

Social Services

Essential Guide for Carers



February
2025

ESSENTIAL GUIDE FOR CARERS - INFORMATION LEAFLET

Mae'r ddogfen hon ar gael yn Gymraeg / This document is available in Welsh

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ARE YOU A CARER?

Do you look after somebody who couldn't manage without you?

Did you know that according to the 2021 census, we have an estimated 18,000 carers in Flintshire?

Have you ever thought that you may be a carer?

It's natural that many of us will not see ourselves as carers, because we view ourselves as a mum, dad, wife, husband, friend, neighbour, relative, partner of the person we are helping in their day-to-day life.

The Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act came into effect on 6th April 2016 and defines 'carer' as a person who cares, unpaid, for a friend or family member who due to illness, disability, frailty, a mental health problem or an addiction, cannot cope without their support.

Anyone can become a carer. Carers come from all walks of life, all cultures and can be any age. Many feel they are doing what anyone else would in the same situation, looking after their mother, son, or best friend and just getting on with it.

A carer may be any age including:

- A young carer under 18 years of age.
- A parent carer caring for a child with additional support needs.
- A friend or neighbour providing support to someone who is vulnerable.
- A husband, wife or partner.
- A person caring for an elderly parent who needs support.

Caring for someone can take up a few hours each week, or a carer may be caring for 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

However, when caring for someone it's easy to forget about you, and your own health and well-being which is why it's important that you recognise when you need support and are able to ask others for that support.

Caring can have a big impact on your life, and this may increase as time goes by. Initially you may not feel that you need support but over time this may change and it's important you know where to turn and that you know there is support out there to help you care for someone you love. This doesn't always mean someone else will provide paid care instead of you, it can mean just having someone to talk to, support to understand what your options are in terms of supporting your income if you have to stop work or allowing you to have a much-needed break.

Many individuals, when they begin to look after another person, do not necessarily consider themselves as a carer. The task they undertake is often carried out because of the love and respect they have for the person they care for or in friendship for another person they know well. For many it will be a gradual process, or it could happen when you least expect it. For

others it may come with the birth of a disabled child and will bring about a lifetime of caring. Whatever your situation there is support out there for you and we hope that by reading this guide it will help you know where to find it when you need it.

You may also be a young carer a person under the age of 18 caring for a family member and there are specific services for young people that can support and help give you the support you need.

UNDERSTANDING YOUR RIGHTS AS A CARER

Carers in Wales are supported under the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 ensures that carers, who provide unpaid care to family members or friends, have specific rights and access to support services:

Well-being and Support

Support with your well-being, which includes physical and mental health, protection from abuse, access to education and employment, and maintaining social relationships.

Information and Advice

As a carer, you have the right to receive information and advice to help understand the support available and how to access it.

Carers Needs Assessment

Carers are entitled to a Carers Needs Assessment if your needs cannot be met by information and advice. This assessment identifies the support required to help you in your caring role. The assessment process will involve you and will consider your personal circumstances and preferences.

Advocacy and Voice

As a carer, you have the right to be involved in decisions about your support. If you struggle to participate fully, then you are entitled to an advocate who can support you to represent your views and ensure your voice is heard.

Did you know the rights of an unpaid carer also includes:

- Rights at work and the right not to be discriminated against because of your caring role.
- The right to be recognised as a carer.
- The right to be included in hospital discharge planning.
- The right to register with your GP Practice as an unpaid carer to enable you to access health checks and vaccinations.
- The right for unpaid carers to get up to 5 unpaid days off work for their care role needs through the Carers Leave Act 2024.

SERVICES FOR CARERS IN FLINTSHIRE

In Flintshire we are proud to support over 18,000 residents who have caring responsibilities both through in-house services and our partner organisations.

Services to support you in your caring role can include:

- Providing advice and information
- Help to get a break from your caring role
- Help to claim carer's allowance
- Directing you to voluntary organisations that provide grants and support for carers
- Assistance with gardening, shopping or purchase of equipment
- Direct payments which give you greater choice and control over the services you want
- Support Groups and Counselling
- Volunteering
- Peer Support
- Carer Training
- Specialist support – Dementia, Mental Health, Brain Injury, Substance Misuse etc.
- Help getting back to work
- Re-assessing the support provided to the person you care for to ensure your own assessed needs are met
- Young Carers Support

We are always developing new and creative ways to provide support to carers, we would encourage you to contact us to find out more about how we can support you.

