

# Caring for someone



How to get the support you need



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## Thank you

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While some information may apply across the UK, this guide covers England only.

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# About this guide

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At some point in our lives most of us will look after someone when they become ill or disabled. There are currently more than 11 million unpaid carers in England.

You may gradually take on caring responsibilities over time and may not think of yourself as a carer. Or there may be a sudden change that means you take on a caring role. While it can be positive and rewarding, looking after someone can also be emotionally, physically and financially demanding.

This guide explains your rights and the benefits, services and support that may be available to help you look after someone else.

We spoke to carers about their experiences. Their quotes appear throughout.

# What it means to be a carer

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Many people look after someone else but don't realise that they are carers. If you're helping someone regularly with their daily life because they're ill or disabled, or can't manage without your support, then you may be a carer.

**In a way, my mum doesn't recognise herself as a carer. She just accepts that her husband is very ill and it is her duty (in sickness and in health, etc) to look after him.**



If you're not sure whether you're a carer, do any of these statements apply to you?

I help someone get washed, dressed or use the toilet. ☐

I make sure someone has enough to eat and drink. ☐

I take someone to the GP and hospital appointments. ☐

I help someone to get around their home, for example helping them to use stairs safely. ☐

I help someone keep their home clean and safe. ☐

I help someone to see their family or friends, or attend social activities. ☐

I make sure someone takes their medication at the right time. ☐

I help someone with their budgeting and finances. ☐

I provide regular and ongoing support for someone. ☐

Without my support, the person I help would have difficulty managing on their own. ☐

If you ticked any of these statements, you're likely to be a carer.

The person you look after could be your partner, a friend or a family member and you may just think of it as part of your relationship. You may be a couple who are caring for each other. Whatever your situation, if you're providing unpaid support to someone, you may be entitled to some help as well.

## How caring can affect you

Caring for someone can be rewarding but it can also be hard work. At times, it might seem overwhelming. It can also be financially and emotionally draining.

It may seem as though your life is no longer your own. You may feel a mixture of emotions such as guilt, resentment, sadness and frustration. It's common to experience stress or low mood.

It's important to recognise how you're feeling and that it's okay to feel this way. You shouldn't feel worried or unsure about asking for support. The first step to getting help is to ask for a carer's assessment from your local council – see chapter 2.



## Caring from a distance

If the person you're caring for lives a long way from you, it can be difficult to stay on top of things. Travelling is tiring and time-consuming and can be costly.

Getting practical help from others can make things more manageable for you. Make sure the person you're caring for has had a care needs assessment from their local council – see chapter 2. This will work out what their care needs are and whether any care and support would help them in their daily life.



Getting online can be helpful for ordering shopping and helping someone to manage their finances. It's also a good way to stay in touch with the person you're caring for.

If you or the person you're caring for need help getting online, you could ask about free or low cost courses at your local library or Online Centre (0114 349 1666, [onlinecentresnetwork.org](http://onlinecentresnetwork.org)). Visit our technology webpages for more tips ([independentage.org/technology](http://independentage.org/technology)).

## Caring and work

If you're finding it difficult to juggle work and caring responsibilities, you usually have the right to request flexible working if you've been with your employer for at least six months. This can include working from home, part-time work, flexitime, working compressed hours, job sharing and shift work.

You also have the right to take a reasonable amount of unpaid time off work to deal with an emergency, such as a breakdown in care arrangements. Contact Acas (0300 123 1100, [acas.org.uk](http://acas.org.uk)) or Carers UK (0808 808 7777, [carersuk.org](http://carersuk.org)) for advice about your rights at work.

## Shared caring

You may be sharing caring responsibilities with other friends or family members. It's important to be organised and communicate so you know who is doing what.

You could use technology to organise care between you – for example, by using shared calendars or the Jointly app developed by Carers UK ([jointlyapp.com](https://jointlyapp.com)). There's a small charge to set up the app.

