



**DementiaUK**  
Helping families face dementia

# Carer's assessments



If you provide regular, unpaid care for a family member or friend with dementia and/or other health conditions, you are entitled to a Social Services carer's assessment. This looks at your needs as a carer, the impact of your caring responsibilities on your life, and the support you need to carry out your caring role, for example:

- respite care for the person with dementia so that you have some time to yourself (also called carer's breaks)
- help from home carers
- training in how to look after the person you care for
- equipment to help you care for the person
- support with arranging flexible working
- mental health support for you

The carer's assessment is free, and anyone over 18 who has unpaid caring responsibilities can request one.

### **Are you a carer?**

Many people who support someone with dementia do not consider themselves to be carers. You may think that you are simply doing what is expected in your relationship. You may feel you are too young to be thought of as a carer. Or caring may have become routine, so you rarely reflect on its impact on your life.

However, you are a carer if you regularly look after someone who is ill, disabled or elderly, including family members. You are considered a carer if you help the person with:

- washing and dressing
- eating and drinking



- getting out and about
- attending medical appointments
- taking medication
- household tasks like shopping, cleaning and laundry
- looking after their bills and finances
- providing company or supervision if they cannot be left alone

### How to get a carer's assessment

Anyone who provides unpaid, informal care for someone has the right to a carer's assessment – the person you care for does not need to be a relative, and you do not have to live with them.

Your GP or another medical professional, such as a nurse, can refer you for a carer's assessment, or you can request it directly from

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your local council's Social Services. If the person you care for lives in another area, you should contact Social Services in their area instead (except in Wales, where you should still contact your own local Social Services).

Please see Sources of support on p14 for details of how to find your local Social Services.

Once you have requested a carer's assessment, a social worker will contact you to set up an appointment for the assessment. The person with caring responsibilities must consent to the assessment so if you are applying on behalf of a family member or friend, they must give permission.

While it is your legal right to receive a carer's assessment, some people find they have to be quite forthright in requesting one. If you need any support with applying for an assessment, please call our Helpline to speak to a specialist dementia nurse – see Sources of support on p13 for details.

### **Preparing for a carer's assessment**

Social Services will send you a form to complete in advance of your carer's assessment, or to fill in with the assessor's assistance at the appointment. You will need to provide:

- your contact details, including your email address
- your NHS number
- the name and address of your GP
- the name, address and NHS number (if possible) of the person you care for
- contact details of anyone who will be with you at the assessment



Before the assessment, it is a good idea to write notes on how you help the person you care for, and the impact it has on your life, including your physical and mental health, work, relationships and free time. Give as much detail as you can and try to be open and honest about how your caring role is affecting you.

It can be helpful to have someone with you during the assessment. This may be a family member or friend, or a paid or volunteer advocate who can help you make your views known.

### **What will happen at the carer's assessment?**

The carer's assessment usually takes place face-to-face at home or at the home of the person you care for so the social worker can see the challenges you face. Some Social Services will do the assessment online or by phone. It usually lasts at least an hour.

The social worker will ask you about the practicalities of caring for the person with dementia, such as helping them wash and dress, cooking and helping them to eat and drink, getting them in and out of bed etc. The social worker will also ask you about any caring responsibilities that you may have throughout the night.

Be as specific as possible when describing your caring role so the social worker can identify what support you need. Base your answers on what a bad day is like for the person you care for, rather than an average or good day, and how this impacts your health and wellbeing.

You should make sure you tell the assessor if you are also caring for other people such as children or grandchildren, and if your caring responsibilities are having an impact on other aspects of your life, such as work and relationships with other family members or friends. They should ask whether you get any time for leisure activities, socialising and holidays: time to yourself is key to being able to cope with your caring role.

If you live with the person with dementia, a carer's assessment may be done at the same time as a needs assessment, which identifies what support the person with dementia needs themselves, as these assessments have some crossover. However, it is better to do them separately so you have more time to focus on your individual needs. Speak to the social worker to find out whether the assessments can be done separately. See Sources of support on p15 for details of the needs assessment.

### **The care and support plan**

Following the carer's assessment, the social worker should agree the next steps with you and share any relevant information they have gathered with other health and social care professionals who are involved with you or the person you care for, eg a nurse or GP.





If the assessment has identified that you have eligible support needs, the social worker will work with you to prepare a care and support plan that covers:

- the type of support you need
- how this support will be provided
- what funding (if any) is available

Your care and support plan might:

- recommend any adaptations or aids to help you in your caring role
- suggest ways to help you make time for yourself – for example, arranging for someone to visit the person you care for, or finding the person a place at a day centre

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- make provisions for carer's breaks of a few hours, overnight, or longer – these could be one-off or regular
- connect you with peer support groups and one-to-one befrienders for emotional and practical support and to share experiences and ideas

You will be asked for your opinion on the care and support plan, so make sure it reflects your views.

