

SOUTHAMPTON CARERS FACT SHEET 2

Preparing for a Carers Assessment

Introduction

The main aim of this document is to help you to focus on your own needs as a carer prior to the assessment visit. It is for your use only unless you choose to share it with a close friend or relative, or the care manager who visits you.

The aim of a carer assessment is to identify his or her ability to provide and to continue to provide care. Although carers may not be entitled to specific services in their own right, the outcome of the carer assessment may, nevertheless, be an increase in the community care services provided for the 'cared-for' person.

Carers have a right to a separate assessment of their needs. If the needs of the carer are assessed and they meet the eligibility criteria, services will be offered to meet those needs. These services will be assessed against the carer's income. It may be advantageous to ensure that the carer and the cared-for person both have a regular review of their needs.

When the Health and Community Care Department (sometimes known as social services) assess the needs of a client, a social worker (who may also be known as the care manager) will work with that person to assess their needs. This process also applies to carers who may have needs in their caring role. The process may involve one or more meetings with the carer to discuss their needs and determine what services are required to meet those needs. Each client and carer has the right to decide for him or herself what he/she wants unless he/she does not have the capacity to make that choice.

The assessment process could be very important for you as a carer. It offers you the chance to think about yourself and your own needs. It is free, and commits you to nothing, but it does mean that you have a chance to give your point of view.

You, as a carer, may be involved in several ways:

- If you care for a disabled child your needs will be considered as part of an assessment of needs of your child and family
- If you care for an adult you can have a carers assessment to discuss the help that you need.

You are able to

- have an assessment at the same time as the person you care for, as the help offered to them could benefit you too, or
- request a separate and confidential assessment of your needs (this may be carried out by someone other than the care manager for the person for whom you care).

You may request assessment of your needs even if the person you care for refuses help You should be able to contribute to the discussion of the needs of the person you care for (their community care assessment) unless they specifically request that you be excluded

Your carer's assessment is your opportunity to tell health and community care staff about the things that could make caring easier for you and you should try to prepare for the visit by making notes of the things important to you.

If you feel you would like to have a Carers Assessment, get in touch with the Contact Centre (023 8083 4567). It may take time to achieve what you need, but remember you are entitled to an assessment. Don't give up.

Try to think ahead and don't wait until a crisis occurs. The right sort of help, at the right time, may help you to care more effectively and also give you more opportunities to do the things you want to do for yourself or other members of your family.

After the assessment, the care manager will ensure you have a copy of what was agreed and you should sign it only when you are happy with what it contains. If you, or the person you care for, do not agree with the assessment you have the right to say, and to ask for it to be changed until everyone agrees it. The care manager will keep you involved as progress is made with setting up your support.

If you, and/or the person you care for, are entitled to social services support, you should be offered an opportunity to consider Direct Payments so you yourself can set up the services to suit you and the cared-for person. (see Fact Sheet of Direct Payments)

If you are not eligible for social services support, staff at the Contact Centre may be able to direct you to other sources of help.

If you, or the cared-for person, had an assessment some time ago, and/or the circumstances have changed, ask the care manager for a re-assessment of needs.

If your circumstances change a **re-assessment** may be required. If a crisis has occurred you may need to convey the **urgency** of the situation.

If you did not receive a copy of the original assessment then you should ask for:

- A copy of the written assessment of the client and carers needs and
- A copy of the agreed care package

Preparing for an Assessment

Please remember:

Carers play a vital role in supporting their partner, other relative, friend or neighbour.

- The Health and Community Care Department has the main responsibility to co-operate and work in partnership with other agencies and organizations to support those in need of 'community care services'.
- The Carers (Recognition and Services) Act 1995 entitles carers to request an assessment of their own needs when the needs of the person they are caring for are being assessed or reviewed.
- The care manager will take into account the help you need to continue in your caring role when they make a decision about services to be provided for the cared-for person. They may need to discuss with you:
 - The help the person you care for needs
 - The help you are giving at the moment
 - The services your council may provide
- You do not have to cope alone with the assessment. If you have a close relative or good friend why not complete the guide together and/or ask them to be with you during the assessment visit.

What do you need to think about?

- Remember, you do not have to provide care, even though, at times, you may feel you have no choice
- You need to think about what is best for the person you care for, and consider the impact that being a carer will have on you and those around you, both now and in the future
- It is important not to forget that many illnesses and disabilities will worsen over time, and, even if you feel able to cope right now, you may not always be able to manage
- Read this document carefully and, if possible, talk through all the possibilities with the person you care for before having the assessment
- You may decide that it is best to consider some residential or nursing care, and remember that that doesn't always mean 'going into a home'

Some of the points to consider as you are preparing for the assessment are shown below. Don't be embarrassed to ask for any help you may feel you need.

Everyone's situation is different, and so not all the points or questions may seem relevant to you. Focus on the ones that you think are important, and remember that you must think about your own needs as you answer them – the cared-for person will have their own assessment.

This document concentrates upon some of the day-to-day practical issues that are known to be of importance to people in a caring role on a day-to-day basis. There may also be issues and concerns of a more personal nature that you may wish to discuss in confidence during the assessment visit.

