



## What is a carer?

A carer is an unpaid family member, friend or neighbour who looks after another person who needs support as a result of age, frailty, a physical, emotional or learning disability, or who has mental health needs, or who misuses drugs or alcohol.

**Many people are carers, but don't think of themselves in this role**, but rather as husband, wife, mum, dad, son, daughter etc. As a result, they don't often realise that there is support available for them as well as the person they care for. Children and young people under the age of 18 may also take on a caring role and are often known as young carers. Someone who is the parent of a disabled child is also a carer.

## What is an assessment?

An assessment is carried out to decide what someone's needs are and what support Adult Social Care might be able to provide. This is usually carried out through a Supported Self Assessment of the person you care for. Carers should be involved in the assessment process and should also be offered an assessment of their needs as a carer.

It is important for us to know the impact that caring for someone has on **your** life and **your** ability to continue caring.

Please don't be put off by the word "assessment". It is not about judging you as a carer. It is about making sure that your views about both your own needs and the needs of the person you care for are listened to. This is to ensure that both of you receive the most appropriate type of support available.

## Checklist for preparing for an assessment

### About your caring role

- Do you and the person you look after live in the same house or do they live in their own home?

### What sort of help do you provide?

- For example, shopping, housework/cleaning, providing meals, emotional support
- Do you have to help during the night?
- Approximately how many hours a week do you provide care for someone?

### How does it affect you?

- When was the last time you had a whole day to yourself?
- Has your own health been affected as a result of caring for someone?
- Has your work been affected as a result of caring for someone?
- Do you feel able to continue with your present level of care at present?
- Do you feel you need help to continue to care?
- Do you feel you need time out from your caring responsibilities?

## Carers Allowance

Carers Allowance is the main state benefit for carers. To qualify the carer must meet all the rules, which are quite complicated. These include the following. The carer:

- must be aged 16 or over
- must be caring for at least 35 hours per week for someone who is in receipt of Attendance Allowance, or middle or high rate care component of Disability Living Allowance, or Constant Attendance Allowance (at least at the full day rate)
- must not be earning more than £100 per week net
- must not be receipt of certain other benefits

If you think you may qualify, or would like more information, please contact the Benefit Enquiry Helpline on 0800 882200, the Carers Support Service on 01325 357533 or look for more detailed information at [www.nhs.uk/carersdirect](http://www.nhs.uk/carersdirect)

This can be done in two ways:

1. A Carer's Initial Assessment
2. A Carer's Individual Assessment

### ***1. A Carer's Initial Assessment***

This identifies if you are having some difficulties maintaining a life of your own alongside your caring role and will give you advice and information about the support you can get. It will also give you the opportunity to access a Carer's Emergency Plan.

### ***2. A Carer's Individual Assessment***

If the Carer's Initial Assessment identifies that being a carer is having a significant impact on you, we can do a more detailed assessment of your needs as a carer. Following this assessment, the person you care for may be offered support such as a sitting service or a short break to enable you to continue in your caring role. You may also be offered services in your own right as a carer, such as assistance with domestic tasks, gardening, driving lessons, or help to pay for recreational or other activities for yourself.

**All** carers identified through the assessment of the person they care for will be offered a **carer's initial assessment**. This will help them to identify the effect that caring is having on them and whether they need advice and information only, or a more detailed assessment of their needs and additional support in their caring role.

In addition, carers aged over 16 who are providing a **"substantial amount of care on a regular basis"** can request an assessment of their own needs from Adult Social Care, even if the person they care for refuses an assessment

or the provision of support. There is no precise definition of what “substantial” or “regular” means. The Care Manager or Care Co-ordinator will look at the effect/impact that caring is having on you, whether you are able to continue with this role and what help you might need to do so. A Carers Assessment can only take place if Adult Social Care are satisfied that the person you care for is someone for whom they could provide or arrange the provision of support.

The carer’s assessment documentation is designed to enable carers to complete it themselves if they would like to, prior to discussion with a member of staff from Adult Social Care. This can be a different member of staff to the one who completed the assessment of the person you care for, if you would prefer this.

### **Possible outcomes from a carer’s assessment**

If you have a Carer’s Initial Assessment only, you will be provided with information and advice suitable to your needs.

If you have a Carer’s Individual Assessment, it may also open the door to:

- the possibility of increased support for the person you care for, either to increase their independence or to take the pressure off you, or to enable you to take a break at times and in ways to suit you and the person you care for.
- the opportunity for you to receive advice on how to care for the person you care for e.g. moving and handling; how to respond to mental health needs, or to behaviours you may find difficult to manage.

Contact: Enterprise House, Valley Street North, Darlington, DL1 1GY. Tel: 01325 360524 or visit the website: [www.darlingtondisability.org](http://www.darlingtondisability.org)

### **Drug and Alcohol Carer Support Service**

Services provided include group and individual support to carers, friends and families, court support, GP/Health professional appointment support, treatment access and treatment choices information, links to advocacy services and regional and national carer services.

