

Carers Needs Assessment

A Preparation Guide for Carers

The aim of a carer's assessment is to find out about your needs and how we may be able to help. It can help us to understand the best way to support you to maintain your own health and wellbeing whilst balancing caring with other aspects of your life. An assessment is not about your capability to care but it is to look at ways in which we can best support you in your caring role.

This guide for adult carers has been designed to help you get the best out of your carer's assessment. It is to help you think through what you might want to talk about.

The guide may help you to think about how your caring role affects you, prior to your assessment. It may highlight particular concerns or bring up questions that you would like answered. You might find it hard to think what is involved in caring, especially as it may be part of everyday life.

How a carer's assessment can help you

The Carers Needs Assessment is:

- ♦ Simply a conversation that helps the service to understand the best way to support you in your caring role and in your life outside of caring.
- ♦ To share your experience of caring and to recognise your role as a carer.
- ♦ To be given information, advice and help.
- ♦ To identify and discuss any difficulties you may have in your caring role and in other aspects of your daily living.

You may already have a good idea of what kind of help you need to make your caring role easier. If you are unsure, the carer's needs assessment will give you a chance to think about this and talk through the options of support.

Preparing for your assessment

To help you prepare for your assessment you may wish to think about the following:

- ♦ What does the term 'carer' mean to you?
- ♦ Do you see yourself as a 'carer'?
- ♦ What term would you prefer instead of a 'carer'?
- ♦ What is the difference between a "carer" and a care worker?
- ♦ Having a friend or family member be with you during your assessment.
- ♦ Where you would like the assessment? In your home or away from home?
- ♦ Keeping a daily diary for a fortnight, covering your caring tasks, as sometimes it is easy to forget how much you do.
- ♦ How much worry affects your life as a result of your caring role
- ♦ Has your role as a carer stopped you from doing the things you love?

If you are not eligible there is still a wide range of support available.

This includes:

- ♦ Information and advice relevant to you as a carer from your assessor and via universal services.
- ♦ Signposting to relevant Voluntary Organisations for further Information, advice and support.
- ♦ Emotional support and one to one support.
- ♦ Contact with carer groups for peer support and learning opportunities,

Care Plan (Support plan/action plan etc.)

If the outcome of your assessment is that you are eligible to receive services, you will have your own care plan developed. The plan will need to be agreed between you and the assessor and you will be given an indication of how long it will take to receive your completed plan. The plan will outline any actions and outcomes that were recorded in your assessment. It will also show if you are due to have any services in place and a schedule of when you will receive these.

If you are dissatisfied with the assessment outcome, you can appeal against the decision through the Adult Services customer complaints procedure.

Reviews

If you receive a care plan you will be contacted 6-8 weeks after your plan is agreed to check how things are progressing and that there are no initial issues. After this your plan will be reviewed annually. If you have an assessment and plan produced alongside the person you care for, then your review may coincide with the review for the person you care for.

**** All of the information you give us will be kept confidential unless you have given us permission to share. You will be offered a “consent to share” form at your assessment which you can then discuss with your assessor.***

During the assessment

What questions will I be asked?

Below are some thoughts you may want to consider and reflect on before the assessment.

- ♦ How are things different now you are a ‘carer’?
- ♦ What effect has your experience had on other areas of your life?
- ♦ What has been the effect on your relative or friend (i.e. the person you care for)?
- ♦ What has been the effect on other family members – partner, children, siblings, grandchildren, grandparents?
- ♦ How is your relationship with your relative or friend different now?
- ♦ What feelings and or emotions are you experiencing?
- ♦ Has the experience changed the way you view yourself?
- ♦ Has the way you view life changed (e.g. what you see as important)?
- ♦ Have there been any positive benefits?
- ♦ What have you learned since taking on a caring role?
- ♦ How do you feel you have been able to help the person you care for?
- ♦ What are you pleased or proud about having achieved?
- ♦ Thinking about your relative or friend, what have they achieved that you are proud of?
- ♦ What would be helpful in your life?
- ♦ Do you need practical or financial support?
- ♦ What, if any, emotional support do you need?
- ♦ What do you feel you are missing?
- ♦ Where do you go to get the help you need?

The following areas may also help identify some of your practical needs:

Physical Health

- ♦ Do you have any health problems?
- ♦ Do you get backache or other muscle strains?
- ♦ Do you get headaches?
- ♦ How easy do you find it to go to health appointments for yourself, e.g. doctor, optician, dentist, hospital?
- ♦ Do you have to move or lift the person you care for?
- ♦ Do you have any aids or adaptations to help you? (e.g. raised chairs/bed, hoists)
- ♦ Are you yourself disabled in any way or do you have an illness or condition? i.e. chronic illness, deaf/hard of hearing, asthma?