Be aware that any changes in routine may have to be introduced slowly and carefully to avoid confusing or overwhelming the person with dementia, especially if you are introducing a new carer.

Your care and support plan should be reviewed after six to eight weeks to make sure it is meeting your needs, and then every 12 months. If your role or needs as a carer change, you can request a new carer's assessment to update your care and support plan.

### **Funding for your care and support plan**

Once you have received your care and support plan, a financial assessment (or means test) will need to be carried out to determine how your support needs will be funded. This will be undertaken by your local council, and you are entitled to this assessment whatever your financial situation.

Local council funding to meet the recommendations of your care and support is based upon your finances and whether you can afford to pay partly or fully for the support you need. If you are eligible for funding, it will be provided in one of three ways:

- a 'personal budget', where the local council will choose which services will provide care and support and pay for them directly – these could be local council or private providers





- a ‘direct payment’, which is money paid directly to you so you can choose how the care is provided and by whom, and pay them yourself – the local council will usually ask for evidence of how you have spent the money every three months
- a combination of the above

If you are not eligible for funding, the local council should be able to give you free advice about other ways you can get support in your community. You can also speak to our dementia specialist Admiral Nurses about other ways to access support – please see Sources of support on p13.

### **Disagreeing with the decision made**

If you disagree with the decision made about your care and support needs following your carer's assessment, or with how the assessment was carried out, you can challenge this.

Initially, you can complain directly to your local council. It should have a formal complaints procedure on its website, or you can phone and ask to be directed to the correct team.

If you are unhappy about how the local council handles your complaint, or if you are unhappy with the outcome, you can escalate it to the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman. An ombudsman is an independent person who investigates complaints about organisations. Please see Sources of support on p15 for more details.

### **Assessments for young carers**

Young carers under 18 are also entitled to a carer's assessment from Social Services. As with adult carer's assessments, it will look at the care the young person is providing, how it affects their life, and what support they need in their role – for example, access to a support worker, local support groups and, in some cases, financial support.

The young person can be referred for a carer's assessment by contacting Social Services themselves, or asking someone else (eg a parent, GP or teacher) to contact them on their behalf. Please see Sources of support on p15 for more information on young carer's assessments.

### **Carer's Allowance**

Many unpaid carers can claim Carer's Allowance to support them in their caring role. To qualify, the person you care for must be receiving a disability benefit such as Personal Independence Payment (PIP) or Attendance Allowance. Only one person can get Carer's Allowance for the person who requires care, so if you jointly support the person with dementia, you will not both be able to claim it.



To be eligible for Carer's Allowance in England, Scotland and Wales, you must:

- be 16 or over
- spend at least 35 hours a week caring for the person
- have lived in England, Scotland or Wales for at least two of the past three years (unless you are a refugee or have humanitarian protection status)
- normally live in England, Scotland or Wales, or live abroad as a member of the armed forces
- not be in full-time education or studying for more than 21 hours a week
- earn below a certain weekly threshold – please check the latest rates at [▶ gov.uk/carers-allowance/eligibility](https://www.gov.uk/carers-allowance/eligibility)



To make a claim for Carer's Allowance, please visit [▶ gov.uk/carers-allowance/how-to-claim](https://www.gov.uk/carers-allowance/how-to-claim)

In Scotland, Carer's Allowance is being replaced by Carer Support Payment, but the eligibility criteria and rate of payment will remain unchanged.

The eligibility criteria for Carer's Allowance in Northern Ireland are the same as in England, Scotland and Wales, but the residency criteria require you to live in Northern Ireland. To apply, please visit [▶ nidirect.gov.uk/services/apply-carers-allowance-online](https://nidirect.gov.uk/services/apply-carers-allowance-online)

## Sources of support

To speak to a dementia specialist Admiral Nurse about the carer's assessment or any other aspect of dementia, call our Helpline on **0800 888 6678** (Monday-Friday 9am-9pm, Saturday and Sunday 9am-5pm, every day except 25<sup>th</sup> December) or email [▶ helpline@dementiauk.org](mailto:helpline@dementiauk.org)

If you prefer, you can book a phone or video call with an Admiral Nurse at a time to suit you: please visit [▶ dementiauk.org/book](https://dementiauk.org/book)

### Dementia UK resources

#### Attendance Allowance

▶ [dementiauk.org/attendance-allowance](https://dementiauk.org/attendance-allowance)

