

Carers First



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Carers Checklist Know your rights as a carer

If you look after someone who needs your help because of a disability or long term ill health condition, it is important to know your rights to access support for you as well as the person you look after.





Caring for your future

Your right to have the freedom of choice to be a carer

Caring is a choice, and everyone has the right to choose whether to be a carer. You have the right to self-assess your ability to care and be supported to identify which needs of the person you are caring for you are willing and able to support.

Your right to be identified as a carer

You have the right to be identified as a carer by your GP surgery, with the local authority who are assessing the care and support needs of the person you care for, in hospital, or other health settings, when the person you care for is admitted to, or due to be discharged from. You also have the right to register as a carer with your local carer support organisation.

Your right to a Carer's Assessment

No matter the level of care you are providing, or how many hours you provide care, if you have needs which arise as a result of your caring role, you have the right to request a Carer's Assessment from your local authority or local carer support organisation to determine your needs for support.

Your needs may be around taking a break, seeing other important people in your life, help with travel or the fuel costs you incur to carry out your caring role, or to help you to learn new skills to support you to care more safely. As part of the Carer's Assessment process, you also have the right to create and register a Carer's Emergency Plan with your local authority for use if you cannot continue caring due to an unexpected circumstance or an emergency.

Your right to protection from discrimination

As a working carer you have the right to ask for flexible working from your employer and to be given time off in emergencies. The new Carer's Leave Act 2023 has also introduced the legal right for carers to take a week of unpaid leave each year from work.

Your right to be included in care planning of the person you care for

As a carer you have the right to be involved when decisions are being made around changes to, or developments to, a service for the person you care for, where there is an expectation you will be involved in providing care.

Carers also have important new rights at hospital discharge. NHS hospital trusts in England must ensure unpaid carers are involved as soon as possible when plans for a patient's discharge after treatment are made. This covers all carers of adults needing care and support following hospital discharge, including healthcare support such as continuing healthcare.

Your right to free NHS checks, flu and Covid jabs

As a carer you have a right to receive a free NHS health check. The health checks are for adult carers between the ages of 40 and 74 and carers at risk of admission to hospital (or if the person you are caring for is at risk of hospital admission). If you are a carer aged 16 or over, you also have the right to request free flu and Covid vaccinations to help protect you and the person you are caring for from illness.

Your right to financial support

If you are aged 16 or over and caring for someone for more than 35 hours a week, you have the right to apply for Carer's Allowance. Even if you are not entitled to any benefits due to your income or age, you will still be awarded an underlying entitlement. In certain circumstances, you may also be entitled a Council Tax reduction due to a low income or a carers disregard if you need to stay over with the person you are caring for due to you needing to provide care over night, or because you have moved in with them to provide necessary care.

Your right to request Carers' Leave under the new Carers' Leave Act

Under the Carer's Leave Act 2023, eligible employees can take up to five days of unpaid leave each year to care for a sick family member or friend. This leave can be taken in shorter blocks, allowing you to balance work and caring responsibilities while ensuring job security.

To use this leave, notify your employer as soon as possible. Eligibility generally includes being a full-time or part-time employee (not casual) and having been with the company for a few months. The leave covers caring for family members or close friends, such as partners. For more details, check with your HR department.



How can we support you?

Obtaining relevant information and support can itself be a challenge, but with it you can thrive as a carer. That is why Carers First offers several avenues for you to get the help you need, either online, on the phone or in your local community. We offer timely advice and will work with you to identify the best way forward, for you as an individual. Visit our website or contact us today to see how we can help you to exercise your rights as a carer.

Visit our website

Our website has lots of information and advice to help you in your caring role, check out our Help and Advice topics on our website:

carersfirst.org.uk/help-and-advice

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