

Darlington Association on Disability

Information Guide

Carers

A Carer is someone who provides support to a family member, friend or neighbour who has a long term illness or impairment. This section provides a background to some of the legislation for carers, and gives information and contact details for some of the benefits and services that may be available to support carers.

Contents

Legislation

How to get support

Information, advice and support

Benefits

Other sources of Information

Contacts

Legislation

There are a number of different pieces of legislation for carers, mostly accessed through the provision of carer assessments as a first step. If you are providing support in an unpaid capacity to a family member or friend, you have a right to have your needs as a carer looked at and taken into account when decisions are made about what service should be provided to the person you care for. You might also be entitled to a separate assessment of your own needs as a carer.

Disabled Persons (Services, Consultation and Representation) Act 1986

This requires social services to “have regard” to the carer’s ability to provide care when they assess the services a disabled person needs. This duty is in place whether or not the carer asks for help.

Carers (Recognition and Services Act) 1995

This gives carers the right, when the person they care for is being assessed, to ask for a separate carer's assessment. Carers have to be providing (or intending to provide) a 'substantial amount of care on a regular basis' to qualify for a separate assessment. This phrase has now been replaced by the term 'impact test'. This looks at the effect caring would have on the carer's own life.

Carers and Disabled Children Act 2000

This Act made it a duty for Care Managers and others to inform carers of their right to a separate assessment. Other Community Care Legislation requires that, even if the carer is not entitled to a separate assessment under the Carers Act, the needs and wishes of the carer should be taken into account when a community care assessment is being carried out. The Act also enables services to be provided directly to the carer. Carers over the age of 16 who provide, or intend to provide, a substantial amount of care on a regular basis for another person aged 18 or over, are entitled to an assessment even if the person for whom they provide care or support has refused community care services.

Following an assessment a local authority can provide a range of services to carers. For example they might provide equipment or training, or put in place a service which might give the carer assistance around the house. Services can either be provided by the local authority, or they can be delivered by way of direct payments; this offers the carer cash payments as an alternative to arranging social care services to meet their needs. At the time of writing carers should not be assessed financially, nor should they be required to make any financial contribution towards the cost of services provided following a community care assessment.

Carers (Equal Opportunities) Act 2004

The Carers (Equal Opportunities) Act 2004 gives carers new rights to information. Section 1 of the Act places a duty on local authorities to inform Carers of their right to a Carer's Assessment. Section 2 states that the Carer's Assessment must take into account whether the carer works or wishes to work, any courses the carer is taking or wishes to take, and any other leisure activities the carer undertakes or wishes to undertake. The Act

also gives local authorities new powers to enlist the help of housing, health, education and other agencies in providing support to carers.

Equality Act 2010

If you are looking after someone who is elderly or disabled, this law may protect you against direct discrimination or harassment because of your caring responsibilities at work, in education, when you shop for goods, ask for services, access services or use facilities like public transport. This is because you are 'associated' with someone who is protected by the Act because of their age or disability.

The Work and Families Act 2006 gives carers caring for members of their immediate family or partners the right to request flexible working from their employers. This might include changing hours of work or requesting the flexibility to work from home. A carer is also entitled to take 'reasonable' time off to deal with certain unexpected or sudden emergencies involving the person they care for and to make longer term arrangements.

There are over a dozen benefits which may be relevant either to a carer or to the people they support. The two which are directly relevant to carers are Carer's Allowance, and National Insurance Credits/Home Responsibilities Protection. Both have complicated rules which, in practice, can make them difficult to claim. If you are not sure whether you can claim, seek advice.

How to get support

The legislation detailed above means that carers could receive an assessment in two ways. Their wishes can be taken into account in the assessment of the person they care for, in which case the process is called a Joint Assessment. Alternatively, if the carer is providing substantial care on a regular basis, they can be given a separate Carer's Assessment.

There are several ways to ask for support. One route is to contact the Access and Contact Team at **Darlington Social Services**.

This is called making a referral. Social Services staff will ask for information about the carer, and the person they care for. An initial decision will be made about whether or not Social Services may be able to help. If the carer or the person cared for may be eligible for help from Social Services, their details will be passed to a specialist worker or team, who will contact the carer to begin the assessment process. Social Services may signpost the carer to another organisation for assistance and information if it is unable to provide support.