Your task at the assessment is to try and establish, with the help of the social worker or care manager where you can best get the help you need. Take part in the process with an open mind, you may be surprised at what can be achieved.

You may like to write down your thoughts on the questions before the care manager's visit.

Carers Assessment – some points to consider

You

- Do you think you have a real choice?
- Are you feeling constantly stressed?
- Does caring stop you doing things that are important to you?
- What would you like to do that you can't?
- Do you have a past hobby, sport or interest that you would like to do again?
- Are your other relationships affected? Do you see friends and relatives as often as you would like?
- Can you get out when you want? Are you able to get out and about at all?
- Do you have someone you can talk to or confide in?

Your time

- How much time does caring take up, and are there things involved that you can't do, or just don't want to do?
- How much time do you have to do the things you want to do for yourself?
- Do you get any time for yourself?
- How much time do you spend doing practical things for the person you care for that they can't do for themselves? What are these things?



- Is the person you care for getting enough help?
- Do you have to spend time 'just being there' for the person you care for or supervising them as they do things? Can the person you care for be left alone?
- Do you have to provide help at night and, if so, what?

Health

- Do you understand all the health needs of the person you care for?
- Do you know whom to contact in an emergency?
- Do you have any health problems of your own, either now or that you think may get worse in the future?
- Are you able to rest and switch off? Do you get enough sleep?
- Is your health affected in other ways?

Housing and locality

- Do you and the person you care for live together or apart?
- Is the arrangement satisfactory?
- Who owns the house and who has the right to live in it?
- Is the house suitable for the physical needs of the person you care for?
- Is the house suitable for the needs of everyone else that lives there?
- Is there easy access to facilities you need in your community, such as the doctor, the post office, shops and the chemist?

Your work

- Do you have a job or would you like to get one?
- What help do you need to keep or get that job?
- Can your employer change your hours or change your job so that you can stay in work?
- Do you need training to help you get a job?
- Are you worried you may have to give up work?

Money

- Are you sure you have claimed all the benefits and allowances you are entitled to?
- Do you want information about benefits?
- Can the person you care for manage their own money?
- Do they help you with the expenses of living?

The future

- What would happen to the cared-for if you are unable to provide the care?
- What will happen to you when you no longer have to provide care?

Some other questions to consider before the assessment visit

- 1 What is the most rewarding aspect about caring for your partner, relative or friend?
- 2 What do you consider the most difficult aspect of caring for your partner, relative or friend?
- 3 How do you feel about being a carer?
- 4 Are other family members affected by your additional work as a carer?
- 5 What opportunities exist to allow you to maintain or take up activities, interests, employment or educational opportunities, which you enjoy?



- 6 If the cared-for person lives with you, is your existing housing/accommodation adequate to meet the needs of yourself, family and that person?
- 7 Does the cared-for person have any "special needs" that should be addressed as part of the assessment visit?
- 8 Are there any particular difficulties in the area of "domestic activities" that you wish to address? e.g. housework, cooking, shopping, laundry, etc.
- 9 Are there any particular difficulties in the area of "personal care" that you wish to address? e.g. toileting, incontinence, disturbed sleep, etc.
- 10 Are there any particular difficulties in the area of "mobility and transport" that you wish to address? e.g. steps and stairs, use of wheelchairs, movement in / out of doors, getting in and out of bed, distances to travel, rural areas, etc.
- 11 What about your own support network - how could it be improved?
- 12 Do you consider that you get the right kind of help and support from family and others?
- 13 Do you feel willing and able to continue caring?
- 14 What kind of help do you feel you need to continue caring?
- 15 What would improve your own social life?
- 16 How is your own health? Are there any issues of your health we should be aware of?
- 17 Would you like some advice or training arranged locally? e.g.
 - a) Coping skills and stress management
 - b) Benefits/direct payments
 - c) Practical help
 - d) Moving and handlingPlease think about any other advice or training you feel you need.
- 18 Do you feel able to continue your caring?
- 19 Are you receiving any benefits? (See A-Z of Benefits in the Carers Pack)
- 20 Are you able to name a person to contact in the event of emergency? Please include name address and telephone number. If so are you explain what they will need to do?
- 21 Other comments and/or questions.

Some of the services that might help you:

- Services that give you a break e.g. sitting service
- Emotional support from other carers or people who understand
- Help with household tasks
- Help with caring tasks during the day and/or the night
- Benefits advice – e.g. carers may be able to apply for the Carers Allowance
- Activities for the person you care for
- Supported holiday breaks together



Would you like any further information or advice on the following?

- Voluntary/Independent local organizations
- Housing
- Transportation
- Looking after yourself and caring safely
- Choosing a Residential or Nursing Home
- Sources of support and advice
- How to access short breaks
- Benefits
- Any charges for services
- What to do if you wish to complain
- Carers Emergency Arrangements
- Addresses of National Organizations that support Carers
- Carers Together in Southampton and Hampshire

If you would like more information or independent support please contact:

Carers Support and Advocacy Worker (Southampton)

Carers Together
9 Love Lane
Romsey
Hampshire SO51 8DE

Tel: 01794 519495

E-mail: admin@carerstogether.org.uk

Website: www.carerstogether.org.uk

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