



**Carers** of West  
Dunbartonshire

*"the place for every carer to turn to"*

# **An Introduction to the Carers' (Scotland) Act 2016 for Adult Carers**



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## INTRODUCTION

Do you look after someone because they have a physical or mental illness, disability, frailty or health problems because of substance misuse? It may be a relative, a good friend or a neighbour. If the answer is yes – **YOU ARE A CARER.**

Caring for someone can be physically and emotionally demanding. It can affect your health, your finances, your relationships and your plans

for the future but it can also be rewarding if you receive the right help and support when you need it.

This basic guide about the Carers' (Scotland) Act 2016 relates to adult carers only and sets out what the Act is and how the new provisions within it will help you in your caring role.

## WHAT IS A HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE PARTNERSHIP

Health and Social Care Partnerships (HSCPs) are the organisations formed as part of the integration of services which are provided by Health Boards and Councils in Scotland. Each partnership is jointly run by the NHS and Local Authority.

HSCPs manage community health services and create closer partnerships between health, social care and hospital based services. You can find out more about West Dunbartonshire HSCP and the services it provides at <http://www.wdhscp.org.uk/>

## WHAT IS THE CARERS' (SCOTLAND) ACT AND WHAT DOES IT MEAN FOR CARERS?

The Carers' (Scotland) Act is a law which enhances the rights of carers in Scotland and which is intended to recognise the valuable role that carers play in supporting people who have an illness, disability, frailty or addiction. The Carers' Act extends and enhances the rights of carers in Scotland to help improve their health and well being so that they can continue to care, if they so wish and have a life outside of caring.

The support you receive as a carer should be based on what is important to you and what

will help you to continue caring. If support is provided early, it can make you feel more in control of your caring situation and you now have more choice and control over how you want your support needs to be met.

The Carers' (Scotland) Act has many provisions and places a variety of new responsibilities on local authorities and health and social care partnerships (HSCPs) in relation to supporting carers. In West Dunbartonshire the HSCP is responsible for its implementation. The new rights that you have as a carer are:

- The right to have an Adult Carer Support Plan (ACSP)
- The right to be involved in hospital discharge
- The right to advice and information
- The right to be involved in planning

Each of these is set out in more detail within the guide. You can read more about the Act at <https://www.gov.scot/publications/carers-scotland-act-2016-statutory-guidance/>

## WHAT IS AN ADULT CARER SUPPORT PLAN?

From 1st April 2018, all carers over the age of 18 years are entitled to an Adult Carers' Support Plan (ACSP), if you are already in a caring role or are intending to take on a caring role e.g. if your relative is being discharged from hospital. This is a new provision as it no longer matters how many hours per week you provide care or how substantial your caring role is.

You should make sure that you live within the responsible local authority area before you make the request – **the responsible local authority is the area where your friend or relative lives, not where you live. If you need advice about this, the Carers' Centre will help.**

You can ask any professional involved in the care of your friend or relative e.g. a Social Worker, Occupational Therapist or Nurse or the Carers' Centre to help you complete an ACSP. An ACSP is a record of this conversation, your needs and how they can be met; if you do not look after your own physical, emotional and spiritual needs it can make your role as a carer more difficult.

Before completing an ACSP, it can be useful to think about what your caring role involves and how it impacts on your own physical and emotional well being. Your caring role may include helping your friend or relative to wash and dress, preparing meals, giving them medicine and/or taking them to appointments. Your role may change from day to day depending on how well the person you care for is. It is important to recognise that not all caring situations involve lots of "tasks" e.g. your role might involve supervising, prompting and/

or providing emotional support. This is often true if you are looking after someone who has an addiction or poor mental health. Providing this type of support still means that you are a carer and are entitled to help with your caring role. Once your ACSP is completed there will be agreed actions and outcomes. Outcomes are a way of describing what is important to you and what you are trying to achieve. Some examples of outcomes are: *I am able to carry on working or I am able to spend more time with my friends; these are important things to highlight as they relate to your quality of life.*

To help the HSCP decide if they have to provide you with support, they will assess your needs against a threshold that they have set; this is known as eligibility criteria. More information about West Dunbartonshire's eligibility criteria can be found on page 8.

