

**Central
Bedfordshire**



CARERS' RIGHTS

Carers 
in bedfordshire

If you look after a family member or friend, it is important you understand your rights as an unpaid carer, and where you are able to access support when you need it.

Why these rights matter

Your caring role can affect your health, wellbeing, social life and income.

Knowing your rights gives you the ability to exercise some control to maintain or regain balance.



Our thanks to Central Bedfordshire Council
for funding the creation of this guide

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Rights to a Carer's Assessment

The Care Act 2014 gives adult carers the same rights to support as the people they care for. This means unpaid carers are entitled to a Carer's Assessment, support to meet any eligible needs, and access to information and advice.

Your local authority (the authority who you pay your council tax to) is responsible for carrying out your assessment, regardless of whether the person you care for is receiving support from them. You can request an assessment at any point in your caring journey.

During the assessment, an assessor will talk with you about your caring role and how it affects your life. They will explore areas such as:

- Whether you are willing and able to continue providing care.
- How your caring responsibilities impact your wellbeing.
- Any support you might need.
- What you would like to achieve in your day-to-day life — for instance, having more time for activities you enjoy.
- Whether you qualify for help from the council.

Following the discussion, the local authority will work with you to create a support plan. This plan outlines the types of support available and identifies what will best help you in your caring role. You may also be offered a direct payment to fund the agreed support.

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Central Bedfordshire Council have been fantastic and I've been allowed 6 weeks respite per year since my Carers Assessment a couple of years ago. All Carers should have an assessment regardless of their financial situation.

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[Click here to read our full guide on carers assessments](#)

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Rights at work

Balancing work alongside caring for someone can be difficult, so it's important to understand your rights.

Statutory rights are those set out by law and apply to everyone. Contractual rights, on the other hand, are specific to the terms in your contract of employment. You can check your employment contract to find out what rights apply to your role.

It's your choice whether to tell your employer about your caring role. However, letting them know can help you access support with managing leave and other arrangements. You may also find colleagues who are carers themselves and can offer understanding or advice.

Some workplaces have a Carer's Policy, which may be outlined in your employment contract, appointment letter, or staff handbook. We also encourage organisations to sign up for our Carer Friendly Tick Award to show their commitment to supporting carers.

You also have the right to request flexible working. This could include home working, flexible or part-time hours, job sharing, term-time working, compressed hours, or working from a different location.

Employers must give serious consideration to any statutory request for flexible working. A request can only be refused for a valid business reason — for example, if the organisation would be unable to meet customer demand, the change would incur excessive costs, or there wouldn't be enough work during the hours requested. As an unpaid carer, you also have the right to take a reasonable amount of time off to deal with an emergency involving someone who depends on you — this could be a family member or another person you care for. This time off may not be paid, so it's worth checking your employment contract for details. Under the Carer's Leave Act 2023, unpaid carers are also entitled to one week of unpaid leave per year.



Carer's Allowance

Carer's Allowance is a benefit for people who spend a significant amount of time caring for someone with substantial care needs. It helps to provide some financial support for the time you dedicate to your caring role.

To be eligible you must:

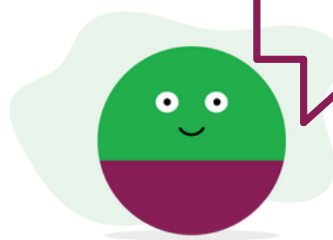
- Care for someone at least 35 hours per week
- Care for a person who receives disability benefit (e.g. PIP, DLA, Attendance Allowance)
- Earn no more than £196/week (from 7 April 2025)
- Be aged 16+ and not be in full-time education

You do not have to be related to, or live with, the person you care for.

If you're eligible for Carer's Allowance, you'll receive £83.30 a week and it can be backdated for up to three months.

Following the discussion, the local authority will work with you to create a support plan. This plan outlines the types of support available and identifies what will best help you in your caring role. You may also be offered a direct payment to fund the agreed support.

[Click here to read our full guide on Carer's Allowance](#)



Benefits calculator
turn
2US

If you are unsure on what benefits you can and cannot claim for your circumstances we have a handy benefits calculator on our website provided by our partner Turn2Us

Health and Wellbeing

Caring for someone can be rewarding, but it can also be physically and emotionally demanding. It's important to look after your own health and wellbeing so that you can continue caring well.

As a carer you are entitled to receive an annual flu jab and Covid booster for free.

Tell your GP you are a carer. They can put you onto the records of the person you are caring for so they can include you in any medical decisions.

Have your voice heard

Speaking up as a carer can be tough, yet your voice holds significant power. Historically, carers speaking out has led to real change – that's how we've got our carer rights in the first place.

If you want to have your voice you can:

- Join your local Healthwatch
- Join our Carers Voice Programme
- Speak to your local elected representatives
- Join your surgery Patient Participation Group to advocate for carers
- Give your feedback - good and bad - to service providers from your perspective as a carer



Protection from discrimination

The Equality Act 2010 protects people caring for someone who is an older person or who has a disability as they are associated with someone who is protected by law. For example, you could not be turned down for a job because of your caring role. If you are caring for a child (under 18) and you have continuous employment with your employer for one year, you are entitled to parental leave. This is usually unpaid. Leave can be in blocks of one week, but also can be taken one day at a time. The maximum amount of leave is four weeks in a year, and you should give at least 21 days' notice

Other information

We have a wide range of guides on our website

- Bedfordshire Carers Guide
- Carer's Assessment
- Choosing the right care home
- Carer's allowance
- Hospital discharge
- Carers wellbeing
- Respite
- Financial Checklist
- Employment support
- Life after bereavement



Carers' Rights checklist

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If employed, have you told your employer you are a carer?

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Carry out a benefits check through the Turn2Us benefit calculator

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Tell your GP you a carer

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Request a carers assessment if you need additional support

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Feedback on your experiences as a carer to help improve service improvement

