

commitment to carers



If you are looking after a relative or friend who is elderly or has an illness, including mental health problems, or a disability, you are a carer. The following gives information on how to get help and support in your caring role. If you do not understand it or need further information about Carers in Hertfordshire please contact us as we have access to people who can speak your own language.

Se lei si prende cura di un parente o di un amico anziano o affetto da malattia, ivi compresi problemi di salute mentale, o disabile, lei è definito come un 'carer'. Questo opuscolo le spiega come ricevere assistenza e sostegno nel suo ruolo di carer. Se desidera maggiori spiegazioni oppure vuole saperne di più sul ruolo di Carer in Hertfordshire si metta in contatto con noi in quanto abbiamo accesso a personale che parla la sua lingua madre.

اگر آپ اپنے کسی ایسے رشتہ دار یا دوست کی دیکھ بھال کر رہے ہیں جو بزرگ ہے یا بیمار ہے، اس میں ذہنی صحت کے مسائل میں مبتلا افراد اور معذور افراد بھی شامل ہیں، تو آپ کیریر یعنی دیکھ بھال کرنے والے فرد ہیں۔ اس میں آپ کو ایسی معلومات دی گئی ہیں جن سے آپ یہ پتہ لگا سکتے ہیں کہ کنسٹیٹ کیرر آپ کو کس قسم کی مدد یا سپورٹ مل سکتی ہے۔ اگر آپ کو یہ سمجھنے میں دشواری ہو یا پارٹنر ڈیٹا کے کیررز کے بارے میں مزید معلومات حاصل کرنا چاہتے ہوں تو برائے کرم ہم سے رابطہ کیجئے کیونکہ ہماری رسائی ایسے افراد سے ہے جو آپ کی زبان بول سکتے ہیں۔

ਜੇ ਤੁਸੀਂ ਕਿਸੇ ਬਜ਼ੁਰਗ ਜਾਂ ਬੀਮਾਰ ਦੋਸਤ ਜਾਂ ਰਿਸ਼ਤੇਦਾਰ ਦੀ ਦੇਖਭਾਲ ਕਰ ਰਹੇ ਹੋ, ਜਿਹਨਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਮਾਨਸਿਕ ਸਿਹਤ ਦੀ ਖਰਾਬੀ ਵਾਲੇ ਜਾਂ ਨਿਰ-ਯੋਗਤਾ ਵਾਲੇ ਲੋਕ ਵੀ ਸ਼ਾਮਲ ਹੋ ਸਕਦੇ ਹਨ, ਤਾਂ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਦੇਖਭਾਲ ਕਰਨ ਵਾਲੇ ਮੰਨਿਆ ਜਾਂਦਾ ਹੈ। ਅੱਗੇ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਦਿੱਤੀ ਹੋਈ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਤੁਸੀਂ ਆਪਣੇ ਦੇਖਭਾਲ ਦੇ ਕੰਮ ਵਿਚ ਮਦਦ ਕਿਵੇਂ ਲੈ ਸਕਦੇ ਹੋ। ਜੇ ਇਹਨੂੰ ਸਮਝਣ ਵਿਚ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਮੁਸ਼ਕਿਲ ਆ ਰਹੀ ਹੈ ਜਾਂ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਹਰਟਫੋਰਡਸ਼ਾਇਰ ਵਿਚ ਦੇਖਭਾਲ ਕਰਨ ਵਾਲਿਆਂ ਬਾਰੇ ਹੋਰ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਚਾਹੀਦੀ ਹੈ, ਤਾਂ ਤੁਸੀਂ ਸਾਡੇ ਨਾਲ ਗੱਲ ਕਰੋ, ਕਿਉਂਕਿ ਸਾਡੇ ਕੋਲ ਅਜਿਹੇ ਲੋਕ ਹਨ ਜੋ ਤੁਹਾਡੀ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਬੋਲ ਸਕਦੇ ਹਨ।

