

## Support for Carers

If you are looking after a loved one and you need some support, you could think about having a carers' assessment.

Support for carers can come in many forms, including respite care, carers' direct payments and peer support for carers to help you continue caring.

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### Who is a carer?

A carer regularly looks after, helps or supports someone who wouldn't be able to manage everyday life without their help. You don't have to be living with the person that you care for and the help you give doesn't have to be physical. You may be caring for a partner, another relative, a friend or a neighbour. For example, it may be someone who:

- Is over 60.
- Is living with dementia.
- Has a physical disability, learning disability, or a mental health condition?
- Has sight, hearing or communication difficulties.
- Has a long-term health condition.
- Has a drug or alcohol dependency.

You may be helping them with:

- Personal care, such as washing and dressing.
- Going to the toilet or dealing with incontinence.
- Eating or feeding and taking medicines.
- Getting about at home or outside.
- Practical help at home, keeping them company.
- Emotional support or communicating.

## Having a carer's assessment

If you provide regular, unpaid support to someone who could not manage without your help, the law says you have a right to have your own needs assessed, even if the person you care for has refused support services or an assessment of their own needs.

This assessment, called a carers' assessment, gives you the chance to tell your local authority what you need as a carer and to find out what support might be available to help you. The assessment of carers' needs explores whether you have eligible needs in your own right.

Your local authority, or a carers' organisation partnered with the council, will assess whether you have needs as a carer and what those needs may be. Your assessment is not a test of your abilities as a carer.

The assessment will consider:

- The impact of caring on you.
- What difficulties you may be facing and how you manage them.
- Things that you want to achieve in your day-to-day life.

It must consider other important issues, too, such as whether you are able or willing to carry on caring, whether you work or want to work, and whether you want to study or do more socially.

You should also speak to your GP who may be able to offer you additional support, even if you aren't eligible for support from the council

## Carers' eligibility criteria

National carer's eligibility criteria will be used to determine if you have eligible needs. If you have eligible needs the assessor will discuss the options available to meet those needs. If your needs are not eligible you will be given information and advice.

Three questions are used to work out whether carers are eligible for support from their council:

1. Do your needs arise because you are providing necessary care for an adult?
2. Do these needs mean you are unable to achieve any of the tasks or 'outcomes' below?
3. As a result of this, is there, or is there likely to be, a significant impact on your wellbeing?

You need to meet all three of the criteria to be eligible.

## Outcomes

The outcomes that will be looked at when assessing your needs include determining whether you are able to:

- Care for any children or other people you are responsible for, as well as the adult you are caring for.
- Maintain a habitable and safe home environment for yourself.
- Manage your own nutrition.
- Maintain other personal relationships, including with your family.
- Take part in work, training, education or volunteering.
- Make use of facilities or services in your local community.
- Have free time for hobbies and relaxation.

## Respite services for carers

Respite services offer support for carers to take a break from their caring responsibilities, so you can have some time off. The breaks could be regular or just when needed and can be as short as an afternoon or as long as a few weeks.

Replacement support for a respite break could mean the person you care for living in a care home for a short period or hiring a live-in care service or home care agency to come in and look after the person you care for.

Respite is considered to be a service for the person you care for, as the replacement support is provided for them, so if they have a personal budget or direct payment for their own needs, they could use that money to pay for it. A financial assessment of the person being cared for will confirm whether they need to pay towards the cost of this service.

If you have had a carers' assessment and it has found that you are eligible for a short break or respite, you may be given a carers' direct payment to pay towards the cost of a holiday or trip out.

## Benefits for carers

Explore whether you are entitled to Carer's Allowance. You might be eligible if you care for someone for more than 35 hours a week and if that person is receiving certain benefits, like Personal Independence Payments or Disability Living Allowance.

The rate for Carer's Allowance is set at £64.60 per week. This may change after April 2019. You can claim Carer's Allowance online on the Gov.UK website.

You may also qualify for Carer's Credit if you care for someone for 20 hours a week or more.

The Government website has more information on benefits, including carers' benefits. Alternatively, contact a local carer organisation which may be able to help you undertake a benefit check.

