

## How do I get a Carer's Needs and Support Plan?

You can ask any healthcare staff member to make a referral to the most appropriate key worker for your situation, who will then arrange to carry out your Carer's Needs and Support Plan, for example:

- Social Worker/Care Manager
- GP
- Community Nurse
- Mental Health Nurse/District Nurse/Health Visitor
- Key Worker
- Allied Health Professional e.g. Physiotherapist, Podiatrist, Speech and Language Therapist or Occupational Therapist
- Carers Coordinator

## Benefits

The discussion aims to help you:

- Feel that your contribution is recognised as important in the care of your relative or friend
- Feel better informed about what support is available to you when you need it
- Feel more confident speaking to staff about your caring role
- Be more aware of the services being provided to help you continue in your caring role
- Have a contingency plan in case of emergencies

You should be given copy of the agreed Needs and Support Plan.

**You are eligible for a Carer's Assessment if you are looking after someone who has been assessed as needing services from the Trust, even if the person you care for does not wish to avail of those services.**

Ask your key worker if they will assess your needs.

If you do not have a key worker, ask your GP for a referral to Social Services to have an Assessment of your needs.

If you feel you require more information about supports available to you please contact us in the Carers' Support Team at the contact details below:

## For more information

Carers Coordinator  
Southern Health & Social Care Trust  
Promoting Wellbeing Division  
John Mitchel Place  
Newry BT34 2BU

Tel: 028 3756 6284  
[carers.coordinator@southerntrust.hscni.net](mailto:carers.coordinator@southerntrust.hscni.net)



# Carer's Needs and Support Plan



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## Are you a carer?

You are a **carer** if you regularly provide, or intend to provide, a substantial amount of care for a friend or relative.

## Your legal entitlements

If the person you care for is assessed as needing services from the Trust, even if they do not avail of their services, you are legally entitled to request an assessment of your needs which will provide you with a Carer's Needs and Support Plan.

The Southern Trust has the responsibility to offer you a Carer's Needs and Support Plan.

## What is a Carer's Needs and Support Plan

A Carer's Needs and Support Plan is a shared conversation between you and your key worker about your caring role or responsibilities. It will take account of your circumstances, needs and views.

The support plan is not a test of your financial situation, it is a conversation to focus on how caring impacts on you and your lifestyle. The issues can be discussed over a number of visits.

You may ask to talk in confidence, without the person you care for being present, so you have the opportunity to speak frankly about your feelings and any difficulties.

## What is the purpose of the Support Plan?

The Support Plan will ensure a shared understanding between you and your key worker. It is also the gateway to accessing a range of other support services such as self directed support and short breaks.

It will:

- Ensure you are recognised and feel valued in your caring role
- Identify any help or support you might need
- Assess if you are eligible for respite services
- Provide information on local support services, such as carers support groups and benefits
- Explore your options for managing work alongside your caring role.

## Preparing for the conversation

Talk to the person you care for and discuss if they would also like their care needs assessed, if this is not already in place.

You can still request a Carer's Needs and Support Plan for yourself.

Ask for a copy of the Support plan beforehand so you can have time to look at the questions that will be asked and to prepare your responses.

Keep a record of what you do each day.

## Useful questions to consider

Consider the impact caring has on all aspects of your life and your family's lives, and ways this can be made easier for you.

**Feelings:** How do you feel about your caring role? Do you feel you have adequate support?

**Health:** Has your physical or mental health been affected as a result of the caring role?

**Time:** How many hours a week do you care? Do you have any time to yourself? Have you enough time to be involved in other activities?

**Relationships:** Do you have enough time for other family members or friends? Do you have an opportunity to socialise?

**Unplanned events or emergencies:** Do you have a plan in place should an unexpected event occur such as you become sick or involved in an accident?

**Housing:** Are the living arrangements adequate? Do you have the right equipment? Do you live with the person you care for, or close by?

**Work:** Are you struggling to maintain a job as well as your caring role?

**The future:** Are you concerned about the future?