Sometimes the care duties may seem to fall more heavily on one person. If you'd like more help from other family members but don't know how to ask, we have suggestions for how to start the conversation at [independentage.org/talking-about-how-others-can-help](https://independentage.org/talking-about-how-others-can-help).



**I helped care for my mum during her last illness. She lived over 100 miles from me but close to my brother and his wife, who is a registered nurse. They did the bulk of the caring and I went down almost every other weekend to support them and give them some time on their own – and of course to be with Mum as her cancer developed.**

## **Other caring options**

There may come a time when you need to consider other options. For example, perhaps the person you care for could move closer to you or even move in with you. Our guide **Choosing where to live** has more information about your options.

**Dad was diagnosed with Alzheimer's. I couldn't manage his needs on my own, so I had to find a care home for him. It took months of searching, but eventually I found a specialist dementia nursing home. The costs are high but Dad's very settled. It's so good to walk in and see that he is loved and well cared for.**

If your friend or relative has a lot of care needs or their health gets worse, it might be that a care home ends up being the best option for them in the future. This could leave you with mixed feelings – relief that they will be getting the level of care they need, but also guilt or sadness.

It's important to remember that if you want to, you can still be involved in caring for your friend or relative if they move to a care home. Our guide **Choosing the right care home** has more advice.

# What help can I get as a carer?

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If you provide unpaid care for a partner, friend or family member, you should have a free carer's assessment by your local council, to talk about what help you need.

Anyone who is a carer can get an assessment – it doesn't matter how much care you provide, whether it's practical or emotional support, or what your financial situation is.

It's a good opportunity to discuss your needs as a carer and to see what support you can get from your local council (see chapters 3 and 4). It can help make life easier for you and the person you're caring for.

The assessment will look at:

- whether you're willing and able to continue to provide care
- the impact of your caring role on your wellbeing.

There is a national threshold which your council will use to work out whether you qualify for support from them.

## How to apply

Contact the adult social care team at your local council to arrange an assessment. This may be carried out over the phone, online, at home or somewhere other than your home if you prefer. You may also be able to do a self-assessment.

If you think you've been waiting too long for your assessment, call the council and ask to speak to someone senior, such as the manager of the adult social care team, for an update.

If you need help urgently, make this clear to the council when you ask them for your assessment. Sometimes the council can choose to provide urgent help to the person who needs care before carrying out an assessment.

## How to prepare

The council must give you information explaining what will happen at the assessment. Ask for this in advance, including the questions you may be asked.

It's a good idea to prepare by thinking about how being a carer affects you and what might help you. You might want to keep a diary of everything you do for one or two weeks before the assessment.

## Things to consider

Are you getting enough sleep or is it disturbed by your caring role?

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Is your health affected? If so, how?

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Are you able to go out without worrying about the safety of the person you care for?

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Are your other relationships being affected?

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Do you need information about what support and benefits are available?

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Is your caring role having an impact on your job?

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What equipment does the person you care for need to enable you to care for them safely?

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Do you need any training, for example in first aid or in moving and handling the person you care for?

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Do you want to spend less time in your caring role? For example, you may wish to go back to work, attend a course or just have more time to yourself.

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If you'd like to talk to someone about your carer's assessment and how to prepare, call the NHS Carers Direct helpline (0300 123 1053, [nhs.uk/conditions/social-care-and-support/carers-direct-helpline](https://nhs.uk/conditions/social-care-and-support/carers-direct-helpline)). You could also contact our free Helpline on 0800 319 6789 and arrange to speak to an adviser.

## If you need help during the assessment

You can ask for other people to be involved, for example a friend or your GP, and the council must include them in the assessment – either face to face or by phoning or writing to them. These people might be able to help you explain the impact caring has on your health or daily life.

If you think it would be difficult for you to express your views, you may be entitled to an independent advocate to help you. See our factsheet **Independent advocacy** for more information.

## Are you able and willing?

Your assessment must look at whether you're able and willing to continue providing care for the person you're looking after. It must also

look at how you'll manage in the future. Think carefully about how it's affecting you. If you're struggling or you can't manage any more, don't be afraid to say so.

