



# Essential Information for Carers



# ARE YOU A CARER?

If you look after a family member, partner, friend, or neighbour who needs support because of illness, disability, frailty, poor mental health or an addiction, you are a carer. Carers can be any age – children, adults and older people.

The type of care and support you provide can vary. It can include helping with everyday tasks such as getting out of bed, personal care such as washing and bathing, helping with medication and making meals. Caring for someone can also mean supporting them emotionally, helping them to maintain outside interests and friendships or assisting them to manage their finances.

Being a carer can affect your own physical and emotional health. At times it can be stressful and tiring but support is available.

The first step can be to identify yourself as a carer. For people from different communities, this can be difficult as it may be a phrase which is not familiar or used.

Help and support is available from your local carers centre.

If you do not know how to contact your local carers centre, please contact us on **0131 467 2994** or email at [info@mecopp.org.uk](mailto:info@mecopp.org.uk) and we can put you in touch with them.

You can also find your local carers centre on the Care Information Scotland website at [www.careinfoscotland.scot](http://www.careinfoscotland.scot)



# WHAT IS A CARERS CENTRE?

As a carer, there will be times when you need advice, information, practical or emotional support to help you in your caring role. These services can be provided by your local carers centre.

Carers centres have trained staff and volunteers who can help you with a wide range of things. This might include welfare benefits, finding out about local services and how you can access them, taking part in groups or supporting you to make your views known.

You can ask your GP, social worker or any other professional who is supporting you to put you in touch with your local carers centre or you can contact them directly.

Carers Centres are here to help you so please get in touch.

To find out where your local carers centre is, please contact MECOPP at **0131 467 2994** or email at [info@mecopp.org.uk](mailto:info@mecopp.org.uk)

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# WHAT IS AN ADULT CARER SUPPORT PLAN?

Every adult carer has a right to an Adult Carer Support Plan. If you are already in touch with your local Council about your caring role, you should be offered one. You can also ask for one if you have not been told about this.

The Adult Carer Support Plan is an opportunity to discuss with the local Council what support or services you need to help you in your caring role. You will be asked about what type of help you provide, how this affects you and your ability to live your life and what is important to you.

There are many things that can affect you as a carer. You might want to discuss your own quality of life, how to have more time to do the things that are important to you or any financial, health or emotional worries that you have. You may be worried about legal issues or what can be done to improve your home environment such as aids and adaptations.

The Adult Carer Support Plan will help you and the Council to identify who can best provide the support you need and how this support can be provided.

It can be helpful to spend some time thinking about what you would like to have included in your Adult Carer Support Plan beforehand. Your local carer centre can help and support you with this.

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# WHAT IS A YOUNG CARER STATEMENT?



Young carers are children or young people under the age of 18 who look after another family member because they have a disability or are unwell. If you are 18 and still at school, you are also a young carer.

You may help a parent, grandparent, brother, sister or another family member with cooking, cleaning and washing. You could also help them with dressing, moving around and with medication.

The extra help you provide as a young carer can affect your education and your social life. You may struggle with homework or finding time to spend with your friends. Being a young carer can also affect your physical and emotional health.

As a young carer you are entitled to a Young Carer Statement. This will help you to tell a professional what it is like for you to be a young carer. It is a written record of the type of help you provide, how it affects you and most importantly, it is a record of what is important to you and what you want to achieve. The information in the Young Carer Statement will be used to identify how best to support you.

If your local authority knows that you are a young carer, they must provide you with a Young Carer Statement. Other professionals such as your guidance teacher or a health professional who is involved with you can also prepare a Young Carer Statement. You can also let people know that you are a young carer and request a Young Carer Statement.

You do not have to have a Young Carer Statement if you do not want one. It is your choice but having one will make sure that you are listened to, especially about any decisions that affect you.

It can be helpful to spend some time thinking about what you would like to have included in your Young Carer Statement beforehand. Your local young carer service or carer centre can help and support you with this.

If you do not know how to contact your local young carer service or carers centre, please contact us on **0131 467 2994** or email at [info@mecopp.org.uk](mailto:info@mecopp.org.uk) and we can put you in touch with them.

You can also find your local carers centre on the Care Information Scotland website at [www.careinfoscotland.scot](http://www.careinfoscotland.scot)

# HOSPITAL DISCHARGE PLANNING

When a person comes home from hospital, it can be a stressful time for any carer. They may need extra care and support to make sure they can return home safely. You may have to get used to doing new things such as giving medicine or using equipment you are not used to.

It can help if you are able to discuss and plan things before they return home from hospital.

You can get information on when they are likely to come home and what help will be provided. You can also tell hospital staff about how you think you will manage and what extra support you might need as their carer. You can ask questions about any medication they have or what community health professionals will be involved. It is important that you let hospital staff know you are the carer as soon as possible. Tell them you would like to be involved or else they may not be able to take your views into account.

Different health and social work professionals may become involved in the hospital discharge to make sure the right support is provided.

Help and support is available from your local carers centre.

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# SHORT BREAKS



Caring for another person can be rewarding, but it can also be stressful. It can affect both your physical and emotional health and wellbeing. Taking time away from your caring role and responsibilities can help you to look after yourself too and cope with your caring situation.

Time away from your caring role is often referred to as a 'short break' or sometimes 'respite'. Short breaks are an opportunity for the carer to take part in activities they enjoy, have a change of scene, try something different or to have fun with friends, or just enjoy some time to themselves.

The important thing to remember is that the purpose of a short break for the carer is to give them a break from their caring role and to support their own health and wellbeing. The best short break is one that suits your needs.

Short breaks can take many forms and can be taken on your own or with the person you care for. It could be a day trip, weekly activities such as going to a group or class, overnight trips or being away from home for a longer period of time. It could also involve someone coming into your home to take on the caring role for a while so you can have some time to yourself

Short breaks can also include the person you are caring for themselves having a break away from home to give you time for yourself.

If you would like to find out more about short breaks and how to access them, you could contact your local carers centre.

You can find your local carers centre on the Care Information Scotland website at [www.careinfoscotland.scot](http://www.careinfoscotland.scot)

Shared Care Scotland also have a range of information to help you find the right short break including a directory of services, information leaflets, and funding information. You can find out more on the Shared Care Scotland website at [www.sharedcarescotland.org.uk](http://www.sharedcarescotland.org.uk)

Or you can contact us on **0131 467 2994** or by emailing [info@mecopp.org.uk](mailto:info@mecopp.org.uk) and we'll help you get in touch with the right organisation.



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