

Do you care?:

Preparing carers to get the best from the Care Act 2014.



National Development Team for Inclusion

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www.ndti.org.uk

National Development Team for Inclusion
First Floor
30-32 Westgate Buildings
Bath BA1 1EF
01225 789135

Written and Edited by: Cally Ward, Madeline Cooper-Ueki and Drew Edwards

This is a guide for carers over 18 on how to get the information, advice and support you need.

You are a carer if you are providing unpaid support to a family member or friend who due to illness, disability, substance misuse or mental health need would not be able to cope without your support.

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Caring for other people is a natural part of family life, friendship and neighbourliness. We are all likely to be involved in caring at some point in our lives. For that reason many people who are caring for someone don't actually recognise themselves as a 'Carer'. It is something they just 'do' for a partner, child, parent, friend or neighbour and don't get paid for it.

"We've been married for years of course I look after him."

Across the country, large numbers of people in the last Census identified that they were looking after someone but many are not currently known to services as 'carers' or receiving support. Are you one of these people?

Another reason that identifying as a carer can be difficult is because we also use the word 'carer' to describe people who are paid to look after or support someone.

So - are you a carer?

Have a look at the 'Carers Tree ' developed by carers at the Bradford Carers Resource and think about some of the roles that you currently take on in relation to either someone in your family, a friend or neighbour.



Do you undertake any of these activities or tasks for another person? Make a list of all that you do. We will come back to this in more detail in the section Carer's Assessment.

It is important to remember that 'caring' is not just about what you physically do for the person. Helping the person you care for can involve prompting and reminding them to do things like:

- Personal care
- Practical tasks in and around the home
- Helping them stay safe
- Supporting with their health issues – physical, mental and emotional
- Stopping them getting lonely and isolated
- Helping them stay connected to their community

The person you care for might live with you or they might not!

From natural support to becoming a 'carer'

So many of us care for other people but when does this caring tip over into you being 'a carer'? One way to think about it is to ask yourself the question: could the person (or persons – as many carers are helping more than one person) cope if I did not provide the help care that I do?

This is a very important question because under the Care Act this is what is described as **necessary care** and will have important implications as to whether you will be eligible for some types of support on offer from Social Services (see Carer's Assessment section).

Why it is important to see yourself as a 'carer'

If you are caring for someone it is going to be difficult to get the support you need if you don't see yourself as a 'carer'. There are benefits from identifying yourself as a 'carer'.

These include:

- Getting helpful information and advice
- Having someone to talk to about what you do and how you feel
- Having a Carer's Assessment
- Getting the help and support you need to make life more manageable
- Being recognised, valued and listened to as an important partner in the care of the person you support by health and social care professionals

Carers' Roles

As carers we are all on a journey but every carer's journey is unique, and it is not always linear! As a carer you might be living with the person or supporting them at a distance. You might have been caring for many years or have only recently started caring.



You might be:

- **A working carer** – juggling paid work with an unpaid caring role
- **An older carer** – aged 60 or looking after a parent or a partner
- **A parent Carer** – providing care for a disabled child under 18
- **A young carer** – under the age of 18 and providing regular and ongoing care and emotional support to a family member who is physically or mentally ill, disabled or misuses substances
- **A multiple or sandwich carer** – who has caring responsibilities for more than one person, sometimes different generations in your family
- **A long term carer** – who has been caring for many years

Whatever type of caring role you are in and whoever you are looking after, this guide is designed to help you ask yourself some key questions about your caring role and help you to access the information, advice and support that you need.

Questions to ask yourself include:

- **Am I a carer?** Perhaps the most important question of all because if you don't see yourself as a carer it is going to be difficult to get the support you need.
- **What do I actually do as a carer?**
- **How does my caring role impact on the rest of my life?**
- **What needs to change to make things easier for me?**
- **Where can I get the help and support I need?**
- **Do I have any rights as a Carer?**

What you need to know about the Care Act 2014 and why it is important

The Care Act 2014 – the basics

The Care Act 2014 (which went live in 2015) brings in important change to the responsibilities local authorities have in providing care and support to both adults with needs (the person you care for) and you as the unpaid carer that supports them. For the first time in law, carers have equal rights to support as the person they care for.

