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# INTRODUCTION

This pack is for anyone who wants to know more about caring for another person. Many people do not consider themselves carers. It may seem the most natural thing in the world to look after a friend or relative. However in concentrating your time on the person you care for, you can forget your own needs.

Caring for someone else can be a great strain and emotionally draining. You have the right to decide on whether you take on or continue the role of carer. This pack focuses on you as the carer. You are not alone, there are thousands of carers in Carmarthenshire and there are various organisations that may be able to help.

We hope this pack will give you practical and emotional support, as well as links to other sources of help and information.

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If you would like to receive this pack in another format e.g. large print, on tape or in Braille, please phone the Carers Service on 0300 0200 002 or email [carers@cavs.org.uk](mailto:carers@cavs.org.uk).

The pack is also available to download at [www.cavs.org.uk/partnerships/carers-service](http://www.cavs.org.uk/partnerships/carers-service).

# Who is a carer?

A carer is someone who looks after a relative, partner, friend or neighbour who needs support because of age, physical or learning disability or illness, including mental illness and problematic substance use.

## Carers Rights

### Carers Rights to an Assessment

**Under the Carers and Disabled Children Act 2000** carers aged 16 or over who provide a regular and substantial amount of care for someone aged 18 or over have the right to an assessment of their needs as a carer.

**The Carers (Equal Opportunities) Act** came into force in April 2005. It places a duty on local authorities to ensure that all carers know that they are entitled to an assessment of their needs, and to consider a carer's outside interests - work, study or leisure - when carrying out an assessment.

**The Employment Act 2002** gives working parents of disabled children under 18 the right to request flexible working arrangements. Since 6 April 2007, you also have a statutory right to ask your employer for flexible working if you are caring for an adult who is a relative or lives at the same address as you. Carers also have the right to take (unpaid) time off work for dependants in cases of emergency.

**Carers Wales and [directgov.uk](http://directgov.uk) website for information.** 

Card 4

# CARING FOR YOURSELF

It can be difficult to recognise yourself as a carer and to accept that you have needs of your own. Don't feel guilty about needing and asking for help. If you can take care of yourself, you are more likely to stay healthy and able to continue helping the person you are providing care for.

Becoming a carer may have happened suddenly, leaving little time to think about the implications for you. Or it may have been a gradual process, with you taking on more responsibility for the person you care for. It may have been a role you accepted willingly out of love, or out of duty, or a bit of both.

Looking after someone else is nearly always **hard work**. You may find it a financial drain, physically or mentally exhausting, or all three. Coming to terms with a new role may take time and constant readjustment.

## **Coping with your Feelings**

How do you feel at times? Tired? Isolated? Guilty? Upset? Angry? Embarrassed? These are common feelings experienced by many carers but may also be mixed with positive feelings.

## **Dealing with stress**

No matter how well you deal with your caring role, there will inevitably be times when you experience high levels of stress. To ensure your own health does not suffer, it is important to try and deal with stress. Possible ways of doing this are to ask friends and family for support; talk through situations with appropriate professionals face to face or by telephone, or seek help from GP's, pharmacists or other health professionals you may know.

## **Counselling**

If you are experiencing depression or anxiety or feel you need additional support in helping you to deal with your circumstances, you can discuss with your GP whether it would be appropriate for you to be referred for counselling. Or you could try voluntary or charitable agencies that offer counselling. There are charges for private counselling services, but sometimes these can be negotiated. 🖱 Card 3

**Support Groups** and carers' organisations can be a source of help. You may want to contact a Support Group to get information and find out how others have met and dealt with problems similar to those you encounter.


There are a number of groups representing various conditions, for example, diabetes, arthritis or mental health problems, learning disability and so on. These groups can provide you with information about the particular illness/disability experienced by the person you care for.

There may be both carers and the people they care for in the group and they may give the kind of support available from a carers support group. Carers living in the Llandeilo, Llandovery and Nantgaredig areas, can contact the Carers Support Worker based with the GP practice. 🖱 Card 3

## **Taking the Strain**


Lifting and moving the person cared for often causes injury to carers who are particularly vulnerable to back injury. Find out the best way of doing it.

If the person you care for is in hospital, or undergoing physiotherapy, ask the physiotherapist for advice. Occupational Therapists (OT's), whether from the NHS or Social Services, can give advice on lifting and moving as well as disability equipment. You can ask your doctor to

refer you. If a disabled person asks for an assessment by Social Services, it is often done by an Occupational Therapist.  card 1 District Nurses may also give advice.

## **Working Carers**

If you are trying to combine caring for someone with a job, then you are juggling two major commitments. A large percentage of people who go out to work also look after someone at home. Many other people who work feel responsible for relatives who are some distance away.

Some employers have introduced career breaks and flexi time. ACAS have produced a short guide for carers on flexible working.  Card 4

If you are finding it difficult to combine working and caring, you may consider asking your employer about the possibility of going part-time or having a job share.

Carers Wales have produced some information leaflets for people who are juggling work and care. They also produce leaflets for employers, which look at the benefits of offering support to people with caring responsibilities.


## **Carers Wales**


Carers Wales was formed to address the needs of and to support carers, and enable them to speak with a stronger voice. They aim to:


- encourage carers to recognise their own needs;
- develop appropriate support for carers;
- bring the needs of carers to the attention of government and other policy makers.

