

A Guide for Carers in Harrow



Welcome

Three out of five people will become carers at some point during their lifetime, and every day another 6,000 take on a caring responsibility and start to care for a family member or friend.

Caring can be extremely rewarding, and, if you are new to caring, you may already be starting to discover that it can come with its challenges. People who have been caring for some time often say they need help with things like

- a break from the caring they do
- someone to talk to confidentially about how they are feeling
- advice about services, benefits and support for them and the person they are caring for
- some extra financial help to cope with the increased costs they experience as a result of caring for someone
- advice on housing needs and adaptations
- training courses

Getting the right advice and support as soon as you start caring can make all the difference. Even if you have been caring for a long time it's important to make sure you are aware of all the help and support you are entitled to.

Caring responsibilities can have an adverse impact on physical and mental health and supporting carers with their health and wellbeing is key to maintaining a person's ability to provide care.

It's important that carers feel confident, safe and supported and your GP surgery and Harrow Carers can provide an invaluable source of support, advice and information for carers.

As a carer there is lots of help, advice and support available, the problem is knowing where to find the information, this guide will outline your rights as a carer, give you details and information and guide you to where you can get practical help and support in Harrow.

Who is a carer?

A carer is someone of any age who provides unpaid support to a family member, relative, partner or friend who may be ill, frail, disabled or has mental health issues, and could not otherwise manage without this help.

**Written and Produced by
Harrow Carers and Carers**



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Caring can bring many rewards and challenges, and as the number of people caring continues to rise it is vital that we provide support to them. Carers are estimated to save the NHS around £132 billion a year and play a major role in supporting an aging population and managing complex and long-term conditions as adult unpaid carers, parent carers and young carers.

GPs, primary care teams and wider health and care services have a major role to play in identifying and formally recognising carers, initiating discussions about carer support needs and in supporting and maintaining carer health and wellbeing.

Carers also need support with their own health, as well as information and education to ensure they have the knowledge, skills and confidence to support those they care for. It is an ongoing journey of listening and responding to ensure every carer has access to vital support and information. We hope this guide can provide confidence for new carers as they start their caring journey.

The Borough-Based Partnership in Harrow is a partnership of organisations that support the health, care and wellbeing to the citizens in Harrow – NHS providers, including General Practice services, social care, other Local Authority Services and our voluntary and community sector. Lisa and Radhika are the leadership team working on behalf of the partnership. Lisa has been working in Harrow since 2018 and is actively involved in the development of the Strategy for carers in Harrow and the programme of work to improve carers services. Radhika is a GP and has worked in Harrow for more than a decade, dedicated to improving the health and wellbeing of Harrow citizens and carers. A Borough Professional Lead will also be part of the Harrow Borough Based Partnership, striving to deliver excellent quality services to improve the care and service to carers.

As the leadership team for the Borough Based Partnership in Harrow, we are proud to be actively involved in working with Harrow Carers and all health and social care organisations in the Borough to support carers rights and wellbeing.

Help you get from your GP

What to expect from your GP surgery for YOU as a carer.

As soon as you become a carer, it is vital that you inform your GP surgery. This will ensure that you have additional support available to you, so that you are kept well in your caring role. The additional support for you as a carer will be;

- Seasonal vaccines – such as Flu / Covid
- An annual health check

Many carers prioritise the person they are caring for and are at risk of neglecting their own needs. Your surgery will want to support YOUR health. You are a recognised and valued worker who is an integral part to the healthcare system.



Being a carer

Caring for someone can be difficult when trying to access care or find out information on their behalf. Please speak to the GP reception desk about a form which allows consent for you to act on the person's behalf. This should ensure smoother communication when trying to get help.

GP surgeries now function as a Primary care team of professionals with broad skills, many of which overlap with each other. When contacting the surgery, it is wise to give the details of your needs to reception. They can then refer you to a range of professionals who may be able to help. The Primary Care Team at your surgery may have;

Advanced Nurse Practitioners (ANP) or Advanced Clinical Practitioners (ACP)

These professionals have studied to Masters level and can manage many of the conditions that GPs have traditionally seen. They can also prescribe medications.