আপনার কোন আত্মীয় বা বন্ধু যিনি বয়স্ক অথবা যাহাদের কোন অসুস্থতা বা মানসিক স্বাস্থ্য সমস্যা ও আছে কিংবা যাহারা প্রতিবন্ধী তাহাদের আপনি যদি দেখাশোনা করেন, তবে আপনি একজন তত্ত্বাবধায়ক। তত্ত্বাবধান ভূমিকায় কি ভাবে আপনি সাহায্য এবং সহায়তা পাইতে পাবেন সে সম্পর্কে তথ্যাদি নিম্নে প্রদত্ত হইয়াছে। যদি আপনি তাহা বুঝিতে না পাবেন অথবা হার্টফোর্ডশায়ারে তত্ত্বাবধায়কদের সম্পর্কিত অধিকতর তথ্যাদি পাইতে চান তবে আমাদের সঙ্গে যোগাযোগ করুন কারণ আপনার নিজ ভাষা বলিতে পারা ব্যক্তিদের সহিত আমাদের সংযোগ আছে।

如果你照料著一位年長或有疾病的親友，包括是精神病患者或身體有殘障的人仕，你便是一位看顧員。下列提供給你有的怎樣能獲得幫助及支持你看顧工作的資料。如果你不明白它或者需要有關在赫福郡(Hertfordshire)的看顧員更多的資訊，請聯絡我們，我們同時可以安排能說你方言的人。

a commitment

from South East Hertfordshire Primary Care Trust and
Welwyn Hatfield Primary Care Trust to carers.

about this book

We were delighted to be asked to provide the foreword for the Information Booklet for Carers in Hertfordshire. It can be a difficult, if not devastating experience to discover that someone you love and care for has a significant health problem. You may need both information and support to be able to help that person effectively.

This booklet explains:

- what relatives, partners and friends should expect from Carers in Hertfordshire and the local NHS,
- how to get help in your caring role,
- how to get the information you need to help the person you care for.

South East Hertfordshire Primary Care Trust and Welwyn Hatfield Primary Care Trust have worked with Carers in Hertfordshire in order to assist GPs and other primary health care professionals to identify carers. In partnership with Carers In Hertfordshire and medical staff across the two Primary Care Trusts, we want to ensure that carers, whether they are a relative, friend or neighbour, have the opportunity to gain a better understanding of the health condition of the person they care for.

This booklet also outlines how carers should be recognised, supported and given relevant information, whether it be health related or about financial matters, such as understanding what benefits are available and how to claim them.

Some carers may gain mutual support through carers groups, assistance with respite care and young carers may be able to enjoy holiday breaks.

South East Hertfordshire Primary Care Trust and Welwyn Hatfield Primary Care Trust know how much carers are valued by health care professionals within the NHS for the contribution they provide to the care delivered to individuals. This is enhanced by the network and support available through Carers in Hertfordshire.

We hope you find this information booklet of real help. Thank you for all you do in supporting us to deliver health and social care in Hertfordshire.

**Vince McCabe, Chief Executive,
South East Hertfordshire Primary Care Trust.**

**Peter Horbury, Chief Executive,
Welwyn Hatfield Primary Care Trust.**

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What should carers expect from local health services?

Recognition and understanding

You should be recognised and listened to as a partner in providing care and valued for your knowledge and skills.

Support

You should receive help and information and be offered an assessment of your own needs.

Information

You should be given information about the condition and treatment of the person you look after and information about what services and other sources of help are available.

Involvement

You should have the opportunity to give your views about services and to be involved in the planning and development of services in your area.

Some people may experience difficulties getting the services and support they need. Carers in Hertfordshire can help, they can:

- help you to make a complaint if you are unhappy about a service or have been refused a service,
- ensure your views are heard.

If you feel you are having difficulties getting the services and support you need, you can contact Carers in Hertfordshire: on (01992) 586969.

am I a carer?

The chances are that many people will, at some time in their life, help a member of their family, a friend or neighbour to cope with illness or disability.

