



2009-2010
Positive engagement of older people
2009-2010
Preventing and tackling child poverty
2003-2009
Winner of 7 previous
Beacon Awards



*Adult Social Care
Tower Hamlets*

**Guide for
Assessing a
Carer's Needs**

If you provide care and support to someone you may have needs yourself in one or both of two ways. The first is in relation to the effort required in carrying out the caring role, and the second is in relation to the effect it may have on your life. In order to do what is right for the person you care for and yourself, it is important to understand both the needs of the person and the impact that the caring role has on you

The needs of the person you care for and the impact this has on you as a carer are often addressed as part and parcel of the assessment of the cared for person. Sometimes, however, it is better to focus more fully on the impact the caring role has on you so that this is properly understood and addressed. This is the purpose of the **Carers Needs Assessment**.

You have the choice of carrying out the assessment yourself, or with the help of someone you trust. This is a **self-assessment**. This allows you to be fully in control of how your needs are presented to the Council. This document aims to provide you with the information you may need to do this. It is structured in the same way as the **Carers Needs Assessment Form**.

In addition to reading this guidance, it is also important that you read the leaflet *Carers Leaflet 'Do you look after someone?'*. This sets out more broadly the type of support which may be available.

Who is carrying out the assessment?

If you are completing the assessment yourself please refer to yourself in the first person, please say "I think.....".

However, it may be that you are someone who is helping the carer with their assessment. It is important that you set out what their views are, in relation to all the sections of the assessment. In that way, even if you are the one completing the form, the person you are helping will still be fully in control. There is a section at the end of the assessment form which you can use to say if you have different views about any aspect of the assessment. Please complete the form using the third person, not the first – that is, please say "Mrs. A thinks....." and not "I think....." as if it was written by Mrs A.

Section A - your situation

There are four parts to this

- **Describe the person you care for, their care and support needs and how you support them**

The Council may already know a lot about the person you care for through their own assessment (if they have had one). However, it is important to know your perspective about them and their needs.

This part is about understanding what you do, routinely or occasionally, to provide care and support. Please include everything, not just the practical tasks. For example, the time you give to provide company for the person you care for, may be what makes their life worthwhile.

You do not need to include any formal care support currently provided to the person who you care for at this stage.

- **If there are other people involved, such as friends or family, please describe what they do.**

It is also important to set out what others are doing. This includes family, friends and the local community. Providing care and support can be a team effort, and it is important to know what each person does and how the team works.

- **Please say how carrying out the tasks you do, affects you on a day to day basis**

The effects can be both physical and emotional.

- The physical effects can be related to such matters as how hard the tasks are, how often you have to do them, the timing (for example if its round the clock), the level of responsibility and anxiety associated with carrying out the tasks.
- The emotional effects may relate to the nature of your relationship with the person you care for before their disability or the change in your relationship of becoming a carer.
- The government has provided a list of outcomes which you may have difficulty achieving as a result of your caring role. Please refer to the list at the end of this

Examples of emotional demands

Adult children caring for older parents may be affected by the quality of their relationships in childhood.

The appropriateness of the tasks carried out, for example, provision of personal care can sometimes be uncomfortable and feel inappropriate.

guidance of ‘outcomes for carers’. Does your caring role impact on your life in any of the areas identified?

- **Please say how this role affects your life more generally**

Examples of how your life might be affected

- Some carers have to give up work, which might have an impact on income but also your needs for self-fulfilment.
- For some, it is no longer possible to maintain friendships or leisure activities.
- Some carers also have young families and their role as parents might suffer, for example they need to leave their children with other people to care for

In addition to the physical and emotional effects- we need to understand the ways in which the caring role might affect other aspects of your life. Sometimes the effect is comfortably within what you can offer. However, it may be that this is not the case and the demands are having an unwelcome effect.

It is important to be clear about the full impact the caring role has on your life and your wellbeing as a whole. We need to understand the things that you would usually be able to do, but are made more difficult because of your caring role. The Care Act has provided specific criteria which seek to define ‘wellbeing’. These are listed at the end of this document.

Section B – Adjusting what others might do?

The contributions others make can be the key to ensuring that what you do is at a level that is sustainable in the long run for you.

- **How can family, friend or the community better support you?**

Are you family, friends and the community aware of the support which you may need? Sometimes they may be able to provide more help than they are currently, but may not be aware that there is a need and it is one they could fulfil.

Please describe the support which you are currently receiving from family, friends and the community. Are there

Examples of where family and friends could do more

A daughter living some distance away was not aware her parents were struggling with shopping. Once she was made aware, she offered to manage it on-line for them.

A son is not willing to support his parents because of a dispute with his sister who does the main caring. Ways could be found to better manage, if not resolve, the dispute.

ways in which they could better support you?

There may also be times when others might be aware, but are unwilling to help for other reasons. Do you need support to hold these conversations?

- **How might statutory services (Social Care, Health or Housing) provided to the person you care for, support you?**

Once it is clear what the person you care for is able to do, the next step is to identify what is required of the public funded services in relation to the care and support it provides to the person you care for, to ensure your contribution is at a level and of a nature that is right and appropriate for you.

If the person you care for is already receiving support, please say what this is and how well it is working for you. Is the support provided at a time which suits you?

