

Top Tips for Front Line Staff

**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.

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 to make sure you are supporting carers to make this change.

You can use this alongside our Top Tips for Carers resource to enable carers to think about a future when they are less able or unable to care.

Early identification and support of carers are vital.

Without early identification, subsequent support to plan for a future when carers are less able or unable to care becomes more difficult.

- Many carers do not self identify as 'carers'. So, you might have to explain what being a carer means and why support is available to them.
 - Remember that being a carer does not negate other bonds the carer has with the person or people they care for – they are still mothers, fathers, partners, sons, daughters, spouses.
- Working in partnership with local authorities, health partners and charity organisations will help you more effectively identify and support carers.
- Make links with your front line colleagues at other organisations – such as those working for a local authority or charity .
 - You can contact your local Council for Voluntary Service (local umbrella group) to make links with local charities.
 - Ask your employer if your organisation has links to other front line services.

Early identification



Carer in contact with support services



Support for day-to-day challenges of being a carer



Relationship built allows for planning for the future

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.

- Once you've identified and are supporting a carer, you must look for opportunities at the right time and place to talk to them about planning for a future when they are less able to care.
 - This does not necessarily mean that planning for the future when they are less able or unable to care will be in the first support plan, but trigger points should be on your radar and should be considered as time goes on.
- This goes beyond contingency planning, and you may be talking about a situation that will not happen for years to come.
- The support you provide should be tailored to the needs and circumstances of the individual carer.
- Service providers must be proactive in bringing up planning for the future as carers often feel there are higher priorities than planning for the future and may be reluctant to address the issue.

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.

Talk to carers about these trigger points, and have conversations early. This will make it easier for you as a front line worker and for the carer to have the conversations further down the line. (See Resources section below for some questions you could ask.)

These conversations could be formal assessments or they might take a different format – the aim is to allow carers space and time to talk about their own support needs and put support in place at the time it is needed.

- Encourage carers to attend their **NHS Health Check**. (**See who's eligible**).
- Work with carers to complete their **Mid Life MOT**.

Subsequent assessments should revisit these.

- The Care Act means 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 provide should ensure that this happens. Carers who are approaching trigger points or changes in their carer journey should expect to have support in becoming less able or unable to care.

Planning must take into account the carer's individual needs and circumstances. Plans should also reflect the views and needs of the person with care needs.

- Work with the carer to ensure your assessments reflect their needs and wishes.
- Make sure you offer another assessment when the carer's circumstances change.
- Through your initial conversations with the carer, set out what changes in their lives they would like to use to trigger further discussions about planning for a future when they are less able or unable to care.
- Many carers will instinctively talk about their immediate needs.
 - While this is natural and their immediate needs should be addressed, also encourage the carer to think about the long term.
- The views, needs and aspirations of the person or people with care and support needs should also be jointly included in this planning, combined with carers' voices as expert partners in care. This should be enabled through co-planning between services, carers and the person with support needs.

Resources

- **Think Local Act Personal (TLAP) - Making it Real.**
- **Example checklist used by Oxfordshire Family Support Network (OxFSN).**
- **West Yorkshire & Harrogate Health and Care Partnership's 'My Coronavirus Plan B'.**
- **NHS Health Check.**
- **Mid Life MOT.**
- **Sense - Decisions to Make, Steps to Take.**
- **Top Tips for Carers.**

Often this planning will involve another member of the family taking on more, or all of the caring responsibilities. If this is the case, that carer must be identified and supported with their own needs.

- It may be your role to facilitate conversations between the carer who is giving up caring, and the individual or individuals who are picking up more caring responsibilities.
- This is also a chance to talk to the new carer about their needs as a carer, ensuring they get that early support.
- However, no assumption should be made about another family member or friend taking on the caring responsibility.

Make sure you have separate conversations with the family member or friend who will be taking on more caring responsibility about their needs as a carer.

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

Partnership working is vital if carers are to get the support they need. Carers might need to get support from different organisations and it's important to facilitate that.

- Talk to carers about any additional barriers they might face. Discuss their needs and how you can work together to support them.
- Some people may be reluctant to disclose a part of their identity to you. Improving visibility can encourage people to be more open when discussing their identities and the barriers they may face. For example, you could wear a rainbow lanyard to show you are supportive of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) identities, or a spectrum logo badge to show you are supportive of people with autism.
- It is important to work in partnership with other local organisations and refer carers who do need, or may benefit from, specialist support to organisations which can provide that.
- Find out if a carer would prefer support from an organisation serving the community they identify with and/or whether they want peer support from their community.
- Find out how the carer would prefer to receive information.

Provide the carer with information in an accessible format if required. The carer should be at the centre of their support. Support should be put in place around the carer so they are able to plan for a future when they are less able or unable to care.

Carers want to be involved in the design of support services.

- Work with service users to develop and design your services.
- Offer carers the chance to be part of designing the services they access. This will need to be done in co-operation with your commissioners.

Resources

- **Think Local Act Personal – Making it Real.**
- **SCIE’s guide to co-production and co-design.**

Supporting a carer cycle



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.

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