Knowing about the Care Act is important to you for two reasons:

1. It helps you get the right support in place for the person you care for.
2. It helps you, as a carer, get the right information, advice and support that you need.

It's all about wellbeing - and that means yours too!

The Care Act looks to positively promote 'wellbeing'. Wellbeing is a broad concept, and the statutory guidance defines it as relating to the following nine areas:

- Personal dignity (including treatment of the individual with respect)
- Physical and mental health and emotional wellbeing
- Protection from abuse and neglect
- Control by the individual over day-to-day life (including over care and support provided and the way it is provided)
- Participation in work, education, training or recreation
- Social and economic wellbeing
- Domestic, family and personal relationships
- Suitability of living accommodation
- The individual's contribution to society

The Act also signifies a shift from thinking about meeting people's care and support needs by offering and fitting them into pre-existing services, to looking at their specific needs and offering more personalised support to meet them.

What does the Care Act mean for you as a carer?

It gives significant new rights for carers in England including:

- A focus on promoting carer wellbeing
- A duty on local councils to prevent, reduce and delay need for support, including the needs of carers
- A right to a Carer's Assessment based on the appearance of need
- A right for carers' eligible needs to be met
- A duty on local councils to provide information and advice to carers in relation to their caring role and their own needs
- A duty on NHS bodies (NHS England, clinical commissioning groups, NHS trusts and NHS foundation trusts) to co-operate with local authorities in delivering the Care Act functions

To find out more

Department of Health and Social Care <https://carers.org/article/care-act-2014-england>

Carers UK <https://www.carersuk.org>

Carers Trust <https://carers.org>

Family Carer Support Services

How to get the right support from you local authority: A guide to the Care Act 2014 and other laws, for family carers of an adult with learning disabilities and/or autism. (2018).

<https://www.hft.org.uk/our-services/family-carer-support-service>



Prevention:

Information, advice and community support

In this section we look at the key role of information, advice and community resources working together to prevent carers getting to a point where their own health and wellbeing is jeopardised by their caring role.

As a carer, getting the right information and advice at the right time can make a real

difference to your experience. It can reassure, signpost to where to get help now, or be stored for future use if circumstances change and you don't feel you need to act on it now.

What sort of information you need will depend on your circumstances but these are some of the most common concerns that people talk about.

Worrying about the person you care for

- Understanding their health and support needs and how you can help them day-to-day
- What support is there for them?
- Do people have to take my point of view into account when the person I care for lacks capacity to make important decisions?
- What will happen to them if something happens to me?

What support is out there for me?

- My rights as a carer
- My rights at work
- Benefits I might be entitled to
- Housing – aids and adaptations that make things easier and safer

There is a lot of information out there for carers but you need to know how to access it!

National resources

If you are able to access the internet or use a telephone there are excellent resources produced by national charities and organisations.

Carers UK offers a range of information on their website, including; financial and practical support, help to maintain your health, relationships, work and career. They also offer useful information on how the role of technology and equipment can help you in your caring role.

<https://www.carersuk.org/help-and-advice>

https://www.carersuk.org/images/Help_Advice/CUK-Looking-After-Someone-2019WEB.pdf

They also offer a personalised service via the website where you can email in your queries and a telephone helpline.

<https://www.carersuk.org/upfront/> - emails

Telephone helpline providing information is open on Mondays and Tuesday between 10am and 4pm - 0800 808 7777

The Carers Trust website also has a lot of information and there is a section where they can direct you to get more local advice via their network of local Carers' Centres.

<https://carers.org/section/help-advice>

If you are a young carer you can find out more about your rights

<https://carers.org/know-your-rights-support-young-carers-and-young-adult-carers-england>

Other national organisations like Age UK, Mencap, Mind, Dementia UK, and Family Carer Support Service.

Local authorities have a duty to provide information and advice.