If you find after your assessment that you're no longer willing or able to look after someone, tell the council as soon as possible. Ask them to carry out, or review, a care needs assessment for the person you care for (see section below). Tell them if the situation is urgent.

## Getting a care needs assessment for the person you're caring for

If the person you're caring for hasn't had one already, you should ask social services to carry out a free care needs assessment for them as well as a carer's assessment for you. This could be done at the same time as your assessment if you wish.

Their assessment will work out:

- what their care needs are
- whether any care and support would help them in their daily life
- if they qualify for council help.

The assessor may ask about how you support them as a carer, but they cannot take this into account when assessing the needs of the person you care for.

See our factsheet **First steps in getting help with your care needs** for more information about care needs assessments.

## After your carer's assessment

If the council decides that you qualify for support and they are going to pay for some or all of it, they must prepare a support plan with you. See chapter 3 for examples of the practical support you could get.

Although the council may charge you for a service they provide directly to you, they mustn't charge you for any care and support for the person you look after.

See our factsheet **Getting help from the council as a carer** to find out more about carer's assessments.

## If you don't qualify for help from the council

If you don't qualify for support, the council must write to you to explain why. They must also give you advice about things you can do to help you manage in your caring role. For example, they may tell you about local support services for carers.

Having this information and a copy of your carer's assessment will make it easier if you want to challenge the council's decision or make a complaint. Our factsheet **Complaints about social care services** has more information.



# Practical support

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Practical support can make your caring role easier and give you more time for other activities. It could be anything from equipment at home to respite care so you can take a break.

## Help from the council

If you qualify for support, your local council might provide care and support to the person you care for, or provide you with support directly. This could include:

- practical help with things like housework or gardening
- advice about benefits
- leisure activities such as gym membership
- training to help you feel more confident in your caring role (such as moving and handling training)
- emotional support from other carers (such as attending a local carers group)
- breaks from caring (called respite care).

## Aids, adaptations and technology

Different types of equipment or home adaptations can make your life easier, particularly if you have to lift the person you're caring for or help them move. It can also help the person you're looking after to stay safe and independent.

If the council assesses them as needing an aid or minor adaptation (one that costs less than £1,000 to install), or specialist disability equipment like a hoist, the council must provide this for free. There may be grants available for larger adaptations. See our factsheet **Adapting your home to stay independent** for more information.

Technology can help the person you look after to live safely at home and give you peace of mind.

You could get:

- telecare – alarms and sensors which can detect a range of problems, for example, if they fall out of bed while you're sleeping
- telehealth – a way of monitoring someone's health remotely through equipment that's set up in their home.

See our factsheet **Technology to help you at home** to find out more.

**If you're worried about leaving someone by themselves because they may leave the house and wander, you could get sensors that alert you if they've opened their front door.**

**Or if you're having to take someone to regular medical appointments to have their blood pressure checked, a telehealth device might minimise the number of appointments and save time and hassle.**

Anna, Independent Age adviser

You may be able to get telecare as part of a package from your council or you may have to pay for it privately. Contact the Disabled Living Foundation for information about what may be available **(0300 999 0004, [livingmadeeasy.org.uk](https://livingmadeeasy.org.uk)).**

## Help from your GP

Tell your GP that you are a carer and ask them to make a note of this on your records. Caring can take a toll on your own health so it's important you look after yourself as well – see chapter 5.

**When caring for my mum after a stroke, I mentioned to my GP that I was having to take on a caring role. She was very helpful in pointing out to me that I had to make time for myself, as I was wearing myself down to the point where I wouldn't have been any good to anyone. It was as though she gave me permission to put myself first sometimes.**

Your GP can give you information about the medical condition of the person you look after. They may put you in touch with support services provided by the NHS and other local sources of support and advice.



Your GP could also:

- arrange medical appointments for you and the person you care for at the same time, so you only have to make one visit
- arrange for repeat prescriptions to be delivered to your local pharmacy or home
- provide letters of support to help you claim benefits. Some GPs charge for this.