Staff can offer information to carers and professionals in English and Welsh.  Card 4

## **Caring for a Child with a Learning Disability**

If your child needs services in addition to those that all children use (e.g. schools) you can ask social services to carry out an assessment of your needs as a whole family. The Children's Disability Team provides help and support to disabled children and their families.  Card 2

After an assessment has been carried out, if you meet the eligibility criteria, various services can be arranged. These could include: after-school clubs; holiday play-schemes; aids and adaptations to help make life at home easier; short breaks - sometimes called respite care. Organisations that can offer services for children and their families in Carmarthenshire include **Breakthro' and Gateway**.  Card 5

**Contact a Family** provides advice, information and support for parents of all disabled children. They produce a variety of fact-sheets covering a range of issues that can affect families, regardless of their child's special need, including preparing for adult life and transition.  Card 5

For more information and local support, you can contact **Mencap Cymru Family Adviser Service**.  Card 5


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## **Caring for an Adult with a Learning Disability**


Some people with a learning disability may need support with everyday practical skills, while other people with more severe learning disabilities, often coupled with physical disabilities, require 24-hour care.

There are a range of services available to enable people

to live as independently as possible in their own homes or within the local community.


To find out if the person you care for is eligible to receive a learning disability service and for information on respite services you need to make contact with the nearest community learning disability team.  Card 1

If you have any health concerns your GP would normally be your first point of contact and they will be able to refer people for specialist services if this is required.

Carmarthenshire County Council's Transition Service can support people who may be leaving education.  Card 1

**Citizen Advocacy Service sits with Carmarthenshire People First**, a support agency for people with learning disabilities. The service is important not just to the individual, but also to the family. An advocate can take pressure away from them, because they know that their relative is being given the right support and knowledge to help them engage with the various services in their lives.


 Card 6

**Mencap Family Adviser Service** provides information about learning disability and can answer questions on a range of issues.  Card 6

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## **Caring for someone with a Physical Disability and or problems with sights and hearing**

A range of care and support services are available in Carmarthenshire to help people with a Physical Disability and/or problems with sight and hearing, to keep as much independence and control over their lives as possible.


Care needs are identified within care plans - for example: day care, respite care and flexi-care workers to provide intensive support. To find out how to access these and other services.  Card 1

Advice about managing care arrangements, Direct Payments, accessing any available finances through the Benefits Agency and the Independent Living Fund can also be provided.

For some people, getting around the house can be difficult. If this is the case often a piece of equipment can make all the difference to you and the person you care for. Adaptations to your home e.g. a ramp and daily living appliances e.g. bathing aids may be available from the Social Care, Health & Housing Department. These are assessed by the Community Occupational Therapists.


 Card 1

If you need to purchase privately, your GP practice or local pharmacist may have catalogues of available equipment.

Accessible transport and mobility support can in many instances make caring for someone more manageable. The Princess Royal Trust has links to various sites that may be useful, such as Public Transport, Driving Licences, Financial Help with Travel, Personal Mobility, Aids and Equipment.  Card 7

**The Independent Living Fund (ILF)** aims to help severely disabled people to live at home rather than going into residential care. The fund pays for extra care for people with very severe disabilities. The fund can only do this if you:

- get at least £340 worth of support a week or £17,680 a year from social services. This support could be something like going to a day centre or getting money from a direct payment scheme;
- get the higher rate care component of Disability Care Allowance (DLA);
- be at least 16 and under 65. You must apply before your 65<sup>th</sup> birthday. The funding can continue after your 65<sup>th</sup> birthday as long as you still meet all the other conditions;
- have less than £23,000 in savings/capital (this includes any money your partner has);
- normally be in paid employment or self-employed for at least 16 hours per week
- has less than £23,000 in savings/capital.
- Normally be in paid employment or self-employed for at least 16 hours per week

**If you think the person you are caring for meets these conditions, talk to your social worker.**  Card 1

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## **Caring for someone with Dementia**


### **Alzheimer's and Dementia**

Symptoms of dementia include loss of memory, confusion and problems with speech, understanding and behaviour.

Diagnosing dementia is often difficult, particularly in the early stages. There are other conditions that may have symptoms similar to dementia and that may be treatable. Poor sight or hearing, emotional changes and upsets, such as moving or bereavement, or the side-effects of certain drugs or a combination of drugs can cause confusion.

The GP is the first person to talk to about any concerns and is the usual person to refer someone to a specialist consultant. Assessments can include conversations with the person being diagnosed and those close to them, a physical examination, memory tests and/or brain scans.

When you're caring for someone with dementia, it can be all too easy to ignore your needs, but you shouldn't lose sight of the fact that your well-being matters just as much; the more you take care of yourself, the better equipped you'll be to provide quality care for the person you care for. Some of the contacts below have useful specialist information on how you can cope with caring for someone with dementia and the emotional and practical issues that arise.

The Alzheimer's Society have produced a wide range of fact sheets, with some very useful information.  Card 8

Locally, the Alzheimer's Society Carmarthenshire provides practical support, advice and information to people living with dementia, their carers and family members. The organisation runs monthly carers support groups, a befriending scheme, carers' information programmes and a home care service in conjunction with local care agencies. They also run training courses for health professionals and care home staff.

Amman Valley Dementia Carers Support Group can provide information, training and support to carers across the whole of Carmarthenshire. They have a specialist day centre, Hafan Gobaith providing day care six days a week and a specialist care home, Hafan Croeso offering respite care.