There should be information on the local 'carer offer' on your council website. Look under Adult Social Care (also relevant for the person you care for) and information about services for children with disabilities. The information should also signpost you to other organisations that can help carers as well as social services.

Health Services also have a role in supporting carers and you should also find that your local NHS Commissioning Care Group (CCG) or NHS Hospital or Community Trust has a website that is a useful source of information on services for the person you care for if they have a specific condition as well as carers' support services

Not everyone has access to the internet or feels comfortable about getting the information that they need in a digital form. Some carers can feel excluded if the only way to get information on line. So it is important that information and advice is accessible in different ways.

Written information can be helpful. Look out for leaflets in your local GP surgery, library, community centre, or pharmacy. These leaflets should signpost you to local voluntary organisations that can help. This might be a Carers' Centre or a specialist organisation like Age UK, Mind, or a Learning Disability charity.

Some local areas are developing One Stop Shops for all council services and/or Community Advice Hubs. You can either call in or drop into have a conversation with someone to be signposted to more specialist information and support. Ask at your local Town Hall

Voluntary organisations like Carers' Centres or organisations that focus on specific condition like dementia are often commissioned by the LA or health services to provide specialist information, advice and support. This could include:

- A telephone conversation to discuss your situation
- Signing you up for a newsletter
- Tell you about a range of groups and activities they offer where you will meet other carers
- Face-to-face support from a Carer Support Worker
- Advice on a range of community concessions for carers. For example - Carer Passports that offer discounts for carers in shops and leisure facilities and libraries that allow carers extended borrowing times.

Conversations with professionals. Identify yourself as a carer to your GP or Practice Nurse. If the person you care for has a social worker talk to them about your caring role and how they can signpost you to help and support.



Preventative Community Support

The Care Act introduced a new duty on local authorities to focus on preventing, reducing and delaying people and carers from developing the need for formal support services. Much of the support we get in the community comes from family, friends and people in our community. Many of us do not need to look outside these

natural circles of support to maintain our wellbeing, and caring for those we love can bring a lot of satisfaction, which helps contribute to our sense of emotional wellbeing.

However, caring can also be stressful. Sometimes our natural support networks are not enough and we might need some additional support when circumstances change.

Example

A single mum caring for her son with a learning disability did not get any formal breaks but did receive a lot of help from her own elderly mother. 'It is the little things that make a difference to me like going to support the local football team every other week or being able to pop into town on my own. But now I can't even do that anymore as Mum has got a lot of her own health problems. I am going to have to ask Social Services for some help.'

Getting the right support for the person you care for

'Get it right for him and you get it right for us.'

Make sure you support the person you care for to get the best from the Care Act and have their needs assessed. Here are some examples of services that may be offered following a community care assessment:

- Changes to the disabled person's home to make it more suited to their needs
- Equipment installed such as a hoist or grab rail
- A care worker to help provide personal care at home
- A temporary stay in residential care/respite care
- Meals delivered to the disabled person's home
- A place at a day service
- Assistance with travel, for example travel to and from the day centre
- Laundry services

Your good health: staying well

If you are too unwell to care any more – who will?

Looking after your own health should be a number one priority for you. Evidence shows that carers are at particular risk of developing physical and mental health problems as a result of their caring role and yet far too many neglect their own health.

Most people have contact with their GP and primary care team. It is important that you let them know that you are a carer so they can include this in their records.

Many GP practices have Carers' Champions and it is worth asking if your practice does and make contact if they do.

Your GP or Practice Nurse will be able to talk to you about:

- Having a Carer's Health Check
- A flu jab
- Whether they offer help to carers by referring you on to a community organisation that talk to you about having a break or some activity that will benefit your wellbeing – sometimes this is known as social prescribing
- Whether you could access a Personal Health budget to access some support or piece of equipment that will help you stay well.

Money matters.

Millions of pounds of carers' benefits go unclaimed every year, according to AgeUK. Carer's Allowance is £64.60 a week in 2018/19. You might be able to claim it if you: spend at least 35 hours a week caring for someone.