If you meet the criteria, you have a right to support from the HSCP. Support can be provided in different ways and you should be provided with information on the choices you have. If you do not meet the criteria, you still have a right to have information and advice and you will still be able to access support from the Carers' Centre.

All the information will be written down, as well as the actions that will be taken to help you. You will be provided with details about how your information will be protected and who it will be shared with. Your ACSP is now complete and you should be given your own copy.

## MAKING AN EMERGENCY PLAN

Emergency planning is now part of your ACSP. Emergencies can happen to all of us but when you are a carer you may be worried about what will happen to the person you look after until the emergency is over. For example, if you suddenly take unwell or have an accident, what would happen to the person you care for? Having a plan written down that you have shared with other

family or friends can help you feel more confident that the person you look after will continue to be safe and supported.

It is important to discuss this when you are completing your ACSP or you can ask the Carers' Centre for more information and support about completing an Emergency Plan.

## THE RIGHT TO BE INVOLVED IN THE HOSPITAL DISCHARGE PROCESS

When a person leaves hospital, they may need care and support to make sure they can return home safely. The hospital discharge process helps to identify what support will be provided and who will provide it. Health and social work staff will become involved in the hospital discharge process to make sure the right support is in place. They should not do this without involving you, the carer.

It is important that you let hospital staff know you are the carer as soon as possible; tell them that you would like to be involved so that they can begin a conversation with you at the earliest opportunity. Having early conversations will help to plan appropriate support to be put in place for you and the person you care for; if they do not know you are the carer, they may not be able to take your views into account. Before you do that, you should speak to the person you care for to make sure they are happy for you to discuss their needs with hospital staff. If you do not have their permission, hospital staff will not be able to talk to you about the person; this is because of patient confidentiality. However it may still be possible to get some general information on what to expect.

When a person comes home from hospital, it can be a stressful time for any carer; not least if you are taking on a caring role for the first time. You may need to get used to doing new things such as giving medicine, using equipment and understanding more about your friend or relative's care needs. It is important that you think about how this will affect you and if you are willing and able to take on the role?

Being part of the hospital discharge discussion will help you to prepare for when the person comes home. You should get information about the discharge date, talk to the hospital staff about how you will manage and what extra support you might need. You should ask questions about what your friend or relative will require and what other support will be put in place.

There is an integrated hospital discharge team within West Dunbartonshire. This means that health, social work and carer support staff are part of one team. When your friend or relative is discharged from hospital your details will be passed to the Carer Support Worker. However, not everyone who is discharged from hospital will require their support and as a carer you can still contact the Carers' Centre directly.

## THE RIGHT TO ADVICE AND INFORMATION

The HSCP must make sure that carers have access to accurate and up to date information. West Dunbartonshire HSCP supports Carers of West Dunbartonshire, which is your local Carers' Centre to provide information and advice to all adult carers. The Carers' Centre will generally be the first point of contact you are given and it will provide advice and information as well as a range of other services which can help with your caring role.

You can ask to be referred to the Carers' Centre by e.g. the Social Worker, Nurse or your GP or you can refer yourself. You do not need to be in receipt of Carers' Allowance, have had an assessment or be caring for a specific number of hours to get support from the Carers' Centre.

You have a right to get this information in a way that you can understand. For example, if you do not speak English, you can have it translated or you may require written information to be in larger print.

## THE RIGHT TO BE INVOLVED IN PLANNING

Involving carers in planning can mean different things. It can mean carers being involved in planning the care for the person you care for, it can mean carers being involved in planning local services or it can mean both.

The HSCP has a duty to involve carers in the assessment of the cared-for person, this is called a Single Shareable Assessment, as far as is reasonable and practical. Once the Single Shareable Assessment is completed, arrangements should be made for regular reviews and the duty to involve carers within the review still applies. Local Health Boards also have a duty to involve carers, as far as reasonable and practical, when the cared for person is being discharged from hospital.

