

# Carer's assessment



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You may be caring for your spouse, a family member who lives with you or a friend or relative who lives nearby and helps you regularly. You may not necessarily be getting paid for caring. It would be advisable for you to check if you are entitled to benefits and whether a potential claim would affect the benefit entitlement of the person receiving care.

You may also have needs arising through your caring role. You may find it difficult to cope, or wish to take regular breaks from caring and may not know where to turn to for support. Social Services can provide you with assistance in your caring role.


Carers have a right to an assessment if they ask for one. This is called a **carer's assessment**. It is triggered by contacting Social Services in your local Health Trust.

You may:

- Self refer by contacting Social Services in your local Trust
- Be referred by a GP or someone who works for the Trust
- Be referred by a voluntary organisation

- Be referred by a family member or friend.

A carer's assessment will review your needs and assess what support services can be provided for you. You should be given a copy of your carer's assessment and check that all your needs have been identified. It may be useful to think about what would benefit you as a carer. You can request a carer's assessment even if the person for whom you are caring does not wish to be assessed. This can be carried out by a separate care manager. An assessment should consider what would support you in your caring role. This may include training, contact with other carers or emotional support.



After being assessed the Trust must consider what services (if any) can be provided to you as a carer. Health Trusts can make direct payments to carers (including carers aged 16 and 17) for the services that meet their own assessed need.

### What should I ask for?

Community care assessments should be straightforward. A social worker should provide all the details you require throughout the process including information on the following:

- Health & Social Care Trust services and how they can support carers
- Suitable day centres for the person you are caring for
- Types of equipment aids and adaptations which may help
- Additional personal care support (dressing, bathing etc)
- Meals on wheels service
- A regular sitting service which enables you to have personal time
- Respite care

- Emotional support
- Networking opportunities with other carers in your local area

### What happens next?

A community care assessment should be provided in writing. This is called a **care plan**. Guidance on carer's assessments state that the carer must always receive a copy of their assessment without having to ask for it. Any services provided should also be flexible to suit you and the person you care for. If you are unhappy with any aspect of your care plan, talk to the person who carried out the assessment and make sure all your needs have been identified.

If you are unhappy with any aspect of this process, you can find out how to challenge decisions in Factsheet 4.

*Age NI would like to acknowledge The Law Centre of Northern Ireland and The Ladies, St Mary's Parish Church Friendship Circle, Comber for their contribution to the Community Care Factsheets*



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