The main benefit available to carers is the Carer's Allowance.

Whether you qualify or not, if you're on a low income, your circumstances mean you could be entitled to other benefits...

Carer Premium

You might be entitled to an additional Carer Premium if you already get:

- Income Support
- Universal Credit
- Housing Benefit
- Council Tax Support
- Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance
- Income-related Employment and Support Allowance.

Ask about the Carer Premium at your local Jobcentre Plus or Jobs and Benefits Office.

Carer's Credit

Carer's Credit is a National Insurance credit towards your State Pension while you're not making any contributions because of your caring role.

To find out more visit your local Citizen Advice Bureau, Job Centre Plus or Benefits Office

<https://carers.org/article/money-and-benefits>

<https://www.carersuk.org/help-and-advice/financial-support/help-with-benefits/carers-allowance>

Working carers

Many people find themselves juggling work and their caring responsibilities and it can be challenging and stressful. If you are a working carer you do have certain rights in law –called 'statutory rights'. These include:

- A right to request flexible working
- Time off in emergencies
- Protection from discrimination
- Parental leave (if you have children under 18)

You might also have contractual rights with your employer and it is worth checking. Ask your manager, check the staff handbook or have a word with the HR department.

<http://www.carersuk.org/files/helpandadvice/2613/factsheet-uk1031-your-rights-in-work.pdf>



Caring Conversations: Carer's Needs Assessment

Do you know what a Carer's Assessment is? We ask because there is a lot of confusion about Carer's Assessments and many carers have not even heard of it. Even when they have, they might not always be sure about:

- What is it
- Who is meant to carry it out
- Whether they have received one or not
- Whether it will make any difference!

Under the Care Act (2014) you are entitled to a Carer's Assessment as your local authority has 'a duty to assess a carer's need where it appears they may have support needs'. If you are caring for someone then you can ask for a Carer's Assessment. Local authorities have a duty to assess your needs as a carer but how they do this varies from area to area. Some might take a more

formal, tick box approach. Others see assessment as a more open conversational approach to help you identify what is important to you and make a difference.

Some local authorities do Carer's Assessments themselves. They might have a small team of Carers Workers who undertake assessments over the phone or face-to-face. Social workers, who work with the cared for, might also undertake them. Local authorities might also offer online self assessment for carers. Other local authorities delegate their Care Assessments functions, often to local Carers' Centres, who might offer opportunities for telephone or face-to-face conversations and assessment. However they are organised in your local authority area, and whoever undertakes them, the Carer's Assessment should always achieve the same thing.

What a Carer's Assessment is and what it is not!

First and foremost - a Carer's Assessment is not about making a judgement on your caring!!

A Carer's Assessment is about finding out about what is important to you. It must establish how caring impacts on your wellbeing and what are some of the outcomes (real improvements you want to achieve in your day-to-day life).

These might include whether you work or want to participate in education and training or spend more time with other family and friends and be able to participate in your community.

A Carer's Assessment should also try and find out whether you are 'able and willing to provide or continue to provide' the care you currently provide. This can be a very tricky one for carers as there can be a lot of emotional subject. But it is something you should at least ask yourself.

A Carer's Assessment is not an end in itself. It should always achieve something and feel like it has been a positive experience for you. Part of a process of thinking about what you do in your caring role, how it affects you and what sort of help and support you need to maintain your own sense of wellbeing.

Preparing to get the best from your Carer's Assessment.

To get the best from your Carer's Assessment, whether you are filling in an online form or sitting down with someone having a conversation, it is always a good idea to do some thinking about it beforehand.

What do you actually do in your caring role?

Many carers underestimate what they actually do for the person they care and support. It is really important that you prepare for your Carer's Assessment. Have a look at the following checklist, you might be surprised at how much you actually do!