The person you're caring for can give consent for their GP to discuss their health with you, so you can be involved in decisions about their care. Talk to them to find out if they're willing to do this.



## Help from charities and carers networks

You can get a lot of practical and emotional support from charities and carers networks. They understand the challenges you face and can give you the chance to talk to people who are in a similar position. The services they offer vary, but they can usually give you information and advice about your rights, benefits and other financial help, and respite care. They can also put you in touch with local support groups.

For more information, contact Carers UK (0808 808 7777, [carersuk.org](https://www.carersuk.org)) or the Carers Trust (0300 772 9600, [carers.org](https://www.carers.org)). You can find details of your local carers centre on [nhs.uk/service-search/carers/locationsearch/1796](https://www.nhs.uk/service-search/carers/locationsearch/1796). Or see chapter 6 for contact details of other support organisations.

## Making emergency plans

You need to know that care would be put in place quickly in an emergency – for example, if you became ill or were admitted to hospital. If the person you care for gets help from the council, their care and support plan should include an emergency plan. If not, you can create one by writing down:

- the name, address and other contact details of the person you care for
- who you would like to be contacted in an emergency
- any medication the person you care for is taking
- any ongoing care or health treatment they need.

You may be able to arrange emergency help from friends and family.

In some areas, there are carer's emergency card schemes. You can register and get help to draw up an emergency plan. You'll get a card with the scheme's telephone number and a unique identification number. If you're unable to provide care, you or someone with you can call the number and an operator will put your emergency plan into action.

Ask your local council or a local carers' organisation if there is a scheme in your area.

## Making decisions

The person you're caring for may want to consider putting in place powers of attorney. This allows you to help them make certain decisions, or to make them on their behalf in the future if they are unable to do so – financial decisions, for example. For more information, see our factsheet **Managing my affairs if I become ill**.

## Getting respite care

You may want to take a break from caring so you can do other household tasks, take part in leisure or social activities, or catch up on sleep. You could consider respite care – this is replacement care for the person you look after, so they're supported while you take a break.

You can ask your local council to help, even if the person you care for doesn't currently get any help from them. If they qualify, the council will have to arrange respite care while you take your break. You can't be charged for this but the person you're caring for might be. The council will look at their finances to see if they should pay anything towards it.



There are different options available, including:

- **care services at home** – home care agencies employ care workers to visit people and provide care in their own home. For more information, see our factsheet **Arranging home care**
- **day care centres** – the person you're caring for can receive support and socialise with others while you have a break
- **care homes** – some care homes offer short-term stays for respite care. If you're not going through the council, you could contact local care homes to see if they have places available for this.

Your local council will be able to advise you about services in your area. Some carers' organisations provide help with respite care. You can also arrange replacement care yourself.

## Going on holiday

If you want to go on holiday with the person you care for, some charities such as Revitalise (0303 303 0145, [revitalise.org.uk](http://revitalise.org.uk)) and MindforYou (01509 351 008, [mindforyou.co.uk](http://mindforyou.co.uk)) can help you arrange one. You may be able to get some help with costs – see chapter 4. Plan ahead and make arrangements in advance, if possible.



**Mum is the sweetest person but it's still tiring and very trying. We have managed a short holiday every year though. My brother comes to stay and the council provides extra evening care while we're away.**

Caring for someone can take a toll on your finances, especially if you've been doing it for a long time. You may qualify for extra money as a carer, so make sure you check.

## Carer's Allowance

If you're caring for a family member or a friend for 35 hours or more a week, you may be able to claim Carer's Allowance.

You might qualify if the person you care for receives a qualifying disability benefit, such as:

- Attendance Allowance
- the middle or higher rate care component of Disability Living Allowance
- the daily living component of Personal Independence Payment
- Constant Attendance Allowance
- Armed Forces Independence Payment.

You won't qualify for Carer's Allowance if you have earnings over a certain amount. This amount may change slightly each tax year,



but for April 2021/22 this is £128 a week (after certain deductions). Money you get from personal and workplace pensions does not count as earnings, but your State Pension does.