It may happen suddenly or it may be that someone needs more help as time goes on. Some people will be helping a neighbour with shopping for a few hours a week and others will be caring for someone full time.

Many people do not see themselves as carers. They are simply someone's parent, partner or child. Whether or not you think of yourself as a carer, if you look after someone then you may find information helpful. This booklet is designed to guide you through the maze of the help that is available and where to get it.

The information in this booklet will be relevant to most carers. However, there are also information packs available from Carers in Hertfordshire if:

- you look after someone with mental illness,
- you look after someone with dementia,
- you are a young carer.

If you cannot find the information you need or you would like to talk things through then contact Carers in Hertfordshire on (01992) 586969 and ask to speak to an Information Worker, Mental Health Carers Support Worker or someone from the Young Carers Project.

help

Social Services in Hertfordshire are now provided by Children, Schools and Families (CSF) and Adult Care Services (ACS).

Staff working in Education, and those in children and family roles in Social Services Departments have joined forces to deliver services. The remaining Social Services staff will continue to provide services to adults.

How do I get help?

As a first step, by asking for a community care assessment. This is a chance for the person you look after to tell Social Services what help they need with daily living. If services are then provided to the person you look after, this should in turn help you in your caring role.

What about my needs as a carer?

If you look after someone, Social Services must take into consideration the care that you provide and your ability and willingness to continue to provide that care.

If someone provides or intends to provide a 'substantial and regular' amount of care then they are entitled to ask for an assessment of their needs as a carer. This is called a carer's assessment.

A carer's assessment is an opportunity for carers to tell Social Services about what might help make caring easier. For further information about carers assessments ask for a 'Guide to Carers Assessments' available from Carers in Hertfordshire (also see section on Carers Rights in Law).

What if my situation changes?

Carers may find that their needs and those of the person they look after change as time goes on. If any changes to their caring situation make it difficult for a carer to manage, it is important that they let Social Services know. (see end of this section for contact details).

If the person being looked after is beginning to need more care or the carer is finding it harder to manage for any reason then Social Services can be asked to carry out a new assessment of needs.

What kind of help is available?

The type of help that may be arranged includes:

- a home care worker to help with personal and practical tasks for example dressing, toileting and preparing meals,
- day care,
- respite care to give carers, including parent carers, a break,
- equipment to make the home more accessible, for example bathing equipment and wheelchairs.

Who is eligible for services?

Do Services have to be paid for?

Social Services assess people's needs to find out if they qualify for their support before they arrange and fund services. Not everyone will be eligible for services and some people may have to pay. It may also be possible for some people to receive Direct Payments so they can arrange the help they need for themselves. For further information please ask for the relevant guide, from the list below, available from Carers in Hertfordshire.

Guides to who qualifies for support

- Children with disabilities and their families.
- Older people.
- Younger physically disabled people.
- People with learning disabilities.
- People with mental health problems.
- People who misuse drugs and/or alcohol.

Guides on paying for services

Will I have to pay?

A guide to charges for home care and day services.

Paying for Residential Care

A guide to how residential and nursing home care is paid for.

Who do I contact?

- If you look after a child with special needs under the age of 18 contact:
Children, Schools and Families
Telephone: (01438) 737500.
- If you look after an adult with physical disabilities, learning disabilities, mental illness or someone over 65 contact:
Adult Care Services
Telephone: (01438) 737400.

Callers from (01923) or (020) 8 dialling codes may wish to ring (01923) 471500 or 471400 in order to be charged at local call rates.

For further information about support from Adult Care Services and Children Schools and Families contact Carers in Hertfordshire.

Where else can I get help and support?

There is a wide range of voluntary organisations in Hertfordshire offering many types of support to carers including:

- practical services to enable carers to take a break,
- information and support to carers who are looking after someone with a specific condition or disability,
- information and support about a specific topic such as holidays or money matters.
- emotional support or someone to talk to.

