



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 has been compiled to help you find services that can support you in your role as a carer.

Where do I start?

The first step is to contact your local carers' organisation (see table overleaf). They will be able to support you and help you ask for a **carer's assessment**. This will be used to enable you to access the support available where you live. A number of national and local organisations (listed overleaf) also provide support services which you can access 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 by the local council adult social services department of the person you are looking after (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 for whom you caring on their own.
5. Accept help! Don't feel guilty, selfish or neglectful either to 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 the Macmillan Support Line on 0808 808 0000.
(With thanks to The Hospice of St Francis for permission to use their 'Top Ten Tips for Carers')
11. Visit or call the Lynda Jackson Macmillan Centre at Mount Vernon Cancer Centre. A range of services is available for carers including relaxation classes that you can attend alone or together and complementary therapy sessions. The half day 'Time and Space' workshop provides an opportunity to meet with other carers. Call 020 3826 2555 for details.

Local carers' organisations

Location	Organisation	Contact details
Bedfordshire	Carers in Bedfordshire	www.carersinbeds.org.uk Tel: 0300 111 1919
Berkshire		
Bracknell Forest	SIGNAL	www.signal4carers.org.uk Tel: 0344 266088
Reading	TuVida	www.tuvida.org/berkshirehub Tel: 0118 324 7333
Slough	Slough Carers Support	www.sloughcarerssupport.co.uk Tel: 01753 303428
West Berkshire	TuVida	www.tuvida.org/berkshirehub Tel: 0118 324 7333
Windsor & Maidenhead	Carers UK	www.rbwm.gov.uk/home/adult-social-care/carers Tel: 01628 683744
Wokingham	TuVida	www.tuvida.org/berkshirehub Tel: 0118 324 7333
Brent	Brent Carers Centre	www.brentcarerscentre.org.uk Tel: 020 3802 7070
Buckinghamshire	Carers Bucks	www.carersbucks.org Tel: 0300 777 2722
Harrow	Harrow Carers	www.harrowcarers.org Tel: 020 8868 5224
Hertfordshire	Carers in Hertfordshire	www.carersinherts.org.uk Tel: 01992 586969
Hillingdon	Carers Trust Hillingdon	www.carerstrusthillingdon.org Tel: 01895 811206

What other support is available?

Carers UK	Support online and by phone where you can chat about real issues with people who understand and who can support you.	www.carersuk.org Tel: 0808 808 7777
Carers Trust	Works to improve support, services and recognition for anyone living with the challenges of caring unpaid.	www.carers.org Tel: 0300 772 9600
Hertfordshire Compassionate Neighbours	Trained volunteers offer supportive companionship, friendship and assistance.	www.hcpa.info/guideline/hertfordshire-compassionate-neighbours-schemes/
Macmillan Cancer Support	Telephone support and an online community where those caring for someone with cancer can share experiences and support each other.	www.macmillan.org.uk Tel: 0808 808 0000
Lynda Jackson Macmillan Centre	Drop-in centre and telephone support, counselling, complementary therapy and self-help courses.	www.ljmc.org Tel: 020 3826 2555
healthtalk.org	Website with videos in which patients and carers share their experiences of cancer	www.healthtalk.org

Other services

Home-Start	Helps support families with young children.	www.home-start.org.uk Tel: 0116 464 5490
Blue Badge scheme	Helps people with disabilities or health conditions park closer to their destination.	www.gov.uk/apply-blue-badge