

# Information and Advice for Deaf Carers

## Are you Deaf?

- Do you regularly look after someone who needs support?
- Do you do this for free?



Across the UK, approximately 6.5 million people are carers, supporting a loved one who is older, disabled or seriously ill. You could be a carer. This information can help you get the support you need and explains your rights as a carer.



**Royal Association for Deaf people**

Together with Deaf people; creating a better future

# What is a carer?

A carer is anyone who cares, unpaid, for a friend or family member who due to illness, disability, a mental health problem or an addiction cannot cope without their support.

Anyone can become a carer. Carers can be of any age. Many feel they are doing what anyone else would in the same situation; looking after a close family member or friend. Carers don't choose to become carers; it happens. They often feel that if they don't do it – no-one will.

Carers might help with daily needs and activities like feeding, bathing, dressing, toileting, lifting and moving. Other carers support people who are fairly independent, but may need someone to assist with tasks like transport/travel, shopping and housework.

Sometimes more than one carer looks after the same person. For example; a wife with dementia needs support from her husband and daughter. In this case both the husband and the daughter are carers.

## Carers can be any age

A young person can also be a carer. Young carers often take on practical and/or emotional caring responsibilities that would normally be expected of an adult. The tasks undertaken can vary according to the nature of the illness or disability, the level and frequency of need for care and the structure of the family as a whole. A hearing child or young person might provide communication support for their deaf parents.

It is important to recognise that whilst this might be acceptable informally in the home, appointments or meetings such as a GP check-up, hospital consultation or school parents evenings will require a qualified, NRCPD registered BSL interpreter to facilitate communication.

Support services are available for young carers. The local council may provide support or activity groups for young carers so they can share experiences with others.

If you are a young carer or know someone who is, contact our Children and Family Service at: [cft@royaldeaf.org.uk](mailto:cft@royaldeaf.org.uk) or your local children's services/social services for advice and support.

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# Caring can be hard work

Supporting someone regularly can be a very positive experience for you, the carer, and the person you support.

Caring can also be exhausting, stressful and hard work.

Although as a carer you want the best for the person you care for; you also need support.

## Counselling or mental health support

National Deaf Services can provide a range of mental health services for Deaf people:

[www.swlstg-tr.nhs.uk/our-services/specialist-services/national-deaf-services](http://www.swlstg-tr.nhs.uk/our-services/specialist-services/national-deaf-services)

SignHealth provides a service delivered in BSL: [www.signhealth.org.uk](http://www.signhealth.org.uk)

Your doctor can refer you to both of these services.