 Card 8

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## **Caring for someone with Mental Health Problems**

You are not alone. Around 1.5 million people in Britain care for someone with a mental health problem. Every

carer's experience will be different in some way - but everyone needs to know their rights and what support they can receive.

As a carer you have rights, which may enable you to get help and support in your caring role. You have the right to ask for a Carers Assessment even if the person you are caring for does not want any services. If the person you are caring for is supported by a Community Mental Health Team, then you can ask for this assessment to be carried out by them. If not you can ask the Adult Services Team for an assessment. 📄 Card 1

MIND have produced a very good booklet on Carers, which gives helpful information on Carers rights, confidentiality and sources of help. This is available from: Publications on 0844 448 4448 or email [publications@mind.org.uk](mailto:publications@mind.org.uk).

There is a Carers Advocate based in Eiriol who can assist and support the Carers of people with a broad range of mental health difficulties through advocacy. 📄 Card 9

West Wales Action for Mental Health can help you with information about local services, and signpost you to relevant organisations. They can also help raise awareness of the issues and difficulties Carers may face, with the commissioning and provider organisations. 📄 Card 9

Hafal provides a range of support for carers of people experiencing mental health issues including:

- One to one support – get help with a wide range of issues and information
- Monthly carers meetings – mutual support, up to date information and guest speakers. Meetings held in Carmarthen, Llanelli and Ammanford on a monthly basis


- Carers help line – provides emotional support plus information about services, events and activities.

 Card 9

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## **Caring for Someone with Problematic Substance Use Alcohol & Drugs**

The use of substances can harm a person's physical and mental health. Dependence is a physical and/or psychological need to use the substance, when person will suffer withdrawal symptoms if they do not use the substance.

People use many sorts of substances. These can be legal (alcohol, tobacco, and solvents), or illegal (cannabis, heroin, cocaine etc.). Some prescribed drugs are addictive (e.g. diazepam). Substance use and dependence is increasing in the UK, especially among the young, as is polydrug use. See index cards for useful contact numbers.  Card 10

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## **Carmarthenshire Young Carers and Sibling Carers Service**

### **What is a young carer?**

A young carer is someone under the age of 18 whose life is restricted because of the need to take responsibility for a family member due to sickness, disability, mental health, drug or alcohol problems.

### **What is a sibling carer?**

A sibling carer is someone under the age of 18 whose life is restricted because they are helping to take care of brothers and sisters who are seriously ill, or have disability.

Young carers and sibling carers can be boys or girls and come from any ethnic background or culture.

### **What things do young carers do?**

Many young carers have to take on an “adult role” at an early age. Sometimes from as young as five.

This can include:

- Household chores – cooking, cleaning, ironing, gardening etc.
- Personal care – washing, dressing, toileting, giving medication.
- Offering emotional support.

### **What things do sibling carers do?**

Many sibling carers take on more responsibility than their peers.

This can include:

- Significant levels of supervision of siblings;
- Giving medication and personal care;
- Entertaining siblings;
- Emotional support for parents.

### **What problems can young carers/sibling carers face?**

- Suffer depression. Thoughts of suicide.
- Feeling lonely Lack of confidence.
- Low self esteem.
- Lack of sleep. Poor physical health.
- Non-attendance at school. Late for school.
- Difficulty completing homework. Little time for study.
- Being bullied.
- Socially isolated. Making/keeping friends.
- Not knowing who to trust.
- Lack of quality time with parents.
- Lack of employment opportunities.
- Lack of understanding. Financial difficulties.

## **What can the young carers/sibling carers service offer young carers?**

Both the young carer and sibling carer service have very strict criteria, due to funding constraints. If we cannot directly help, we will put you in contact with someone who can.

### **We provide:**

- Information about the illness or disability of the person you care for
- Someone to talk to who will listen and give practical relevant advice
- Peer support
- Advocacy
- A break from caring
- Relevant courses
- Focused 1-1 work
- Referral onto other agencies
- Work in partnership with schools to provide continued and consistent support.

Anyone can make a referral to the service. Please contact the Young Carers Service on 01554 775232 or visit [www.barnardos.org.uk](http://www.barnardos.org.uk).

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## **CARING AT HOME**

### **How do I get help?**

If you are caring for someone at home, you may want help and support in giving that care. This could come directly from Social Services, the NHS, voluntary or private organisations.

### **Help from Social Services**

People with all kinds of disabilities and of all ages may be eligible for support in the home. Social Services can offer

a range of support for disabled people and carers. To determine what help is needed they will first need to carry out **an assessment**. Discussion about what is needed should involve you, the carer.

## **Community Care Assessment**

If the person you care for feels they need help and support to remain at home, they can ask Social Services for an Assessment of their needs. The assessment should also look at the role of the carer and help they provide.

Who to contact to ask for an assessment?  Card1

## **Carer's Assessment**

If you are providing a regular and substantial amount of care for a relative, friend or a disabled child, you can ask Social Services for a carer's assessment - even if the person you care for has refused a community care assessment or the offer of services.

**'Are you a looking after someone...?'** leaflet available from **Social Care**  Card 1

An assessment is not a judgment on your ability to provide care, but rather the recognition of the extra work and responsibilities that carers have. The aim of an assessment is to find out what help could be provided to make caring easier for you.

You need to think about the sort of help you need; whether you want to continue working, your physical ability to cope with tasks like getting somebody out of bed or into the bath.