Being awarded Carer's Allowance can affect the benefits of the person you're caring for. For example, they will stop getting a severe disability premium paid with their benefits. Call our Helpline on **0800 319 6789** to arrange a benefits check.



## How to claim Carer's Allowance

You can download a claim form or claim online at [gov.uk/carers-allowance/how-to-claim](https://www.gov.uk/carers-allowance/how-to-claim) or phone the Carer's Allowance Unit (**0800 731 0297**) to ask for a claim form. If you're already claiming a State Pension, there's a different, shorter form to fill in.

If you need help filling in the form, your local Age UK (0800 169 6565, [ageuk.org.uk](https://ageuk.org.uk)) or Citizens Advice (0800 144 8848, [citizensadvice.org.uk](https://citizensadvice.org.uk)) may be able to help.

## Extra money added to your means-tested benefits

Means-tested benefits, such as Pension Credit, Housing Benefit and Council Tax Support are designed to support you by giving you enough money to live on. If you get Carer's Allowance or have an underlying entitlement to it, you could get a higher rate of these benefits, or you could qualify for them for the first time. Having an underlying entitlement means that you qualify for Carer's Allowance, but you won't be paid it because you're already getting more than the rate of Carer's Allowance from certain other benefits, including the State Pension.

Read our factsheet **Underlying entitlement to Carer's Allowance** for more information.

Call our Helpline on 0800 319 6789 to arrange a free benefits check, or try our online benefits calculator at [independentage.org/benefit-calculator](https://independentage.org/benefit-calculator).

## Protecting your entitlement to State Pension and other benefits

If you're under State Pension age, Carer's Credit is a National Insurance credit that helps to fill gaps in your National Insurance contribution record so you can build your entitlement to benefits like the State Pension.

To qualify, you must care for one or more disabled people for at least 20 hours a week. They must either receive one of the qualifying disability benefits listed on page 30, or a health or social care professional must sign a 'Care Certificate' to show they have a certain level of care needs.

If you're not receiving Carer's Allowance, you'll need to fill in a claim form for Carer's Credit. Download a form from [gov.uk/carers-credit/how-to-claim](https://gov.uk/carers-credit/how-to-claim) or ask for one by calling the Carer's Allowance Unit on **0800 731 0297**.

If you're caring for a family member under 12, you could be entitled to Specified Adult Childcare credits. Call the National Insurance Helpline for more information (**0300 200 3500**, [gov.uk/national-insurance-credits](https://gov.uk/national-insurance-credits)).

## Council Tax discounts

You may qualify for some Council Tax discounts – for example, if you live with the person you're caring for and they have a disability or severe mental impairment. See our guide **Council Tax** for more information.

**Other carers told us about so many little things that can make a difference to those who have some savings – things that aren't means-tested, such as Attendance Allowance, Blue Badges and a reduction in Council Tax.**

## Caring and grandchildren

If you're looking after a grandchild on a short- or long-term basis, you may be able to get benefits such as Child Benefit and Specified Adult Childcare credits. If you're in this situation, get advice from an organisation like Family Rights Group (0808 801 0366, [frg.org.uk](http://frg.org.uk)).

## Grants and discounts

As a carer, you may qualify for grants from charities to help pay for respite care, disability equipment and aids, and other essential one-off costs. You can search for grants on the Turn2us website ([grants-search.turn2us.org.uk](https://grants-search.turn2us.org.uk)). Read our factsheet **Extra help with essential costs if you're on a low income** to find out more.

Some carers' organisations also offer grants and discount schemes – see chapter 6 for contact details. You may be able to get other discounts, such as travel concessions and cheaper cinema tickets if you accompany someone as a carer. Contact Turn2us for more information ([0808 802 2000](tel:08088022000), [turn2us.org.uk](https://turn2us.org.uk)).



## Bill's story

"We are almost marooned indoors and tried for a long time to get help. My wife, Amy, is in her 80s and pretty frail. She doesn't feel comfortable going out. She freezes at the front doorway, even though there are handrails to stop her falling. It's as if she's standing on the edge of a cliff. I have to help her all the time.