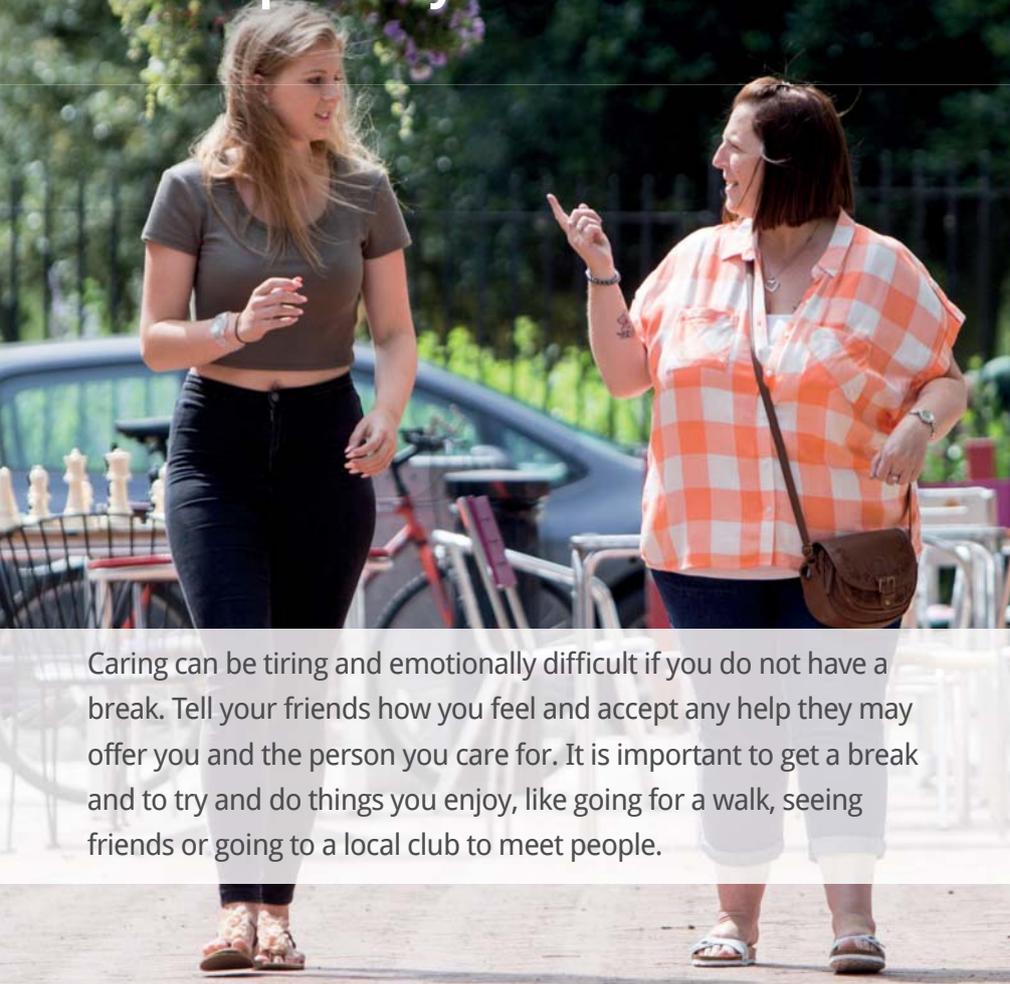
## Changing relationships

Caring can change the relationship between the family member or friend and the carer, because the carer has to help with personal tasks such as showering and dressing. The carer might start to feel differently about the person they're supporting. Caring can make you feel angry, frustrated and/or guilty. It is important to have someone you can talk to and can share your feelings with.

## Counselling

Discuss counselling support with your doctor who can refer you to a counsellor and other support groups/services in your local area. It is important to tell your doctor you are a carer so he/she can help you get the support you need. You have the right to ask for a Deaf counsellor or specialist service – depending upon your circumstances.

## Get help from your friends



Caring can be tiring and emotionally difficult if you do not have a break. Tell your friends how you feel and accept any help they may offer you and the person you care for. It is important to get a break and to try and do things you enjoy, like going for a walk, seeing friends or going to a local club to meet people.

## How to look after yourself

- Try to exercise and go for regular walks
- Get sufficient sleep/rest
- Look after your physical health
- Eat well
- Get help if you feel depressed – discuss this with your doctor
- Meet with other carers
- Maintain your friendships
- Find ways of reducing stress through relaxation, massage or meditation
- If you are working, discuss your situation with your employer. You may be able to reduce your working hours (if you want to)

## Financial help and help with benefits

RAD Advice Service is available in some areas to give advice about benefits in BSL. Please contact us for further information: [advice@royaldeaf.org.uk](mailto:advice@royaldeaf.org.uk)

If we cannot help, we will signpost you to a suitable service or you can contact the local Citizen's Advice Bureau (CAB), Job Centre Plus who can advise you further, or visit [www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk) for accurate up to date benefits information.

Some organisations may be able to visit you at home, if you find it difficult to leave your house because you are a carer. Don't be afraid to ask.

## What help is available for carers?

### It is important to look after your own health and get the money you are entitled to

Many people find it difficult to be a carer and also work or study. This is because caring can take up a lot of time and energy. Sometimes people feel they have to give up work to be a full time carer but they worry they will not have sufficient money.

If you have to give up work to become a carer, you can get help:

- Benefits advice for carers and the person they look after
- Money to pay for help to care for the person you look after
- Equipment, aids and adaptations for your home
- Support groups
- Respite for you
- Advice, advocacy and counselling services for you as a carer
- Relaxation, health and wellbeing courses and activities
- Access to leisure facilities at a reduced price – for example: swimming, cinema and bowling
- Help in an emergency, for example using a helpline or out of hours service, meals bought into your home
- Blue badge – access to disabled parking
- Carer training such as lifting and moving the person you look after

*(Please note there are qualifying criteria for some of the help listed above – you will need to speak to your relevant local authority/support services to get detailed information regarding your own situation.)*

# How to get help and support

**The Care Act gives local authorities a responsibility to assess a carer's needs for support. The local authority will assess whether the carer has needs and what those needs may be.**

The carers' eligibility threshold is based on identifying whether a carer's needs are a consequence of providing necessary care for an adult, to what extent the carer's needs affect their ability to achieve specified outcomes, or puts their health at risk, and to what extent this impacts on their wellbeing.