Having an assessment can be the opportunity to look at the effect caring is having on you, and whether you are willing or able to continue with this role. **"How do I get**

**Help?" leaflet available from Carers Wales.**  Card 4

After the assessment has been carried out, a **Care Plan** will be drawn up.

## **What can I expect from a Care Plan?**

The care plan will identify what services are needed and what can be provided. This should be reviewed from time to time as needs change. You should be given a copy of the care plan. The plan should be based on the agreement reached between the person for whom you care, you the carer, and the social worker or assessor/care manager.

## **What kind of services can I expect?**

- **Domiciliary (Home) Care** – to help people most in need to stay in their own homes.
- **Replacement Care or Short Breaks** – a break from caring
- **Support and guidance** – information, advice, signposting and someone to listen to you
- **Aids and equipment** – to help with everyday tasks
- **Minor adaptations to the home** – such as handrails or ramps
- **Careline Alarm system** – an emergency call system linked to a 24 hour response service
- **Telecare** – various sensors can be placed around the home, monitored 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.
- **Carers Emergency Card** – in case of an accident while you are out, services would know that there is someone at home who cannot manage without help
- **Flexible Support Grants** – small grants up to £200 to help meet needs to sustain caring (the grants are limited)

**Contact social services to arrange an assessment or for information on services.**  Card 1

**There may be charges or waiting lists for some services**

## **Direct Payments**


Once social services have carried out an assessment and decided which services you and the person you care for need, you can then choose either to have social services provide that help for you, or to receive a Direct Payment instead. If you choose Direct Payments, you or the person you care for will get money from social services so that you can buy in the help you need.

**Direct Payments leaflet available.**  Card 1


**Direct Payments** can offer more control and flexibility to arrange the support you need, but can involve a lot of paperwork, as you may become someone's employer.

**The Rowan Organisation can help you with this.**  Card 11

## **What if we do not want an assessment?**

If you and the person you care for do not wish to be assessed or be involved with social services, services can be purchased direct from independent organisations. See your local Yellow Pages or contact the Care and Social Services Inspectorate for Wales (CSSIW) for a list of Social Services Registered agencies.  Card 2

## **Help from Voluntary Organisations**

Voluntary organisations, ranging from large well-known groups like Crossroads Care Sir Gâr to small, local groups can provide a range of services and information.  Card 11

## **Help with Medical and Nursing Care**

You may need extra help because the person you care for has medical problems. **For more information about the**

## **following services ask your G.P.**

Your **District Nurse** might be able to provide practical nursing care for the person you look after e.g. help with injections, care of pressure sores or going to the toilet.

**Health Visitors** are an invaluable source of advice and information.

**Community Psychiatric Nurses** give specialist advice on caring for someone with a mental health difficulty.

**Occupational Therapists** can advise you on equipment and adaptations to your home.

**Speech & Language Therapists** can work with the person you care for to help them communicate effectively.

**Dieticians** will advise you on special diets to ensure that the person you care for gets all the nutrition they need. They will also provide hints such as giving frequent small meals to people having difficulty eating or swallowing.

**Community Dentists** may visit the person you care for at home.

## **Palliative Care**

Palliative care involves providing care to relieve suffering and focuses on controlling pain and other symptoms. Palliative care is especially important for those whose illness cannot be cured. Some people need specialist palliative care support, which may be provided by teams of health professionals working from hospitals or in the community.

**Macmillan Nurses** give specialist advice on pain and symptom control, and advice on cancer care. They provide counselling and care to the person with the illness, and

their relatives, carers and friends. 🖱 Card 11

**Marie Curie Nurses** provide night nursing and occasional day nursing and sitting services. 🖱 Card 11

**Respite care** - if you need a break it may be possible for the person you are caring for to go into a local hospital or nursing home for a short period. There may be a charge for the care your relative receives. Ask your G.P. or local social services team for more information. It is better to get help at an early stage - don't wait for a crisis. 🖱 Card 1

## **Help from Independent Agencies**


Services can be provided by independent agencies. You can choose to buy services directly from an agency using your own income. For a list you can contact Care & Social Services Inspectorate in Wales (CSSIW). 🖱 Card 2


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## **HELP WITH DAILY LIVING**

There is a wide range of equipment available to help disabled and older people, and their carers, carry out everyday tasks. It is advisable that an assessment is made by an appropriate person to ensure that any equipment provided is suitable.


If the person you care for has been discharged from hospital with a new problem the hospital Occupational Therapist or Physiotherapy department should give you advice on what equipment you may need and how to get it. They may also be able to tell you how to fund the equipment or if it is available on loan or hire.

If the problem has changed without involving a hospital visit, your first point of help should be your Community Occupational Therapist. Contact Social Services or your GP  Card 1


**THE BRITISH RED CROSS** may, in an emergency or short term, lend equipment.  Card 11

**EQUIPMENT** may be purchased from specialist firms as well as some large branches of chemists. Obtain advice from health or social services occupational therapists if you are unsure of what is most appropriate.

## **Problems with Sight or Hearing**

If either you or the person you care for has a sight or hearing problem Social Services have specialist workers who can give advice and sometimes equipment to cope with the problems.  Card 1

## **Other Sources of Help**

If the person you care for needs but cannot pay for something that the authority will not provide, grants may be available from trusts. Some organisations for particular illnesses and disabilities may be able to help with this kind of expense. Your library may have a copy of 'A Guide to Grants for Individuals in Need' which gives brief details of trust funds.  Card 13

For information on possible help for health costs contact **Help with Health Costs on 0845 850 1166.**

If you are over 65 and have a low income, you may be able to get help from the charity **Independent Age**. This could be a one-off grant to help you buy things needed for the home or a regular amount of money to top up your

income. 📄 Card 11

If you care for someone receiving income support, they may get a Community Care Grant from the Social Fund. You can contact your local Jobcentre Plus Office for more information, details of which should be in your phone book or can be found at [www.jobcentreplus.gov.uk](http://www.jobcentreplus.gov.uk).