"I'm frail too so I'm not able to help her as much as I used to. I've had ten years of cancer in the bone marrow and haven't got the strength any more. An injury in my shoulder means it's difficult for me to lift her. If she fell, I would fall as well.

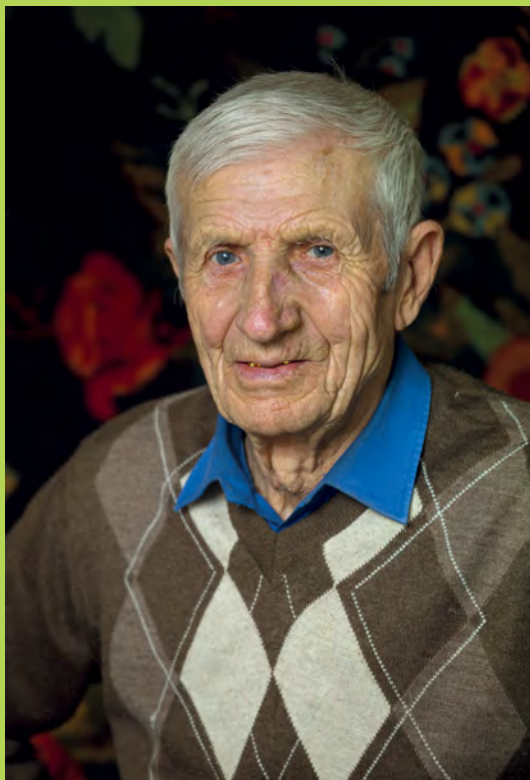
"If I have to go out to do some shopping or for a dentist appointment, I'm so worried because there's no one at home to look after her. We have a personal alarm fall detector but she won't wear the wristband. It's too worrying for me to go out unless I have to.

"I rang the Independent Age Helpline and they advised us to ask for a face-to-face care needs assessment from our local council and a carer's assessment for me. They also sent me

useful information about other sources of help.

"We discussed our difficulties with the assessors and we now have care workers coming to help five times a week for up to two hours. We also have cleaners once a week to clean the floors, loos and do the vacuuming.

"Now we're working out respite care with social services. Respite care would give me time for myself to do things I need to do, such as getting work done in the house. I'd also be able to sit in the garden. We're still waiting but I think there's something cooking now! I know I can ring Independent Age again if we need any more help."



Picture posed by model



## 5 Taking care of yourself

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Being a carer can be emotionally and physically demanding. You may be so busy looking after someone else that you neglect your own health. It's important that you take good care of yourself, not only for your own sake but also to give you the strength to go on in your caring role.

**Your horizons will shrink and sometimes it will be all you can do to get through the day. At those times it can help just to look at the couple of hours ahead of you. Take small steps and appreciate small victories (a cup of tea made and drunk before it got cold). Be kind to yourself – you are doing all you can – and pat yourself on the back for your achievements.**



## Get support from others

It's a good idea to talk to someone about your situation and how you're feeling. Tell your friends, family and GP that you are a carer so they're aware of the pressure you're under.

**Don't be afraid or too proud to ask for help. Friends are often willing to listen when you need to vent your frustrations and can make suggestions you may not come up with for yourself. Neighbours can be another unexpected source of support.**

It can be helpful to talk to people in the same situation, to share experiences and get advice. You could join an online carers forum or a carers group. Carers UK has an online forum ([carersuk.org/help-and-advice/get-support/carersuk-forum](https://carersuk.org/help-and-advice/get-support/carersuk-forum)) and can also put you in touch with local support groups ([0808 808 7777](tel:08088087777), [carersuk.org/local-support](https://carersuk.org/local-support)).

You could also contact your local Age UK (0800 169 6565, [ageuk.org.uk/local](https://ageuk.org.uk/local)) or ask your council about support groups in your area.

Organisations for people with a specific health condition or illness, such as Alzheimer's, arthritis, Parkinson's disease or stroke, also offer support for carers – see chapter 6.

