

## Carers Week 2024: Putting carers on the map

A carer is anyone who looks after a family member or friend who has a disability, mental or physical illness, or addiction, or who needs extra help as they grow older. Carers can be children, young people or adults. The impact of caring on all aspects of a carer's life can be significant. Caring without the right information and support can be tough.

Identification of carers enables assessment of their ability and willingness to provide care as well as to assess the support they need to maintain their own wellbeing. This is an important step to reduce the risk of harm both to carers and to the people they care for.

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### 10th-16th June is Carers Week 2024

Carers Week is an annual campaign to raise awareness of caring, highlight the challenges unpaid carers face and recognise the contribution they make to families and communities throughout the UK. It also helps people who don't think of themselves as having caring responsibilities to identify as carers and access much-needed support.

The theme for 2024, putting carers on the map, aims to highlight the increasing pressures carers are facing and to campaign for much-needed recognition and support.

This includes raising awareness about the impact on carer's finances, employment, health and wellbeing and ensuring that their needs are also met, as well as those of the person they are caring for.

82% of carers surveyed by Carers UK said the impact of caring on their physical and mental health would be a challenge over the coming year, with nearly 60% adding that being valued as a carer would improve their wellbeing.



Carers Trust Hillingdon is a charity that operates support services for unpaid carers living or caring in the London Borough of Hillingdon. They provide support to adults and children caring for adults, and have a great range of support for children and young people who are caring in their formative years, as well as over 80 free services for adult carers. They also undertake assessments of carers' needs.

They have extensive expertise in supporting carers and can act as a source of guidance for professionals and support for carers.

Contact for advice and referrals: 01895 811206, [office@carerstrusthillingdon.org](mailto:office@carerstrusthillingdon.org)

## Young Carers: A Safeguarding Response

A young carer is child that provides, or intends to provide, regular care for another person. This could be a family member that has disabilities, a long term illness, substance misuse or mental health problems.

Many young carers may be hidden from services. Children may not realise that they are providing care or that they are entitled to support. Others may be scared or embarrassed to ask for help. A young carer's vulnerability increases when their responsibilities impact their education, physical, emotional and social development. They may not be identified until things reach crisis point.

Signs and indicators that a child may be a young carer are:

- Completing most domestic tasks (cleaning, cooking, shopping)
- Providing family members with medication regularly
- Managing finances
- Providing a lot of support to a sibling (disabilities/ illness)
- Interpreting on a daily basis
- Helping the adult with their self care and/or mobility
- Low school attendance or lateness with little explanation
- Limited information about the home life
- Concerns with diet and/ or hygiene
- Change in physical and emotional presentation
- Providing emotional support for their caregiver
- Lack of ability to socialise
- Change in behaviour – attention span, low motivation, disruptive, withdrawn
- Parent or carer often misses meetings, school events or is difficult to contact.

It is important to recognise signs that a child may be a carer at the earliest stage by completing an early help assessment and submitting it to the [Stronger Families Hub](#). They may be a child in need of support to achieve their full potential.

**Think Family:** When working with adults that have care and support needs, consider who is supporting them with their daily care, including the impact of their needs on their child.

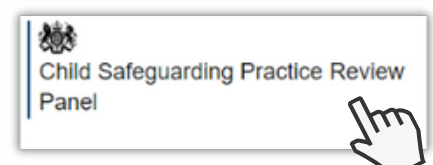
### Carers for Children with Disabilities

An independent national review focussed on safeguarding children with disabilities and complex health needs who resided in residential special schools, registered as children's homes. There were many allegations of abuse and neglect whilst residing in these settings. We know that children with complex needs and disabilities are at increased risk of abuse and neglect.

There were recommendations from the review for local safeguarding partners when children are placed away from home:

- Parents/carers, and family members should be supported to visit them regularly and see them alone.
- Parents/carers can help professionals understand a child's lived experiences (including their wishes and feelings) and communication methods.
- Parents/carers must be involved in decisions that impact the child.
- Good engagement with parents/carers can ensure that a child's diversity needs are recognised and met.
- Regular contact between child and parents/carers can mean changes in behaviour, which might indicate abuse or neglect or other welfare issues, can be picked up more quickly.

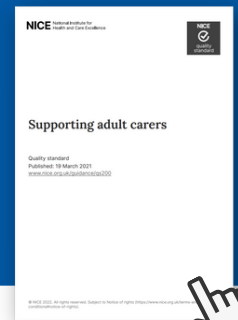
The review emphasises the importance of early support to enable parents and carers to provide their child with the right support at the right time to keep their child at home, wherever possible. This reduces the risk of abuse and neglect that arises in institutional care.



# Identifying and Assessing Adult Carers: Are They Able and Willing to Care?

The NICE Guidance “Supporting Adult Carers” makes clear:

*“It is important to identify carers at the earliest opportunity and to encourage them to recognise their role and rights. This will help ensure that they are recognised as partners in the care of the person they are supporting and can access any advice and support they may need.”*



The responsibility to identify, assess and support carers is shared across health and social care services. Good assessment of, and communication with, carers promotes realistic care planning to ensure the cared for person's needs are met safely and that risks to the carer are identified and managed. Good assessment of carers also reduces the risk of neglect and abuse by informal carers.

- Professionals who become aware of carers should assess their willingness and ability to do the caring role that professionals are expecting of them.
- Family dynamics and attitudes of the carer and the cared for adult, as well as the potential complexity of the needs of the cared for adult, should be considered.
- Carers should be explicitly informed of the caring responsibilities and risk management activities that professionals expect them to be doing and check that these are realistic and manageable.
- Be realistic and think critically when determining what a carer can or can't do for the cared for person.
- If the cared for person has difficulties making decisions, make sure that the carer understands the potential risks and how to seek help and advice around mental capacity issues.
- Identify and explore risks associated with caring - for example the emotional and sometimes physical challenges of caring for a person with dementia or with high physical care needs.
- Identify and explore risks that you expect the carer to be managing and establish a shared understanding with the carer.
- Agree clear contingency plans with carers - what will they do if things change or deteriorate.
- Make sure carers know where to get support.

If you are concerned that a carer is unsafe in anyway or is struggling to meet the needs of the cared for person contact Adult Social Care on 01895 556633

## Legal Obligations to Adult Carers

Section 10 of the Care Act 2014 sets out a positive duty on local authorities to assess carers needs, including the impact of caring on their wellbeing and their ability and willingness to provide care.

Whilst carers can refuse a carers assessment to look at their own needs, there is a legal obligation on the local authority to offer the assessment. NB. Even if a cared for person refuses an assessment, it is still an obligation to assess and support the informal carer.