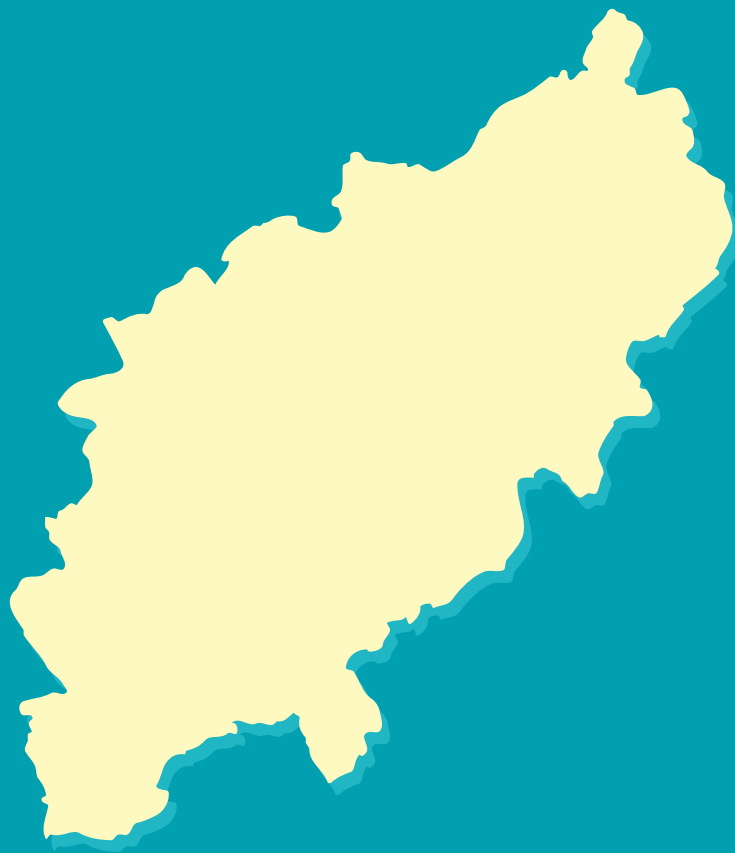


Carers Information Pack



If you provide unpaid help or support for a relative or friend who is frail, disabled or has an illness then you are a carer and this booklet has been produced for YOU.

The first and most important message that we want to give you is that if you are a carer you do not necessarily have to do everything yourself.

Many of us will find that we are a carer for some part of our life. Some people will be carers for the rest of their lives.

It is natural that as part of a relationship or friendship we just accept that we are helping by doing more than normal. Often carers get on with their tasks, ignore their own needs and do not notice the increasing stresses and strains until it is too late and a crisis has happened.

This booklet gives some ideas about how help can be given to carers, some things carers might consider and some ways of finding out what help is available.

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1. Who is a carer?

The word carer refers to someone who provides regular, unpaid help for a relative or friend who is frail, disabled or suffers from an illness. This includes those with parental responsibility for a child with a disability. Young people and children may also be carers and are known as young carers.

As a carer you may benefit from:

- Having occasional breaks from caring
- Contact with carers organisations and other carers
- Knowing where to get help
- Considering your own health and well being
- Making sure you are receiving all benefits
- Having someone to help you to speak up for yourself

The term 'carer' is now often confusingly used to refer to someone who undertakes caring as part of their paid employment or their voluntary work for an organisation. They may be a Home Carer or Care worker or Care Assistant.

In this booklet carer refers to unpaid carers – family or friends

2. What is a carers' assessment?

One of the ways to find out how to get help with caring is to ask for a carers' assessment.

Did you know that carers have a right to receive a carers' assessment?

A carers' assessment gives you the chance to discuss your caring role with a care manager or social worker. It is not a test of whether you are able to care. It is the way of finding out what needs you have and then finding ways in which you can be helped.

