

Support and help for carers

About this factsheet and who it is for

If you are a carer supporting a disabled relative or friend, it is important to be aware of the various sources of support available to carers. This factsheet helps to identify the statutory services that may be available to you as a carer.



The artwork on the front of this factsheet was done by an older artist for EAC's over 60s Art Awards



The carer's assessment

If you are caring for someone on a regular basis you are legally entitled to a carer's assessment from your local authority. The assessment will give you the opportunity to discuss with the local authority what help you might need to maintain your health and balance your caring responsibilities with your own life, family, work and other commitments.

The assessment of your own needs will normally coincide with an assessment of the needs of the person you are caring for. But if not, an assessment of your needs as a carer can be requested at any time, even if the person you are caring for does not wish for an assessment themselves. Once asked to carry out a carer's assessment the local authority should do so within what is considered a 'reasonable time', although there is no statutory time limit.

If more than one person shares the caring responsibility then they are both entitled to an assessment of their needs as carers.

What's included in the carer's assessment?

Since the introduction of the Care Act 2014, in order to be able to receive services and/or direct payments from the local authority, the level of your need for

support will need to meet a new minimum threshold before you are considered to have 'eligible needs'.

Generally speaking, you will meet the new eligibility criteria if there is (or is likely to be) a significant impact on your wellbeing as a result of you caring for another person.

There are three questions that the local authority will need to consider when making their decision. If the answer is yes to all three questions, then you will meet the eligibility criteria.

- Are your needs the result of you providing necessary care?
- Does your caring role have an effect on you?
- Is there, or is there likely to be, a significant impact on your well-being?

The carer's assessment must also consider the carer's activities beyond their caring responsibilities, and the impact of caring upon those activities. This includes considering the impact of caring responsibilities on a carer's desire and ability to work, to partake in education, training or recreational activities, such as having time to themselves.

Note: The person you are caring for does **not** need to be receiving services

from the local authority in order for you to request an assessment of your needs as a carer.

In addition, if you require the support of an advocate to assist you in arranging for an assessment of your needs as a carer, then the local authority has a duty under the Care Act to provide this service.

Preparing for your assessment

Before your carer's assessment you might want to think about the following and ensure that any strong feelings you may have are conveyed to the person doing the assessment

Your housing

Do you and the person you care for live together or separately? What are the effects of this and are any changes needed to improve the arrangement?

Your health

Are you finding it difficult to cope either emotionally or physically, and what impact might this have on your own physical or mental health?

Your work and leisure

What support or help do you need to balance your caring role with your work

and family commitments, and what impact is it having on your leisure time?

The time you spend on caring duties

How much time do you spend caring – is it just during the day or night, or both? What is the caring role that you are fulfilling; what do you see as needed; and are you getting any help?

Your feelings

Do you feel you have a choice about the care you are providing? And do you feel it is just too difficult to carry on without some help?

Dealing with emergencies

What if any alternative arrangements are in place if you suddenly became ill and were unable to continue providing the care either short-term or long-term?

The future

Do you have any concerns or worries about your own future or the future of the person you are caring for?

If you do not meet the eligibility criteria, the local authority is still under a duty to provide you with advice and information. You will also be able to make a complaint about the decision through the local authority complaints procedure.

The support you may get following an assessment

The assessment may identify services for the person you care for, in order to ease your role. For example, access to a day centre or periods of respite care in a care home, to give you a break from caring. There may be home adaptations or disability equipment that could be provided to improve access to your home or help with lifting or bathing. You may also benefit from advice and information, for example financial or benefits advice, for you and the person you are caring for.

Any help or support you are assessed as needing from the local authority can either be delivered directly by them or funded by them through direct payments to you, for you to spend on the services you've been assessed as needing.

What will I have to pay for the assessment and the support I need?

There is no charge for the carer's assessment and this is a legal right. However, if it is decided you are eligible for help and support you can be means tested. A carer can only be charged for the services provided to them and not the person you care for. Means testing will

ascertain to what extent a carer can afford to contribute towards the costs.

Financial Support

There may be some financial support available to you in the form of Carer's Allowance of £62.70 a week, paid by the Department for Work and Pensions to help you look after someone with substantial caring needs who also receives a qualifying disability benefit.

- You don't have to be related to, or live with, the person you care for;
- The amount of savings you have will not affect Carers Allowance;
- You must be 16 or over and spend at least 35 hours a week caring for them;
- You must be in Great Britain when you claim and have been so for at least 2 of the last 3 years;
- Carer's Allowance is taxable. It can also affect your other benefits.
- you must earn less than £110 a week (after taxes, care costs while you're at work and 50% of pension contribution)

To find out more about Carer's Allowance visit: www.gov.uk/carers-allowance/overview

Important note

Claiming Carer's Allowance may affect the benefit entitlement of the person you are caring for.

More about caring

The following organisations have considerable information on their websites and can help you find out more about your rights as a carer and the help and support that is available to you:

Carers UK

Provide carers with expert advice, information and support. They can also help identify local support services

Tel: 0808 808 7777

Email: advice@carersuk.org

Web: www.carersuk.org

The Carer's Trust

A charity for, with and about carers. They work to improve support, services and recognition for anyone living with the challenges of caring.

Email: support@carers.org

Web: www.carers.org

About FirstStop Advice

FirstStop is a free information and advice service designed to help older people decide how best to meet their needs for support, care and suitable housing. It is provided jointly by a growing number of national and local organisations and it is led by the charity, Elderly Accommodation Counsel (EAC).

About FirstStop Financial Advice

Working together, EAC and its partners in FirstStop Advice provide comprehensive information and guidance to help you afford the care, accommodation or services you need.

FirstStop's national Advisors are trained to advise on:

- What you may be entitled to in state benefits and financial help from your local authority;
- Whether you may be entitled to help with your care costs;
- Ways of making your income and capital go further;
- Services that are provided free by local and national voluntary organisations;
- Homesharing, co-housing and other mutual support networks.

A key FirstStop partner organisation is the *Society of Later Life Advisers (SOLLA)*.

SOLLA's members are regulated Financial

Advisers who specialise in providing financial advice to older people, they also adhere to the Society's Code of Best Practice.

If you decide, after speaking to us, that you would like advice from a SOLLA member, we can provide local details to you.

(Neither EAC or FirstStop has any financial interest in SOLLA or its member IFAs)

Contact us

- Visit us online: www.housingcare.org

The information contained in this factsheet is intended to be, and should be regarded as, a brief summary and is based on our understanding of present legislation, regulations and guidance. No responsibility can be accepted for action based on this information.

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