

## Background

Your legal rights as a Carer come under two Acts:

### 1. The Carers (Recognition and Services) Act 1995

The main purpose of this Act is to ensure that your role as a Carer is fully recognised and this is achieved by receiving a 'Carers Assessment' from your Social Services department.

### 2. The Carers and Disabled Children's Act 2000

This extends your rights to an assessment. The important change is that your right to an assessment exists even if the person you care for refuses to have a Community Care Assessment from your local Social Services department.

A person with parental responsibility for a disabled child has a right to ask Social Services for an assessment and this should be done in accordance with guidance set out in 'Framework for the Assessment of Children in Need and their Families.'

The Carers and Disabled Children's Act requires Social Services departments to provide a wider range of support to Carers than ever before; to carry out Carers Assessments in a way which focuses on the needs of the individual Carer; and to look at the situation in which Carers are providing the support to help family and friends remain at home.

## Who can have a Carers Assessment?

A Carers Assessment is available to anyone over 16 who provides 'substantial care' on a 'regular basis', or intends to provide care in the near future e.g. on discharge from hospital. The cared for person would need to be eligible for a Community Care service from the council, but they do not have to be living with you. Caring also includes the emotional support given to someone with serious mental health problems, as well as people with physical and other disabilities. The key times to be offered an assessment include: on receiving a diagnosis; leaving school or hospital; stopping work to care.

## What are the benefits of having a Carers Assessment?

Having a Carers Assessment is an opportunity for you to have your say about what help and support you need to carry on caring. Any needs which are identified on your assessment have to be considered, and wherever possible should be met. (However, a Carers Assessment cannot provide personal care for the cared for person – this has to come from a separate Community Care Assessment of their needs). Even if the Assessment does not lead to a service to the Carer, it can act as a signpost to other support e.g. benefit advice or breaks information – and there is funding for Carers to have breaks from caring.

**Carers line (01761) 431389**

**Mon – Thur 9.00am – 11.00am and 1.00pm – 3.00pm**

**Friday 9.00am – 11.00am**

**Email: [carerssupport@thecarenetwork.co.uk](mailto:carerssupport@thecarenetwork.co.uk)**

**[www.thecarenetwork.co.uk](http://www.thecarenetwork.co.uk)**

## Preparing for your Assessment

To get the most from your Assessment, it's a good idea to think about what you want from it. The checklist below gives some idea of the areas you and the social worker will cover, and you can add any other topics you may want to discuss.

### Tasks for Caring may include:

- helping with washing and dressing
- helping with getting in and out of bed
- housework, shopping
- bathing and toileting
- dealing with money, collecting pension
- making sure they are safe

### Impact of Caring:

- Has your health suffered?
- Have your finances been affected – perhaps through early retirement, or being prevented from working?
- Has family life been disrupted, or made more stressful by having to juggle the needs of other family members and the person you care for?
- How often do you get time 'for yourself'?
- When did you last have a break?
- What would happen in an emergency – could anyone else take over?

Your Assessment will also give you the opportunity to say if you want to carry on caring, and if not, will look at how alternative care can be provided.

## After your Assessment

Once the assessment has been completed, you will be sent a copy which will show the outcome, and any services which may be offered. You will also be entitled to a review.

If you are entitled to a service, you would be entitled to have a 'Direct Payment' made to you if you wished to purchase your own service, rather than have it supplied to you by Social Services. Your social worker will explain how this works.

## How do I get an Assessment?

If you haven't already been offered an assessment, you can simply call Bath & North East Somerset Council on: 01225 477000 and ask for the Adult Duty Desk. If you are caring for a child (under 16) you will need to call the Disabled Children's Team on: 01225 825307. They will ask about your caring situation and you will be referred on to a social worker who will contact you to arrange a convenient time to visit to do the Assessment.

You may wish to consider whether you would like this done on your own, or with the person you care for present – the choice is yours.

If you would like to find out more about Carers Assessments, The Care Network Support Workers can answer your questions and help you through the assessment process.

**The Care Network, 1 Riverside Cottages, Radstock, Bath BA3 3PS**  
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