Another route for someone seeking assistance is through health service staff, including District Nurses, Health Visitors or a local health centre. If the person being cared for is in hospital it is also possible to talk to staff from the **Discharge Management Team**, who are based at the hospital to make sure people do not leave hospital without any necessary support.

A number of services to support the carer can be put into place following an assessment by Social Services or Health staff. These include respite care, assistance at home, equipment and adaptations.

Several organisations, including Social Services, can give carers the chance to take a break. This can be provided at home or by the person being cared for going somewhere else, for instance attending a day service. Longer breaks are possible using residential respite services. Respite services may be paid for privately or may be offered as part of a package of care following an assessment.

Aids and adaptations are often available to assist the carer, for more information see the Equipment section of this information guide.

Information, advice and support

There are a number of other organisations, which can make a referral on behalf of a carer or offer support in other ways.

Darlington Association on Disability's Carers Support Service, provides advice, support and information to carers of any age, whatever their caring situation. This service can signpost carers to other agencies and carers support groups, where carers can meet others in similar situations. The Carers Support Service is also

involved in ensuring that carers have a voice in the planning and development of local services. Carers can ask for their details to be held on Darlington Carers Register. This provides the carer with up to date and relevant information about what is happening locally and nationally. A service is also being offered in conjunction with the **YMCA** to offer information, advice and support to Young Carers aged 16 -25.

Carers Darlington meets twice a week, and offers carers an opportunity to meet others in a friendly and relaxed atmosphere.

The **Carers Development Officer** acts as a focal point for carers' issues in Social Services and consults with carers and their representatives on the development of the department's policies.

The **Alzheimer's Society** provides support and information to carers of people with dementia. Carers can seek individual advice on their caring situation.

Time Out is a project for Young Carers run by Darlington YMCA. Young Carers are people under the age of 18 years old who are involved in the care or support of a family member who has a long-term illness or impairment. Time Out offers children and young people under the age of 18 a break from their caring responsibilities. In addition, a new service has been developed in conjunction with **DAD's Carers Support Service** providing information, advice and support to Young Carers (16 -25).

Carers UK is a national organisation committed to carers. It raises awareness at all levels of government and society of the needs of carers and provides information, advice and support to carers. It also produces a number of publications. Carers UK is subscription based, and any carer can become a member. Members receive a regular newsletter.

The central government website **Direct.gov.uk** has a page dedicated to carer's issues, which provides many useful links.

The **Princess Royal Trust for Carers** provides carers' support services throughout the UK. As well as having a network of independently managed Carers' Centres the Trust also provides young carers services and information and advice through its interactive website. The nearest Carers Centres to Darlington are in Barnard Castle and Sedgfield.

Parents of disabled children can find support through the Children with Disabilities team based at Harewood House in Darlington,

which has been developed jointly by Social Services, Health, Education and Barnados. Initial contact for the team is via **Darlington Social Services**.

Benefits

The only benefit payable to carers in recognition of the work that they do is Carers Allowance (CA). To claim CA the person receiving care must be in receipt of Attendance Allowance or the middle rate or higher rate of Disability Care Allowance. In addition the carer must be earning less than £100 per week (after National Insurance Tax and some other deductions have been made) and must be caring for over 35 hours per week. Savings do not affect CA. As from 2002 carers aged 65 and over can make a claim for CA. If the carer fulfils these requirements but already receives one of a number of other benefits such as Income Support, the carer will be told that, although they have an underlying entitlement to CA, they are only eligible to receive Carers Premium.

For claim forms, further advice and information contact your local **Department of Works and Pensions (DWP)**. The **Citizens Advice Bureau** can also advise on benefit claims.

Other Sources of Information

Other sections of the Darlington Association on Disability Information Guide may contain further information relevant to carers.

The **Equipment** section provides sources of information and advice on equipment.

The **Health Services** section gives a brief overview of local health services and sources of advice and information.

The **Legal Rights** section gives general information on how to access legal advice.

The **Living Independently** section gives an overview of services, including domicilliary care, Warden Link service and Direct Payments.