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## **HELP WITH HOUSING: Moving in; Adaptations; Fuel Costs**

If you are considering giving up your home and moving in with the person you care for, consider this carefully. You may not be able to stay on after your caring responsibilities come to an end. If you are unsure, get independent and accurate advice from a solicitor, CAB or Shelter. 📄 Card 12

### **Housing Adaptations**

**Disabled Facilities Grants (DFG)** can help towards the cost of adapting a home, when it is deemed that changes are necessary and that the work is reasonable and practical. DFGs are means-tested; they take your income and savings into account and you may have to pay towards the cost of alterations.

**Care and Repair** can provide advice and assistance to older and disabled people needing help to continue living safely and securely in their own home. 📄 Card 12

### **Winter Fuel Payments**

This is a one off payment to help with heating costs in the

winter and is usually paid to people over 60 automatically during November. You can contact the Winter Fuel Helpline for more information **0845 915 1515**.

### **Home Energy Efficiency Grants (HEES)**

This scheme can help you to pay for heating and insulation improvements to your home if you are in receipt of a disability or means tested benefit. For more information call **HEES on 0800 316 2815**.

**Other Help:** If you are at risk of your fuel supplies being disconnected, call the Home Heat Helpline on **0800 33 66 99**.

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## **TAKING A BREAK**

Taking time out is very difficult when you are a carer, but it is extremely important. If you need a break from caring, various options could be available.


Regular, planned respite care for a few hours or longer can be arranged in some cases. For example, you may care at home for a period, then the person you care for spends time at a residential/nursing home.


Some day services are available where the person goes outside the home. This will also give you some time to yourself.


**Day Centres, Day Clubs and Luncheon clubs** can provide essential support, company and meals for people.

Replacement care at home can also be provided for short periods. Crossroads Care Sir Gâr can provide care attendants to support carers of people of all ages.  Card

Short breaks may also be available for children and young people with disability or significant health needs. These include staying in a respite centre; short breaks through the Barnardo's Family Link Service; stays in a foster placement or attendance at a play scheme or activity.

An assessment will always be carried out if the person seeking care is asking Social Services for help to pay for it, and a charge may be made for the services, depending on financial circumstances.  Card 1

Private arrangements can be made with local nursing or residential homes, or other service providers.  Card 2

**The Adult Placement Service** can provide weekend or short term, planned breaks in order to provide existing carers with respite and to provide service users the opportunity to meet different people.  Card 1

## **Telecare**


Telecare and assistive technology options can help relieve stress and provide support, peace of mind, independence and dignity to carers and the people they care for.


A range of non-intrusive telecare sensors, such as fall, smoke, flood and movement detectors, temperatures extreme sensors and medication reminders, telecare can offer a comprehensive way of managing the risks to a person's health and home environment, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. To find out more information about Carmarthenshire's Telecare Service Support for Carers.

 Card 12

## **Leaving Hospital**

If you are caring for someone leaving hospital then the

hospital should have carried out discharge planning to prepare support for their patient. You can also ask for a carer's assessment to look at the help that you may need. For more information from Carers Wales about hospital discharge.  Card 4

If a care plan and services are not in place before someone is discharged from hospital, they may be entitled to free intermediate care for up to six weeks while more permanent services are put into place. If you have any concerns, speak to the hospital social worker.  Card 2

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## **WHAT TO DO IN A CRISIS - PLANNING AHEAD**

One of the greatest concerns for carers is what will happen if they can no longer care – or if an emergency crops up. You may find that planning for the future helps to put your mind at rest. Ensuring your affairs are in order, making a will and talking to your family about the future should be part of this process.

Think about the practicalities of looking after your friend or relative; consider if anyone else would be able to take over smoothly. You may want to consider the following:

- Making a set of instructions detailing the care and preferences of your relative or friend and keeping this in a safe place known to your family/friends. This is especially important if the person for whom you care has any difficulties communicating.
- Keep the names and telephone numbers of your key/link/care worker handy.

- If you have any worries discuss them with the workers that you, or the person you care for, know.
- If you do not have any contact numbers, contact your local social services team.


## **Out of hours**

If a crisis arises out of office hours and you need to contact a social worker, phone **Careline on 01558 824283**.


## **NHS Direct**

If you have health concerns for you or your family, you can phone this 24 hour confidential helpline, which provides advice and information **0845 4647**.

## **Mental Health Crisis Card**

Containing information for people caring for someone with mental health problems, a copy of the card can be obtained through the Carers Mental Health Advocate, WWAMH or the Area Mental Health Teams.  Cards 1 & 9

## **Carers Emergency Cards**

The aim of the card is to give peace of mind to carers when they are out and about. Should an accident happen to a carer while out then the card which can be carried in a pocket or wallet, will let emergency services know that there is someone at home depending on them. If you wish to apply for a card look out for posters which should be on display in GP practices, Social Service Offices, NHS Trusts, or you can phone for a registration form.  Card 1


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## **LEISURE ACTIVITIES & GETTING ABOUT**


It is not always easy to find out about activities in which you and the person you care for can take part. But it is


important that, where possible, you find outside interests. These may be things you do together, or separately.


