



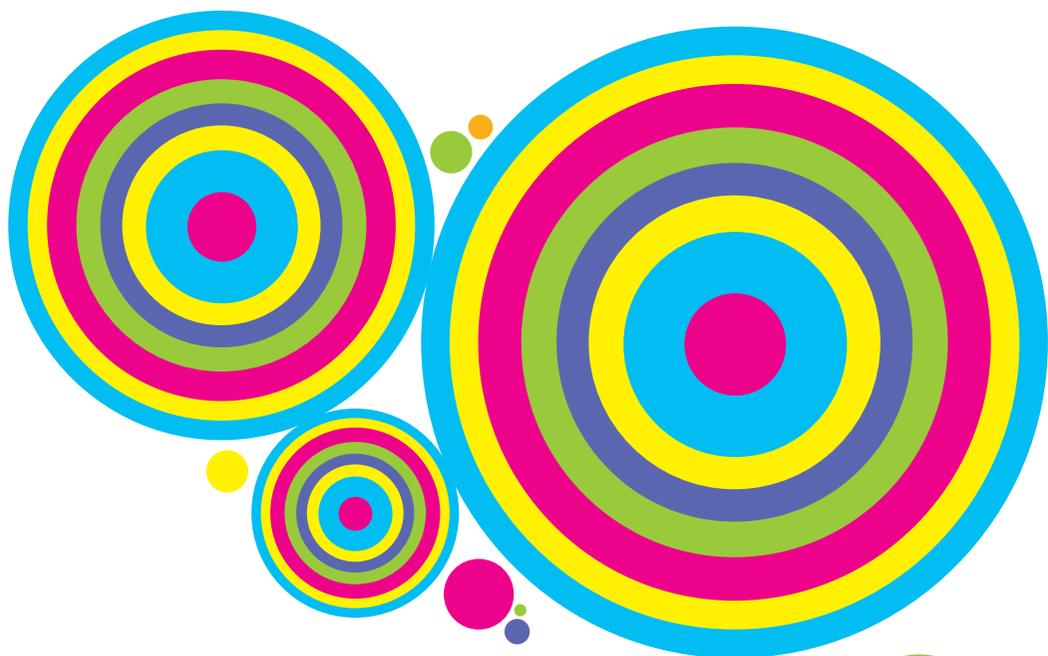
VASL

INCLUDE • INVOLVE • ENRICH



Welcome

Carers Health & Wellbeing Service



Leicestershire
County Council



Welcome to the Carers Health and Wellbeing Service



We're a free, confidential service working with GP practices to support carers throughout Leicestershire. Read on to find out more about our service and get top tips on how to look after your own health and wellbeing!

How can we help you?

Our friendly, experienced team is here to help you in all kinds of ways and can:

- Help you find relevant services that could support you, or help you sort out a specific issue.
- Listen to your views and make sure you get the support you're entitled to, or improve the support you get at the moment.
- Give you support and information on other services available to you.
- Help you get a Carer's Assessment.

About the service

Our aim is to help carers look after their own health and wellbeing, as we know your caring responsibilities can sometimes leave you feeling tired, overwhelmed or frustrated, which can lead to physical, mental or emotional ill-health. The service is run by VASL (vasl.org.uk) a community-based organisation with a long and very successful history of supporting carers.



What do we mean by a carer?

A carer is someone who spends a lot of time providing a variety of emotional and practical support, without getting paid, to a loved one, family member or friend, because of their disability, physical or mental ill health, substance misuse or because they're elderly and frail. Every situation is different but remember, a carer can be any age, and so can the person you care for, and you don't have to live together.

Here are just some of the reasons why carers don't always ask for help:

- You don't recognise yourself as a carer
- A feeling of duty
- Stigma
- You're worried about being judged

Young carers

According to The Children's Society, around 244,000 young people aged under 19 are carers, with 23,000 aged under nine. Stress, tiredness and mental ill-health are common for young carers and many experience traumatic life changes such as bereavement, family break-up, loss of income and housing, or seeing the effects of an illness or addiction on their relative.

There are strong links between being a young carer and underachieving at school, with young carers 50% more likely to have a special educational need or illness and 1 in 20 missing school.

Most young carers receive no help during their childhoods and some fear they will be bullied if other young people find out. Young people from Black, Asian or other ethnic minority communities, who don't speak English as their first language, are twice as likely to be young carers.

“what's invisible to us is also crucial for our own well-being”



Working-age carers

According to Carers UK, over 3 million people juggle care with work. However, the significant demands of caring mean that 1 in 5 carers are forced to give up work altogether. To find out more or for an informal chat about how we can help you, please feel free to get in touch.

Call 01858 411380 (calls charged at local rates, calls from mobiles may be higher)

Email wellbeing@vasl.org.uk

Visit Carers Health and Wellbeing Service
VASL, The Settling Rooms, St Mary's Place, Springfield Street
Market Harborough, Leicestershire, LE16 7DR.

Does your GP know you're a carer?

