

Care and Support: Support for Carers FAQs

What is a carer?

In England, millions of people provide unpaid care or support to an adult family member or friend, either in their own home or somewhere else.

‘Caring’ for someone covers lots of different things, like helping with their washing, dressing or eating, taking them to regular appointments or keeping them company when they feel lonely or anxious.

If this sounds like you, you are considered to be a ‘carer.’

From April 2015, care and support in England is changing for the better, and if the person you care for is an adult (aged 18 or over) you may be able to get more help to carry on caring and look after your own wellbeing.

What is ‘support for carers’?

‘Support for carers’ is what we mean by the help and advice that carers can get from the council, national services and local networks. As a carer, you may be able to get more help so that you can carry on caring and look after your own wellbeing.

What is changing?

From April 2015, changes to the way care and support is provided in England mean you may be eligible for support, such as a direct payment to spend on the things that make caring easier; or practical support, like arranging for someone to step in when you need a short break. Or you may prefer to be put in touch with local support groups so you have people to talk to.

The council covering the area where the person you care for lives can help you find the right support and you can ask them for a carer’s assessment.

A carer’s assessment will look at the different ways that caring affects your life and work out how you can carry on doing the things that are important to you and your family. Your physical, mental and emotional wellbeing will be at the heart of this assessment. As a result, you may be eligible for support from the council, who will also offer you advice and guidance to help you with your caring responsibilities.

You can have a carer’s assessment even if the person you care for does not get any help from the council, and they will not need to be assessed.

Am I eligible for support?

The council covering the area where the person you care for lives can help you find the right support and you can ask them for a carer’s assessment. The carer’s assessment will help to decide what care and support you need and how much help the council can give you.

What about parents caring for disabled children, or young carers who are under 18?

If you are a young carer yourself, or if you are a parent caring for a disabled child, you have similar rights to assessment and support but they are covered by the Children and Families Act, not the new Care Act.

If you or the person you are caring for is about to reach the age of 18 years, you will be able to get a 'transition assessment' which will let you know whether you or they are likely to be eligible for support as an adult caring for another adult.

The Department for Education will soon be publishing further information on the rights of parent carers and young carers and how councils should support them.

To find out more about support for parent carers and young carers visit:

www.nhs.uk/carersdirect.

How might a carer's assessment help me?

If you provide care and support to an adult friend or family member, you may be eligible for support, such as a direct payment to spend on the things that make caring easier; or practical support, like arranging for someone to step in when you need a short break. Or you may prefer to be put in touch with local support groups so you have people to talk to.

A carer's assessment will consider the impact the care and support you provide is having on your own wellbeing and important aspects of the rest of your life.

When can I request a carer's assessment?

You can ask for a carer's assessment at any time. You should contact the council covering the area where the person you care for lives, if it is not the same as your own. If you don't want a carer's assessment but you are looking for advice and information about local support, the council will be able to help you.

What will be considered during the assessment?

A carer's assessment will look at the different ways caring affects your life and work out how you can carry on doing the things that are important to you and your family. It should cover your caring role, your feelings about caring, your physical, mental and emotional and what could make things better for you and the person you look after health, and how caring affects your work, leisure, education, wider family and relationships.

Your physical, mental and emotional wellbeing will be at the heart of this assessment. This means that you will be able to tell the council how caring for someone is affecting your life.

Will I be asked about my finances?

You won't need to do a financial means test as part of the carer's assessment but you might be asked about what impact the cost of caring is having on your finances. The carer's allowance that some people receive for caring on a full-time basis is different and does require a means test.

Councils may charge a fee for some of the support services they offer. If they think you might benefit from one of these services, the council might ask to look at your finances to see whether you can afford to pay. If you can't afford to pay, they might offer you the service for free. Councils may also need to look at the finances of the person that you care for if they are going to provide support directly to that person.

Bracknell Forest Council does not currently charge for services provided to carers.

Does having a carer's assessment affect my right to get carer's allowance?

Not at all. Having a carer's assessment will not affect your right to receive a carer's allowance.

Does having a carer's assessment mean the council is judging the quality of care that I provide?

A carer's assessment is about you and your wellbeing. It will consider the impact that caring is having on your life and what support might be available for you. Its purpose is not to judge the care that you provide.

Can I have a carer's assessment if the person I care for does not currently get help from the council?

Yes. But you will need to do this through the council of the person that you support, if it is not the same as your own. You can also ask for an assessment for the person you care for, if you want to.

I share providing care with other family members/ friends. Can all of us have a carer's assessment?

Everyone who gives unpaid care to an adult over the age of 18, and has some need for support, can request an individual carer's assessment. They do not have to be done together.

I share providing care with other family members/ friends and we disagree about who provides the most. Will this affect the support that I may be offered?

This should not affect the support you may be offered. If you care for an adult family member of friend, and you feel like you need some support, you can contact the council covering the area where the person you care for lives to ask for a carer's assessment.

If the council decides that you have needs that meet the new national level they will discuss with you what support they can provide.

If your needs are not eligible, the council will give you information and advice about other types of support that are available in your area. This may include putting you in touch with local charities or community organisations.

The person I am caring for will not agree to a needs assessment themselves. Could I still be offered support as a carer?

You don't need the permission of the person you are caring for to request a carer's assessment. You are entitled to ask for one in your own right.

If my assessment recommends a short break from caring, who will pay for the cost of services that cover for me?

Each person's situation is different. The cost would either be covered by the council, or a contribution would need to be paid by the person receiving the care. You as a carer cannot be charged for any support provided directly to the person you care for, even if it helps you to take a break.

What happens if my needs change or if I need more support?

If either of these things happen, the council of the person that you support will be able to discuss your situation with you and agree the next steps to take.

Where can I find out more about support for carers?

To find more about support for carers visit: <http://www.nhs.uk/carersdirect> or [contact the council](#) of the person you are caring for.