

Information for Carers: Being a carer

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Information sheet E1

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This information sheet is about:

- Carers Support Service
- Young carers
- Parent carers
- Further information

If you give up your time, without pay, to look after a family member, a friend, or a neighbour, who is ill, frail or has a disability, then you are a carer. You may be a young carer, a parent carer, or care for an older person or other adult with care needs.

Being a carer can be demanding and put a strain on relationships, no matter how much you want to help. It may be difficult to cope with your job, or other members of your family, or to see friends because you are a carer. You may have to deal with difficulties because the person you care for has problems getting around, sight or hearing loss, mental health problems or dementia. They may have an illness that gets worse over time, or be close to the end of their life.

What to do if you see that someone might be starting to need care

One of the hardest things for you may be seeing changes in a family member, friend or neighbour. The changes may be physical or mental, short or long-term. It can be helpful to make a note of what you see and tell the doctor and other health and care providers about them.

Some people need help with personal care like washing, shaving, dressing and caring for their appearance. Others may have memory loss or difficulty talking or understanding what is being said to them. Some people can wander or become aggressive. There may be problems with eating and drinking or taking medicines. If you recognise some of these problems, there are many health and social care services that could help make a difference to your life.

Support available for carers

The Somerset Carers Service is available to all unpaid carers, whether you care for a few hours or provide a substantial amount. This service is run by the Community Council for Somerset.

They can provide good quality local information, emotional support and practical advice to help you in your caring role, and can point you in the right direction to get help or information. They also work closely with the other specialist carer support networks, which are detailed below. This service is to support you as a carer. It does not replace assessed care and support provided by the local authority.

For more information please visit www.somersetcarers.org. You can also call the advice line on **0800 31 68 600**, TEXT 'Carer' to **78070**, or email carers@somersetccc.org.uk.

Young Carers

If you are under 18 and look after someone in your family then you are a 'young carer'. It may be difficult for you to cope with studying, getting to school or college on time, or meeting friends because you are a carer. In Somerset there is a Young Carers Support Service to give support, advice and breaks to young carers. There are Young Carers Co-ordinators who understand how difficult it can be for you, and can help you work things out.

The Young Carers Support Service:

- Runs groups and arranges activities for young carers
- Can talk to your school about what being a young carer means for you
- Can give you support and help you get information

To find out more, phone us on **0300 123 2224** or email childrens@somerset.gov.uk

Parent carers

Many parents of children with disabilities do not think of themselves as carers.

Caring for a child with a disability, chronic illness, or behavioural difficulties can be stressful for the whole family. It may be difficult for you to accept your child's problems. You may be shocked, angry or feel guilty. It is not unusual to feel like this.

Support, advice and practical help are available. Phone Compass Carers on **01823 255911** or email info@compasscarers.org.uk if you are caring for a child with a disability or a chronic illness. Phone Somerset Partnership on **01278 432000** or email ask@sompar.nhs if you care for a child with learning difficulties, behavioural difficulties or other mental health related needs.

Carer assessments

For information about carers assessments please see our information sheets **E4: Carers assessments and eligibility** and **E10 Carers rights** or phone us on **0300 123 2224** or email adults@somerset.gov.uk

More information

There is information and advice available to support you in your caring role. Go to www.somerset.gov.uk/carers to find out about:

- Carer support groups and networks
- Breaks for carers
- Carers Assessments
- Financial information, support and benefits
- Working and caring
- Health, well-being and emotional support
- Help if the person you care for goes into or comes out of hospital
- Accessibility and travel
- Carers' rights
- Support for carers around specific conditions

Your opportunity to feedback

We welcome your comments about the services you receive. If you would like to tell us what you think, please either:

Contact us by going to our website, www.somerset.gov.uk, or

- Speak to your social care worker
- Phone Somerset Direct on 0300 123 2224, or
- Contact the Adults and Health Customer Experience Officer
Floor B2 East
County Hall
Taunton
TA1 4DY
Email: customerexperience@somerset.gov.uk

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