

# Professional support

Health professionals are paid and have been trained to provide support, for example doctors and practice nurses. Formal support includes **primary, secondary, tertiary** and allied care services.

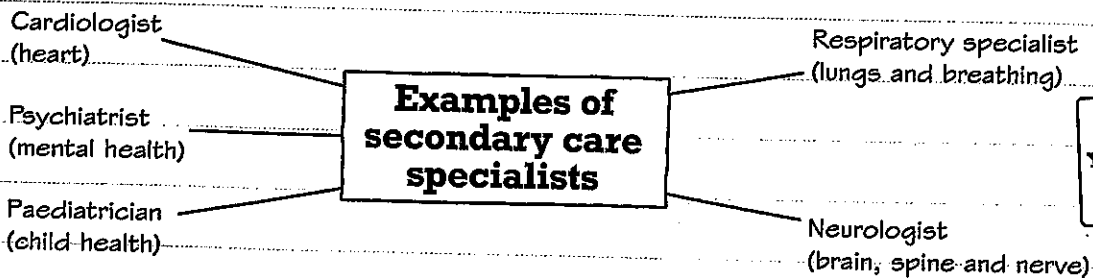
## Primary care services

Primary care services are usually people's first point of contact with health professionals. They include health centres (with GPs, practice nurses and midwives), accident and emergency services, pharmacies, dental surgeries and opticians (both optometrists and opticians).

Service	Functions
Health centre	Measuring and interpreting physiological indicators, such as pulse, blood pressure, peak flow and BMI Advising on lifestyle health risks, such as smoking, drugs and alcohol Working together with people to produce <b>health improvement plans</b> and monitoring progress Prescribing drugs and treatments Referring patients to other health professionals (secondary and tertiary care services)
Accident and emergency services	Dealing with life-threatening emergencies, such as profuse bleeding, extreme pain, severe allergic reactions, critical burns, stroke and heart attack
Pharmacy	Giving advice on medication Offering health promotion and advice Providing aids such as nicotine replacement therapies, blood pressure monitors
Dental surgery	Providing treatment for teeth and gums Giving advice on how to keep teeth and gums healthy
Opticians	Assessing and monitoring the health of the eyes, and providing glasses Giving advice on how to keep eyes healthy

## Secondary and tertiary care services

Patients who require hospital care for a health condition will be referred to a secondary care service by their primary health care provider. Tertiary care services provide specialist support in dedicated units, such as stroke rehabilitation, oncology and secure mental health units.



**REVISE IT!**  
You might need to use this Component 2 knowledge in your assessment

### Now try this

Vincent is worried about his health. He has had a cough and sometimes finds it difficult to breathe. Vincent smokes 10 cigarettes each day.

Give **two** examples of professionals who might provide support.

← Smoking can affect blood pressure and pulse. (See also pages 9, 21, 22, 23, 27 and 33.)

# Formal support

Allied professionals, trained volunteers, support groups and charities work alongside primary, secondary and tertiary services to provide formal support and specialist advice to help people plan for improvements in health and wellbeing.

## Allied health roles

Allied health professionals can help individuals make health improvement plans and support them in achieving their goals. Some allied health professionals can also diagnose conditions in their specialist area.

Service	Functions
Dietician	Advises on risks of an unhealthy diet and benefits of a healthy diet, and on diets to help manage certain conditions
Physiotherapist	Advises on exercise and movement for people with breathing or mobility problems, may provide mobility aids
Art or music therapist	Provides support for people with emotional and communication problems
Speech and language therapist	Works with people with communication difficulties to improve communication skills
Advocate	Speaks on behalf of people who are not able to express their wishes
Domiciliary care worker	Supports older people and people with disabilities with everyday care in their own homes
Clinical support staff	Health care assistants, dietetic assistants and phlebotomists (specialist blood collectors) who may also be involved in formal support

## Types of formal support

Formal support can take many forms:

- **Physiological measuring aids**, such as blood-pressure testing kits or weighing scales for people to monitor change themselves.
- **Practical support**, such as healthy menu plans, suggested exercise DVDs and routines.
- **Advice** and leaflets on lifestyle health risks, such as recommended alcohol levels.
- Introductions to **support groups**, such as those shown in the table opposite.
- **Emotional support**, such as providing encouragement to achieve targets.

### Volunteers

Trained volunteers support professionals and other support staff in a wide range of roles from such as listening, advising and encouraging individuals.

## Other organisations that provide formal support

Some charities and organisations provide specialist support and advice in particular areas. Some run support groups.

Area	Example organisation
Alcohol	Alcoholics Anonymous
Diet	Weight Watchers
Diet and exercise	Change4Life
Smoking	Action on Smoking and Health (ASH) QUIT
Drugs	Action on Addiction Talk to Frank
Social isolation of older people	Age UK

## Now try this

Explain why physiological measuring aids, such as blood pressure testing kits and weighing scales, can help people to meet their health improvement plan targets.

If people can see their own progress they are more likely to achieve their targets.

# Informal support

Informal support is provided by people who are not paid to provide help.

## Informal support providers

People are more likely to be successful in following a health-improvement plan if they have the support of the people who are closest to them. It can be hard to make lifestyle changes if family and friends do not also change their behaviour.

People who could provide informal support are:

- partners
- family members
- friends
- neighbours
- work colleagues
- community.

## Partners

Partners can give support by:

- following the same health plan, such as taking exercise or stopping smoking
- praising progress and complimenting improvements
- providing reassurance when it is hard to stick to the plan and encouragement to resume the plan if necessary
- helping overcome barriers to following the plan, such as giving financial or practical support. For more information on barriers and obstacles see pages 39 and 45.

## Family support

For many people, partners and family are an important source of informal support.

Lifestyle change	Family members can
Lose weight	help to prepare low-fat meals, stop buying takeaways and unhealthy snacks
Improve financial management	research money advice services, suggest alternative sources of income, such as benefits
Do more exercise	suggest opportunities for walking rather than taking the car, take up a sport or an active hobby the family can do together
Stop smoking	stop smoking near the person, agree not to smoke in the home, stop buying and offering cigarettes
Stop using drugs	research support services, accompany the person to appointments, give encouragement

## Friends, neighbours and community

Friends can also be helpful in providing support and encouragement.

Lifestyle change	Friends can
Lose weight	join a fitness programme together, attend a support group together, give mutual encouragement, share low-calorie snacks
Reduce alcohol to recommended limits	reduce their own alcohol intake, offer non-alcoholic alternatives at social occasions, suggest social activities that do not involve alcohol
Become less isolated	visit regularly, accompany the person or invite them to social events
Quit smoking or smoke less	also quit, stop offering cigarettes
Take more exercise	go on runs and walks together, take up joint activities such as dance classes or tennis

### Now try this

Copy and complete the table below by including examples of informal and formal support.

Goal	Informal support	Formal support
Eat more healthily		
Quit smoking		
Become less isolated		

Re-read pages 36 and 37 to remind yourself of types of formal support.