

The Jubilee Medical Practice Carers Information Pack

'because we care about you'



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Introduction

Do you care for someone with severe illness?

If you are a partner, relative or close friend of someone with health difficulties and you provide a major part of their care, then you would be known as a 'carer'.

It can sometimes be difficult to see yourself as a carer, particularly if you are looking after a friend or family member. If you answer yes, or even maybe, to any of the following then you would be considered a carer

- Do you feel responsible for supporting a person with ill health?
- Do you assist a person on a day-to-day basis?
- Do you feel you have to be there for them?
- Do you feel you need more information about health difficulties and the options open to you?
- Do you feel no-one understands the pressures on you?
- Do you feel you have to cope alone?

Highs and Lows of being a carer

Caring for someone can be immensely rewarding, but there are times when caring for someone with severe illness can bring a sense of isolation and extreme stress. It is at these times that you might well benefit from the information contained on these pages and the different kinds of help and support highlighted here.

Caring about Carers

Caring about Carers is a national strategy introduced by the Government. The strategy acknowledges the vital role of carers and introduces ways of supporting them more effectively.

We hope this pack you have been provided with will assist you in receiving the support and resources you are entitled to as a carer.

Am I a Carer?

The Government says you are a carer if you are a friend or relative who is involved in looking after someone with a severe illness. You may be the person's wife, husband, civil partner, son, daughter, sister, brother, parent, other relative, neighbour or friend. You do not have to live in the same household as the person you look after.

What Are My Rights?

The Government recognises the importance of carers. In its national plan for carers, the Government says that you should feel that 'the system is on your side' and that you should have opportunities for 'a life of your own'.

The law (the Carers Acts) sets out what should be done for carers. The main thing that the law sets out is that you have a right to have your own needs assessed. The law says that you must be informed of your rights.

What is an assessment for?

The purpose of an assessment of carer's needs is:

- to find out if you need some extra support
- to look at what can help you in your caring role and help you to keep well yourself
- to consider how caring affects your ability to work or take part in education/training or leisure activities
- to see if support can be given by social services or other organisation

What happens if I have an assessment?

When the person you look after is assessed by a doctor, nurse or social worker, your needs should also be considered. If you provide 10 or more hours of practical support/emotional support or supervision per week, or if the caring role is clearly having a negative effect on your ordinary lifestyle, then you can choose to have a separate assessment if you wish.

The member of staff who does the assessment will talk to you about how your relative or friend's illness affects you. You can tell them about anything that worries you, and ask any questions you may have. The member of staff will answer your questions as fully as possible but there may be some information they cannot give to you because they must also respect the confidentiality of information about the person you look after.



Carers Support Plan

The member of staff will try to identify things to help and support you. This will be written down after agreement with you the carer in a document called a “Carers Support Plan”.

The Support Plan should include some or all of the following:

- information on what to do and who to contact in a crisis
- what will be provided to meet your own health needs, and how it will be provided
- information on how to get advice on income and benefits, housing, education and employment
- if support or short term breaks have been agreed, what the arrangements for these will be
- information about appeals or complaints procedures

This Support Plan will be reviewed (looked at again) every year, or more often if necessary.

Carers UK is a campaigning organisation, providing information and advice on all aspects of caring to carers.

For further information go to www.carersuk.org. Telephone: 0808 808 7777 (helpline)
In terms of your Spiritual needs you can access local faith groups, and the Chaplaincy Service at the hospital.



Carers' Rights

Carers' Assessment

If you provide a substantial amount of care on a regular basis for another person aged 18 or over, the law says you have a right to an assessment. You may be the person's wife, husband, partner, son, daughter, sister, brother, parent, other relative, neighbour or friend. You do not have to live in the same household as the person you look after.

There is no reason for the person you care for to be present during the assessment.

If the person you care for is involved with social or health services you can ask for a Carers' Assessment. Contact the Social Care & Health Access Team, or your GP to start the process.

The purpose of a Carers' Assessment is to discuss with social services the support you need with caring. It will also help you to maintain your own health and care for your own needs.

As well as looking at the support you need, the assessment can be useful in:

- Exploring with how you feel about caring
- Giving you information on benefits and support, such as carers groups or advocacy
- Helping you decide if you want to stay at or return to work and how to make this happen
- Looking at how caring may affect you in the future and what help you might need

Some of the questions you may be asked at your assessment are:

- How long have you been a carer?
- How often do you give or monitor medication?
- Do you help with practical tasks (cooking, cleaning etc)?
- Do you give emotional support?
- Do you have a deal with difficult behaviour?
- Do you have to manage finances?
- Do you need help and advice on what is available to you?
- To what extent are you involved in decisions about treatment and care?

Within two weeks of the assessment taking place, you should receive a copy of it. Should you not agree with its content, then it is your right to tell social services that you disagree and want to appeal.

Carers' Benefits

Welfare Rights have produced a booklet, [Benefits for Carers](#), which provides information on benefits that are available if you are caring for a friend or relative whose illness or disability means they need extra help. It is designed to explain the benefits that are available to you as the carer, rather than the person you are caring for.



Taking Care of Yourself

Your Health and Needs

Illness is unpredictable and emotionally taxing. Carers often feel that they “walk on eggshells” in order not to upset the painstakingly achieved balance that has been established. This can be very limiting for both the carer and the service user, and gives little scope for moving forward. Where there is a good level of trust and open communication between them, the service user feels more understood and supported, and their everyday anxieties are less likely to grow into major problems. For the carer, it results in greater understanding of the problems, and being able to act in a constructive way rather than worrying about pushing the service user too far too soon, and doing nothing because of the risk of relapse. Mutual understanding also increases the chances of planning breaks or time out for the carer.