## **Local Attractions**

Your local tourist information office will have details on local leisure and tourist sites with accessibility. There are also access guides available in some areas.  Card 13

## **Holidays**

If you want a break from caring to take a much-deserved holiday, you will need to arrange respite care.  Card 1


You might find it easier to enjoy yourself if the person you look after is on holiday with you. The Royal Association for Disability and Rehabilitation (RADAR) produce an annual guide to holidays for people with disabilities or illness.  Card 13

Mencap have a holiday guide with venues that particularly welcome or are adapted to suit the needs of people with a learning disability.  Card 6

## **The Library Service**

The mobile library service offers a variety of resources including, (in some libraries) large print books, cassettes of books and music for adults and children, records and compact discs. Further information is available from your main library.


## **Talking Newspapers**

There are several talking newspapers and magazines available in the county for those with sight impairment. The Library Service can provide RNIB talking books and newspapers.  Card 13


# GETTING ABOUT

As a carer in Carmarthenshire, you may find that transport and travelling present you with yet more challenges especially if you are not a car driver/owner.


## **Concessionary Travel Pass**

Older people and people with disabilities are entitled to free travel on local bus services. People with disabilities, unable to travel without assistance, may also be entitled to take a companion with them free of charge. The concessionary travel pass can be obtained free from Post Office branches with proof of eligibility, proof of address and a current passport sized photograph.  Card 13

## **Country Cars**

This service is designed for rural areas, throughout the county, where bus services are not very frequent. It also caters for people who are not fit enough to use public transport. A 'local transport' charge is payable although concessionary passes can be used.  Card 13

## **Hospital Transport**


Patients who need hospital transport to attend their first appointment can book directly through the Transport Booking Centre. You will need to contact the centre at least one week before you are due to attend.  Card 13

Transport for subsequent appointments should be booked at the hospital when you attend for your appointment.

You may be able to get financial help from the Hospital Travel Costs Scheme if you're on a low income. To apply for the NHS low income support scheme, you'll need to fill

in form HC1. Phone NHS Patient Services Helpline on 0845 850 1166, or ask for one at the hospital or your GP.

## **Motability Scheme**

The scheme is open to those people who get the higher rate of the mobility component of the Disability Living Allowance. It can help to buy or lease a car, or outdoor wheelchair, and make getting around less of a problem. You can apply for Motability if you are not the disabled person, but instead appointed to act for him or her. Some disabled people do not have to pay road tax. Advice is available.  Card 13

## **Blue Badge Parking Scheme**

The Blue Badge Scheme provides a national system of parking concessions for disabled people travelling as drivers or passengers. Badge holders are exempt from certain parking restrictions, check with the Local Authority before you travel.

### **Who qualifies?**

You can qualify for a badge if you or the person you are caring for:

- Gets the higher rate of the mobility component of the Disability Living Allowance (DLA)
- Are registered blind
- Receives a War Pensioners' Mobility Supplement


### **Where to apply**

Applications should be made to Carmarthenshire Direct.

 Card 13

# BENEFITS

## Benefits for You and the Person you Care for


Listed briefly are the major benefits. You should remember that claiming a new benefit might affect one you already receive. The benefit system is complex. Always seek advice. For help and advice you can phone CarersLine or The Department of Work & Pensions Benefit Enquiry Line for carers and disabled people.  Card 14

## Benefits for Carers

### Carers Allowance (CA)

This is a benefit payable to carers aged 16 and over who spend at least 35 hours a week caring, are not in full time education and earn less than £100 a week after deducting expenses. The person you care for must be in receipt of Attendance Allowance or Disability Living Allowance at the middle or highest rate for help with personal care.

**You cannot be paid carers allowance** if you are getting State Retirement Pension, Incapacity Benefit or any other 'earnings replacement' benefit. You could though have an 'underlying entitlement' to Carer's Allowance, so it is still worth claiming.

If you are paid Carer's Allowance, the person you care for may lose some of their benefit. Call the Carers Allowance Unit or Carers UK Advice Line.  Card 14

### Carer's Premium

If you are getting Income Support, or other income-based benefits (Council Tax and Housing Benefit, Income-based Jobseekers Allowance and Pension Credit), your Carers Allowance will be treated as income - but the amount you get will include an additional **Carer's Premium**. Carers


Allowance may not be payable when in receipt of some other benefits, but claiming it will still give entitlement to the Carer Premium. Seek advice from CarersLine or The Department of Work & Pensions Benefit Enquiry Line.

### **Disability Living Allowance (DLA)**

This is a benefit for anyone under 65 paid to help with extra costs of long-term illness or disability. Your income and savings do not affect whether you can get DLA or how much you get. Disability Living Allowance is split into two parts;

1. Care component – for the help someone needs to look after themselves and can be paid at one of three rates, lower, middle or higher.
2. Mobility component – for the help someone needs getting around and can be paid at one of two rates.

### **Attendance Allowance (AA)**

This is a benefit for people who have reached their 65th birthday, to help them with extra costs of a long term illness or disability. Your income and savings do not affect whether you can get Attendance Allowance or how much you can get. Attendance Allowance is paid at two rates (lower or higher); the amount you get depends on the amount of help you need. There is no amount for mobility needs in Attendance. To claim DLA or AA you can call the Benefit Enquiry Line.  Card 14

## **Benefits for People on a Low Income**

### **Income Support**

This is a means tested benefit paid to people on a low income (or with no other income) aged under 60 who do not have to sign on to look for work. The amount of Income support you receive varies according to family

circumstances, income and age.