Voluntary organisations can be:

- branches of a national organisation, offering local services,
- county wide organisations, offering services to people across Hertfordshire,
- local only.

Carers in Hertfordshire can put you in touch with an organisation appropriate to your particular caring situation.

time off

The Government has recognised that carers need time off by making breaks money available to local Councils.

Why is taking time off important?

Taking a break for yourself is an important part of caring. Many people feel guilty about asking for help but remember paid workers get holidays!

Making time for yourself is part of looking after your own health. Caring is physically and emotionally demanding. A break can help you recharge your batteries so that you can continue in your caring role.

What is a break?

Breaks mean different things, for example:

- a week's holiday,
- two hours per week to take part in a leisure activity or class,
- a weekend away,
- time in your own home without caring responsibilities.

What stops carers taking time off?

You may get into the habit of not taking time off or you may feel strongly that you are the only person who can do the caring job. The person you care for may also make things difficult by refusing to let anyone else but you do the caring. These problems need to be resolved because having time off, even just a few hours, is important.

What types of services are available?

At home: a care attendant coming into the cared for person's home during the day, evening or overnight. They may watch over someone and provide personal care.

Outside the home: day services outside of the home, including day centres and other services, for example supported employment schemes and college courses or opportunity classes for children under five with special needs.

Residential: residential care homes and nursing homes offering short term stays, often for a week at a time.

Leisure: leisure or other social activities on your own, with family or friends or with the person you care for.

Holidays: with family or friends, on your own or with the person you look after.

Volunteers: volunteer schemes that provide befriending or "sitting" services.

Young carers: activities and holidays for young carers aged 11–18.

How can I get a break?

Social Services assess people's needs to find out if they qualify for their support before they arrange and fund services. During either the assessment of the person you care for or during your carers' assessment you can make your need for a break clear. See page 4, 'Help' for more information.

Plan ahead-don't wait until there is a crisis or until you are too exhausted to carry on. Make your request for a break well before you need it.

You can contact Carers in Hertfordshire to talk about taking a break and the type of break that may suit you. We aim to give information on what is available, the likely charges and to assist carers in resolving problems to help them take a break. We may also be able to get funding for holidays.

You can arrange your own break by contacting local voluntary organisations and home care agencies to ask about the services they provide and how their services work. Carers in Hertfordshire can provide contact details of organisations including a list of private and voluntary home care agencies.

rights in law

Many carers do not realise they have rights in law. The first law to recognise carers was the Carers (Services and Recognition) Act 1995, followed by the more recent Carers and Disabled Children Act 2000.

What rights do these laws give carers?

The Carers (Services and Recognition) Act 1995 entitles carers who provide or intend to provide a substantial and regular amount of care to an assessment of their own needs when the person for whom they care is being assessed or reassessed.

The Carers and Disabled Children Act 2000 came into force on 1 April 2001 and entitles carers to an assessment in their own right. This means that carers can request an assessment even when the person they are looking after is not being assessed or refuses an assessment.

What is regular and substantial?

In Hertfordshire, someone who provides regular and substantial care is defined as someone who has little time to themselves because of their caring role.

What happens during the assessment?

Before the assessment you should be given a form to fill out to help you prepare. This is yours to keep and is not the assessment proper. It gives you the opportunity to think about the kind of help you might need. A worker from Social Services will then arrange to visit you at home or if you prefer, to arrange to meet you somewhere you can speak more freely, perhaps without the person you look after. During the assessment you can make notes and afterwards you should be given a copy of the assessment.

You can also have someone with you, perhaps a friend, for support.

What happens next?

An individual care plan will be drawn up for the person you look after. This should take into account your needs for support identified from your carers' assessment as well as the needs of the person you look after. You should both be given a copy of this plan. Social Services will then decide what services to provide.

If you are unhappy about the level of services Social Services decide to offer, you can make a complaint. For information about complaints procedures and for help making a complaint, contact Carers in Hertfordshire.

money

Many carers do not realise they may be able to claim benefits and other financial help. It is important that carers and the people they look after get all the money they are entitled to.