There are several ways in which you can become involved in planning local carer services. The HSCP must produce a plan for their local area on how they will support carers. This is known as a local Carers' Strategy.

The strategy is an important document as it sets out what services will be provided locally, what the priorities are in relation to supporting carers and what information is already available about carers and their needs.

The strategy must be published by 31st March 2019 and will be made widely available. It will be on the Health and Social Care Partnership's website and Carers of West Dunbartonshire website and will also be available in paper copy from the Carers' Centre.

The Carers' Centre will be able to give you information on how you can get involved in planning services. This can happen in a variety of ways such as attending meetings, giving your views on documents, by getting involved in consultations or attending engagement events.

## SHORT BREAKS FOR CARERS

A short break is designed to give you a break from your usual caring responsibilities, sometimes it is referred to as respite. They are important because they can help you have a life outside of caring and can help you to sustain your caring responsibilities. Short breaks can help to improve your physical and emotional health, support family relationships and make sure you have time to yourself.

A short break can come in different forms as what suits one carer may not suit another; it will depend on your own needs and circumstances.

Examples of a short break include:

- ✓ A holiday (with or without the person you look after)
- ✓ Someone else supporting the person you look after for a few hours
- ✓ A stay in a care home for the person you look after
- ✓ Funding so that you can do something you want to do such as a hobby or going out with friends

As part of the Carers' (Scotland) Act the HSCP must produce a statement about the type of short break services that are available in West Dunbartonshire. This will be published by the end Dec 2018 and will be reviewed annually. The local statement can be viewed at: <http://www.wdhscp.org.uk/media/2117/wdhscp-short-breaks-services-statement-dec-18.pdf>

## THE WAIVING OF CHARGES FOR SHORT BREAKS

The Carers (Scotland) Act ensures that all charges are waived if a short break directly benefits the carer and forms part of the outcomes which have been identified in the Adult Carer Support Plan. Some will be chargeable as sometimes a short break will benefit both the carer and the cared-for person.

You can get more information about this by contacting WDHSCP or the Carers' Centre.

## THE CARERS' CHARTER

The Scottish Government has produced a document called the Carers' Charter which sets out the rights you have as an adult or young carer in Scotland. If you would like to have a copy of the Carers' Charter, the Carers' Centre will be able to help you or you can visit:

[www.gov.scot/publications/carers-charter](http://www.gov.scot/publications/carers-charter)

# WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE'S ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA FOR CARER SUPPORT

West Dunbartonshire Health and Social Care Partnership is committed to ensuring carers can access support to ensure they are able to continue in their caring role. The HSCP believes that the best option for carers and those that they care for is to have eligibility criteria which reflects this position.

The eligibility criteria adopted within West Dunbartonshire for carers; ***ensures that no carer will be excluded from receiving support from a range of opportunities, wider agencies and support organisations following assessment; thus supporting a preventative and early intervention approach to supporting carers.***

In West Dunbartonshire, carers are able to access support as appropriate to their assessed needs and the legislation will enhance the existing position and will support current practice. It is believed that the eligibility criteria in West

Dunbartonshire will ensure there are no barriers to carers accessing support and services.

However, you must be:

- ✓ A carer
- ✓ Over 18 years of age
- ✓ Caring for someone who lives within West Dunbartonshire

All carers will be offered a Tier 1 (Carer Conversation) and/or a Tier 2 (an ACSP). Support will then be offered based on your assessed need.

The support offered may include respite; Care at Home services; Technology Enabled Care; onward referral to third sector and community support services for adults, children and young people. the local eligibility criteria can be viewed at <http://www.wdhscp.org.uk/media/1971/eligibility-criteria-draft-april-2018.pdf>

## WHERE TO GO FOR MORE INFORMATION

You can get more information about the Carers (Scotland) Act and your rights as a carer by contacting Carers of West Dunbartonshire (your local Carer' Centre) at [www.carerswd.org](http://www.carerswd.org) or **0141-941-1550** or by visiting <http://www.wdhscp.org.uk/carers/carers/>

