**A Care Planning e-learning tool will be available later in 2009**

## *What is a care plan?*

A care plan records the outcome of the care planning discussion between an individual and their healthcare professional. It should contain all the information an individual needs in order to effectively manage their own health. The plan is owned by the individual and may be a written document or something that is recorded in the person's health record. It may be complex or simple, depending on the individual's health and social care needs. If it is a written document, a copy of the care plan should be given to the individual and stored in their medical records. Copies should be available, or at least accessible, to all health and social care professionals providing direct care to the individual, and any other individuals (such as carers) who have been given permission to see the plan.

### *Templates and care plans... a word of caution*

A care planning template may be useful to support the care planning process, however, it should be remembered that the most important aspect of personalised care planning is that a discussion takes place during which healthcare professionals:

- **Invite people to tell their story and set the agenda**
- **Work with people to think about goals of importance to them as individuals**
- **Work with people to develop action plans to attain those goals**
- **Ensure review is built into the process**

## And finally...

This information booklet has provided a brief overview of the philosophies and goals of **'Your health, your way'**, the importance of supporting self care and the five areas where support is most beneficial.

It has also provided an introduction to the concept of personalised care planning and supported self care and offered points for consideration when starting the process of care planning for people with long term conditions.

To complement this information booklet, a range of practical tools and resources are available online to support healthcare professionals deliver personalised care planning including support for self care. These can be found at:

**[www.dh.gov.uk/yourhealth](http://www.dh.gov.uk/yourhealth)**

**Local information about self care support services will be available from PCTs through their Guides to Local NHS Services. This will complement the national information available through NHS Choices and in the resource pack which accompanies this booklet.**

The resource pack will continue to be developed and revised over time as more practitioners share their own examples of best practice.

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**[www.orderline.dh.gov.uk](http://www.orderline.dh.gov.uk)** and quote **295007/Your health, your way.**

**A guide to long term conditions and self care.**

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