

## CARING FOR SOMEONE



It is estimated that every year 2 million people become carers. If you are a carer it is important that you have the support and information you are entitled to. There is help out there and with information produced by **The Princes Royal Trust For Carers, Direct Gov and Carers UK** we have put together some useful tips.

### Definition of 'carer'

The definition of a 'carer' can sometimes be confusing. A carer is someone who looks after and supports a relative, friend or neighbour who can't manage without help. A number of factors could be due to this and it can range from physical or mental illness, age or disability or addiction. It does not mean someone who is a professional care worker who gets paid for their work. A carer is someone who, does not get paid for providing help and support to a, relative, partner, child, friend or neighbour who can't manage without additional help.

### Financial support for carers

If you do care for someone, there is a variety of financial benefits available to you and also to the person you care for. One of them being a Carer's Allowance which is a taxable benefit for people who cannot work or have a low income because they are looking after someone who is ill or disabled. You may be able to get Carer's Allowance if you spend at least 35 hours a week in your caring role. Other benefits include Council Tax reductions or help with prescriptions. Carers UK produces a range of information about benefits and their CarersLine is able to carry out a benefits check over the phone. 0808 808 7777 (Wednesdays and Thursdays only, 10am-noon, 2pm-4pm).

The current State Pension is based on the number of years in which you have paid or are credited with National Insurance contributions. If you are unable to work because you are caring for someone, you can still get credited with National Insurance contributions. If you are entitled to Carer's Allowance, you will be credited automatically.

Also, your Forester friends are here to help. Many years ago, Benevolent Funds were started in the UK within each Foresters Region, to assist Members in times of need – all four UK Funds were later merged to form the present UK Regional Council Benevolent Fund.

As a Foresters member (policy holder) you may be able to apply to the fund for help. The Trustees consider all applications including specific needs, purchases and assistance during difficult periods. To apply, a member must contact their Branch President listed under the membership section on the Foresters website. They will listen to your needs and arrange to visit you to complete an application form where financial information will be required - confidentially of course. Trustees ensure a response within four weeks of receipt of the completed form – sooner if there is a need.

There are many Foresters Branches across the UK and the volunteer members at your local Branch may also be able to support you in the interim period while an application to the Benevolent Fund is considered, or if the UK Benevolent Fund is unable to help you. Please contact your local Branch and they will visit you where possible, and offer practical help if required.

Branch contact details can be found by entering your postcode into the search box at: [www.foresters.co.uk/ourcommunity/branches](http://www.foresters.co.uk/ourcommunity/branches) or by calling 0800 990066.

## Support

If you are a carer, it is important that you take time for yourself. Time off from caring can help your own well being which is good for both yourself and the person you look after. Where possible include your family and friends to help with support. They could help you take a break from caring? Make sure you do not cope alone!

Speak to your local council because if you provide care for someone aged 18 or over, they should carry out an assessment to see if you are entitled to services. A carer's assessment is about your needs as a carer. You may be entitled to changes to the home, to make life more easier or help with the housework.

## Health services

It can be emotionally and physically demanding caring for someone so if you have any worries about your own health speak to your GP (doctor). Your GP can advise you on keeping healthy. He or she should also be able to give you up to date information about social services and counselling.

## Where to go for help?

Your local council is the first place to go to for information about caring for someone. They will be able to give you advice about services that the council provides. There are also organisations to help, including charities and local groups. Also, other carers can be a great source of support. Some carers groups have online forums, so you can stay in touch with other carers without leaving the house.

Below is a list of useful contact numbers and websites:

### **Carers UK**

[www.carersuk.org](http://www.carersuk.org)

0808 808 7777.

### **The Princess Royal Trust For Carers**

[www.carers.org](http://www.carers.org)

0844 800 4361 – London

01257 234 070 – Northern Office

0141 221 5066 – Scotland

02920 221788 – Wales

[www.directgov.uk](http://www.directgov.uk)