Carers' Checklist

Do you help the person you care for? Remember helping includes prompting, having to remind someone and more ... it's more than what you physically do for the person	Yes	No	Would you like more help with this?
<p>Everyday help</p> <p>Getting in and out of bed?</p> <p>Washing, dressing, bathing and undressing?</p> <p>Toileting and/or using continence aids?</p> <p>Cleaning, housework, gardening, and jobs around the home?</p> <p>Shopping and cooking and/or help with a specialist diet?</p> <p>Laundry, and/or changing and washing sheets and clothing?</p> <p>Dealing with money, personal correspondence and form filling?</p> <p>Arranging transport or using public transport?</p> <p>Getting out and about to different social and leisure activities?</p> <p>Making sure they are safe in the daytime and in the night?</p> <p>Being awake or waking to regularly give them support?</p> <p>Coping with their feelings and difficult behaviour (emotional support)?</p> <p>Communicating and being understood?</p> <p>Helping the person you care for to speak up?</p> <p>Understanding information and dealing with people or organisations?</p> <p>Being an appointee for their finances? – Power of attorney etc.</p>			

Do you help the person you care for? Remember helping includes prompting, having to remind someone and more ... it's more than what you physically do for the person	Yes	No	Would you like more help with this?
<h3>Health Needs</h3> <p>Arranging and going to routine and specialist health appointments (GP's, dentists, opticians and so on)?</p> <p>Filling prescriptions and collecting medication?</p> <p>Making sure that medication is taken in the right dose at the right time?</p> <p>Other health needs (for example helping with feeding tubes or catheters or checking insulin levels)?</p> <p>Getting information about different health conditions?</p> <p>Watching for side effects of medication?</p> <p>Monitoring an ongoing medical condition?</p> <p>Dealing with health professionals?</p> <p>Going to and staying in hospital to support the person?</p> <p>Cutting toe nails and finger nails?</p> <h3>Co-ordinating Care and Support</h3> <p>Get support from Social Services through the Care Act Assessment and Care and Support Planning?</p> <p>Manage a Personal Budget with them or on their behalf?</p> <p>Coordinate their care – monitoring their support and making sure they are safe?</p> <p>Employing and managing Personal Assistants.</p> <h3>Other Wellbeing Needs</h3> <p>Stay in touch with important family and friends?</p> <p>Stay connected to community activities (like a lunch club, dance class or their faith community)?</p>			

Now it's time to think about you.

How does the caring that you do affect your own wellbeing?

Have a look at the checklist. It is not an exhaustive list but it might prompt you to recognise that caring does have an impact on your life!

Thinking about you? Health and wellbeing	Yes	No	Elaborate
<p>Your health</p> <p>Do you have a disability, illness or long term conditions that affects your ability to care?</p> <p>Is it ever difficult to get to the GP's or hospital for your own health appointments?</p> <p>Have you ever put off having treatment because of your caring role?</p> <p>Is it difficult to take part in routine screening programmes because of your caring role?</p> <p>Does your GP know you are a carer and give you the support you need?</p> <p>Have you had some training and advice in things like moving and handling or first aid that might be useful in your caring role and help you stay well?</p> <p>Do you ever feel isolated or lonely and find it difficult to keep up with family and friends?</p> <p>Would you like to meet new friends?</p> <p>Are you working?</p> <p>Have you had to reduce your hours of work because of your caring role?</p> <p>Would you like to work, but find that your caring responsibilities make this difficult?</p> <p>Are you studying or training?</p> <p>Would you like to study or train, but find that your caring responsibilities make this difficult?</p>			

Thinking about you	Yes	No	Elaborate
<p>Break from Caring</p> <p>Do you regularly get some time for yourself?</p> <p>Do you ever have a break from caring?</p> <p>Do you usually get a full night's sleep?</p> <p>Do you ever get a complete break from caring?</p> <p>Are you able to get away on holiday to somewhere you want to go?</p> <p>Can the person you care for be left alone safely for short periods of time, such as when you go to the local shop?</p> <p>Do you know what short break or respite services are available locally?</p> <p>Do you feel you need more practical help?</p> <p>Can you manage well in the property you are in?</p> <p>Can you keep on top of your household chores?</p> <p>Can you keep on top of things in the garden?</p> <p>Do you feel safe in your home, or would you like a home safety check to discuss things like smoke alarms and door chains?</p> <p>Do you feel that some equipment or adaptations might help in the property you are in? Or in the property of the person you care for if they don't live with you? (Examples include handrails, raised toilets seats, washing machines, stair lifts etc.)</p> <p>Do you feel confident that you are getting all the financial benefits that you may be entitled to, such as Carer's Allowance or council tax benefit?</p> <p>Do you feel you get the right information, services and support provided in a language and format that you understand and that suits your culture and religion?</p>			

