

Help for Carers



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Q. Last year my wife was told she has a long-term illness. Now she needs to use a wheelchair. I look after her, but it takes up all my time. I don't know how much longer I can cope or which way to turn. Help!

A. There IS a lot of help available...the most practical way to get help is by having a Carers Assessment which looks at your needs as a carer.

Q. How do I get one?

A. Someone from Social Services can visit you at home and you can tell them what would make caring easier for you. They were very helpful when I started looking after Dad.

Q. So what would they do for me?

A. They can tell you about support available to assist you with your caring responsibilities which takes the pressure off you. This may include help with your wife's personal care, housework, sitting service, daycare and breaks from caring. It can be physically and emotionally exhausting when someone else depends on you all the time. You will need time to yourself to re-charge. A short break might mean your wife going to stay in a caring environment where she is looked after, or a Home-Based Breaks Service where she can stay in familiar surroundings with help at hand.

Q. And how much will this cost?

A. Someone from Torbay Council's Financial Assessment and Benefits (FAB) Team can also visit you to look at your partner's income and help you both apply for any benefits you are entitled to which help pay for this care. The person who came to see me filled out all the forms and Dad and I really appreciated their friendly advice.

Q. Is there anyone else who can help me?

A. Yes. Many doctors' surgeries in Torbay have a Carers Support Worker who will give you advice and information about local services which are relevant to you. They can also tell you about support groups where you can meet other carers. You can arrange to see a Carers Support Worker at the surgery or they will visit you at home if this is easier for you.

Q. Our 10-year-old son helps to look after his Mum, is there any support for him?

A. Torbay Young Carers Project supports young people under the age of 18. Your son will enjoy their fun activities and outings and will meet other children who understand what it's like to help look after someone at home.



Q. I'm worried about leaving my wife alone, but I need to go shopping.

A. Don't worry, the Community Alarm Service can supply a pendant alarm for your wife to wear. In an emergency she can press the button and help will arrive quickly. Since Dad had one I never worry about leaving him and I've even been able to keep my part-time job.

Q. What if something happens to me when I'm out?

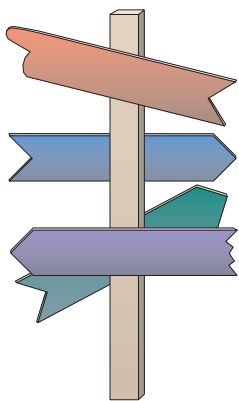
A. Carry a Carers Emergency response Card, like I do. If I had an accident or was delayed in returning home others would realise that Dad relies on me and needs attention. Help would be provided when it was most needed. It's very reassuring. You can get one free by joining Torbay Carers Register.



Q. My wife is going into hospital soon and we both feel anxious. Can anyone there help?

A. Medical staff can give you both information about your wife's stay. When she is ready to leave hospital they will discuss how best to help you and arrange extra support if you need

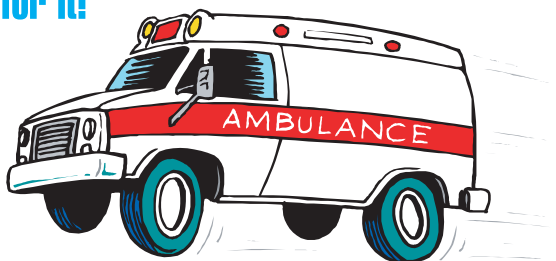
it. If you have any other concerns you can speak to a Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) Officer who is there to help anyone using the NHS. All these people will want to put your mind at rest.



Q. Is there anything else I need to know?

A. It can be very stressful caring for someone else, so look after your own health, too and make sure your doctor knows you are a carer. If someone has a fall and you are worried about hurting them or yourself call 999 and ask for the Ambulance Service. A fall might happen because of frailty, illness or a stroke. Sometimes a fall can cause an injury, so never feel you are wasting their time.

Remember there is a lot of help for carers - Make sure you ask for it!



Who is a Carer?

A 'Carer' is someone who has caring responsibilities for a spouse, child with special needs, relative, friend or neighbour, who due to disability, frailty, illness or vulnerability cannot manage alone in the community. Carers care without pay and can be of any age.

Sources of information for Carers

For information about a Carers Assessment, short breaks, Home-Based Breaks Service and the FAB Team, contact Torbay Social Services on:

Torquay 01803 208500

Paignton and
Brixham 01803 208600

The following services can be contacted direct:

Torbay Young Carers 01803
Project 402754/402781

Torbay Community
Alarm Service 01803 522228

Torbay Carers Register . . 01803 522228

Patient Advice and
Liaison Service (PALS) . . . 0800 02 82037

South Devon Carers
Consortium 01803 294275

Carers Support Workers can be contacted at
doctors' surgeries.

websites:

www.torbay.gov.uk/carers

www.torbay-pct.nhs.uk

and Torbay Hospital's is

www.sdhct-nhs.uk

Leaflets giving more details about each service can be found in Council offices, libraries, doctors' surgeries and at public information points.