Carers can feel guilty about taking time for themselves, but it is crucial that they do – one in three carers becomes ill with stress-related disorders.

For Yourself

- Remember that you are merely human and have needs of your own. Continually putting them off, or not allowing time for yourself, will only make you resentful, irritable and could eventually make you unwell.
- Allow time each week to do something you enjoy, something to make you feel relaxed, refreshed and that life is good.
- Eat regularly and well. Poor sleep and diet will only add to your overall stress levels.
- Exercise as much as possible – even a short brisk walk will help.
- Plan to take regular time out and/or holidays – and take them.
- Put in clear boundaries with the person you care for. Be clear about what you can and cannot do – and stick to it.
- Ensure that there is at least one supportive person with whom you can talk confidentially. It is really easy to lose your perspective and sense of humour if you feel isolated.
- Remember that your GP can be a source of help. Take a friend or advocate with you if you think you don't know how or may not be able to tell your doctor what you are feeling.
- Knowing about the illness or disorder that you are dealing with will help you to understand it and act appropriately, even if the person you care for doesn't want to know.
- Joining a Carers Group helps relieve isolation, stress, loss of humor and loneliness, as well as helping you to understand different types of illness and disorder.
- Seek advice from the team involved with providing care if you can – if not an advocate can help to get answers for you.
- If you should be receiving services that you are not getting, don't be too proud or too afraid to complain – don't just cope all by yourself, seek help from an advocate.

Counselling

Counselling can help you to express feelings and emotions, safely and confidentially. It can help you to understand why you feel stressed, angry, resentful, help to maintain a sense of perspective or new coping strategies.

- CLASP - www.claspthecarerscentre.org.uk
Telephone :0116 251 0999
- Carers UK: www.carersuk.org
Telephone: Advice line 0808 808 7777

Education, Training and Leisure Activities

Sources of information about educational and leisure activities:

- Leicester City Council: <http://www.leicester.gov.uk/>
- Leicester County Council: <http://www.leics.gov.uk/>
- Rutland County Council: <http://www.rutland.gov.uk/>
- LAMP: <http://www.lampdirect.org.uk/>
- Local library
- Local leisure centre or swimming pool
- Local community college
- Local community centre
- Local paper



Alternative Therapies

You may wish to consider some alternative therapies. It may be useful to inform your GP if you are considering Homeopathy, and if you do decide to go ahead with any alternative therapies, tell your therapist if you are taking any medication (whether this is prescribed by your GP or something you have bought for yourself).

Acupuncture: Uses small needles inserted into the skin at specific points to balance or restore energy.

Aromatherapy: Uses the essential oils from plants to enhance physical and emotional well-being. The oils can be inhaled or massaged into the skin.

Homeopathy: Uses natural substances (known as remedies) which mimic symptoms. Substances used are very diluted and have very few harmful side effects.

Massage: Unblocks muscular tension, stimulates circulation and helps the body to eliminate waste (eg blocked sinus). Massage also gives a sense of physical comfort that can ease sadness and isolation.

Meditation: Through learning how to clear your mind of worries and control your breathing, meditation can provide periods of time that are peaceful and inwardly calm.

Reflexology: Works on a similar basis to acupuncture except that the energy pathways are released through reflex points on the feet or hands, each of which corresponds to an area of the body.

Shiatsu: Uses massage and/or finger pressure in a similar way to acupuncture. Also known as acupressure, it helps to release blocked energy and so stimulate healing.

Tai Chi: Uses movement based on martial arts exercises to increase energy and health.

Yoga: Aims to improve mind, body and spiritual functioning, using slow gentle stretching exercises and deep breathing techniques.

Support Groups and Web Links for Carers

Please find below a list of organisations that may be able to provide you with further information or support. We have split the list in to local and national groups. Below each icon is a brief description of the organisation. Click on the icon to be taken to the organisations website.

Local Links



Telephone: 01858 433232

A local organisation providing free support and guidance to carers on what help is available including advice about what financial support may be accessible. Patients and carers at Jubilee Medical Practice can book in to see the VASL representative who holds a clinic at the surgery on a monthly basis. Please ask at reception for more details.



Leicester City Council

Telephone 0116 252 7000

Information about how Leicester City Council can help and support carers living in Leicester City. Includes information about the carers assessment, the carers grant and the City Council's Carers Strategy.



Telephone 0116 232 3232

Information about how Leicestershire County Council can help and support carers living in Leicestershire. Includes details about what services are available, a carers booklet, support groups and information for young carers.



Telephone 0116 305 7538

A local web site that was set up to improve the lives of carers, disabled people and older people by providing accessible information and services, helping people to make their own decision and helping to reduce isolation and social exclusion.

CLASP the Carers Centre

Telephone 0116 251 0999

Supports carers in the diverse communities of Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland providing services to improve the quality of life for carers and those for whom they care.

CLASP The Carers Centre
Unit 19, 4th Floor
Matrix House
Constitution Hill
Leicester
UK
LE1 1PL

National Links



Telephone: 0300 772 9600

Charitable organisation providing support and advice to carers.



Telephone 0808 802 0202

A web site provided by the Department of Health aimed at carers. The site provides Government guidance and regulations affecting carers and details of the carers grant.

advicenow

An independent, not-for-profit web site providing accurate up-to-date information on rights and legal issues, including benefits, employment, health and social care, housing, family and personal. Funded by Legal Services Commission and the Department of Constitutional Affairs.



Telephone: 020 7378 4999

A charity providing support and information to carers.



A government web site which provides a wide range of useful information for carers, including details about carers assessments, carers allowance, direct payments for carers, employment, carers rights and how carers can look after themselves and take a break.