## Take care of your health

Looking after someone can affect both your physical and mental health, but there are steps you can take to stay well.

Try to follow a balanced diet, get some regular exercise and get enough rest. If you're having trouble sleeping, speak to your GP. Carers UK have advice about how to eat well as a carer (0808 808 7777, [carersuk.org/help-and-advice/health/nutrition/eating-well](https://carersuk.org/help-and-advice/health/nutrition/eating-well)).

You could also ask your GP about health checks and screening programmes. You qualify for a free flu jab if you receive Carer's Allowance or if you're the main carer for an older or disabled person who may be at risk if you fall ill.

**Look after yourself is the golden rule. You can't care for anyone if you're ill yourself. I found that during my father's care, my mum lost herself a bit. We'd make an effort to give her a few hours each week to herself – even something as simple as a relaxing bath, undisturbed, helped Mum to hold onto her sanity.**

The challenges of caring could make you more vulnerable to stress and mental health problems. See our guide **Dealing with depression** for advice on how to cope if you're feeling low.

If you'd like to talk to someone about what's troubling you, call Samaritans (**116 123, [samaritans.org](https://www.samaritans.org)**). You could also contact the Mind information line to find out about support in your area (**0300 123 3393, [mind.org.uk](https://www.mind.org.uk)**). If your low mood continues, speak to your GP.

If your caring responsibilities are affecting your health, make sure you mention this during your carer's assessment – see chapter 2.



## Look after your relationships

Taking care of someone can change your relationship. It can also put a strain on other relationships with friends and family. If you're caring for a partner it may take time to adjust to your changed situation.

**My mum appreciated all of the practical things we did for her, but what she appreciated most was us spending time with her, doing everyday things like swapping words from the word puzzle in the newspaper, watching TV or going out for a short drive. It was important not to lose that invaluable personal relationship.**

You may find it helpful to speak to a specialist relationship counsellor. Contact Relate to find out about services in your area (**0300 003 0396**, **[relate.org.uk](https://www.relate.org.uk)**). There's usually a charge for counselling sessions.

Being a carer may sometimes leave you feeling lonely and isolated. It's important for your mental health to keep in touch with family and friends, even if it's just a quick phone call. Our guide **If you're feeling lonely** has some helpful tips for ways to stay connected.

## Take some time for yourself

Make sure you get a regular break from caring, even if it's only 10 minutes. It's important for your quality of life to find time to do the things you enjoy. If this is difficult for you, mention it at your assessment.

You could ask friends or family to help. You could also use telecare to help keep the person you look after safe and give you peace of mind when you're not with them. See our factsheet **Technology to help you at home** for more information.

You may be able to arrange respite care to give you a regular break, or for a longer period to give you the chance to go on holiday – see chapter 3.

**I can feel my life passing and hope there will still be time to do some of the things we had planned. In the meantime, I have found a lot of support online and I've taken up some online courses – art, photography, creative writing. I meet a friend once a week for swimming and lunch, get out for daily walks, and I've adopted a cat, which Mum loves.**

# Useful contacts

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## Carers support organisations

**Carers UK** – 0808 808 7777, [carersuk.org](https://carersuk.org)

Provides an advice service for carers and may be able to put you in touch with local support groups

**Carers Trust** – 0300 772 9600, [carers.org](https://carers.org)

Information, home care and local support services for carers

**Carers Direct** – 0300 123 1053,  
[nhs.uk/conditions/social-care-and-support/  
carers-direct-helpline](https://nhs.uk/conditions/social-care-and-support/carers-direct-helpline)