North East Wales Carer Information Service (NEWCIS)	Social Services
Tel: 01352 752525 Website: www.newcis.org.uk E-mail: enquiries@newcis.org.uk	Tel: 01352 702000 E-mail: ssduty@flintshire.gov.uk

You can also look at the DEWIS online service directory at www.dewis.wales

CARER'S NEEDS ASSESSMENTS

Whilst some services and support can be arranged directly with a voluntary organisation or community group, some services are provided following a Carer's Needs Assessment.

What is a Carer's Needs Assessment?

A Carer's Needs Assessment is an opportunity to discuss what support or services you may need to help you with your caring role. The assessment will look at how caring can affect your life, what you want to achieve in life, what support you need as an unpaid carer and whether you are eligible for help from Social Services, or your needs can be met by provision of information, advice and guidance.

A Carer's Needs Assessment does not check to see how or why you are caring.

It considers your personal strengths, support available from family members, friends, and others in the community. It will also look at whether you work or wish to work, and whether you wish to participate in education, training, or leisure activities.

Finding out what needs a person has starts with a conversation. During this conversation we will ask what matters to you.

We will ask you about your circumstances; personal outcomes, barriers to achieving those outcomes, any risks to you or to other persons and your strengths and capabilities. We will also ask you about the support you already receive, and we will talk about where you can access support that you need.

A Carer's Needs Assessment is NOT an assessment of your ability in your caring role. A Carer's Needs Assessment looks at what support you need to sustain you in your caring role.

Sometimes people feel they are not ready for support or a more in-depth assessment and that's fine too. The Carer's Assessment can still help people to think about what support they have outside of formal services that could help them at this time, and it can also give them the important information they need for accessing support in the future.

An assessment gives you the chance to:

- Think about your needs
- Consider the impact of caring on your 'well-being'
- Talk, in private, to someone who understands your situation
- Be listened to
- Think about whether you feel you can go on caring and the choices you have
- Talk about the support you think is important to carry out your role and to maintain your health and well being

How do I get a Carers Needs Assessment?

If the person you care for currently has the support of a Social Worker, they will be able to complete your Carer's Needs Assessment with you. They will be in a good position to do this as they will already be aware of your situation and be able to look at the support you need holistically alongside the support may be needed for the person you care for.

If the person you care for does not currently have a Social Worker, you can contact NEWCIS who are commissioned by Flintshire County Council Social Services to provide Information, Advice and Carer's Needs Assessments to carers in Flintshire.

What happens after a Carer's Needs Assessment?

Once your initial assessment is completed, you may receive information and advice or be referred on to Carer services that will provide you with the support that you need. At this time, it may be identified that you need a more in-depth assessment at which point someone will come out and speak to you or have a more detailed phone conversation with you to further consider your needs and what support would benefit you.

This assessment can be carried out even if the person you care for refuses services, as it is specifically to look at your needs. You can also have a joint assessment with the person you care for so that both of your needs can be assessed at the same time, and you can both contribute.

Once your assessment is completed, we will help you to get the right support in place for you. You will also be offered a review assessment within a year to check how you are finding the support and discuss if your needs have changed. If your circumstances change in the meantime, you can request an earlier review assessment.

If you are unhappy with any decision made by Social Services, you can appeal.

Carer's Assessment Key Points:

- Carers who's needs have been identified for assessed support should be offered an assessment.
- You will be entitled to an assessment regardless of the amount or type of care you provide, your financial means or your level of need for support. You don't necessarily have to live with the person you are looking after or be caring full-time to have an assessment. You may be juggling work and care, and this is having a big impact on your life.
- You can have an assessment whether or not the person you are looking after has had a needs assessment, or if the Council has decided they are not eligible for support.
- If you and the person you are looking after agree, a combined assessment of both your needs can be undertaken at the same time.
- If you are sharing caring responsibilities with another person, or more than one person, including a child under 18, you can each have an assessment (although for a child under 18 the assessment will be different).
- Your assessment will be completed in 2 parts. Part 1 to provide information and advice or to direct you to voluntary or community services. Part 2 an in-depth assessment to look at your needs in more detail. You have the right to both parts, but you may feel you would only want Part 1 depending on the level of support you require. Part 2 is always available to you should your needs increase.