The Carers Trust has an excellent guide to how your GP can help you as a carer on their website. You'll find the main points below or you can read the full article at:

www.carers.org/help-directory/getting-most-your-gp

How your GP could help



What to do next:

- Let the reception staff at your GP surgery know you're a carer and ask for it to be noted on your medical record. (Most surgeries have a Practice Carer Register).
- Ask if your surgery has any carers' support services that may benefit you. For example, a free annual flu jab, flexible appointments if caring prevents you attending at other times, regular check ups to care for your own health and wellbeing and information or training on how to lift, move and handle the person you care for safely.
- Make an appointment with your GP to see how they can help you care for your own health and wellbeing. Don't wait until you feel unwell or overwhelmed, prevention is much better than cure. Remember to let reception know if you have any special requirements. For example, if you need to leave the person you care for in the waiting area.

Before your appointment

Write down a list of questions to ask your GP. If you know you'll be talking about the person you care for, it's a good idea to let reception know beforehand, so they can get their medical notes ready, as well as yours.

Your GP won't be able to share health information about your cared for without their permission, so it's best to take a letter with their signature on, saying they're happy for this to happen.

During the appointment

Remember you're there to talk about you, rather than the person you care for. You may find it useful to take brief notes.

If you need a letter from your GP

If you need a supporting letter from your GP for anything like housing or benefits, ask if there's a fee. Ask for the letter well in advance, as it's likely to take time for your surgery to arrange it.

Home visits

If you care for someone who's housebound and has difficulty getting to the surgery, and you're having trouble arranging transport or respite care, you can request a home visit.

After your visit

If you need an ongoing or regular prescription, ask your GP to send it to your local pharmacy. Pharmacies can be very helpful and are now recognised by the Primary Care Trust (PCT) as a service provider for carers. They may be able to deliver your medication to you, or the person you care, if needed. Plus, they can let you know about medicines and their side effects.



'everything we do, think, feel
and believe has an effect
on our state of well-being'



Hospital Discharge Checklist for Carers



Here is a list of things that should happen if someone you are caring for is being discharged from hospital:

- If the patient requires ongoing support on discharge you should be asked if you are willing and able to care, including how much help you can provide and how often.
- You and the patient should be given both spoken and written information, with contact details and any relevant information about future treatment and care.
- You should be told who the key person is to talk to about discharge plans.
- If the patient does not want you to be involved or have information about their care you will be told where you can go for carer support.
- Information should be made available to you about how you can complain if you are unhappy about the services you or the patient receives.
- An assessment for NHS continuing care will be carried out where appropriate, you should be kept informed about this.
- You and the patient should be consulted about whether or not to involve social services.

Carers' Assessment



Make sure you get the support you deserve

The Care Act (1 April 2015) has given family and other informal unpaid carers the same right to assessment and support as people who need social care support. Anyone who provides care and feels they might benefit from some support is entitled to an assessment. The local authority will determine if you're eligible for support, using criteria set nationally.

What is a Carer's Assessment?

A Carer's Assessment is a way of identifying what effect being a carer has on you and your life, and your physical, mental and emotional needs as a result of this. You'll have the opportunity to discuss how things are for you with a professional from your local Adult Social Care team and the advice, support and information that could help you. The assessment isn't about judging your ability or the way in which you carry out your caring role. If the person you care for gets support

from Adult Social Care, your caring needs should have been taken into account in their assessment (this is called a combined assessment). If they don't need or want Adult Social Care support, you can choose to have a separate Carer's Assessment.

What help and support could you get?

- Information
- Specialist advice and support groups
- Training about relevant topics to help you to manage caring
- A direct payment to pay for support to improve your health and wellbeing such as a break from caring, gym membership, leisure classes, a computer and training courses to help you start or return to paid work or help with domestic chores like gardening or housework.
- Help with benefits and financial support including the Carer's Allowance.

What will your assessment cover?

- Your caring role
- Your feelings and choices about caring
- Your health
- Your work
- Other family commitments
- What you enjoy doing to relax
- Planning for emergencies i.e. a contingency plan



“a more compassionate mind
a sense of concern for other's
well-being is the source
of happiness”





How to prepare

Before your assessment, sit down and think about your role as a carer. Be honest about the effect that caring has on your life. Without support, will you struggle to provide the care your cared for needs?

Don't feel that it's your responsibility to provide all the care or feel guilty if you can't do it all. In many cases, it's better for trained professionals to carry out certain tasks.

Ask yourself:

- Will you be able to talk freely if the person you care for is present during your assessment?
- Do you want to, or are you able to, carry on caring?
- If yes, is there anything that could make life easier?
- Without support, is there a risk you might not be able to continue caring?
- Do you have any physical or mental health problems, including stress or depression, that make caring more difficult?
- Does being a carer affect your relationships with other people, including family and friends?
- If you have a job, does being a carer cause problems?
- Would you like more time to yourself, so that you can sleep, take a break or enjoy some leisure activity?
- Would you like to do some training, voluntary work or paid work?

To find out more and ask for a Carer's Assessment:

Call 01858 411380 (calls charged at local rates, calls from mobiles may be higher)

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Market Harborough, Leicestershire, LE16 7DR.