It is always best to seek advice from a specialist money advice organisation, like the Citizens Advice Bureau. Details of where to get further information and advice are given at the end of this section.

What can I claim if I look after someone?

Invalid Care Allowance is the main benefit for carers. From 1 April 2003 Invalid Care Allowance will change its name to Carer's Allowance.

You can claim if you:

- are aged between 16 and 65,
- look after someone for at least 35 hours a week,
- look after someone on Attendance Allowance or middle or higher rate care component of Disability Living Allowance.

You may still qualify if you are working and any income you receive is below a certain amount.

From October 2002 people over the age of 65 can claim Invalid Care Allowance. However it will not be paid if you get a retirement pension that is worth more-but you could still get income support, housing or council tax benefit through what is called a carer's premium. It is always worth finding out if you are eligible by contacting one of the advice organisations mentioned on page 10.

Caution: sometimes when a carer gets Invalid Care Allowance it reduces the amount of benefit the person being looked after gets, so it is worth seeking advice before you make a claim.

What can the person I look after claim?

The main benefits for people with a disability are Attendance Allowance (for those aged 65 or over) or Disability Living Allowance (for those under 65, including children from the age of 3 months).

They are not means-tested, are tax-free and are paid on top of any other benefit or pensions.

For more information about these benefits, ask for a copy of the booklet 'Benefits for Carers', available from Carers in Hertfordshire.

What other financial help is available?

There are Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit for people on a low income. Some households may get a discount on Council Tax bills, for example if the person you look after is severely mentally impaired or if your property is adapted for a person with a disability. Some carers can also qualify for a discount. Carers in Hertfordshire can give advice about who is eligible and how to apply.

There are a number of grant making organisations that can help with one off purchases like holidays and equipment as well as with allowances to supplement a low income. Carers in Hertfordshire can advise on where to apply and assist where necessary with the application.

Concessionary fares: available to some people who live in Hertfordshire. The level of assistance depends on the nature of a person's disability, their age and where they live. Reduced fares may also be available to carers or 'companions'. Check with your local Borough or District Council for details on how to apply.

Railcards: available for people with disabilities giving concessions on rail fares. Contact your local station for details.

Travel to hospital: carers may be able to get help with the cost of travel to hospital for themselves or the person they look after if on Income Support, Working Families Tax Credit, Disabled Person's Tax Credit or a low income. Claims are dealt with by the hospital.

Disabled Parking Badge: people with disabilities from the age of 2 and registered blind people can apply for local parking concessions. To apply contact Social Services.

Can I get help with heating costs?

Home Energy Efficiency Scheme grants are available for loft insulation, central heating installation and draught proofing for disabled people, those aged 60 or over who receive income related benefits and families with children who get a qualifying benefit. Contact your local District or Borough Council for more details.

People aged 60 and over should automatically receive a winter fuel payment.

An additional cold winter payment will also be paid automatically to those who qualify when the temperature is 0 degrees Celsius or less over 7 consecutive days.

Can I get help with health costs?

People on Income Support, Working Families Tax Credit, Disabled Person's Tax Credit or a low income who have no more than a small amount of savings may qualify for free prescriptions and free or reduced cost dental treatment, dentures, glasses, sight test, wigs, fabric supports and fares to hospital. You can get a claim form from the Post Office.

Can I get help with changes to the home?

The local district or borough council administers Disabled Facilities Grants to help meet the cost of adapting a property for the needs of a disabled person. The grant is means tested and the person you look after will need to be assessed by an Occupational Therapist. To request an assessment contact either Adult Care Services or Children, Schools and Families (see page 4, 'Help' for contact details).

In some areas there are 'care and repair' or 'staying put' agencies which can help older or disabled home owners with repairs, improvements or adaptations. Contact the local district or borough council to find out whether there is an agency locally.

What if the person I look after is not able to manage his or her own affairs?