**Jobseeker's Allowance** is either means tested or based on National Insurance contributions made through previous work. The amount of means tested benefit you can get is affected by your income and savings. To claim Jobseeker's Allowance you must be available for and actively seeking work and sign on regularly to prove this.

To claim Income Support or Jobseeker's Allowance you can go to your local Jobcentre Plus office.

## **Pension Credit**

This is a benefit for people aged 60 or over, or on a low income. There are two parts to the pension credit;

- **Guarantee Credit** is means tested, so your income and savings will affect the amount you get. It can be claimed by people who are 60 or over. If you are under 60 but your partner is over 60, your partner can claim for both of you.
- **Savings Credit** rewards pensioners who have a second pension or modest savings. It is paid as part of a claim for Pension Credit to pensioners who are 65 or over.

The calculation of Pension Credit can be quite complex. To find out if you are entitled and how much you could get, phone the Pensions Service. Claims can be completed for you over the phone, then sent out for you to check and sign.  Card 14

**Tax Credits** are paid to top up the incomes of families or workers with a low income. The amount you get is affected by your household income and savings.

**Child Tax Credit** is paid if you have children under 16 (or 19 if they are in education). You may be able to get extra credit if you have a disabled child. You do not have to be in work to get Child Tax Credit.

**Working Tax Credit** is for people who are in work. You may be able to get extra credit if you work for more than 30 hours a week and are aged over 50 or are disabled.

**To claim Tax Credits.**  Card 14

## **Social Fund**

If you get Income Support, Jobseeker's Allowance, Pension Credit or certain amounts of Tax Credits, you may also be able to get help from the Social Fund through a range of loans and grants.

- **Community Care Grants** are paid to help you buy items that will help you to live independently; they do not need to be paid back.
- **Budgeting & Crisis Loans** help with larger or urgent expenses; both must be repaid.

**For more information about the Social Fund, contact your local Jobcentre Plus office.**

## **Housing Benefit (HB)**

For people who are on a low income and pay rent or council tax and have limited savings. To claim HB contact Carmarthenshire County Council on 01554 742100

## **Council Tax Benefit (CTB)**


You may be able to get help with your **Council tax** if you live on your own, leave your home unoccupied and live elsewhere to provide care. Or if someone leaves a house empty and comes to live with you so that they can provide care, their home is exempt from council tax.

Certain people can be ignored for Council Tax purposes, such as students or those who are severely mentally impaired including dementia. There is also a reduction for properties that have certain disability adaptations and allow use of a wheelchair indoors.

To claim Council Tax Benefit contact Carmarthenshire

County Council on 01554 742100.

## LEGAL MATTERS

If the person you care for does not have the capacity to make their own decisions, they may be able to nominate someone to make decisions for them, by giving them Power of Attorney, or the Court of Protection can make decisions on their behalf. For more information or advice, contact **The Public Guardianship Office.**  card 15

**Advance Care Planning** Through this, the person you care for can make an advance statement about the treatment they wish or do not wish to receive. For more information you can contact **The Patients Association.**

 Card 15

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## ALTERNATIVES TO CARING AT HOME

### Moving into residential or nursing care

A situation may arise where you are no longer able to care for your friend or relative. As a carer, residential or nursing care for the person you care for might be a difficult option to consider. It may feel like you are letting the person you care for down, or you are rejecting them, but it is important to remember that you can only do so much as a carer.


Caring can be both physically and mentally exhausting and there are often limits to the level of care that can be provided in the home. It is better to arrange the best care possible than struggle on until you reach crisis point.

Take time to explore all the possible options. You will need to talk with the person you care for about what is best for both of you. If the person you care for is unwilling to

discuss the situation, or you are finding it hard to handle the move, it may help to talk it over with a friend, family member, another carer, your GP or social worker.

## **Finding and Funding Care**


There are organisations that can offer you support and information about finding and funding care, such as the Relatives and Residents Association, Counsel and Care, MS Society and Alzheimer's Society.

Carers Wales, Age UK and The Princess Royal Trust for Carers also have a comprehensive range of information and have produced useful fact-sheets and leaflets on residential/nursing home care.  Card 16

## **Charging**

Unless care is provided by the NHS, local authorities or individual care homes can charge for their services. In order to do this, they must carry out a financial assessment to determine how much they can charge.

Local authorities must follow statutory guidelines for charging. Paying for care is a complex issue and it is important to seek specialist advice.

For more information you can call Counsel and Care's helpline.  Card 16

## **Residential Homes**

For people who can no longer cope with day to day living at home. They can be run by the local authority or by a private or voluntary organisation. These must be registered with Social Services. Lists of homes are available from the CSSIW or Social Services Adult Teams.

## **Nursing Homes**

For people who need regular nursing care, and the staff

always includes qualified nurses. Nursing homes must be registered and inspected. Lists of homes are available from the CSSIW or Social Services Adult Teams. 📄 Card 1

## **Hospices**

If the person you care for is nearing the end of their life, hospice care may be the most appropriate help for them. Hospice care can also be provided in people's homes and through day care facilities. People are usually referred by their GP hospital doctor or District Nurse. For more information on hospice care 📄 Card 16.