Enhanced Practice Nurses

These are nurses based at your surgery who care for complex cases or those who may be housebound. They connect regularly with the patients known to them and ensure good links with their named GP and can carry out clinical assessments and referrals to other services.

Clinical Pharmacist

These professionals can help with any issues to do with your medicines. Many are trained in managing minor ailments and are able to prescribe and alter your medications to maximise benefits for you, and minimise side effects

Care Co-ordinators

These people are trained in planning your care and appointments to ensure all aspects of your care are looked after. They can help with social services referrals and with linking you to other organisations. They are also based in the surgery and therefore have easy access to the GP if there is a query.

Social Prescribers

These people help you to link with local organisations and schemes to support your non medical needs ie food bank, local luncheon clubs or other voluntary sector activities that may assist you in staying connected with people.

Many surgeries now also have access to Physiotherapists and Occupational Therapists which may be offered to you. To get the best from your Primary care Team and avoid any unnecessary waiting at your surgery, it is wise to ask to connect to the wider team and not to just request a GP appointment.

As a carer we would hope that your surgery can provide:

- A designated phone line during opening hours for you to contact reception
- An email address of either a care co-ordinator or enhanced practice nurse
- 'flag' on your notes that defines you as a carer
- Documented evidence on the notes of the person you care for that states you have consent to act on their behalf when arranging appointments or raising concerns
- The ability to request a longer appointment due to complex needs and to be flexible as possible with timings
- Good signposting to other professionals and organisation that can support you
- Good communication with you about the person you are caring for and involving you in decisions that are made (as long as there is consent from the patient)
- Support with arranging NHS transport, supporting letters for benefits or blue badges



Harrow Carers

Harrow Carers is an independent charity and voluntary organisation and has been the lead carers' support agency in Harrow since 1996. Harrow Carers provides a comprehensive package of services for carers and is the focal point for carers in Harrow to obtain information, support and advice.

Services offered at the Carers Centre include:

- Information and advice
- Benefit application support including form filling
- Home visits / one-to-one help
- Carer support including drop-ins and experienced staff who will listen and understand your situation
- Activities, including yoga, Zumba and with new activities introduced regularly

- Training and events including computer classes, first aid and back care
- Complementary Therapies
- Wellbeing sessions, including positive psychology and mindfulness – including access to CNWL Recovery and wellbeing college courses
- Understanding mental health
- Counselling
- Support for young carers
- Respite care
- Grants for carers
- Breaks and holidays
- Homeshare
- Carer emergency card

Our services are available to anyone who provides care and support for a friend or relative in the community, regardless of the amount of care you provide.

Money and Benefits

The benefits system can be complicated and confusing. Finding out what you are entitled to can often be difficult to understand and many people may miss out. You can get further information on benefits including the criteria from the Department of Works and Pension (DWP), website: www.gov.uk/browse/benefits or contact Harrow Carers on 020 8868 5224 who can guide you through the process.

For the carer

Carer's Allowance

Carer's Allowance is the main benefit for carers and is extra money for you to use as you want or need to

- You could get Carer's Allowance if you care for someone for at least 35 hours a week
- The person you care for must be in receipt of a relevant disability benefit
- You don't have to be related to, or live with, the person you care for
- You won't be paid extra if you care for more than one person

Carer's Credit

Carer's Credit is a National Insurance credit that helps with gaps in your National Insurance record. Your State Pension is based on your National Insurance record.

Carer Premium

You may be able to get extra money added to your existing benefits or credits if you claim Carer's Allowance (or have an underlying entitlement to it). This is called the Carer Premium. This is part of the calculation that works out how much money you are entitled to and it is added to the other amounts.

For the person you care for

If you are caring for someone they may be entitled to disability benefits.

Attendance Allowance

Attendance Allowance is a benefit for those over state pension age that helps with the extra costs of living with a longterm illness or disability.

Personal Independence Payment (PIP)

PIP is a benefit paid to those who are between 16 years old and state pension age, who have daily living and/or mobility needs, to help with the extra costs of living with a long-term illness or disability.

