

# Top Tips for Commissioners

**Supporting older carers and ageing parent carers to plan for a future when they are less able or unable to care**

This resource is one of a suite of resources developed alongside a report, No Longer Able to Care: Supporting older carers and ageing parent carers to plan for a future when they are less able or unable to care.

All the resources can be found at [carers.org/resources/all-resources/105-no-longer-able-to-care](https://carers.org/resources/all-resources/105-no-longer-able-to-care).

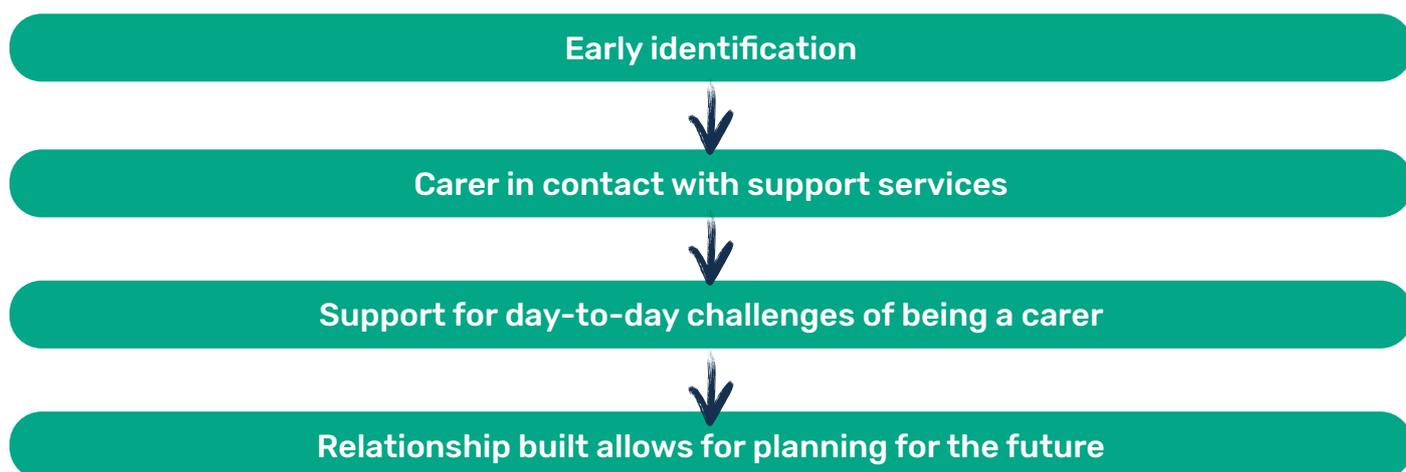
Most unpaid carers will need support at some point in their caring journey. There will come a point in most carers' lives where they will be less able or unable to care. Carers must be supported at this stage to make sure the best possible outcomes are achieved for them and the people they care for.

This resource will help you support carers to plan for a future when they are less able or unable to care. It gives suggestions on what you can do as commissioners to make sure this support is available in your area. It includes free resources you can use to ensure that you are supporting carers and fulfilling your duties under the 2014 Care Act.

You should work with local partners from across health, care and the charity sector to develop services that meet the needs of carers in your local area.

## **Early identification and support of carers are vital. Without this, subsequent support to plan for a future when carers are less able or unable to care becomes more difficult.**

Identifying carers as early as possible will ensure carers are supported at an earlier part of their caring journey. Carers will then be in contact with support services and are more likely to be supported in the daily challenges of being a carer – thereby giving them a chance to plan for the future.



The services you commission should, therefore seek to identify and support carers.

### **Resources**

- **NHS England Commissioning for Carers.**
- **NHS England Carers Toolkit.**

## Once a carer is identified, the support plan that is developed for the carer should set out trigger points where a carer will receive support when they are less able or unable to care.

Support for carers that you commission should include an expectation that the providers will identify carers who are approaching trigger points, and they provide planning and support to enable carers to plan for a future when they are less able or unable to care.

These triggers should be understood as changes in a carer's life which mean they are less able or unable to care. The impact of these changes is likely to be gradual which increases the importance of early dialogue and regular conversations about these different stages of a carer's journey.

The triggers will include:

- A change in the condition of the person they care for meaning carers are less able or unable to care.
- Carers' own health declining.
- Carers' own age.
- Carers becoming physically unable to care.

## Support for carers to plan for a future when they are less able or unable to care is an important area for developments for future services to consider.

Support for carers to plan for a future when they are less able or unable to care is a preventative service. By investing in these services, you are preventing crisis for both carers and people with care and support needs, as well as saving money by intervening early.

- When planning for future services, enabling carers to plan for a future when they are less able or unable to care should be integrated into service provision planning. Carers often do not actively seek support for planning for the future.
- Commissioners need to map existing local support, including early intervention services, and what the local community seeks support for.
- Work with local and national partners to ensure you have the information and support you need to develop services that meet the needs of your population.
- Use **Citizen's Advice's Advice Trends** to get an insight into local needs.