If the person you look after is unable to manage his/her own affairs or finances there are ways to overcome this.

Carers can apply to the Benefits Agency to become an appointee, thereby taking charge of claiming and collecting benefits.

If the person you look after is mentally capable, they can give you power of attorney or enduring power of attorney. Power of attorney only lasts while the person is mentally capable whereas enduring power of attorney remains in place even when the person can no longer manage their own affairs.

If the person you look after is no longer mentally capable and you do not already have enduring power of attorney then you can apply to the Public Guardianship Office to manage his/her finances. A small fee may be charged for this service. Otherwise, it may be necessary to apply to the Court of Protection to be appointed as a receiver. An initial fee is charged and then an annual fee based on the income of the person you look after.

Where can I get help with benefits and money?

Carers in Hertfordshire can give information about benefits for carers and the person they look after and can refer to other organisations that can help, for example with form filling. They can also advise where to apply for grants and give further details about any information in this booklet.

For more general help with finances and benefits, perhaps managing debts, then contact your local Citizen's Advice Bureau. They can also give information and advice about housing, consumer and employment rights. Many Bureaux offer home visits for carers or people with disabilities. Details of local CAB can be found in the phone book.

If the person you care for is assessed by Social Services as needing a home care service, or they attend a day centre, a Social Worker can arrange for someone from the County Council's Money Advice Unit to visit them and check their benefits, and the benefits of their carers and of other people in the household. To get a benefit check, ask your Social Worker to refer you to the Money Advice Unit.

For more information about these benefits, ask for a copy of the booklet 'Benefits for Carers', available from Carers in Hertfordshire.

transport

For those who need help with transport there are a number of schemes across Hertfordshire.

Carers in Hertfordshire can provide contact details of the following transport schemes and travel information providers:

Voluntary Car Schemes: provide transport to local hospitals, doctors, dentists, and shopping.

British Red Cross: provide drivers and/or escorts to help with essential journeys for people who find it difficult to use public or private transport unaided.

Dial a Ride: has minibuses with tail lift and ramp offering door to door transport anywhere within Hertfordshire for people who have difficulty using public transport due to disability or illness regardless of age.

Herts Action on Disability: operates a wheelchair accessible transport service for people with disabilities.

Accessible Taxis: your local district or borough council's taxi licensing office has names of drivers of wheelchair accessible taxis.

Travel Information: Tripscope gives information to help you plan journeys anywhere if you have a disability.

Varying charges are made for these services, but will normally be cheaper than taxi fares. Some Local Authorities provide Taxi Vouchers that can be used on these schemes.

health

Community health services in Hertfordshire are now provided by 8 local Primary Care Trusts.

The doctor is responsible for arranging some services for people living in the community. There are also services that can be arranged without having to go through the doctor.

What services can a doctor arrange?

District Nurses: have specialist skills to offer comprehensive nursing care to maintain patients with complex medical needs in their own homes. They have a wide knowledge of services and equipment to help families care for their relatives. They offer support and advice in times of stress.

Health Visitors: are specially trained nurses. Their work is often with families and children, but their training enables them to support any family with problems and at times of stress. They can give advice on services and benefits that might be available. Your GP surgery can tell you how to contact your health visitor.

Community Psychiatric Nurses: visit people with mental health problems, including dementia at home. They can also give carers information and advice on ways of coping.

Chiropody/Foot Health: some people are entitled to free chiropody. Ask your GP whether or not you qualify.

Medical Equipment Loans: the loan of some types of medical equipment can be arranged, often through the District Nurse.

What services can I arrange myself?

Medical Equipment Loans: The British Red Cross has items of medical equipment such as wheelchairs, bed rests and commodes that can be lent to people on a short term basis. There are 13 stores across Hertfordshire. Contact Carers in Hertfordshire for details of your nearest store.

Hertfordshire Action on Disability: has a permanent exhibition of equipment at the Woodside Centre, The Commons, Welwyn Garden City where equipment can be tried out, hired or purchased.

