

CARERS SUPPORT SPELTHORNE

Registered Charity No. 1061488

New To Caring - The First Steps to Getting Support

Every year 2 million people become Carers, so the first thing to remember is that you are not alone. Becoming a Carer can be bewildering, confusing and frightening. All Carers require some support and back up.



Here are 10 steps to help you as a new Carer:

Step 1 – Remember You’re a Carer

Recognising yourself as a Carer is the very first step to getting the support you need. Many people do not see themselves as Carers straight away, as they are doing what anyone would do to help someone in their life. You could be caring for a son or daughter, grandchild, parent, other relative, a friend or neighbour, anyone who is unable to do things for themselves. **The fact is that you are a Carer, and there are things that you need to know.** No one likes to be labelled, but recognising yourself as a Carer can be the gateway to getting a range of help and support.

Step 2 – Include Your Family and Friends

Many Carers turn to family and friends for support to help them to take a break from caring. It is important that you do not try to cope alone, as this can impact on your own health. If you can, speak to family and friends and make sure they know the extent of your caring role. Many family members or friends may not realise the level of care you provide.

Step 3 – Inform Your GP



Make sure that you tell your GP that you are a Carer and get him/her to write it on your notes. If they know that you are a Carer, some GPs can offer special flexibility with appointments, and are more likely to make home visits if certain circumstances arise. Carers are usually too busy to find time for their own health. A good GP who appreciates Carers' needs is vigilant, as the impact of your caring role may have an effect on your health. He/she can also be a gateway to getting all kinds of help, such as counselling, other specialist medical services, and referrals to Social Services.

Step 4 – Inform Social Services

Social Services is part of your local County Council and provides a range of services to Carers and people with disabilities. It is important that they know about the person you are caring for. **As a Carer, you are entitled to a Carer's Assessment, which looks at your needs and how you, as a Carer, can be supported.** Social Services may provide replacement care to give you a break, help with aids and adaptations to make life easier or simply be a back up in an emergency. All these services are means-tested.



You can contact Spelthorne Social Services by calling the contact centre - 08456 009 009. You can speak to them about your role as a Carer. Alternatively, either your GP or Carers Support Spelthorne can refer you. Even if you choose not to have a Carer's Assessment, it is advisable to let Social Services know that you are a Carer, should a time arise when you need urgent assistance.

Step 5 – Inform People at Work



If you are a working Carer you are likely to need a range of support at different times. Telling work you are a Carer is not always an easy step and you might feel it depends on whether your employer is likely to be supportive. Colleagues can be very supportive, and it may help to discuss your situation with someone you can trust at work. You might even find that other colleagues are Carers too.

An organisation called Action for Carers in Employment may also be able to provide you with some useful information and enable you to continue working for as long as you want – 01483 565874.

Step 6 – Register With Carers Support Spelthorne



You can contact us direct by telephoning 01784 446234. You will then be sent a welcome letter and receive a follow up telephone call from your allocated Carers Support Worker who will arrange to meet with you at a mutually agreeable place and time to talk about your needs. You will go on to our database and receive our free newsletters and invitations to our events, outings and information days.



Step 7 – Claim Your Entitlements

The benefit system is complex, and many people who are new to caring are unsure what they should be claiming. Remember the benefits system is there to help and you are entitled to claim. There are a number of benefits available to Carers and the person you care for, and we can help you through the process of claiming. Our Benefits Advisor or Support Worker can help you to complete the forms.

Step 8 – Look After Yourself

It is easy to neglect yourself when you are busy caring for someone else. As a Carer it is vitally important that you do look after yourself as best you can. If you become ill yourself how would you continue caring? Caring without a break, without proper sleep and without support is extremely stressful. It is important you acknowledge how your 24/7 routine affects you in the long term. Remember that a little can go a long way so when you can, try and take some time out to do something just for **you**. Our events and trips are a good time for you to take a break from caring and meet other Carers.



Step 9 – Think About the Future



As hard as it might be to contemplate, if you are caring for someone with diminishing mental capacity you may need to consider how to continue caring and continue with your everyday responsibilities e.g. bills, mortgage, rent etc. If you are caring for someone elderly or someone with a terminal illness, there will come a time when you are no longer caring. When caring ends it can be extremely hard. By facing the future and thinking about life after caring you can minimise that shock when the time comes. Many people say that when caring ends they feel adrift, without purpose or direction. Although caring can be all-consuming, it is important that you keep as much of your own life going as you can, such as work, friends, hobbies and interests, so that you do not feel lost once your caring role ends.

Step 10 – Use the Support Available from Carer Support Spelthorne

We are here to support you with your caring role. Once you register with us you can utilise our support services. Our support groups are an ideal place for you to meet other Carers and discuss issues that you are all facing. Our events and trips allow you to take a break from caring, as well as meeting new people.