The **Money Matters** section gives brief information on a range of benefits for disabled people.

There are a number of local and national organisations providing broad information and advice resources. Please refer to this guide's Introduction for contact details.

Contact **Darlington Association on Disability's** Information Service for assistance with searching for information about any subject in this guide or for support in dealing with your information requests.

Contacts

Alzheimer's Society

North East Area Office

Sinclair Court

Darrell Street

Brunswick Village

Newcastle Upon Tyne

NE13 7DS

Telephone : 0191 2173810

Fax : 0191 2173819

Website : www.alzheimers.org.uk

Carers Darlington

c/o 50+ Age Concern Darlington

Bradbury House

Beaumont Street

Darlington

DL1 5SX

Telephone : 01325 362832

Fax : 01325 383543

Minicom :

E-mail : darlington@ageconcern.org.uk

Website : www.ageconcern.org.uk

Carers Development Officer

Darlington Borough Council

Social Services Department

Central House

Gladstone Street

Darlington

DL3 6JX

Telephone : 01325 346200

Fax : 01325 346474

Minicom : 01325 360862

E-mail :

Website : www.darlington.gov.uk

Carers UK

20-25 Glasshouse Yard

London

EC1A 4JT

Telephone : 0207 490 8818

Helpline : 0808 808 7777

Fax : 0207 490 8824

Minicom :

E-mail : info@carersuk.org

Website : www.carers.org.uk

Children with Disabilities Team

Initial contact via-

Access and Contact Team

Social Services Department

Central House

Gladstone Street

Darlington

DL3 6JX

Telephone : 01325 346200

Fax: 01325 346474

Minicom : 01325 360862

E-mail :

Website : www.darlington.gov.uk

Darlington Association on Disability

20-22 Horsemarket

Darlington

DL1 5PT

Telephone : 01325 489 999

Fax : 01325 488 188

Minicom : 01325 245 061

Email : mail@darlingtondisability.org

Website : www.darlingtondisability.org

Darlington Association on Disability Carers Support Service

South Entrance

Enterprise House

Valley Street

Darlington

DL1 1GY

Telephone : 01325 357533

Fax :

Minicom :

E-mail : carers@darlingdisability.org

Website : www.darlingtondisability.org

Darlington Citizens Advice Bureau

Bennett House

14 Horsemarket

Darlington

DL1 5PT

Telephone : 01325 380755

Appointments 01325 256999

Fax : 01325 380324

Minicom :

E-mail : bureau@darlingtoncab.co.uk

Website : www.darlingtoncab.co.uk

National advice website : www.adviceguide.org.uk/

Darlington Social Services

Access and Contact Team

Social Services Department

Central House

Gladstone Street

Darlington

DL3 6JX

Telephone : 01325 346200

Fax: 01325 346474

Minicom : 01325 360862

E-mail :

Website : www.darlington.gov.uk

Department of Works and Pensions

Carers Allowance Enquiry Line

Palatine House

Lancaster Road

Preston

PR1 1HB

Telephone : 01253 85 61 23 or 0800 88 22 00

Fax : 01772 23 89 53

Direct.gov.uk

Website : www.direct.gov.uk

Disability Benefits Centre

Newcastle DBC

Government Buildings

St Agnes Road

Gabalfa

Cardiff

CF14 4YJ

Telephone : 0292 058 6002

Fax :

Text phone: 0292 058 6267

E-mail: [Wales -dba-Customer-Services@dwp.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:Wales-dba-Customer-Services@dwp.gsi.gov.uk)

Website : www.dwp.gov.uk

Discharge Management Team

5th Floor

Darlington Memorial Hospital

Hollyhurst Road

Darlington DL36HX

Telephone : 01325 743348

Fax : 01325 743284

Princess Royal Trust for Carers

182A Hammersmith Road

London

W6 7DJ

Telephone : 02085 638014

Fax : 02087 482497

Minicom :

E-mail : info@carers.org for publications and public relations

E-mail : help@carers.org for all other enquiries

Website : www.carers.org

Time Out

Darlington YMCA

Unit 4, Beaumont St

Houndgate

Darlington

DL1 5SZ

Telephone 01325 350465

E-mail : timeoutyoungcarers@supanet.com

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