



SOUTHAMPTON CARERS FACT SHEET 2a

The Carers Assessment Document – guidance on completion

Information

- The carer should be able to see all information appropriate to their needs before an assessment takes place.
- An information pack especially for carers, should be made available to the carer before completing the assessment document. It should include information about any carers support policies, any benefits/services and other information available, with clear guidelines about those to which the carer may be entitled.

The Carers Assessment

- A carer has the right to a separate assessment. This should take place at a mutually agreed time and place. The carer should decide who else is present for their support.
- The assessment may be undertaken by the care manager for the cared-for person or by a separate carers assessment worker, depending on the wishes of the carer.
- The assessment should focus on the abilities of the carer. It should cover factual issues as well as personal/emotional issues central to the carer's well being.
- Concentrating on his/her own needs, as opposed to those of the cared-for person, may well be a new experience for the carer, but it is essential that the needs of the carer remain the focus of the assessment. The assessment should be a positive and beneficial experience for the carer allowing them to explore new areas that may have previously been suppressed or ignored.

Caring

The views and circumstances of carers and the people they care for, are distinct, but the nature of caring requires that they are considered together by the care manager so the whole picture is reflected in the services to be provided. Carers, theoretically, have the right to choose how much they do and whether or not to care. This right must be respected throughout the assessment and carers encouraged to choose for themselves.

Confidentiality

The cared-for person and the carer have the right to personal confidentiality and all parties concerned must respect this. No assumptions should be made about what different people might know or think.

Essential Facts to remember

- The Carers Act places on the local authority a duty to 'take into account' the needs of the carer when planning a care package for the person being cared for.
- It is the care manager's responsibility to undertake this duty, particularly when someone else has completed the carer's assessment.
- The carer must be offered a copy of their own assessment.
- The carer does not have to accept what the care manager has said and can request changes or adjustments until it meets their own wishes.
- It is important that the final page is completed and signed by the carer.

The Assessment Document

- The carers assessment document was designed with carers and includes many of the issues that are relevant to their needs.
- Each carer's situation must be assessed individually.
- Some sections may not be relevant to all carers.
- Carers themselves should be able to determine the parts relevant to them.

The document should include the agreed sections below:

Carer 'Time' Assessment

- This part of the assessment is intended to review and discuss with the carer the time spent caring, and to assess how, when, why and for how long a carer uses their time in the caring role.
- The completion of the assessment may be the first time the carer has thought in detail about his/her own practical role, and the results may point to some 're-planning' of their workload. It may also identify some training needs. Any suggestions as a result must take into account other demands on the carer e.g. other family demands, employment opportunities, leisure and personal time.
- This process may also indicate tasks where the carer feels uncomfortable and those with which the carer feels most competent. It also helps to identify relevant and necessary service provision – targets, allocation and needs.

Carer's Health

- This is not a health assessment, but may point to the need to consider health issues.
- Carers should be looking at issues and risks (current and possible future) and considering their right to choose. The impact of this may be relevant to their personal, physical and emotional health now and in the future.
- Some respite, in whatever form, may be an important consideration.

Caring Environment

- Carers should be thinking about the practical environment inside and outside the house, including access to local facilities.
- Occupational therapy assessment may well be useful.
- Carers should be considering financial issues, housing rights and legal issues for themselves and the person they are caring for, e.g. power of attorney etc.
- Whilst difficult and sometimes painful for the carer, planning for the future and 'life after caring' is also important.

Carer's Personal Issues

- Carers will need to consider the emotional issues involved with caring.
- All caring is based upon a pre-existing relationship. The nature of that relationship and how the caring relationship has evolved, plus the carer's personal hopes and wishes should be examined together with their present and future needs.
- Reference to other family members and their response to the caring situation should be explored. The carer may feel compelled to care through personal, family or social obligation; choice for the carer may not be real but it is important, emotionally, to explore it.

Carers Comments

Space is available for free text and comments from the carer.