Thinking about you	Yes	No	Elaborate
<p>Do you know where to get practical advice and support?</p> <p>Do you have the right phone numbers and information that you may need to get help in an emergency?</p> <p>Your feelings</p> <p>Do you feel you have control over your day-to-day life?</p> <p>Do you feel that on a day-to-day basis the routines of the person you care for dominate your day?</p> <p>Do you feel that you are willing and able to carry on caring the way you do now?</p> <p>Do you feel you have a choice about going on caring in the same way that you are doing now?</p> <p>Do you feel that caring is affecting your relationship with the person you look after, family and friends?</p> <p>Do you have people you can talk to in confidence about how you are feeling?</p> <p>Do you feel valued as a carer by the person you care for and other members of your family and friends?</p> <p>Do you feel you are valued and listened to by professionals?</p>			

Am I eligible for help and support under the Care Act?

Do I have eligible needs as a carer? Now you have had a chance to think through what you do in your caring role and how it affects your wellbeing/life in a little more detail the next question to ask is will I be eligible to get any help/support?

The Care Act identifies a clear set of 'eligibility outcomes' for carers needs. Outcomes are the real improvements that you will see in your life as a result of getting the support you need in relation to your caring role. **The checklist below highlights the Care Act eligibility outcomes for carers.** Go through the list and think carefully about whether any of them apply to your situation. Under the Care Act you only have to be eligible in one of these areas, but you might find you have more.

Outcome – are you able to:	Yes/No/NA	More details
Carry out your caring/parenting responsibilities for a child?		Do you have any parenting responsibilities for a child in addition to your caring role for an adult you look after? For example are you a grandparent with responsibilities for looking after children while their parent works or a parent who find it difficult to look after your other children because of your caring role?
Provide care for others?		Do you have caring responsibilities for any other people and is the energy and time taken up with the person you care for stopping you helping other family members who need your support?
Maintain your home in a fit and proper state?		Can you maintain your own home environment in a habitable state? Is your home safe? Does the person you care for live with you? Is there enough room? Do you have time to enough time to deal with maintenance or deal with the garden?
Manage your and maintain proper nutrition?		Are you eating properly? Do you have enough time to do essential shopping and prepare meals for you and your family? Or are you eating on the go and living on a poor diet?

Outcome – are you able to:	Yes/No/NA	More details
<p>Maintain relationships with family & friends or have time to develop new relationships?</p> <p>Engage in work, training, education or volunteering?</p> <p>Make use of local facilities in the community, including recreational facilities?</p> <p>Do you get a break from caring?</p>		<p>Does your caring role prevent you from maintaining important relationships or even making new ones? Are you able to keep in touch with family and friends or does your caring role mean you have no time or energy to see people or don't have access to a phone or a computer that might help you keep in touch with people who live at a distance.</p> <p>Are you able to continue in your job or does your caring role make this difficult? Have you had to take too many days off work or even use holiday entitlement to enable you to continue caring? Does your caring role mean it is difficult to be involved education and learning or volunteering? Are you able to have a role outside of caring?</p> <p>Do you get an opportunity to use local community facilities like the library, cinema, gym or swimming pool? Do you get any free time for yourself to pursue hobbies, or exercise like going for a walk on your own without the person you care for?</p>

How many of the eligibility outcomes are relevant to you? If you had one of more does this mean you are now eligible to get support you need to make the improvements necessary for your wellbeing?