Contact: Starting Point, Central House Annexe, Gladstone Street, Darlington, DL3 6JX. Tel: 01325 346201

### **Job Centre Plus**

Carers’ contact (Clare Moohan) – 01325 385084

Offers support to carers who would like to combine their caring role with paid employment

### **“Time Out” YMCA Young Carers Project**

Provides support to carers under the age of 18.

Contact: Unit 4 Beaumont Street, Houndgate, Darlington  
Tel: 01325 350465 or Mobile: 07739883379

Contact: Unique Home Care, Innovation House, 26 Longfield Road, South Church Enterprise Park, Bishop Auckland, DL14 6XB. Tel: 01388 773884 or visit the website: [www.ddcarersemergencysupport.org.uk](http://www.ddcarersemergencysupport.org.uk)

### **DAD Carers Support Service**

Provides information, support and advice to carers. Through them you can make contact with other carers and receive information about other sources of help. The information available includes the following:

- a general leaflet about the support that they can offer, including how to register as a carer
- a guide for carers caring for someone who has mental ill-health
- a series of fact sheets including information about groups you may like to attend or benefits that might be available

The Carers Support Service can also assist with holidays, either with or without the person you care for.

Contact: Enterprise House, Valley Street North, Darlington, DL1 1GY. Tel: 01325 357533 or visit the website: [www.darlingtondisability.org](http://www.darlingtondisability.org)

### **DAD Direct Payments Support Service**

Provides information and advice about direct payments to enable you, or the person you care for, to employ and manage your own staff to meet personal care or other identified needs, or to arrange the assistance you need directly from your chosen provider.

- the possibility, in some instances, of support in your own right (carers services). The purpose of this support is to enable you to continue to care or to maintain your health or wellbeing.

It is important to remember that the type of support that can be provided will depend on your particular needs and will only be provided on the basis that it will enable you to continue to care or to maintain your health or wellbeing. Examples may include:

- domestic tasks, such as housework and ironing
- gardening
- help to pay for recreational or other activities e.g. driving lessons, massages, fishing permits, computer courses
- assistance with child care costs
- other types of support as agreed with you

## **What sort of support may be available to the person I care for?**

In most instances the person you care for will be offered an indicative personal budget to enable them to meet their identified support needs, e.g. assistance with personal care activities such as washing and dressing, social activities etc. They may choose to receive this as a Direct Payment or Adult Social Care can arrange and manage the support as a Directly Managed Service on their behalf.

The person you care for may also receive housing adaptations to enable them to continue to live at home more easily, or the provision of equipment such as a bath board and seat.

## What happens following an assessment?

Depending on the needs which have been identified, you will be asked to complete a Carers Support Plan (based on a specified amount of funding). You can complete this yourself or with support from a number of different sources, including your Care Manager or Care Co-ordinator.

If the support you need (for example, to take a break) is to be provided to the person you care for, you will need to agree with them how this will take place and will also need to record it on their Support Plan. The Support Plan(s) can be drawn up in the format most appropriate to yourself e.g. on CD, in Braille or in another language if required.

## Will I have to pay anything?

Most support identified as a result of a carer's assessment will be delivered to the person you care for and they will be financially assessed to decide how much they are able to contribute to the cost of any support they receive. For more information about charging for support see leaflets A4a - *"Charging for Residential or Nursing Home Accommodation"* or A4b - *"Charges for Services"*.

There is currently no charge for any support you receive in your own right as a carer, although the Council does have the right to financially assess you for this support.

## What will happen to any information I give you?

Any information you give us will be treated in confidence. Sometimes, in order to keep people safe, information needs to be shared with other agencies. We will ask your permission before doing this, except in certain instances as specified in law.

We will keep any information we have about you up to date and accurate. To help us to do this we would appreciate it if you would contact Adult Social Care to inform us of any changes. For example, let us know when you move house or change doctors. You can ask to see the records we hold about you at any time. For further information about this, please contact Adult Social Care and ask for leaflet G5 - *"Access to your Social Care Records"*.

## Where else can I go for support?

### **Carers Direct**

A national information, advice and support service for carers, which includes a wide range of information. You can visit their website - [www.nhs.uk/carersdirect](http://www.nhs.uk/carersdirect) - or telephone them on 0808 802 02 02. The service is available 7 days a week.

### **Carers Emergency Support Service (provided by Unique Home Care)**

Carers who register with the service draw up an emergency plan which identifies 3 family members, friends or neighbours as emergency contacts. If they are not available, or there are no nominated contacts, short term support is provided by Unique Home Care until alternative arrangements can be made by Adult Social Care.