Disability Living Allowance (DLA)

Disability Living Allowance (DLA) is a benefit for children, which may help with the extra costs of looking after a child who is under 16 and has difficulties walking, or needs much more looking after than a child of the same age who does not have a disability.

Other Benefits

If you have had to give up work to care, or are in receipt of a low income, then there are other benefits that you and your partner may be able to claim.

Universal Credit

Universal Credit is a means-tested benefit for people of working age who are on a low income.

It replaces six existing means-tested benefits:

- Income Support
- Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance
- Income-related Employment and Support Allowance (ESA)
- Housing Benefit
- Child Tax Credit
- Working Tax Credit

Universal Credit is intended to be simpler than the current system of benefits and tax credits, and is paid on a monthly basis. Entitlement is worked out by comparing your basic financial

needs that the government says you need to live on with your financial resources. Universal Credit is still in its roll-out phase and there are some exceptions to claiming Universal Credit, and you may instead be required to claim one of the existing means-tested benefits.

Pension Credit

Pension Credit is an income-related benefit to give you some extra money in retirement, if you are on a low income. You can claim pension credit as soon as you reach state pension age.

Other Benefit Help

If you are in receipt of any means tested benefit, then you may also receive assistance or additional payments such as:

- Support for mortgage interest if you are a homeowner (SMI)
- A Christmas bonus payable if you are in receipt of some benefits
- Cold weather payments

And other benefits such as:

- Free Eye Tests from your Optician
- Free Single Vision Glasses
- Free Dental Check Ups
- Travelling Expenses including Parking to attend hospital appointments
- Free prescriptions





Help from the Council

Carers Conversation Approach

The carers conversation approach is designed to offer you, the carer, a more person-centred service. Council staff will have 'conversations' with you, to best understand what is happening for you in your caring role and how it is impacting on your own health and wellbeing. This may include areas such as your health, social life, ability to work or just having time for yourself.

There are two stages:

Conversation 1 is designed to listen, connect and understand what really matters to you, as the carer. This may be looking at assets available in the community or providing a small budget to help you regain control of your life.

Conversation 2 is looking at helping you, the carer, build a good life for the long term and will take the form of a detailed Carer's Assessment.

The assessment will look at your physical, mental and emotional needs, and can result in a decision to provide or arrange services for the person you look after.

If the council determines that care needs can be met under the Care Act 2014, a financial assessment will need to be carried out with the person you care for, to determine if, and how much, they should need to contribute towards the care package.

The carer's conversation approach is available to anyone who provides, or intends to provide, a regular and substantial amount of unpaid care to a vulnerable friend or relative living in Harrow. You can request a carers conversation even if the person you are caring for does not receive care or support from the council

You can arrange for a carers conversation or assessment by contacting Harrow council on 020 8901 2680 or email AHadults@harrow.gov.uk or via the website: www.harrow.gov.uk

Needs Assessments for the person you care for

The local council has a legal duty under the Care Act 2014 to carry out a needs assessment once they become aware of the person's potential needs. The assessment will look at a person's physical, mental and emotional needs, and can result in a decision to provide or arrange services for the person you look after.

If the council determines that care needs can be met under the Care Act, a financial assessment will need to be carried out with the person you care for, to determine if, and how much they should need to contribute towards the care package.

Council Tax Benefits/Reductions

Depending on your circumstances you may be eligible for a discount or reduction on your council tax bill, for example if you are:

- In receipt of benefits or a low income
- A single person living alone (25% reduction)
- Living with someone who has a severe disability such as Alzheimer's (25% reduction)
- Reduction if certain adaptations have been completed in the home (reduced to a lower band).

The local council has a legal duty to carry out a Carers assessment once the Carer has been identified

Careline Personal Alarm Service

Telecare services that can provide an alarm and pendant for use in an emergency, this can give you peace of mind when you are away from the person you care for.

Blue Badge

A Blue Badge enables people whose ability to walk is seriously impaired, or those registered severely visually impaired, either as a passenger or driver, to park close to their destination.