Not necessarily so. There are still three more key questions that need to be asked as part of the eligibility decision-making process. These are:

- You have needs because you are a carer who provides “necessary” care because the person you care for couldn't cope without you
- Those needs make it harder for you to do certain important things (the outcomes listed above)
- Because of this there is or is likely to be a ‘significant impact on your wellbeing’. Your physical and mental health might be at risk as you find it difficult to have a life outside of caring

It is still worth having the assessment conversation even if you don't technically meet the Care Act eligibility criteria? A Carer's Assessment can flag up if more support is needed for the person you care for. This could make a big difference for you.



Carer Support Plan and Personal Budget

Your Carer's Assessment can demonstrate any needs you have as a carer and how caring impacts on your wellbeing, in a significant way, on at least one of the eligibility outcomes or areas if not more!

If you are a carer with eligible needs a Carer's Assessment is the gateway to getting the help and support that might improve your situation. You can see why it is so important to prepare for your Carer's Assessment so that you can get the best out of the process.

What does this mean in terms of the help and support you are entitled to under the Care Act?

It could be that as a result of your Carer's Assessment it is recognised that the person you care for needs more money allocated to their support. This will not only benefit them but it will benefit you as well.

Support for you in your caring role. Having your own Carer's Support Plan.

A Carer's Support Plan will set out in a clear way how your specific eligible needs and general wellbeing will be met. It needs to include what improvement in your life (what are called 'outcomes' in the Care Act) will be achieved as a result of the support you receive. It is your plan and it absolutely crucial that you are at the heart of deciding what works best for you.

For example you might find that it is difficult to keep on top of your own household tasks because of your caring role.

A Carer's Support Plan for you might involve having regular help with housework or gardening. Or you might need a break from caring. Your Carer's Support Plan would say how this was going to happen, how often and who is going to fund it. Sometimes you might be able to get a Carer's Grant either from your local authority or your local Carers' Centres.

A Carer's Personal Budget

The Care Act sets out the need for a person centred approach to meeting the specific needs of adults, and carers with needs. This is not just about offering you a pre-existing service, something that is already out there. As a Carer with eligible needs the local authority has a duty to provide you with a personal budget (that is an amount of money allocated to you to meet the needs identified in your Carer's Support Plan.

This allocated money can be used in different ways. It doesn't necessarily mean that the money will be given to you directly, though it can be! Not everyone wants the responsibility of managing the money.

"I've got enough stress in my life – I just want the help. I don't want to organise it."

Ways you can take a Carer's Personal Budget:

- It can be used by the local authority to offer you one of their services. For example they might offer you a short-term break.
- The local authority can also use your allocated Personal Budget to arrange support or services from another care or support provider. For example, buying the support of an outside domiciliary care agency, a cleaning or gardening firm, transport or child-minder.
- The right for carers to ask for their Personal Budget as a Direct Payment. Sometimes carers prefer to have more control over how they get support. For example:
 - Pay a neighbour or a friend who knows the person well and is prepared to come into the home and give you a break.
 - Your Personal Budget can be used in all kinds of ways; it's yours to use to pay for anything that will support you in your caring role and that has been agreed in your Carers' Support Plan.

Here's how some other carers have used their personal budgets:

- travel expenses or fees to take up leisure or education activities
- health promotion activities such as exercise classes, gym membership, massages or relaxation or complementary therapies
- practical things such as a washing machine or a computer
- a short holiday to recharge their batteries
- driving lessons
- help with housework and gardening
- a mobile phone so they can keep in touch with the person
- leisure classes to relieve stress
- funding to pay for a child minder to provide support of younger children if they need to be taken to school

However you take your Personal Budget, the key thing is that it has to meet the eligible needs identified in your assessment and how you are going to achieve this as that has to part of your Carer's Support Plan.

Reviews

The Care Act 2014 places a duty on local authorities to keep care and support plans generally under review. The aim of the review process reassessment is to ensure that the person's needs continue to be met in line with the person's wishes and preferences so that the plan is kept up to date.

Finally, I hope you have found this guide helpful and you feel more confident to tell people you are a carer, how it impacts on your life and the sorts of things that would help make a difference to you in your caring role.

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