The discussion is completely confidential. You are not committed to anything. You might discuss:

- Your own health
- How to get a break from time to time for yourself
- Any part of caring that is difficult for you
- What would you like to happen in an emergency
- Employment, training and leisure
- Anything else that you want to mention

Carers' assessments can be requested through your local Care Management department or Community Mental Health Team (see Section 10 for telephone numbers).

3. What is a carer break?

Carers Breaks are time that is provided so that you, the carer, can have free time to do whatever you want to do while someone else looks after the person you care for.

Breaks can be:

- A few hours, a day, a few days or a few weeks
- Provided at home or somewhere else such as a residential unit or day centre
- Provided overnight so that you can have a better nights sleep

Breaks should:

- Be planned so everyone can make the most of the time. They are not designed to deal with a crisis
- Let you do whatever you want to which includes enjoying the time, relaxing and even doing nothing if that is what you want
- Ensure the cared for person will be well cared for and the time will be enjoyable

Using breaks to keep in touch with family, friends, interests etc is an excellent way of taking care of yourself and not letting caring overwhelm you.

For details of carer breaks please telephone your local Care Management or Community Mental Health Team (See Section 10 for telephone numbers)

4. How can I get equipment or an adaptation to help me in my caring role?

If the person you care for has a physical disability which results in loss of function and impacts significantly on activities and daily living they will be entitled to an assessment by Occupational Therapy.

You may feel that you need some equipment or adaptations to:

- Help you to look after the person you care for safely
- To help the person you care for remain as independent as possible

This equipment may include some of the following:

Commode	Walk in shower	Zimmer	Wheelchair
Incontinence pads	Chair/bed raisers	Hand rails	Stair lift
Urine bottle	Mattress covers	Hoist	Waterproof sheets
Ramp	Downstairs toilet	Shower chair	Bath hoist

To find out more details contact your local Care Management or Community Mental Health Team (see details in Section 10).

5. Where should I go if I need an advocate?

An advocate is someone who will help you express your wishes and views to professionals on a wide range of issues.

For a list of advocacy services please E-mail:
mjerram@northamptonshire.gov.uk, Tel: 01604 237680

6. Are there any carer support groups in my area?

There are many Carer Support Groups across Northamptonshire. For a leaflet listing groups or any further advice or information telephone:

Carers Forum, Northamptonshire 01604 624088

In addition you may order a copy of the 'Carers Directory' which is a Countywide Directory of services to support informal carers by telephoning the above number.

There is also a Carers Website with up to date information services for unpaid carers on: www.caringnorthants.org.uk

7. How can I find out about any benefits that I (or the person I care for) may be entitled to?

As a carer you and the person you look after may be entitled to claim benefits such as Carers Allowance, Income Support, Pension Credit, Attendance Allowance, Disability Living Allowance, Incapacity Benefit, or other related entitlements such as council tax rebates.

The Department for Work and Pensions pay these benefits and can provide leaflets with basic information.

It can be helpful to talk to local Welfare Rights Services who can offer you confidential independent advice on your rights and eligibility to claim benefits. They will also help you with complicated forms.

Many carers and the people they care for do not claim the benefits they are entitled to, so it is always worthwhile enquiring or having a benefit check to ensure you receive the full entitlement.

If you choose to give up work because of your caring role you can get advice from Welfare Rights or the Department for Work and Pensions. Welfare Rights surgeries are also held by Northamptonshire Carers Centre Tel: 01604 232500.

Some useful contact numbers are in Section 10.

8. How can I look after my own health as a carer?

National and local research shows that a considerable number of carers suffer health problems as a result of their caring role. These can range from physical problems, such as back problems and injuries from lifting, etc. to problems around stress and anxiety. Some useful points to consider in terms of your own health are as follows:

- Do you receive services to support you in your caring role?
- Do you have a regular break from your caring responsibilities?
- Can you talk to anyone about the demands of your caring responsibilities?
- Does your GP know you are a carer?
- When was the last time you visited someone about your health needs?
- Do you have all the aids, adaptations and equipment you need to support you in your caring role?
- Do you suffer from exhaustion, stress, anxiety and depression?
- Do you have an active social life?