Taking a considered decision that the person you care for would have an improved quality of life in a care home does not mean that you, the carer, have failed in any way. We all have physical and emotional limits - stretching them to the utmost could lead to a crisis for both of you.

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## **WHEN CARING COMES TO AN END**

When the person you care for dies, as well as coping with the loss of that person, you also have to deal with the loss of your caring role. Carers UK together with Help the Hospices have produced a leaflet called 'When Caring Comes to an End' for carers who are experiencing significant changes in their lives. For a copy 📄 Card 4.


## **Bereavement**


Grief is a natural response to bereavement, but it is different for each individual. Support can come from family and friends, or there are organisations that help you deal with bereavement and encourage you to face the future.

There are bereavement services based in West Wales


General & Prince Phillip Hospitals. Organisations such as CRUSE have specialist bereavement counsellors and your GP may be able to refer you for counselling.  Card 16

### **Registering the death**

You do not have to do this yourself – another relative may be able to register the death. You can phone The General Register Office to make an appointment.  Card 17

**Arranging a Funeral.** Many people have an idea of the sort of funeral they want and it is advisable, if possible, to discuss this with the person you are caring for. If there is a will, it is the executor who should make the funeral arrangements. Funeral directors will be able to advise you on a range of issues. Other information may be sought from The Natural Death Centre and The British Humanist Association.  Card 17

### **Help with funeral costs for people on a low income**

If there is not enough money in the estate of the deceased person to pay for the funeral, and the person arranging the funeral is likely to have a problem meeting the cost, then they can check whether or not they are eligible for help from the Social Fund Funeral Payment (Although this may not cover all the expenses.)  Card 17

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## **Life after Caring**

### **Practical Matters**

When caring ends some practical matters will need to be dealt with fairly quickly. However, having spent time caring for someone else and putting their needs first, it is

important to take some time for yourself. Making decisions about what you do next do not need to be rushed.

## **Finance and Housing**

If you have been receiving Carers Allowance this will usually continue for eight weeks. For information on benefits and finances you can contact the Carers UK Advice Line, the Pensions Service, Department of Work & Pensions or Jobcentre Plus Offices. Locally you can contact CATCH UP or the CAB for support and information and Shelter for advice on your housing situation.  Card 14

## **Next Steps**

You may feel isolated after years of caring and this may have knocked your confidence. You might have been out of the workplace for many years, but your caring will have given you many practical skills and also shows that you are a capable and committed person.

There are various options you may consider, such as volunteering in your local community, pursuing a course, or looking for support to get back into training or work.

To find out more about volunteering opportunities – these could include befriending older people, offering skills to a local charity, or a local conservation project - you can contact Carmarthenshire Volunteer Bureau on 01267 245 555 or Llanelli 01554 778601 or visit the CAVS website [www.cavs.org.uk](http://www.cavs.org.uk).

If you would like to consider taking a course you could find out what is available from the local library or adult education centre or visit the Learn Direct website at [www.learndirect-advice.co.uk](http://www.learndirect-advice.co.uk).

Learndirect can also offer careers advice, including

signposting to training opportunities and funding sources. For more information you can phone **0800 100 900**.

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## **ARE YOU HAPPY WITH YOUR SERVICES?**

Sometimes you may have to wait a long time for the services you need or may not agree with the outcome. Do not give up, seek advice and talk to the staff dealing with your circumstances.

If you are still unhappy about the situation, about decisions made or the quality of a service and have no response from the people you are dealing with, you can use the appropriate organisation's complaints procedures:

### **Social Care Complaints Officer:**

Tel. 01267 228835 [SCComplaints@cardiffshire.gov.uk](mailto:SCComplaints@cardiffshire.gov.uk)

### **NHS Complaints:**

The NHS complaints procedure, covering Hospitals, Community and Ambulance Trusts GP's, NHS Dentists, Optometrists and Pharmacists can be obtained from staff at these premises, who can give you details on how to complain.

If you have any concerns, or you wish to make a complaint about your local hospital, you may do so by contacting the Complaints Manager at Hywel Dda Health Board:

|                                                                         |                     |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------|
| <b>Prince Philip Hospital</b>                                           | <b>01554 756567</b> |
| <b>West Wales General Hospital</b>                                      | <b>01267 235151</b> |
| Trust website at <a href="http://www.wales.nhs.uk">www.wales.nhs.uk</a> |                     |

**Hywel Dda Community Health Council (CHC) – Carmarthenshire Local Committee can help you complain on health matters.**

**Tel: 01267 231384**

**e-mail: [carmarthen@chcwales.org.uk](mailto:carmarthen@chcwales.org.uk)**

## CAN YOU HELP US?

We hope the information in this pack will be of use. You can help us improve information produced in the future, if you can find the time to answer these questions and send your reply to the address below. You can include your name and address if you wish.

1. What did you like about the pack, e.g. format, size, presentation?
2. What did you dislike about this pack?
3. Did you find the information useful; if so, what in particular?
4. What other information do you think should have been included?
5. Any other comments, you would like to make:

**Carmarthenshire Carers Service, The Mount, 18 Queen Street, Carmarthen SA31 1JT Tel: 0300 0200 002**  
e-mail: [carers@cavs.org.uk](mailto:carers@cavs.org.uk)

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Every effort has been made to ensure that the information in this pack is correct. However, responsibility cannot be accepted for any losses sustained as a result of any omission or inaccuracy. The information is correct as of June 2010.