Continence: the Continence Advisory Service has specialist nurses who can be contacted by anyone needing advice. For a full medical assessment you will need a doctor's referral. Contact Carers in Hertfordshire for details of a service in your area.

Community Dental Services: dental care is available for adults and children with disabilities who are unable to obtain dental treatment from family dentists. Ask at your GP surgery or dentist for details of a local service.

Optician: eye tests in your own home can be carried out by the opticians home visiting service. Contact Carers in Hertfordshire for details.

primary care

Most people think primary care simply means their family doctor (GP), but it includes people like district nurses, dentists, pharmacists (chemists) and chiropodists, in fact, nearly everyone who provides healthcare in the community.

Appointments

All health care workers are very busy so:

- be clear about what you want,
- if extra time is needed, ask for a double appointment,
- if it's difficult for you or the person you care for to wait in the surgery, ask for the first appointment of the session,
- if an appointment has to be missed for any reason, be sure to ring the surgery as someone else may be able to use the time.

Recognition

Ask your GP to make sure your notes show clearly you are a carer. This should ensure, for example, that you are given special consideration if you ask for a home visit from the doctor. If the person you care for is housebound, you should not have to take them to the surgery for an appointment.

Support

Are you constantly worried about the person you care for? Do you feel angry and upset? If so, you may find it useful to talk to someone. Your doctor's surgery may be able to arrange counselling or training on different ways of coping. Your GP may be able to arrange respite care so you can have a break.

Repeat prescriptions

If it is difficult to go to your surgery ask the receptionist, practice nurse, district nurse or the doctor if they can arrange for you to send in written requests with a stamped addressed envelope or phone in your requests. Some pharmacies run a home delivery service.

Information

If you have lots of questions for the doctor write them down as a reminder for use during the appointment. It may also help to write the answers down, so you can look at them again when you are more relaxed.

Receptionists and practice managers may also have information about local services useful to carers.

General information about drugs and their side effects is available from your local pharmacy.

NHS Direct can be telephoned 24 hours a day on (0845) 4647 for confidential advice and information about health problems, local and national health services.

NHS Direct also have an internet website www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk

The website has a copy of the NHS Direct Health Care Guide. This gives guidance on when to see your doctor.

You can also find there:

- information about conditions and treatments,
- advice on healthy living,
- an A-Z guide to NHS Services,
- advice on health stories in the news.

information

Carers in Hertfordshire can provide a wide range of information to carers, including contact details for national and local organisations providing information and support for specific illnesses and disabilities.

Your local library is a useful source of information. They offer free internet access if you have a library card. One hour sessions are bookable up to 24 hours in advance. Carers can also apply for a Carers Library card, allowing a greater number of books to be borrowed at one time and no fines for overdue items.

Can I find information on the internet?

There are a number of internet sites that are a useful source of information.

- www.carersinherts.org.uk

As well as finding out about the services Carers in Hertfordshire offer across the county you can read our latest annual report and previous issues of our newsletter.

- www.carers.gov.uk

This website provides information for carers about Government policy on carers. It also has information zones for carers covering a variety of topics including short term breaks, money, work, health, services and help.

- www.guardianship.gov.uk

This website has information on the services provided by the Public Guardianship Office (formerly the Public Trust Office). One of their services is to register Enduring Powers of Attorney. It may be of particular interest to carers of people with dementia or people with mental illness.

- www.hertsdirect.org

This website has information on services provided by Hertfordshire County Council. To get to information pages on Adult Care Services, Children, Schools and Families, and Community Information you need to click on 'Your Local Public Services' on the left hand side of the screen and then click on 'County Council Services' on the left hand side of the screen.

- www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk

This website provides health advice and information. It has a health encyclopaedia for when you want to find out more about an illness or condition; a self-help guide for when you're not feeling well; advice on staying healthy and information on the NHS.

- www.dwp.gov.uk

This website provides up to date and accurate information on benefits and pensions.



commitment to carers



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