Freedom Pass

A Freedom Pass gives people with disabilities or visual impairments and older people (state pension age) free travel on buses, underground, trains, trams and DLR services.

London Taxi-card Scheme



The Taxi-card is a London-wide door-to-door licensed taxi and private hire vehicle service. Harrow members can take a maximum of 40 trips per year. It is available for those who have difficulty in using mainstream public transport such as tubes, buses and trains, and serious long-term mobility problems, or severe sight impairment.



KEEP IN TOUCH

Allie Brice, Carer Lead for Harrow Council's Adult Social Care department. Email carers@harrow.gov.uk for information and advice



Help at work for carers

Carers have statutory rights and employers have a duty to offer assistance to carers who work.

The statutory rights are:

- The right to request flexible working arrangements, which may include working flexible hours, working from home or a job share
- The right to request time off in emergencies, where there has been a breakdown of care, or to deal with an emergency with the person you care for
- Protection from discrimination; the reason that carers are protected against direct discrimination and harassment is because they are counted as being 'associated' with someone who is protected by the law because of their age or disability

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- If you care for a disabled child you could have up to 18 weeks unpaid parental leave up until they are 18.

The requests above cannot be rejected unreasonably. Your employer may also offer additional support and benefits to carers above and beyond the statutory rights. Your employer may have a carer's policy. You can find out more from your HR department



What other help can I get as a carer?

Cinema Exhibitor's Association (CEA)

The CEA Card is a national card scheme developed for UK cinemas by the UK Cinema Association (UKCA).

The Card enables a disabled cinema guest to receive a complimentary ticket for someone to go with them when they visit a participating cinema. You can find more information at their website: www.ceacard.co.uk

Disabled Person's Railcard

If the person you care for is in receipt of certain benefits, then they may be eligible to apply for a disabled person's railcard, which will entitle them and their carer to up to a third off train tickets.

Free Entrance to Tourist Attractions/Parks

Many tourist attractions or leisure parks will offer free or reduced entrance to carers if they are accompanying the person they care for.

Priority Services Register for energy supplies e.g. electricity and gas

The Priority Services Register allows customers who need extra support or additional services, such as different bill formats like Braille or advanced warning when there's a planned interruption of power supply.

“ If the person you care for has a disability, illness or is above state pension age you can apply to your energy providers to be added to the Priority Services Register ”

If the person you care for has a disability, illness or is above state pension age you can apply to your energy providers to be added to the Priority Services Register.

Warm Home Discount Scheme

The Warm Home Discount scheme offers a one off payment towards the

energy bills of households that need it most. The discount is provided to eligible customers as a payment credited to their energy account, or as a credit on their prepayment card or key, during the winter.

If you are in receipt of pension credit or in receipt of a low income then you may qualify. Please contact your energy supplier for further information.

A Carer's Story

I have been a carer for the past ten years, and can honestly say that it has its ups and downs, but, also in my experience there is no one that will offer the level of care to the person you love, as you would. Being a carer can be very taxing, worrying, and depressing for a variety of different reasons, mainly “am I making the right decisions?”, “am I giving the appropriate care?”, etc for your loved one. Well, there are no correct answers as I found out when I met someone from Harrow Carers a couple of years ago. From this meeting, I have realised the decisions you make for the person you are caring for based on the right reasons are usually the correct ones.

I would strongly recommend to anyone who is a carer to inform your GP practice, so that they are aware that you are a carer, and contact Harrow Carers, as I have found that they offer a wide variety of support, advice and services. One of the most important things is “YOU ARE NOT ALONE”, there are over twenty-four thousand carers in Harrow
(A carer from Belmont Health Centre).

Gillie's Survival Guide

Content from Carer's UK Website:(We've re-posted a humorous survival guide that Gillie wrote to help her cope with the stresses of caring)



My Guide to Survival as a Carer

1

Unless someone's a medic no one else is an expert on your other half's condition. Therefore, they are not worth listening to and their opinion/ advice is worth diddly squat.

