Victoria Park Health Centre

We care about Carers

Carers Pack
Carers are a diverse group and every caring situation is unique. Carers are people who care for a family member, a friend or another person in need of assistance or support with daily living. They include those caring for the frail aged, people living with long-term medical conditions, people with a mental illness, people with a disability and those receiving palliative care.

Carers can be adults caring for other adults, parents caring for children who are ill or have a disability or young carers under 18 years caring for or involved in the care of a parent, sibling, relative or friend. The closeness of the caring relationship means care can include emotional support for the person.

Some carers do not call themselves carers but see themselves as a wife or husband, mother or father, partner, grandparent, child, friend or neighbour. There can be multiple carers who care as part of a family or community network. At times, because of the nature of the illness, a carer may not be recognised as a carer by the person he or she is providing care to.

The need for care can happen in various ways. It can increase gradually as a result of a progressive medical condition, or growing older and becoming frail. It can also happen suddenly, for instance, as a result of an accident or stroke.

Parent carers are most likely to be caring the longest. The responsibilities may be even greater in the situation of a carer who is a sole parent who has more than one person to care for or if the carer has a disability or is frail aged. Carers can live in the same house as the person they care for or live close by and visit regularly. Some live a distance away and visit weekly or monthly but nonetheless feel a responsibility towards the person they care for. Caring can affect everyone in the family.

Carers give support with life matters and assist with the health and wellbeing of the person in their care. This can include tasks of daily living and social, emotional, spiritual and physical support. The individual caring situation can have many complexities and can include managing challenging behaviour. Carers may be in full-time or part-time employment. Carers give their time to care because of commitment to and love for the person in need of care. In doing so, the caring role can impact on the carer’s social needs and physical and mental health. Each carer differs in the intensity of the caring role, and this reflects in the stresses and demands of the carer in his or her tasks and responsibilities. Recognition of and support for the individual needs of carers will improve their health and wellbeing.

Anyone in our community could at any time be called on to care for someone close to them for either a short or long period of time. While the work done by paid support workers or care workers assists carers in their role, these workers have industrial entitlements and are not defined as carers. Similarly, the role of volunteers in our community is crucial to carers and the people they care for. However, the term ‘Carer’ in the context of this pack does not include volunteers while they are working under the auspices of a voluntary organisation.
Are you a carer?  
Do you look after someone?

If you look after a partner, relative or friend who is disabled or ill due to physical or mental health, you are a carer, even if you don’t think of yourself as one. Find out about the emotional, practical and financial support available to you.

There are many ways that you might care for someone - you might:

- Be on hand 24 hours a day to provide care.
- Arrange hospital appointments for someone.
- Drop round each day to keep someone company or cook their dinner.
- Visit a relative who lives far away once a month to see how they’re doing.
- Move in with someone to help them recuperate after a major operation.

A carer is anyone, including children and adults who looks after a family member, partner or friend who needs help because of their illness, frailty, disability, a mental health problem or an addiction and cannot cope without their support. The care they give is unpaid. When we refer to carers in this document, this is inclusive of both adult and young carers.

Many carers don’t see themselves as carers and it takes them an average of two years to acknowledge their role as a carer. It can be difficult for carers to see their caring role as separate from the relationship they have with the person for whom they care, whether that relationship is as a parent, child, sibling, partner, or a friend.

It’s likely that every one of us will have caring responsibilities at some time in our lives with the challenges faced by carers taking many forms. Many carers juggle their caring responsibilities with work, study and other family commitments. Some, in particular younger carers, are not known to be carers. They don’t tell relatives, friends or health and care professionals about their responsibilities because of a fear of separation, guilt, pride or other reasons.

This means that the sort of roles and responsibilities that carers have to provide varies widely. They can range from help with everyday tasks such as getting out of bed and personal care such as bathing, to emotional support such as helping someone cope with the symptoms of a mental illness.

If you care for someone, contact your local council to arrange a carer’s assessment.
Looking after yourself

Caring is a difficult and stressful and emotional job and it has been proven that carers are significantly more likely to suffer ill health as they put the needs of the person being cared for before their own. If you have any concerns regarding your physical or mental wellbeing make an appointment to see your GP and make sure to inform them that you are a carer.

What to keep an eye on:

- Blood Pressure
- Stress Exhaustion
- Back Pain
- Sleep (are you getting a good nights sleep?)
- Cholesterol and Heart Health

What your GP Surgery can do to help

Your GP can refer you to social services, to counselling or to other organisations and services that may be able to provide support.

- They can help to arrange for any prescriptions to be delivered to your home.
- Book appointments for the cared for and the carer at the same time to reduce visits to the surgery.
- Arrange for someone to see you at home if you are ill, if it is impossible for you to leave the house.
- Arrange telephone consultations to save you visiting the surgery at all.
Carers Assessment

The purpose of a caring assessment is to ensure that you as the carer are receiving the level of help and assistance that you need, and also to evaluate whether there are any services which could make life as a carer easier. This is your opportunity to communicate to Social Services exactly what impact caring has on all aspects of your life that are affected. Once the assessment is complete Social Services will devise a care plan for you, which should include all of the services which they believe will improve life as a carer for you. Your income and capital will then be assessed to decide which, if any, services you may be charged for.