You may previously have agreed to provide support for the person however, you may require a break from your caring role to look after your own health and wellbeing-The Government uses the term “replacement care”. For example, this may enable you to attend your own health appointments, or go shopping and pursue other recreational activities. It might be that the person that you care for has a need for care at night and that you would benefit from support to consider potential solutions, so that you can catch up on your own sleep. In other circumstances, longer periods of replacement care may be needed, for example to enable you to have a longer break from caring responsibilities or to balance caring with education or paid employment. Replacement care can take place in your home or away from home. Sometimes, when care is provided away from home it is also called *respite* care.

Please say how much difference this care and support for the person you care for, will make for you. It may be that some parts of it would make a bigger difference than others.

Section C – Support for you

This is about any difficulties which you might have which could result in support/ services directly for you.

- **For each need, please say what the *issue* is, the *reason* it is an issue for you, what *impact* it has on your well-being and how you would like things to be for you?**

Example expressed as *issue*, *impact* and *outcome*

I have lost contact with all my friends (*issue*), which is leaving me feeling isolated and rather depressed (*impact*). If I can get to see them again once a month, it will lift my spirits and help to keep me going (*outcome*)

- An **issue** is the difficulty you have, e.g. its emotionally difficult caring for dad after the death of mum and the **reason** is because of his abusive behaviour toward her and the family in the past
- the **impact** is how it affects your well-being – e.g. it is draining and depressing for me making it harder to endure than the physical work required
- the **outcome** is how you want things to be different – e.g. I want to resolve my own feelings about the situation so I am less angry

- **Please say what you require, and how much, to meet each of these areas**

This identifies what supports you might require. In the example above, it may be some form of help, perhaps from a social worker over, say, six sessions. For example, you may require someone to look after the person you care for, so that you can be available to put your own children to bed in the evening.

Please set out what is required and how much is required. Please also say what other factors may be important. For example, the timing of when the support is delivered or the way it is carried out.

The Council will ask for you to find the most cost effective way of meeting your needs. This is to ensure its limited resources are used to the best effect for all. However, being cost effective does not mean cutting corners in any way, or failing to meet the need.

Examples of direct support for carers.

The Government's guidance to the Care Act shows the following examples.

Connor cares for his wife. He does all the cooking, driving and general household duties for her. Connor requested money to buy a laptop to enable him to be in more regular contact through Skype with family in the US. This now enables Connor to stay connected with family he cannot afford to fly and see. This family support helps Connor with his ongoing caring role by providing emotional support.

Divya has four young children and provides care for her father who is nearing the end of his life. Divya received support to enable her children to attend summer play schemes so that she gets some free time to meet with friends and socialise when another family member provides care to her father. This gives Divya regular breaks from caring which are important to the family unit.

- How would you currently rate your level of wellbeing on a scale of 0-10 with 0 being 'extremely poor' and 10 being 'as good as it could be'?

We will ask you again when the support plan has been in place for a few weeks. How much your rating of your well-being has changed, this is a good test of whether the support you are getting is doing what it should do.

- If you have completed this assessment on behalf of the person please use this section to say if you have a different view to the person in relation to any aspect of their assessment.

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT

Does your assessment provide sufficient information for an eligibility decision to be made?

A Council practitioner will look at your assessment and decide if they have sufficient information for an eligibility decision to be made.

This means that:

- It is clear that the issues that you have raised are as a result of your caring role,
- It is clear whether issues you have raised are putting your physical or mental health at risk, or that you are unable to achieve any of the other outcomes listed within the Care Act which may apply (please see the list provided at the end of this document).
- It is clear whether the issues raised are having a significant impact on your wellbeing as defined within the Care Act (please see list at the end of this document which outlines how 'wellbeing' is set out within the Care Act)

If the practitioner thinks your carer's needs assessment provides sufficient information for an eligibility decision to be made, it will pass on to the next stage. If the practitioner thinks some more work is needed, they will be in touch with you to tell you what needs to happen and arrange for it to take place.

Once the assessment provides all of the information we may need, the practitioner will summarise your assessment. As part of this, they will make recommendations to enable decisions about whether the issues raised will be eligible for support.

What if I do not agree with the practitioner's views?

There is an appeal process built into Complaints Procedures if you do not agree with the practitioner and want a further opinion. Please ask the practitioner how to proceed.

Deciding how much support the Council will offer

If the issues identified are eligible, the Council has to provide support to help you meet your needs. This could include advice and information about how you can manage these issues or other forms of support.

Once these decisions have been made, the practitioner will put together a Support Plan for you if it is about meeting your own needs. If your needs will be met through the support to the person you care for, it will be reflected in their Support Plan. In both cases, the plan will set out all your needs and how they will be met from all sources, not just the Council.

What the Care Act says about the needs of carers

The Care Act identifies the following elements of well-being relevant to understanding the needs of carers

- The carer's physical or mental health
- maintaining a habitable home environment in the carer's home (whether or not this is also the home of the adult needing care)
- managing and maintaining nutrition
- developing and maintaining family or other personal relationships
- engaging in work, training, education or volunteering
- making use of necessary facilities or services in the local community, including recreational facilities or services
- engaging in recreational activities.
- carrying out any caring responsibilities the carer has for a child
- providing care to other persons for whom the carer provides care

How does the Care Act define 'wellbeing'

- personal dignity (including treatment of the individual with respect)
- physical and mental health and emotional wellbeing
- protection from abuse and neglect
- control by the individual over day-to-day life (including over care and support provided and the way it is provided)
- participation in work, education, training or recreation
- social and economic wellbeing
- domestic, family and personal relationships
- suitability of living accommodation
- the individual's contribution to society