

Carers

Adult Social Care & Health Factsheet G2

Who is a Carer?

A Carer is a relative, friend or neighbour who provides essential support to someone unable to do everything for themselves. A Carer can be an adult, young person or a child.

Cheshire West and Chester are committed to supporting Carers and recognise that “most care in the community takes place through family, friends and neighbours.” In recognising the role and needs of Carers a “Carers Charter” has been developed and is available from your local Adult Social Care and Health office.

The support that Cheshire West and Chester offers to Carers stems from the Carers Recognition and Services Act 1995 and the Carers and Disabled Children Act 2000. This

factsheet tells Carers how Cheshire West and Chester can help them under the terms of these two Acts.

What is the role of a carer?

In order to support those Carers needing most help, Carers’ legislation defines Carers as people who provide or intend to provide a substantial amount of care on a regular basis. In effect this means a Carer who is typically supporting someone on a daily basis or at least for most days of the week. The support provided could cover personal care, practical assistance, help with medical matters or the supervision of someone who is at risk owing to physical frailty or mental health problems.

A Carer may be caring for:

- Older people (including people with dementia);
- Children with disabilities;
- People with physical disabilities;
- People who look after others...
- People with visual (blindness) or hearing (deafness) impairment;
- People with mental illness (like depression and schizophrenia);
- People with learning disabilities;
- People with HIV/Aids;
- People who misuse substances.

How can Cheshire West and Chester help?

Help and advice can be given in a variety of ways. In most cases help will be provided as the result of an assessment of needs. This may be a joint assessment, where a Carer's needs and the person for whom they care are considered within one process, or as a completely separate assessment, looking at the Carer's own needs.

A Carer may have their needs assessed even if the person they care for does not have services from the Council. Indeed the person being cared for may have been assessed for service and have declined them or they may not wish to request a separate assessment of his or her own needs at any time.

There may be a charge for some services. The person receiving the service will be responsible for paying these. Some charges are fixed, for example, meals, while others depend on a person's financial situation. Either way, we will ensure people are informed of any cost before a service is arranged.

Information, advice and support

Access to the right information at the right time is an important need of all Carers. We can offer information about a range of topics, including what help is available and where to get it. We can also put you in touch with local organisations providing information and support, one which is the Cheshire Carers Centre who can be contacted on

freephone 0800 085 0307. Even if you feel you do not need help yet, you may want to know what will be available, should you need it. If we cannot meet your needs, we will try to put you in touch with someone who can. We may be able to arrange services at home, which support you and the person you look after.

Practical Aids to coping

Our occupational therapists can give practical advice about all aspects of day to day living. A piece of equipment for purchase from local mobility centres. Or following an assessment of the person being cared for physical needs, the loan of appropriate aids may be supplied.

For more information, please contact your local Adult Social Care and Health office.

Time for yourself and help with caring

Caring for someone can be a 24 hour a day job. Most carers need a break. Respite Care allows you some time alone to pursue your own interests, to do essential things for yourself like attend an appointment and generally

“recharge your batteries. It can also be of benefit to the person for whom you care, offering them “space” and perhaps the opportunity to meet others. The opportunity for a few hours break may be made possible through a sitting service or day care. Alternatively, a longer break would be possible if the person you are caring for stays with family carers, or a short stay in a residential or nursing home. These opportunities can be arranged either on a one off or on a regular basis. Even if you feel you do not need respite care now, it may be useful for you to know what is available and how to arrange it on either a planned or an emergency basis. There may be a charge for this service and this will be discussed at the time an assessment takes place.

Is there someone I can talk to?

Many Carers can feel lonely and isolated. They may feel that there are times when there is no one to listen to them or give time to hear about the things they need.

Carers can feel angry at being left with what seems an impossible task and guilt for having such feelings. If you feel

like this, do not let the pressure build up – ask for help.

Our social workers are qualified and experienced workers who can help you talk about things that may be emotional or difficult for you. Alternatively, you can talk to your doctor, to people who contribute to the work of local care support organisations or to the Samaritans. If you or the person for whom you care is going into hospital.

We have social workers working in the community and in hospitals who can make arrangements while people are still in hospital in preparation for their return home.

Getting out with the person for whom you care

We administer, on behalf of the Department of Transport, the car park badge scheme for people with disabilities. These badges allow cars with disabled drivers or passengers to park closer to places to which they need to gain access. For more information contact your local Adult Social Care and Health office.

Support when you are no longer a carer

For many Carers there may come a time when they cease their caring role. The person for whom they care may need to go into a residential or nursing home or sadly the Carer may become bereaved if they outlive the person for whom they care. If this happens to you then you may need support in adjusting to these important changes. You may need help and support from a local Carer's organisation.

How can I find out more?

If you or the person for whom you care already have a social worker or occupational therapist, you can ask them for more information about any of the matters raised in this factsheet. If not, please contact one of our Adult Social Care and Health Access Teams. If you are a Carer, the Access Team will ask you for some details about yourself and the person for whom you care and may arrange for another member of staff to talk to you.

What happens after I have contacted Adult Social Care and Health Services?

You may choose to have a separate assessment if you wish or a joint assessment if that is what you and the person you care for prefer. If you choose the latter you may request at any time in the future to have your needs assessed separately.

You will be offered the opportunity of a private discussion, to talk through your needs. If you are a child or young person providing care or a parent of a disabled child, staff from our Child and Family Care Teams will come to you to see how you may be helped. You will be involved when we review the support we have arranged. Some older or disabled Carers are eligible for an assessment of their needs under the NHS and Community Care Act 1990. For more details ask for the leaflet “Community Care in Cheshire”.

Is there a charge for an Assessment?

There is no charge for an Assessment. An assessment is simply a way of finding out the

best way of helping you to cope. Cheshire West and Chester has a duty to provide and co-ordinate the assessment of those people in its area who fit the legal definition of a “Carer”.

What happens if my needs change?

Any help provided will be reviewed periodically to ensure it is meeting your needs and those of the person for whom you care. If circumstances change, you can request a review or reassessment at any time by contacting your named member of staff or the Access Team.

Cheshire Carers Centre

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Carers Helpline Free phone No:
0800
0850307

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