## Subsequent assessments and reassessments should revisit these plans.

- The Care Act stipulates that carers should get an assessment if their circumstances change. These changes in circumstance may be changes to the carer's life or changes to the condition of the person they care for.
- Support for carers that you commission should ensure that this assessment happens. Carers who are approaching trigger points or changes in their carer journey should expect to have support as they become less able or unable to care.

## Planning must take into account the carer's individual needs and circumstances.

- The contracts you commission for carer support in your area – whether provided by carer organisations or others – should include support for carers to plan for the future when they are less able or unable to care.
- Assessments for when carers' circumstances change should be a core part of the support carers receive.
- Services in your area should work to identify carers early and refer them for specialist support.

### Resources

- **Think Local Act Personal (TLAP) – Making it Real.**

Work with local communities to understand varying needs to ensure the services you commission are accessible and appropriate to all.

- **Sense – Decisions to Make, Steps to Take.**

## Services must be designed in a way that makes them open to everyone in your community.

- By law, you are required to ensure that the services you design fulfil your responsibilities under the **Public Sector Equality Duty**.
- Services must be open to everyone in your community, and services must ensure that communities who face additional barriers are engaged and able to access your services.

## Some communities who face additional barriers may prefer support from specialist organisations.

- Commissioning should encourage partnership working among voluntary community and social enterprise sector (VCSE) providers to ensure communities are served according to their needs.
- Work with local communities to understand varying needs to ensure the services you commission are accessible and appropriate to all.
- Specialist services serving these communities should be commissioned
- All information provided must be accessible and you should ensure support and information are provided in the way that services users prefer. For example, many services users will prefer face-to-face support, rather than online support.

# Involve carers in the design of the services that support them.

- Co-design services with local VCS providers and service users.
- Work with service users to develop and design your services.
- Recognise that service users and front line staff working with them can play an important role when designing services.
- Offer carers the chance to help design the services they access. This will need to be done in co-operation with your Providers.
- Several toolkits can help you co-design services with local VCSE providers and service users:
  - **Think Local Act Personal (TLAP) – Making it Real.**
  - **Service Design Tools.**
  - **SCIE’s guide to co-production and co-design.**

## Your local carer support contract should:

- Stipulate future planning.
- Ensure re-assessments are happening.
- Co-design and co-produce with VCS providers and service users.
- Ensure all services are open to all members of the community.
- Encourage and facilitate collaboration among service providers.

## Supporting a carer cycle



## Resources

- **Example checklist used by Oxfordshire Family Support Network (OxFSN).**
- **West Yorkshire & Harrogate Health and Care Partnership’s ‘My Coronavirus Plan B’.**

## What a pathway could look like

Once a carer is identified and referred for support for their caring role, the pathway to supporting them plan for the future could follow the below path:

### The carer is identified and referred for support in their caring role

- Support is put in place to support carer in the day to day challenges.



### As part of support – trigger points for longer term planning are identified by carer and frontline providers

- Providers should talk to carers about why these trigger points are being identified, and why long term planning is important.
- The carer is asked if they would like support from other organisations once which might specialise in supporting people and carers from the community the carer identifies



### Further conversations and reassessments happen to make sure carer needs are documented

- These can be formal statutory reassessments under the Care Act, or more informal assessments carried out by providers.
- The important outcome is that providers are keeping track of carer needs and wishes.



### Once trigger points are approaching – planning begins

- Conversations with carers.
- Conversations with the person or people with support needs.
- Conversations with other family members.



### Create a support plan

- Create an action plan relating to the specific needs and wishes of the carer, person with support needs, and other family members who have been involved.
- Outline what the actions are and how – and by who – the support is going to be put in place.
- Working with other organisations, a support plan is put in place to ensure carers get the support they need.
- Include any referrals to other organisations that will take place and a lead contact.



### Store, record and revisit if necessary

- As this plan will be put in place ideally before it is needed, keep it as a 'live' document.
- Revisit it periodically to ensure it is up to date and still in line with everyone's wishes.
- Share information in line with confidentiality rules.

## About Carers Trust

Carers Trust is a major charity for, with and about carers. We work to improve support, services and recognition for anyone living with the challenges of caring, unpaid, for a family member or friend who is ill, frail, disabled or has mental health or addiction problems.

We do this with a UK wide network of quality assured independent partners and through the provision of grants to help carers get the extra help they need to live their own lives. With these locally based Network Partners we are able to support carers in their homes through the provision of replacement care, and in the community with information, advice, emotional support, hands on practical help and access to much needed breaks. We offer specialist services for carers of people of all ages and conditions and a range of individually tailored support and group activities.

Our vision is that unpaid carers count and can access the help they need to live their lives.

Carers Trust  
Unit 101  
164-180 Union Street  
London SE1 0LH.  
Tel: 0300 772 9600  
Email: [policy@carers.org](mailto:policy@carers.org)  
[Carers.org](http://Carers.org)



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