#### Carer's Allowance

▶ [dementiauk.org/carers-allowance](https://dementiauk.org/carers-allowance)

#### Caring from a distance

▶ [dementiauk.org/caring-from-a-distance](https://dementiauk.org/caring-from-a-distance)

#### Financial and legal sources of support

▶ [dementiauk.org/financial-and-legal-sources-of-support](https://dementiauk.org/financial-and-legal-sources-of-support)

#### Looking after yourself as a carer

▶ [dementiauk.org/looking-after-yourself-when-you-care](https://dementiauk.org/looking-after-yourself-when-you-care)

#### Registering as a carer with your GP

▶ [dementiauk.org/the-importance-of-registering-as-a-carer](https://dementiauk.org/the-importance-of-registering-as-a-carer)

### **Supporting children and adolescents when a parent has young onset dementia**

➤ [dementiauk.org/supporting-children-and-adolescents-when-a-parent-has-young-onset-dementia](https://dementiauk.org/supporting-children-and-adolescents-when-a-parent-has-young-onset-dementia)

### **Other resources**

#### **Assessments for Carers (Northern Ireland)**

➤ [nidirect.gov.uk/articles/assessments-carers](https://nidirect.gov.uk/articles/assessments-carers)

#### **Care Information Scotland**

➤ [careinfoscotland.scot](https://careinfoscotland.scot)

#### **Carer Support Payment (Scotland)**

➤ [mygov.scot/carers-support-payment](https://mygov.scot/carers-support-payment)

#### **Carers Trust**

➤ [carers.org](https://carers.org)

#### **Carers UK**

➤ [carersuk.org](https://carersuk.org)

#### **Find local Social Services**

➤ [nhs.uk/service-search/other-health-services/local-authority-adult-social-care](https://nhs.uk/service-search/other-health-services/local-authority-adult-social-care) (England)

➤ [mygov.scot/social-services](https://mygov.scot/social-services) (Scotland)

➤ [111.wales.nhs.uk/localservices/?s=CommonAccessPoint&pc=n&sort=default](https://111.wales.nhs.uk/localservices/?s=CommonAccessPoint&pc=n&sort=default) (Wales)

➤ [nidirect.gov.uk/information-and-services/health-and-wellbeing/health-services](https://nidirect.gov.uk/information-and-services/health-and-wellbeing/health-services) (Northern Ireland)



### **Gov.uk: benefits and financial support if you're caring for someone**

➤ [gov.uk/browse/benefits/help-for-carers](https://www.gov.uk/browse/benefits/help-for-carers)

### **Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman**

➤ [lgo.org.uk](https://lgo.org.uk)

### **Needs assessments**

➤ [gov.uk/apply-needs-assessment-social-services](https://www.gov.uk/apply-needs-assessment-social-services)

### **NHS: being a young carer – your rights**

➤ [nhs.uk/conditions/social-care-and-support-guide/support-and-benefits-for-carers/being-a-young-carer-your-rights/](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/social-care-and-support-guide/support-and-benefits-for-carers/being-a-young-carer-your-rights/)

### **NHS: carer's assessments**

➤ [nhs.uk/conditions/social-care-and-support-guide/support-and-benefits-for-carers/carer-assessments](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/social-care-and-support-guide/support-and-benefits-for-carers/carer-assessments)

### **NHS: financial assessments (means test) for social care**

➤ [nhs.uk/conditions/social-care-and-support-guide/help-from-social-services-and-charities/financial-assessment-means-test/](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/social-care-and-support-guide/help-from-social-services-and-charities/financial-assessment-means-test/)

### **NHS: personal budgets and direct payments**

➤ [nhs.uk/conditions/social-care-and-support-guide/money-work-and-benefits/personal-budgets/](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/social-care-and-support-guide/money-work-and-benefits/personal-budgets/)

### **Voiceability: Care Act advocacy**

➤ [voiceability.org/about-advocacy/types-of-advocacy/care-act-advocacy](https://voiceability.org/about-advocacy/types-of-advocacy/care-act-advocacy)

**To speak to a dementia specialist Admiral Nurse  
about any aspect of dementia:**

Contact our Helpline:  
**0800 888 6678** or [👉 helpline@dementiauk.org](mailto:helpline@dementiauk.org)

Book a virtual appointment:  
[👉 dementiauk.org/book](https://dementiauk.org/book)

**Our charity relies entirely on donations to fund our  
life-changing work. If you would like to donate to help us  
support more families:**

- Call **0300 365 5500**
- Visit [👉 dementiauk.org/donate](https://dementiauk.org/donate)
- Scan the QR code

**Thank you.**



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