

PART 4: What help can I get?



What sort of help could I get?

A carers' assessment can help you work out what you find difficult and what you need help with.

The person who helps you fill in the assessment and other people you trust should be able to help you think of things that would help you as a carer.



Some of the things that might help you are:

- help for the person you care for so you can have some time to do things you want
- help to see if you are getting all the money you should be
- information about what is wrong with the person you care for
- someone to talk to
- pills in a box so you can give them at the right time
- equipment that can help, like a stair lift
- someone to come in to your house and help you with things you find difficult, like cooking or helping someone have a bath
- help with things like gardening and changing light bulbs
- an alarm that gets you help when you press a button





Social services may need to pay for some things that will help you, like someone to help the person you care for get washed or dressed. Even though you may need help, social services may decide that there are other people need help more than you. Some areas can only afford to pay for people who need help the most so you might be disappointed.



Other organisations might be able to help with some things you need. For example, Age Concern might be able to help you look after your garden or you could join a group and meet other people who are carers. Whoever helps you with your carers' assessment should help you find other services that can help with things you need.



You or the person you care for may have to pay for some of the help you get.

Remember

Sometimes things won't change even if you have a carers' assessment. It is still important to have one because at least then people will know you are a carer.



Mo's story

Mo is 56 and lives with her mother who is 84. They live in a very small town in the middle of the country and it's often difficult to get around easily on the buses and there are no trains. Four days a week Mo goes to a day centre which she really enjoys as she's been going there for 25 years and knows everyone very well and enjoys the activities she does.

Five years ago, workers at the day centre noticed that Mo had not been coming as often. Her key worker, Cherrill, spent time talking with Mo and found out that Mo's mum was not well and Mo was missing her day service because she was spending more and more time looking after her. Mo said she wanted to look after mum but that she was missing her friends and finding some parts of caring very difficult.

Mo and Cherrill worked together to fill in a carers assessment form that had pictures and symbols to help Mo understand the questions better. One of the things Mo said was difficult was getting the shopping up the steps because they were very high. She was worried about being safe at home because now she was the person who opened the door and they'd been burgled twice in the past. She also said she wanted to be able to see her friends at the centre and go to church on a Sunday.

After her carers assessment, a plan was agreed with Mo about what would happen next. A handrail was put up by the steep steps which made a big difference for Mo and her mum. People came to help Mo make the house safer. She had a peep hole fitted and window locks and a chain on the door. She went back to the centre as mum started to get a little better, and once a week she goes shopping with her key worker to get the heavy things so she has help to take them home. Another family member comes and sits with mum so that Mo can go back to church.

Mo says *"Not enough people listen. I felt I was struggling until people started to listen to me"*



Pat's story

Pat is nearly 62 and her partner, Roy, is 65. Although they don't live together, Pat and Roy have been a couple for over 30 years. They live close by each other and see each other most days. Pat has a learning disability. Pat does voluntary work on a regular basis, often helping other people understand what it's like to have a learning disability.

Last year, Roy had a stroke and he is now paralysed down his left side. Since then, Roy has paid care workers who come in and help him four times a day for 30 to 45 minutes each time. The rest of the time he is by himself. Pat comes round nearly every evening to help by cooking meals and washing up and generally keeping him company. She also goes round during the day if she's not busy doing her voluntary work.

Once Pat got over the shock and busy time when Roy first had his stroke, she realised that she would be doing a lot of caring for Roy, even though she doesn't live with him all the time. Roy had a package of care sorted out and his social worker recognised Pat as a carer and offered her a carers assessment. At first Pat said 'no' because she was worried Roy may lose some of his services. She talked things through with the social worker and people who she knows and trusts and then changed her mind and agreed to have a carers assessment.

Pat got ready for her carers assessment by going through a form first with someone who knew her well. The form helped Pat understand the amount of caring she was doing. She then went through it with the social worker and her friend stayed with her to help make sure that Pat said everything she wanted to. Some of the things Pat said she struggled with was cooking and cleaning. Hopefully, Roy will get some extra help with that now and they waiting to find out about it.

Pat says: *"it is very important that everyone who is caring for someone has a carers assessment and find out what you're entitled to. Don't be nervous about it – people need to know what you are doing and what you need help with"*