

Carer Frequently Asked Questions

The information here is intended as a guide to help you find out about the support available to you as a carer, and the people you're caring for.

You can find out more information on our Carers Information webpage.

Web berkshirehealthcare.nhs.uk/carers-information

About carers

What is a carer?

A carer is someone who provides unpaid support to family or friends who could not manage without this help. This could be a relative, partner or friend who is ill, frail, disabled or is affected by mental health or substance misuse.

About 1 in 8 adults (around 6.5 million people) are carers.

Most of us don't identify as carers and see our caring role as an extension of an existing family relationship. It can take up to two years to identify as a carer.

Caring can take a variety of forms, such as personal care, practical help with things like shopping or housework, emotional support, or help with managing behaviours or relationships.

What is a young carer?

A young carer is a person under the age of 18, who provides or intends to provide care for another person. You may not realise you're a carer because looking after someone is part of your normal life. Caring can cover lots of different things, such as washing, dressing, preparing meals, housework, or even helping to look after a brother or sister.

Do I have to live with the person I support to be classed as a carer?

Carers provide unpaid care by looking after an ill, older or disabled family member, friend or partner. It could be a few hours a week or round the clock, in their own home, or down the motorway. You don't have to be living with the person you care for to be helping care for them.

Carer Assessment

What is a Carer's Assessment?

A Carer Assessment is for anyone over 18 years old who is looking after another adult over 18 years old. It is free, and is separate from the needs assessment the person you care for might have, but you can ask to have them both done at the same time. It looks at your physical, mental and emotional needs.

Any carer who is in need of support can have an assessment regardless of the amount or type of care they provide, finances or level of need for support. Visit the NHS website to find out more.

Web [nhs.uk/conditions/social-care-and-support-guide/support-and-benefits-for-carers/carers-assessments/](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/social-care-and-support-guide/support-and-benefits-for-carers/carers-assessments/)

A Carer's Assessment might recommend things like someone to take over caring so you can take a break; exercise classes to relieve stress; help with taxi fares if you don't drive; help with gardening and housework; training how to lift safely or putting you in touch with local support groups so you have people to talk who can give advice about benefits for carers.

How do I get a Carer's Assessment?

You need to contact adult social services at your local council. Please select the right one based on where you/the person you care for lives. Our website provides helpful information relevant to each locality across Berkshire.

Web berkshirehealthcare.nhs.uk/carers-information

Support

Who should I tell I'm a carer?

You can register as a carer at your GP practice, either by speaking to your GP or asking at reception. By registering as a carer you could be entitled to a health check (for over 45s), a free flu jab, and flexible appointments.

You may also want to tell your employer to see if they can help and support you with your caring responsibilities.

Are there any Carers Support Groups locally?

If you are a carer, you can find free independent information, advice and support through local support groups. They can support you to maintain your wellbeing and stay connected to your community through providing details such as carer groups, events, training and befriending.

Visit our website for helpful information relevant to each locality across Berkshire.

How can my local Borough Council Adult Social Care services support me?

Caring for a friend or family member who is ill, disabled or older can be valuable and rewarding, but without the right support caring can have an impact on your health, your job, your finances, and social life.

Under the Care Act 2014, local authorities/borough councils have a legal duty to provide carers with a [Carers Assessment](#).

Under the Children & Families Act 2014, young carers are entitled to a Carers Assessment in their own right. If you care for someone, you may be eligible for support and you can have an assessment to see what might help make your life easier.

This assessment does not take into account your finances.

Is there any additional support for carers of people with mental health problems?

If the person you care for is accessing our [Community Mental Health Teams](#) you will be able to ask them about support.

How you access the support may vary depending on where you live. For example, in some localities we employ carers leads who undertake carers assessments and provide support to carers supporting people with mental health problems.

If we're unable to support you directly, we will signpost you to partners and specialist groups so you can access support through them.

What does 'Advocacy' mean?

Advocacy means getting support from another person to help you express your views and wishes, and to help make sure your voice is heard. Someone who helps people in this way is called an advocate.

Patients can sometimes struggle to communicate their views or to feel confident in expressing their thoughts with clinical staff. With the consent of the person you care for, you will be able to advocate on their behalf.

If the patient prefers, staff can arrange for them to access a trained, independent advocate who will support them in meetings and/or with appointments.

You can find more information on our website.

Web berkshirehealthcare.nhs.uk/advocacy-groups

Benefits

Am I entitled to any benefits or allowances?

As a carer, you could be entitled to some benefits or allowances. The following websites will provide you with additional information.

Berkshire Care Services Directory

You can find an essential guide for choosing and paying for care and support.

Web carechoices.co.uk/publication/berkshire-care-services-directory/

NHS

The NHS website has a Social Care and Support Guide section, which explains where you can get support.

Web nhs.uk/conditions/social-care-and-support-guide/support-and-benefits-for-carers/

Carer and patient rights

What is the Care Act 2014?

The Care Act 2014 changed the way care and support was delivered, making it more consistent across the country. The act puts people in control of the help they receive and ensures any decisions about care and support also consider wellbeing to support people in staying healthy and independent for longer.

Many of us will need care and support at some point in our lives, and most people will pay at least something towards the cost of their care.

The Care Act 2014 gives a bigger say to people who receive care and support or look after someone as a carer. This includes listening to what sort of care is best for you and your family. **Think Local Act Personal (TLAP)**, a national partnership of more than 50 health and care organisations, have a helpful jargon buster on their website which explains the terms and phrases used in the Care Act 2014. Visit the TLAP website to find out more.

Web thinklocalactpersonal.org.uk/Browse/Informationandadvice/CareandSupportJargonBuster/

What does Consent mean?

Patients, also known as 'service users', have a legal right to decide whether or not they wish staff to share their information with anyone, including their carers, partners and families.

This is called 'consent to share'.

We've created an [information sheet for carers](#) to help you to understand confidentiality, consent and information sharing.