Emotional Wellbeing

- ♦ How do you feel within yourself?
- ♦ Do you get a full night's sleep?
- ♦ Are you feeling anxious or stressed?
- ♦ Do you have someone you can turn to if you have a problem?
- ♦ Are you feeling low or worried?
- ♦ Do you have any other mental health concerns (both for you or the person you care for?)

Medication

- ♦ Do you need to take medication and are you able to take it at the right times?
- ♦ Do you support or administer medication as part of your caring role?

Daily Living

- ♦ Are you responsible for the maintenance of your home?
- ♦ Are you able to keep up with domestic duties, such as cooking, cleaning, washing?
- ♦ Do you also look after space outside your home?
- ♦ Are you able to carry out tasks such as shopping, banking etc.?

- ♦ Have you thought of alternative care arrangements in the event of an emergency?
- ♦ Do you currently have an emergency plan in place?
- ♦ Do you have plans in place for long term care for the person you care for?
- ♦ How do you see the future; what is likely to affect your ability to care long term?
- ♦ Do you know if you are included in the crisis contingency plan of the person you care for, if they have one? Do you know what this expects of you?

After the assessment

Assessment Summary

When the assessment comes to an end you will have the opportunity to give a personal choice statement. This is an opportunity to add any additional information or to give a summary of what is most important to you. It may be something that has not been captured already within the assessment. It is an opportunity to discuss anything that may not yet have been addressed.

Eligibility Criteria

Once your assessment is completed, the local authority will use the information you have provided to determine if you are eligible to receive services. Your assessor should give you an idea of how long this will take. Regardless of whether you are deemed eligible, there will be various types of support that you can access.

If eligible, here are some types of support that you may be able to access:

- ♦ Receiving Direct Payments to purchase your own support or to help you maintain your own health.
- ♦ Breaks from caring.
- ♦ Training to assist you in your caring role.

Mobility and Transfers

- ♦ Do you assist with physically moving and handling the person you care for and are there any physical aides in the home to help?
- ♦ Would you like any training to support with moving and handling tasks?
- ♦ Do you transport the person you care for to other places, e.g. hospital appointments?
- ♦ Do you transfer the person you care for in a wheelchair?
- ♦ Do you have any difficulties related to the pushing or operation of the wheelchair?

Money Management

(This section may not be applicable but some carers may manage the finances for the person they care for)

- ♦ Can the person you care for manage their own money?
- ♦ Do you assist with managing the finances of the person you care for?
- ♦ Is Power of Attorney in place or is the court of protection involved?
- ♦ Are you receiving any financial support or benefits?
- ♦ Are you aware of advice on state pension?

Education, Employment & Leisure

- ♦ Are you currently working or in training, or wanting to return to work?
- ♦ Have you had to leave work or reduce your hours because of your caring role?
- ♦ Would you like support required to access either education and/or employment?
- ♦ Do you have the opportunity to pursue leisure activities?

Contingency Planning (Carer's back-up plans)

- ♦ What would happen to the person you care for if you were to suddenly become ill; do you know who to contact in an emergency?
- ♦ What might be the signs that you can no longer cope/care?

Personal Care

- ♦ Are you able to maintain your own personal care?
- ♦ Are you able to attend appointments such as the hairdressers, dentists etc.?
- ♦ Are you able to take bathroom breaks when you need to?

Meals and Nutrition

- ♦ Are you able to eat regular meals?
- ♦ Do you prepare meals?
- ♦ Do you give assistance with feeding the person you care for?

Social life & activities

- ♦ What did you do before you became a carer that you are no longer able to do?
- ♦ Are you able to keep up with hobbies?
- ♦ Can you maintain friendships and relationships outside your caring role?
- ♦ Do you get a chance to have a break from your caring role?

Environment

- ♦ Do you and the person you care for live together or apart?
- ♦ Is your home suitable for the physical needs of the person you care for?
- ♦ Is your home suitable for the needs of all who live there?
- ♦ How easy is it to access the facilities you need in your community, such as the GP, the post office, shops and the pharmacy?
- ♦ Are you able to park near your home? Near the home of the person you care for?
- ♦ Are there any hazards or health and safety risks?
- ♦ How secure is your home or the home of the person you care for?