For more information relating to The Care Act and support available, you will need to contact your local Adult Social Services carer's team in the first instance or visit [www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk)



Before you have a carer's assessment, it is important to consider what support you provide and the help you wish to receive.

You can get help preparing for a carer's assessment from a local organisation such as RAD, an advice or advocacy service or a health professional.

## **Benefits**

Carer's Allowance is a payment made by the government to help you look after someone receiving Disability Benefits.

You don't have to be related to, or live with, the person you care for. You must be aged 16 or over and spend at least 35 hours a week caring for them.

There are various criteria/requirements in relation to claiming Carer's Allowance, check with your local benefits advisor or visit [www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk).

# How to get a break

## One of the most useful forms of support is to enable you to have a break

Following a carer's assessment, you may be offered support so you can take a break from your caring responsibilities. There are different types of services such as:

- Person sitting service – someone visits your home and looks after the person you care for. This gives you a couple of hours, so that you can go out.
- Long break – the person you look after can go and stay in a specialist home for a weekend, week or more, so you can have a longer break or take a holiday. You can relax knowing they will be looked after.
- Regular breaks from a specialist service – there may be organisations who are specialists in the condition or disability of the person you look after. They could look after the person and give you a regular break.

If you or if the person you look after uses BSL, it is important to tell people this. Anyone coming in to help the person and give you a break needs to be able to communicate with you and the person you care for.

Sometimes you can take breaks from caring by having a regular support (respite) worker. If you qualify for a personal budget you may be able to find a person to help you. Local carers support groups sometimes offer more cost effective breaks.

## Other specialist carer's information

There are regional, local and national carers' organisations that can provide general information on caring and your rights as a carer. Some of these have local support groups or will know about the carers groups in your area.

# BSL FINGERSPELLING ALPHABET



A



B



C



D



E



F



G



H



I



J



K



L



M



N



O



P



Q



R



S



T



U



V



W



X



Y



Z

## Resources

The following websites give you general information on caring and your rights as a carer:

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

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

[www.affc.org.uk](http://www.affc.org.uk)

[www.citizensadvice.org.uk](http://www.citizensadvice.org.uk)

# Information and Advice for Deaf Carers

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who needs support?**

**Do you do this for free?**

**If so, you could be a carer**

Need further information or advice contact:

**Voice Phone: 0845 688 2525**

**Fax: 0845 688 2526**

**Text Phone: 0845 688 2527**

**SMS: 0774 996 5727**

**Email: [advice@royaldeaf.org.uk](mailto:advice@royaldeaf.org.uk)**

**[www.royaldeaf.org.uk](http://www.royaldeaf.org.uk)**

# About RAD

## Our Vision

Together with Deaf people;  
creating a better future

## Our Mission

We promote equality for Deaf people  
through the provision of accessible services.  
Founded in 1841, the Royal Association for  
Deaf people promotes equality for Deaf  
people through the provision of accessible  
services.

- **Advocacy**
- **Children and Families**
- **Community Development**
- **Employment and Skills**
- **Information, Advice and Guidance**
- **Interpreting**
- **Social Care**
- **Youth and Transition**

## To contact us:



Royal Association for Deaf people

**RAD**  
**IAG Service**  
**Century House South**  
**Riverside Office Centre**  
**North Station Road**  
**Colchester**  
**Essex CO1 1RE**

**Voice Phone:** 0845 688 2525  
**Fax:** 0845 688 2526  
**Text Phone:** 0845 688 2527  
**SMS:** 0774 996 5727  
**Email:** [advice@royaldeaf.org.uk](mailto:advice@royaldeaf.org.uk)  
**Website:** [www.royaldeaf.org.uk](http://www.royaldeaf.org.uk)



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