HOW HAS A CARER'S NEEDS ASSESSMENT HELPED ME? – Sarah's Story.

Sarah, a 45-year-old single mother living in Flintshire, became the full-time carer for her 78-year-old mother, Margaret, who has advanced Parkinson's disease and early-stage dementia. Sarah also has two teenage children and works part-time as a teaching assistant.

Challenges Before the Assessment:

- **Physical Strain:** Sarah was helping her mother with all aspects of daily living—bathing, dressing, feeding, and mobility. Without proper equipment or training, she developed chronic back pain and fatigue.
"I was lifting Mum several times a day without any help or equipment. My back was constantly in pain, but I just kept going because I didn't think I had a choice."
- **Emotional and Mental Health:** The constant demands of caregiving left Sarah feeling overwhelmed and isolated. She had little time for herself, and her mental health began to deteriorate. She experienced anxiety, frequent crying spells, and insomnia.
"I felt like I was drowning. I was exhausted, anxious all the time, and I couldn't remember the last time I had a proper night's sleep."
- **Financial Pressure:** Reducing her work hours to care for her mother meant a significant drop in income. She struggled to cover household bills, and was unaware of the financial support available to her as a carer.
"Cutting back my hours at work meant we were barely scraping by. I didn't even know I could get help as a carer."
- **Social Isolation:** Sarah's social life had all but disappeared. She rarely saw friends, missed family events, and felt increasingly disconnected from her community.
"I lost touch with friends. I missed birthdays, weddings, everything. It felt like the world was moving on without me."

Impact on Family Life:

Sarah's children were also affected. Sarah often felt guilty for not being emotionally available to them and worried about the long-term impact on their wellbeing.

"My kids were amazing, but I could see it was affecting them too. I wasn't the mum I wanted to be."

The Carer's Needs Assessment:

After a conversation with her GP, Sarah was referred for a Carer's Needs Assessment. A Wellbeing Officer from NEWCIS visited her home and conducted a thorough review of her situation, including her physical and emotional health, financial circumstances, and the impact of caring on her family life, known as a Carers Needs Assessment.

Support and Outcomes:

During the Carers Needs Assessment, Sarah was supported by the Well-being Officer to identify the following outcomes that she felt might help her.

- **Respite Care:** Sarah was able to apply for access to respite care, allowing her a couple of hours each week to rest, attend appointments, or spend time with her children.
“Just having a few hours to myself each week made such a difference. I could breathe again.”
 - **Emotional Support:** Sarah was referred to our local carers’ support group and began attending regular counselling sessions, which helped her manage stress and feel less alone.
“Talking to people who understood what I was going through was a lifeline. I didn’t feel so alone anymore.”
 - **Financial Assistance:** The assessment identified that Sarah was eligible for Carer’s Allowance, a one-off grant for home adaptations, and a council tax reduction. She was supported to apply for these and this eased her financial burden significantly.
“It took a huge weight off my shoulders. I could finally stop worrying about every penny.”
 - **Training and Equipment:** Sarah received manual handling training and was able to attend courses on Parkinson’s disease and Dementia, which have helped Sarah to understand her mum’s conditions and how best to support her.
“The training has changed everything. I could care for Mum safely without hurting myself and I can understand how to help her better. I can see that my approach is helping her.”
 - **Family Support:** The NEWCIS Well-being Officer also arranged for the NEWCIS Young Carers’ support service to engage with Sarah’s children, helping them understand their grandmother’s condition and offering emotional support.
“It meant the world to me that someone was looking out for them too.”
 - **Community Resources:** Sarah was also connected with several local services that made a lasting impact:
 - **NEWCIS:** Provided one-to-one support, peer groups, and information about carers’ rights and entitlements.
 - **Parkinson’s UK Local Branch:** Offered condition-specific advice, support groups, and access to a specialist nurse.
 - **NEWCIS Young Carers Service:** Helped Sarah’s children understand their grandmother’s condition and gave them a safe space to talk.
 - **Citizens Advice Flintshire:** Assisted with benefit applications, budgeting advice, and energy bill support.
 - **Community Transport Scheme:** Enabled Sarah’s mother to attend medical appointments without relying solely on Sarah.
- “I didn’t even know half of these services existed. Once I was connected, it felt like I had a whole team behind me.”*