A number of organisations offer information and support for carers including training, advice, counselling and offering a break from your caring role.

Please visit www.caringnorthants.org.uk or obtain a copy of the Carers Directory from Northamptonshire Carers Forum for more information (see Section 10 for telephone numbers).

9. What do I do if I am unable to care because of a crisis?

If you have a medical emergency, depending on the urgency, you should use the normal emergency services. If you, as a carer, become ill or are unable to fully carry out your caring tasks you should telephone your nearest Care Management or Community Mental Health Team (see telephone numbers in Section 10) who will give you advice and may well provide emergency help.

In addition the voluntary groups listed in Section 10 will be able to give you advice and signpost you to services which may help you:

10. Useful telephone numbers.

Welfare Rights Advisory Service

Corby and District.....	01536 265501
Daventry	01327 701630
Northampton.....	01604 636112
Kettering.....	01536 312431
South Northants.....	01604 636112
East Northants	01604 636112
Wellingborough.....	01933 277500

Advice and Information Age Concern

Age Concern.....	01604 611200
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Voluntary Groups

Northampton Carers CentreTel: 01604 232500
E-mail: carers@northamptonshire-carers.org

Kettering Carers CentreTel: 01536 414259
E-mail: carers@northamptonshire-carers.org

Carers Forum.....Tel: 01604 624088
E-mail: carers@abilitynorthants.org.uk

Age ConcernTel: 01604 611200
E-mail: Northamptonshire@ageconcern.org.uk

Care Management

Corby/Kettering.....01536 313110
Daventry/South Northants/Brackley.....01327 313200
Daventry/Towcester01327 358323
Northampton.....01604 236147/8
Wellingborough/East Northants.....01933 220710

Community Mental Health Teams

Corby CMHT	Northampton East Sector Stuart Road Clinic Stuart Road Corby NN17 1RJ Tel: 01536 267262 Fax: 01536 260921	Northampton North West Sector Campbell House Campbell Square Northampton NN1 3EB Tel: 01604 658841 Fax: 01604 658842
Kettering CMHT	Northampton South Sector Clarendon House Station Road Kettering NN15 6EY Tel: 01536 410365	Towcester CMHT Mill House Chantry Lane Towcester NN12 6YY Tel: 01327 351822 Fax: 01327 353123
East Northants CMHT The Gables Rushden Hospital Wymington Road Rushden NN10 9JS Tel: 01933 319874 Fax: 01933 319853	Daventry CMHT Danetre Lodge London Road Daventry NN11 4DY Tel: 01327 300567 Fax: 01327 300447	Wellingborough CMHT The Radcliffe 51 Hatton Park Road Wellingborough NN8 5AH Tel: 01933 440181 Fax: 01933 270993

Groups supporting this booklet:

Age Concern Northampton and County,
Cliftonville Road, Northampton, NN1 5BU

Alzheimer's Society,
Regional Office, Acorn house, Midsummer Boulevard,
Milton Keynes, MK9 3HP

Carers Forum Northamptonshire,
13 Hazelwood Road, Northampton, NN1 1LG

Northamptonshire Carers,
53 Whitworth Road, Northampton, NN1 4HG

Northamptonshire County Council
Adult Education
Children and Families, Children with Disability Teams
Community Services, Physical health, Care Management Teams
Community Services, Physical Health, Commissioning
Quality and Policy Team

Northamptonshire Healthcare Trust,
Isebrook Hospital, Wellingborough, NN8 1LP

Northamptonshire Heartlands Primary Care Trust,
Isebrook Hospital, Wellingborough, NN8 1LP

The Volunteer Centre (Thrapston),
53a High Street, Thrapston, Northants, NN14 4JJ

If you would like a copy of this leaflet in any other format such as large print, audio cassette or in a different language please contact: Maureen Jerram, Senior Quality and Performance Monitoring Officer, Tel: 01604 237680,
E-mail: mjerram@northamptonshire.gov.uk