National information service for carers

## Other useful organisations

**Age UK** – 0800 169 6565, [ageuk.org.uk](https://ageuk.org.uk)

Information and advice for older people

**Alzheimer's Society** – 0300 222 1122,  
[alzheimers.org.uk](https://alzheimers.org.uk)

Support and advice for anyone affected by dementia



**Carer's Allowance Unit** – 0800 731 0297,  
[gov.uk/carers-allowance-unit](http://gov.uk/carers-allowance-unit)

Information on Carer's Allowance and how to make a claim

**Citizens Advice** – 0800 144 8848,  
[citizensadvice.org.uk](http://citizensadvice.org.uk)

Information and advice on money, legal and consumer problems

**Cruse** – 0808 808 1677, [cruse.org.uk](http://cruse.org.uk)

Bereavement counselling and support

**Dementia UK** – 0800 888 6678, [dementiauk.org](http://dementiauk.org)

Support for people affected by dementia

**Disabled Living Foundation** – 0300 999 0004,  
[livingmadeeasy.org.uk](http://livingmadeeasy.org.uk)

Information and advice on equipment for independent living

**Macmillan Cancer Support** – 0808 808 0000,  
[macmillan.org.uk](http://macmillan.org.uk)

Information and advice for people affected by cancer

**Marie Curie** – 0800 090 2309, [mariecurie.org.uk](http://mariecurie.org.uk)

Care and support through terminal illness



**Mind** – 0300 123 3393, [mind.org.uk](https://www.mind.org.uk)

Information and advice for people affected by mental illness

**Parkinson's UK** – 0808 800 0303, [parkinsons.org.uk](https://www.parkinsons.org.uk)

Support for people affected by Parkinson's disease

**Relate** – 0300 0030 396, [relate.org.uk](https://www.relate.org.uk)

Relationship counselling and advice

**Samaritans** – 116 123, [samaritans.org](https://www.samaritans.org)

Confidential support if you need someone to talk to

**Stroke Association** – 0303 3033 100, [stroke.org.uk](https://www.stroke.org.uk)

Support and advice for people affected by stroke

**Turn2us** – 0808 802 2000, [turn2us.org.uk](https://www.turn2us.org.uk)

Information and advice on benefits and grants

**Versus Arthritis** – 0300 790 0400, [versusarthritis.org](https://www.versusarthritis.org)

Support for people living with arthritis

## 7 Things to do if you're new to caring

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Ask for a carer's assessment – see chapter 2.

☐

Ask for a care needs assessment for the person you're looking after if they haven't already had one.

☐

Apply for Carer's Allowance – see chapter 4.

☐

Check if you're claiming all the benefits you're entitled to – see chapter 4.

☐

Ask your local council about aids and adaptations – see chapter 3.

☐

Consider getting lasting power of attorney or deputyship for the person you look after – see chapter 3.

☐

Tell your friends, family and GP that you're a carer and ask your GP to make a note on your records.

☐

Find out what support you can get, such as joining a carers support group.

☐

Make a plan to deal with emergencies, for example, if illness affects your ability to provide care.

☐

# Our free advice guides

You may be interested in...



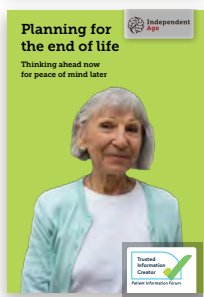
## If you're feeling lonely

Ways to overcome loneliness.



## Getting help at home

How to find help to stay independent in your own home.



## Planning for the end of life

How to plan for the end of your life and where to get support.

Our practical, jargon-free advice guides give you the information you need to get the most out of older age.

To find out about our full range of guides and order copies, call 0800 319 6789 or visit [independentage.org/publications](https://independentage.org/publications)

## About Independent Age

At Independent Age, we want more people in the UK to live a happy, connected and purposeful later life. That's why we support people aged over 65 to get involved in things they enjoy. We also campaign and give advice on the issues that matter most: health and care, money and housing.

For information or advice – we can arrange a free, impartial chat with an adviser – call us on freephone **0800 319 6789** (Monday to Friday, 8.30am to 6.30pm) or email us at [advice@independentage.org](mailto:advice@independentage.org).

You can also support this work by volunteering with us, joining our campaigns to improve life for older people experiencing hardship, donating to us or remembering us in your will.

For more information, visit [independentage.org](http://independentage.org) or call us on **0800 319 6789**.



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**Helpline 0800 319 6789**

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