What is an assessment?

An assessment is a way of getting a clear picture of the circumstances of a Carer and the person they care for.

It looks at restrictions; difficulties and pressure both are under. It acknowledges the help already given, and looks at what help both may need.

It can be difficult for a carer to explain how they feel about their caring situation in the presence of the person they care for, so it is suggested that the carer and the person completing the assessment meet in private.

The assessment will be undertaken by a member of the community care team or a specialised carer case worker and may lead to a support plan for the carer.

To request an assessment please complete the online form at: https://mysupportneeds.leicester.gov.uk/web/portal/pages/carersform#h1

What is carers allowance?

Carer’s Allowance is the main benefit for carers. It is paid in the region of £66.15 a week. The amount paid is reviewed each year in April, but isn’t necessarily increased.

Carer’s Allowance is not based on your National Insurance record. It is also not a means tested benefit based on yours or any partner’s income and capital. However, there is a cap on how much you can earn and still be entitled to claim Carer’s Allowance.

Who can claim Carer’s allowance?

Not every carer can get Carer’s Allowance. You may be eligible if you meet all the following conditions:

- you look after someone who gets a qualifying disability benefit
- you look after that person for at least 35 hours a week
- you are aged 16 or over
- you are not in full-time education
- you earn £110 a week (after deductions) or less
- you satisfy UK residence and presence conditions
Please see links below for further help, support and guidance for carers:

**Independence Payment**
To claim, call the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) on 0800 917 2222 (text phone: 0800 917 7777)

**Age UK**
provide advice and information for people in later life through our Age UK Advice line, publications and online. Age UK Advice: 0800 169 65 65 Lines are open seven days a week from 8am to 7pm. [www.ageuk.org.uk](http://www.ageuk.org.uk)

**Action on Elder Abuse**
Tel: 0808 808 8141

**Care Quality Commission (CQC)**
National independent regulator of all health and social care services in England. Tel: 03000 61 61 61 [www.cqc.org.uk](http://www.cqc.org.uk)

**Carers Direct**
Help and support if you want to talk to someone about your caring role and the options available to you.
Tel: 0300 123 1053 (England only)
Textphone: 0300 123 1004
[www.nhs.uk/carersdirect](http://www.nhs.uk/carersdirect)

**Carers Trust**
Offers practical help and assistance to carers. You can search on their website for local carers services in your area.
Tel: 01455560046
[www.carertrustm.org](http://www.carertrustm.org)

**Carers UK**
Provides information and support for carers, including information about benefits.
Tel: 0808 808 7777
[www.carersuk.org](http://www.carersuk.org)

**Cruse Bereavement Care**
Counselling and advice service for bereaved people that also offers advice, information and practical support.
Tel: 0844 477 9400
Email: [helpline@cruse.org.uk](mailto:helpline@cruse.org.uk)
Website:[www.cruse.org.uk](http://www.cruse.org.uk)
Carers WellBeing Project
The Carers WellBeing Project aims to deliver activities which will recognise the needs and support of the caring role, health and wellbeing. Activities such as relaxation, meditation, arts and crafts are delivered 3 times a week for the users.
Ansaa
Telephone: 0116 2621000
Email: info@ansaar.org
Locations: 112 Melbourne Road, Leicester, LE2 0DS

Carers Support Services - Age UK Leicester Shire & Rutland
Age UK Leicester Shire & Rutland provide a range of preventative, community based breaks, support opportunities and information for carers living within the City boundary, including services specific to older Asian Carers, and carers of people with Mental Health Needs.
Age UK Leicester Shire and Rutland
Telephone: 0116 299 2233
Email: enquiries@ageukleics.org.uk
Locations: Leicester City

CareFree Young Carers' Services
Offers a wide range of practical and emotional support services to young carers (under 18 years old) in Leicester and Leicestershire.
Barnardos
Telephone: 0116 2867182
Email: carefree@barnardos.org.uk
Locations: West Point, Feldspar Close, Warren Park, Enderby, Leicester, LE19 4SD

CLASP - The Carers Centre (Leicestershire & Rutland)
Offers workshops where a carer can learn how to cook or try out new ideas. Carers will get the opportunity to meet other carers who understand how difficult it can be to find time to eat well.
Telephone: 0116 251 0999
Email: enquiries@thecarerscentre.org.uk
Website: www.claspthecarerscentre.org.uk
Locations: Unit 19, 4th Floor Matrix House, Leicester, LE1 1PL

Support for Carers Leicestershire
Support for Carers Leicestershire supports carers throughout the county. The service is run by Voluntary Action South Leicestershire (VASL), a community-based organisation with a long and successful history of supporting carers. We're here to help anyone who's a carer in Leicestershire, whether you care full-time or for just a few hours a week.
Telephone: 01858468543
Email: maureen@supportforcarers.org
Website: www.supportforcarers.org

Easy Health
Easyhealth was made so that people know where to find ‘accessible’ health information. ‘Accessible’ information is information that uses easy words with pictures.
Website: www.easyhealth.org.uk

Macmillan Cancer
Macmillan Cancer Support is one of the largest British charities and provides specialist health care, information and financial support to people affected by cancer.
Telephone: 0808 808 00 00
Website: www.macmillan.org.uk