



## Carers

### Are you a carer?

You do not have to be living with someone or see them every day to be a carer. You are a carer if you assist someone by helping with any or all of these:

- daily activities
- medication (giving it or preparing pill boxes)
- transport to regular appointments
- emotional support

This information sheet was created to help you find the services that can support you in your role as a carer.

### Where do I start?

The first step is to contact your local carers association (see table overleaf). They will be able to support you and may suggest you contact your local social services to ask for a **carers assessment**. This would be used to access the support available where you live. Carers UK and other national organisations provide further support both before and after your assessment.

### Tips for carers

1. Tell your GP you're a carer. Register as a carer with your GP surgery.
2. Take care of yourself. Carers tend to put their own health last. If you feel unwell, visit your doctor —don't put it off!
3. Request a Carer's Assessment (see overleaf).
4. Take time out if you can - to enjoy the things you enjoy doing. Support services are available from various agencies if you're unable to leave the person you're caring for on their own.
5. Accept help! Don't feel guilty, selfish or neglectful to either ask for help or accept it. It will help you to manage better.
6. Communication is key. Does phone or email work best or would you prefer a friend or family member to take charge? Be open and honest about what you need.
7. There's lots of advice, information and support out there! You may find it helpful to talk to other carers in similar situations or simply to chat to other people (see table overleaf).
8. Everyone is different. It's good to be aware of services but also to do what feels right for you.
9. Plan ahead. Keep a copy of all contact numbers, a current list of medication and the latest notes in a secure, easy to access place.
10. Financial support. If you need advice about benefits, caring whilst working, debts or other financial concerns, contact Macmillan benefits helpline on 0808 808 0000.
11. The Lynda Jackson Macmillan Centre holds relaxation classes three times a week that you can attend alone or together, a half day 'Time and Space' program where you can meet with other carers and complementary therapy sessions. Contact us on 020 3826 2555.

(With thanks to The Hospice of St Francis for permission to use their 'Top Ten Tips for Carers')

## Local carers associations

Location	Organisation	Contact details
Bedfordshire	Carers in Bedfordshire	www.carersinbeds.org.uk 0300 111 1919
Berkshire	Berkshire Carers Service	www.berkshirecarers.org 0800 988 5462
Brent	Brent Carers	www.brentcarerscentre.org.uk 020 8795 6240
Buckinghamshire	Carers Bucks	www.carersbucks.org 0300 777 2722
Harrow	Harrow Carers	www.harrowcarers.org 020 8868 5224
Hertfordshire	Carers in Hertfordshire	www.carersinherts.org 01992 586969
Hillingdon	Hillingdon Carers	www.hillingdoncarers.org.uk 01895 811206

## What other support is available?

<b>Carers UK</b>	Offers advice and support online and by phone. An online place where you can chat about real issues with people who understand and who can support you through the ups and downs of caring.	www.carersuk.org 0808 808 7777
<b>Carers Trust</b>	Works to improve support, services and recognition for anyone living with the challenges of caring.	www.carers.org.uk 0844 800 4361
<b>Macmillan Cancer Support</b>	Has healthcare professionals who can offer support by telephone and an online community where those caring for someone with cancer can share experiences and support each other.	www.macmillan.org.uk CancerLine: 0808 808 0000
<b>Lynda Jackson Macmillan Centre</b>	Offers a drop-in centre, telephone helpline, counselling, complementary therapies, benefits advice and self help courses.	www.ljmc.org 020 3826 2555
<b>www.healthtalk.org</b>	Lets you share in people's experiences of health-related conditions and illnesses.	01865 201330

## Other services

<b>Homestart</b>	Helps support families with young children by providing volunteers who can visit the family's home for a couple of hours every week. They tailor-make their support to meet the needs of the parents and of children under 5 years.	www.home-start.org.uk 01923 248010
<b>Herts Neighbours</b>	Part of Peace Hospice Care's community service; Herts Neighbours is a volunteering service that helps families coping with a life-limiting illness. Provides practical and emotional support to individuals and their families within their home or care setting.	www.peacehospicecare.org.uk 01923 330330 (main Peace Hospice Care switchboard)