Impact:

Six months later, Sarah reported a marked improvement in her wellbeing. She felt more confident in her caring role, her back pain had eased, and she was sleeping better. Her children were more settled, and she had reconnected with friends. Most importantly, she no longer felt invisible—she felt recognised, supported, and valued.

“The assessment didn’t just help me—it helped my whole family. I finally felt seen, heard, and supported.”

For more information on Carer’s Need Assessments in Flintshire, please contact:

North East Wales Carer Information Service (NEWCIS)

Tel: 01352 752525

Website: www.newcis.org.uk

E-mail: enquiries@newcis.org.uk

YOUNG CARERS

Young carers are children who help look after a member of the family (can include siblings) who is sick, disabled or has mental health problem, or is misusing drugs or alcohol.

Their day-to-day responsibilities often include cooking, cleaning, shopping, providing nursing and personal care and giving emotional support.

With so many adult responsibilities, young carers often miss out on opportunities that other children have to play and learn. Many struggle educationally and are often bullied for being 'different'. They can become isolated, with no relief from the pressures at home, and no chance to enjoy a normal childhood. They are often afraid to ask for help as they fear letting the family down or being taken into care. So, it's really important they know we can support them.

Young Carers are entitled to Young Carers Assessments. This means that NEWCIS or Social Services will want to meet with the family and try to understand the caring role the child is undertaking, how this might be affecting them and what support we could help them and the family with.

The assessment must involve speaking with the child, their parents and any other person that the child requests to be part of the assessment.

The assessment itself must look at whether or not the young carer wishes to continue caring, and whether it is appropriate for them to continue caring.

When completing an assessment, we will look at any education, training, work or recreational activities the young carer is or wishes to participate in.

Where a young carer's eligible needs are identified as requiring support, we can provide the following services through NEWCIS:

- Support and counselling
- Training and activities
- Peer support
- Linking young people with local clubs and groups
- Advice and Information
- Support to meet the outcomes the young carer wants to achieve.

We currently support carers from the age of 5 up to 18 years of as a young carer. If you are a young carer, we are keen to make sure that you and your family gets the support they need.

Please contact:

North East Wales Carer Information Service (NEWCIS)	Social Services for Children
Tel: 01352 752525 Website: www.newcis.org.uk E-mail: enquiries@newcis.org.uk	Tel: 01352 701000.

SPECIALIST SERVICES COMMISSIONED BY FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

There are a wide range of services available to carers in Flintshire, for information on organisations who offer support visit DEWIS: www.dewis.wales

We also have a number of providers who are commissioned by Flintshire County Council to provide specific and specialist support

NEWCIS – North East Wales Carers Information Service

NEWCIS delivers a wide range of information and support to adults caring for a person in Flintshire for free and in confidence. The NEWCIS carers' newsletter produced quarterly helps to keep carers up to date on both local and national news, services, training, events and carers issues.

NEWCIS runs a training programme for carers in four key areas: practical skills, emotional support, leisure/hobby activities and employment support. Courses include moving and positioning, first aid, stress management, painting and IT.

NEWCIS facilitates a weekly drop in at Mold Carers Centre located on the High Street in Mold (38-42) and monthly support groups. Holistic therapy and counselling appointments are available with NEWCIS and can be booked free of charge on 01352 752525.

NEWCIS provides a voice for carers representing the views of carers in planning and developing carers services, both locally and nationally, with partners in statutory and voluntary organisations. They organise events throughout the year to inform carers about their rights and services available to them. This includes Carers Week and Carers Rights Day.

NEWCIS has a grant scheme to assist carers with practical needs such as gardening, home maintenance, a holiday or piece of equipment.