2

Dust and fluff are not nuclear waste. They will not cause a global crisis. They will be there long after you have stopped breathing, so don't beat yourself up over microbes that don't matter. Do your housework when you have the time, energy and inclination or nothing else to do.

3

If people feel it necessary to pass an ill-informed judgement, comment or opinion, feel sorry for them. There is no cure for terminal stupidity. It's their problem, don't make it yours.

4

Find something to laugh at several times a day. It's a great antidote for the blues. Don't worry if no one else finds it funny. They don't walk in your shoes and laughing to yourself deters unwanted attention.

“

Find something to laugh at several times a day. It's a great antidote for the blues

”

5

Find an oasis of peace in a day to just be quiet without any input. There are many demands on your time, so refuel your sense of well-being as often as you can. Failing that, put your earphones in and lose yourself in your favourite tracks.

6

Value the people who support you, no matter if they are real, virtual, near or far. The fact they understand your journey and take time to say, "Hi" is like early morning dew. It refreshes and revives your spirit. Although you may feel it often, you aren't alone.

7

Remember you are only human, prey to all the human emotions, negative and positive. Swearing under your breath does not make you a bad person. It's just a release valve that stops negative emotions erupting into something far worse.

8

Swearing can be therapeutic! They are only words, not bullets, and can make you laugh, relieve stress and give you the oomph to continue, when you want to give up.

9

Sing at the top of your voice. It doesn't matter if you've a voice like a bullfrog with laryngitis. Who cares? You're not auditioning for X Factor and you haven't time for a record contract anyway, so let rip. You'll feel heaps better afterwards.

10

Don't fret if the words "Thank you" are never heard. Being selfish is easy. Compassion, empathy, love and gratitude take time and effort. You can freak relatives out by telling them it could be their turn to look after their family member one day, if anything happens to you!

11

Take time to nurture your dreams, hopes and ambitions. Like a rare bloom, it may not be their time to flower, but if you neglect them, they'll never get the chance.

12

Some days can be like being lost in the fog but above the clouds the sun is shining. Watch your steps, look after yourself and with care you won't plummet over the cliff.

13

This is but one journey. Keep in mind you still have a life and a future. If this journey changes or ends, you need to be fit to start the next one, so be prepared. It's a big, scary world out there, you need to be strong, face your fears and remember that kindness is a passport to the best places.

CONTACT US

INQUIRY

CHAT

MESSAGE

EMAIL

FEEDBACK

CALL

GET IN TOUCH

**WE'RE HERE
FOR YOU**

Harrow Carers

Tel: 020 8868 5224

Email: admin@harrowcarers.org

Website: www.HarrowCarers.org

Harrow Council

Tel: 020 8901 2680

Email: ahadultsservices@harrow.gov.uk

Website: www.harrow.gov.uk

Careline personal alarm service

Tel: 020 8861 3242

Email: careline@harrow.gov.uk

Website: www.harrow.gov.uk

NWL Intergrated Care System

Website: www.nwlondonics.nhs.uk

Novus Homeshare

Tel: 0330 0882225

Website: www.novus-homeshare.org.uk

Harrow Community Transport

Tel: 020 8427 6619

Email: admin@harrowct.gov.uk

Harrow Parent Carer Forum

Tel: 07928 577689

Email: <https://harrowparentforum.org/>

Dial-a-ride

Tel: 08459 991 999

Harrow Concessionary Travel

(blue badge, freedom pass and taxi card) Tel: 020 8901 2680

Email: concessionarytravel@harrow.gov.uk

Health help now Harrow

Website: harrow.healthhelpnow.nhs.uk

NHS Support and benefits for carers

Website: www.nhs.uk/conditions/social-care-and-support-guide/support-and-benefits-for-carers

DWP

Website: www.gov.uk/browse/benefits

Harrow Shop mobility

Tel: 020 8427 1200

Website: www.harrowshopmobility.org

Community Connex

Tel: 020 88698484 / 020 84237382

Email: hello@communityconnex.co.uk

Turn2Us

Email: <https://www.turn2us.org.uk>



We would like to acknowledge our colleagues and partners for their work on the development of this booklet.