



Social
health &
wellbeing



Support for life

Caring for yourself as a carer

6.5 million people in the UK are carers and this number continues to rise. With ongoing cuts in social, disabled, mental and elderly care, it is estimated that the number of carers will reach 9 million people by 2037¹. A calculation by Carers UK shows that the contribution of unpaid care in the UK is £132 billion².

Being a carer may impact your ability to work, leave you feeling anxious or stressed or have an impact on your health. Carers are increasingly recognised as providing a valuable service in society, so it is important to understand what help is out there to support you in your role.

Carer's assessments

If you are caring for a friend, family member or neighbour; requesting a Carers Assessment will help you to access information, advice and possibly respite. A Carer's Assessment is provided free of charge and is an opportunity to discuss your needs. Before you have your assessment meeting, make sure that you have a list of questions/needs ready to discuss. Think about the impact that caring has on your life. In order to have an assessment you will need to contact the local Adult Social Care department, which will be based in your council or local authority. There is usually a Freephone number you can call.

¹ Carers UK - policy briefing October 2015

² Carers UK - State of Caring UK report 2016

Check your local council's website for information.

Carer's Allowance

Carer's Allowance is a means-tested benefit (this means it is dependent on how much you earn or the savings you have). It is paid to people who care for someone for at least 35 hours a week. It's important to note that it can affect the other benefits that you and the person you are caring for get. To find out more about eligibility and its effect on other benefits, please have a look at the Government website (see further sources of help section). Also check out our benefits fact sheet for information on other financial benefits you may be entitled to.



Carer's
Allowance
£62.10
per week

Working

By law you are entitled to make a flexible working request once a year. Flexible working arrangements may include working from home, flexi-time, part-time, staggered hours or compressed hours, etc. If you need to adjust your working arrangements to suit your caring arrangements, check out your contract of employment to see what is already included. Make sure you check out your eligibility, ways to request, etc. before you start the process.

Become an expert

When faced with the illness or disability of the person you are caring for, you may feel fazed by the situation. In order to understand the generic path of the illness or disability, it's important to get as much information as possible. There are many health related support groups and finding one specific to the illness or disability the person you are caring for is living with, can help you to feel supported and less alone. This awareness will help you to understand help you might need, as well as getting to grips with the do's and don'ts of caring for someone in this situation.



Invest in rest

Caring for someone else can be rewarding and demanding at the same time. In order to provide the best possible care you can give, you need to look after yourself first. Just think of when you are listening to cabin crew instructions on an airplane. You need your own oxygen mask on first in order to best help the person next to you.

Respite Care

The person you are caring for may be entitled to respite care or to attend a day-care centre.

You may be able to get some respite by attending a local Carers Support group.

It may be easier said than done, but try to get enough rest, as lack of sleep makes it more difficult to deal with everyday issues. Try and eat healthily and take regular physical exercise. Keep an eye on your own health and try as much as possible to take a break when you need it.

Get help

Many carers can become socially isolated and feel very lonely. Find someone you can trust to talk to, especially if you're struggling to cope. This can be a friend or even your GP. With so many carers out there, more and more peer groups are starting. There may be local carers groups that you can join.



Further sources of help

There is lots of information available to help you cope with being a carer. Please have a look at these organisations and charities for further tips.

- Information about the Care Act
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/care-act-2014-part-1-factsheets/care-act-factsheets>
- Turn2us – help for people in financial hardship
<https://www.turn2us.org.uk>
- Carers UK
<https://www.carersuk.org/help-and-advice>
- Carers Direct Helpline (government helpline)
0300 123 1053
- NHS UK
www.nhs.uk/conditions/social-care-and-support-guide/Pages/carers-assessment.aspx
- Carers Trust
<https://carers.org>
- Carer's Allowance
www.gov.uk/carers-allowance/overview

www.ben.org.uk

f /BenSupport4Auto

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Free, confidential helpline:
08081 311 333

Ben - Motor and Allied Trades Benevolent Fund. Lynwood Court, Lynwood Village, Rise Road, Ascot SL5 0FG. A charity registered in England and Wales (no.297877) and Scotland (no.SC039842). Registered with the Homes and Communities Agency (no. LH3766).

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