Planning for the future when caring comes to an end

There may be a time when your caring role comes to an end. For instance, the person you care for may move into a care home or they may have died. Naturally, this can be a very emotional time and you may experience feelings of guilt, grief, emptiness or loneliness, as well as relief at getting your life back.

There may also be a financial impact, especially if you or your cared for were receiving benefits. Remember to ask for a benefits check, to see how things have changed.

Are you eligible for financial help?

Carers Allowance

Carer's Allowance is £62.10 a week to help you look after someone with substantial caring needs.

You don't have to be related to, or live with, the person you care for.

You must be 16 or over and spend at least 35 hours a week caring for them.

Carer's Allowance is taxable. It can also affect your other benefits.

You might be able to get Carer's Allowance if all of the following apply:

- you're 16 or over
- you spend at least 35 hours a week caring for someone
- have been in England, Scotland or Wales for at least 2 of the last 3 years
- you normally live in England, Scotland or Wales, or you live abroad as a member of the armed forces
- you're not in full time education or studying for 21 hours a week or more
- you earn no more than £110 a week (after taxes, care costs while you're at work and 50% of what you pay into your pension)

Find out more at - www.gov.uk/carers-allowance/eligibility



Benefits for the person you care for

Personal Independence Payment (PIP)

PIP helps with some of the extra costs caused by long-term ill-health or a disability if the person you care for is aged 16 to 64. They could get between £21.80 and £139.75 a week. The rate depends on how their condition affects them, not the condition itself. They'll need an assessment to work out the level of help they get. The rate will be regularly reassessed to make sure they're getting the right support.

To qualify for PIP, they must:

- be aged 16 to 64
- have a long-term health condition or disability and difficulties with activities related to 'daily living' and/or mobility
- be in Great Britain when you claim - there are some exceptions, eg members and family members of the Armed Forces
- have been in Great Britain for at least 2 of the last 3 years
- be habitually resident in the UK, Ireland, Isle of Man or the Channel Islands
- not be subject to immigration control (unless they're a sponsored immigrant)

There are some exceptions to these conditions if they're living or coming from another EEA country or Switzerland. They can get PIP whether they're in work or not.

Find out more at www.gov.uk/pip



Attendance Allowance

The person you care for could get £55.10 or £82.30 a week to help with personal care because they're physically or mentally disabled and aged 65 or over. This is called Attendance Allowance. It's paid at 2 different rates and how much they get depends on the level of care that they need because of their disability. They can get Attendance Allowance if they're 65 or over and the following apply:

- they have a physical disability (including sensory disability, eg blindness), a mental disability (including learning difficulties), or both
- their disability is severe enough for them to need help caring for themselves or someone to supervise them, for their own or someone else's safety

Find out more - www.gov.uk/attendance-allowance/overview

Top tips for your health and wellbeing

- Being a carer is emotionally and physically draining and will bring about change in your life, with losses and gains. Be kind to yourself and don't feel you have to be a hero.
- Caring for someone means you're 'running a marathon, not a sprint', so you need to pace yourself and conserve your energy. If you run 'flat out' at the beginning, you'll have little energy left to cope with the rest of the race. Ask for help and find out as much as you can about your cared for's condition. Increasing your understanding will calm your worries and fears.
- Avoid people and places that stress you. It's better to avoid them than struggle to deal with the after effects. Spend time with people who are kind and compassionate and care about you.
- Practise asking for, or telling others, what you want - people can't read your mind and it helps them if you say what you want.
- Plan and make time for regular space for yourself. It might be something as simple as keeping a journal, regular prayer, reading a book, going to a class, a regular get together with a friend, time alone, going for a walk...
- Remember, you're only human and will experience feelings like anger, jealousy, sadness, loneliness and despair at times. This is NORMAL, we all feel that way sometimes.
- Exercise causes endorphins to be released in your body, which naturally lifts your mood.
- Eating a balanced diet keeps you healthy and boosts your immune system to stop you becoming ill.
- When things are really getting on top of you, STOP, take a breath, move away and THINK. You are allowed to make space for yourself to think and calm down.
- Try breaking tasks down into small chunks and do one chunk at a time rather than trying to face the whole task, as this will feel overwhelming.
- Don't try to hold everything in your head, make lists and tick things off as you do them. That way you realise you can manage more than you think you can.



Useful information



Support for Carers

Our sister project providing support for carers across Leicestershire including carers' support groups, top tips and a telephone helpline.

www.supportforcarers.org

Carers Direct

For advice and support with caring issues over the phone, you can call the Carers Direct helpline on 0300 123 1053. If you're deaf, deafblind, hard of hearing or have impaired speech, you can contact the Carers Direct helpline using textphone or minicom number 0300 123 1004.

www.nhs.uk/conditions/social-care-and-support-guide/Pages/carers-direct-helpline.aspx

British Red Cross

Everyday first aid.

www.redcross.org.uk

NHS

Health conditions and treatments.

www.nhs.uk/conditions/pages/hub.aspx

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(calls charged at local rates, calls from mobiles may be higher)

Email us:

wellbeing@vasl.org.uk

Visit us:

www.carerswellbeing.org



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