NEWCIS coordinates the Bridging the Gap Respite Scheme, offering carers a flexible break scheme both planned and emergency. NEWCIS can provide respite day care on a Saturday for those suffering from dementia.

NEWCIS has services available for those who care for people with dementia in the community. These services include exercise scheme for carers and cared for with dementia, dementia friendly gardening sessions, counselling for carers of people with dementia. We also have access to small grants for communities to become dementia friendly, access to reminiscence packs and pods in the community through a partnership with Flintshire County Council.

NEWCIS also has a National Lottery funded project that supports carers to improve their own wellbeing and those of the people they care for. The Project offers one to one support, Advocacy, Welfare Rights Advice, breaks and respite and activities and events.

For further details contact NEWCIS on:

North East Wales Carers Information Service (NEWCIS)

Tel: 01352 752525

Website: www.newcis.org.uk

E-mail: enquiries@newcis.org.uk

Neuro Therapy Centre

The Neuro Therapy Centre in Saltney supports people with a range of neurological conditions and their carers. The Centre covers a wide region from North Wales and Cheshire through to Shropshire and the Wirral. It is a base for the provision of regular opportunities for quality carer relief time, access to information, counselling services, and individual and group advice sessions.

Carers can access social events, carer groups, tailored workshops/ group sessions on relaxation, mental health awareness, manual handling and Pilates and support networks.

For further details contact the Neuro Therapy Centre on:

The Neuro Therapy Centre

Tel: 01244 678619

Website: www.neurotherapycentre.org

Daffodils

Daffodils are a registered charity and self-help group for disabled children and young people aged 0-25 years old and their immediate families within Flintshire. Daffodils provide over 175 events and activities each year, which include weekly youth clubs, sports centre activities, soft play, themed workshops, school holiday excursions and parent carer well-being sessions. All activities have Daffodils staff and volunteers on hand to engage with the children and young people, which enables parent / carers to mingle, chat and learn from each other, gaining much needed support from like-minded carers. (Parents must attend with their child/young person at all events.)

For further details please contact:

Daffodils

Tel: 01352 250147

E-mail: daffodils@tiscali.co.uk

USEFUL CONTACTS

A wide range of voluntary organisations provide independent advice and assistance. Contacting them will give you information on your rights.

Flintshire Citizens advice Bureau	
08444 772020	www.flintshirecab.org.uk
Flintshire Care and Repair Flintshire Care and Repair offer advice on housing repairs, adaptations and benefits for disabled and elderly people.	
01352 758700	www.flintshirecr.co.uk
Age Connects North East Wales	
08450 549969	www.acnew.org.uk
Mencap Cymru Helpline	
0808 808 1111	www.mencap.org.uk/wales
MIND	
01352 757637	www.flintshiremind.org.uk
North East Wales Carers Information Service (NEWCIS)	
01352 752525	www.carers.org/local/wales/flintshire
Flintshire Disability Forum	
01352 755546	
Social Services First Contact, Tŷ Dewi Sant, St. Davids Park, Ewloe, CH5 3FF	
01352 702000	SSDUTY@flintshire.gov.uk www.flintshire.gov.uk/careinfo

COMPLAINTS, COMPLIMENTS AND REPRESENTATIONS

We are aware that despite our best efforts there may be occasions when you need to make a complaint. Any complaint about the services can be made to your Social Worker, their Team Manager or you can contact:

The Complaints Officer
Social Services
Tŷ Dewi Sant,
St David's Park,
Ewloe
Flintshire, CH5 3FF 01352 702623
Email: myview@flintshire.gov.uk

A leaflet 'Your right to compliment and complain' which explains how your comments can be made and how they will be dealt with is available from the same address or online at: www.flintshire.gov.uk/careinfo

A wide range of information on the care and support system in Wales is available online at: www.dewis.wales

Mae'r ddogfen hon ar gael yn Gymraeg. Cysylltwch a 01352 702000 i gael fersiwn Gymraeg.

This document is available in Welsh. Please contact 01352 702000 for a version.

This leaflet is available in alternate formats including Braille and Large Print on request to 01352 702000.