

Getting Help with Caring for Someone with Dementia –

Information for Carers

Caring for someone with dementia can have real rewards but can also be very demanding. Over time the condition will worsen and the person may need more care and more attention. Caring can easily turn into a 24 hour a day responsibility and is often difficult for one person to cope with alone.

Don't try to manage alone – ask for help

Don't take on all the work and responsibility by yourself, even if you feel it's what you want to do. If you do too much you may damage your own health, making it difficult to care for the person with dementia or to cope with your other commitments. Work with the person you care for to get good routines in place and continue to do the activities you enjoy.

Health services

It is important that the person has had a proper diagnosis. If not, speak to your doctor. Tell him or her about any changes in the person's condition. You can also ask for a referral to a specialist. The GP or specialist will advise on whether the drug treatments available for Alzheimer's disease might be suitable. At present the treatments are not a cure and will only help some people, but research is continuing. You can also ask about these other services which may be appropriate for you:

- » Community mental health or community psychiatric nurses give practical help and advice on mental health.
- » District or community nurses can provide some nursing care at home.
- » Occupational therapists can give advice and support on the activities of daily living.
- » Physiotherapists can help improve the person's mobility, independence and reduce their risk of falls.
- » Day hospitals provide medical assessment, rehabilitation and occupational therapy.

Support after diagnosis

From April 2013, a person newly diagnosed with dementia is entitled to a minimum of one year's support from a named link worker. The link worker will help to complete a personal plan to identify appropriate and practical support for the individual around: understanding the illness; accessing benefits and services; planning ahead; and keeping healthy and active. Link workers can be accessed through Post Diagnosis Support Services (often linked to Community Older People's Mental Health Teams) and referral is usually made at the point of diagnosis.

Sharing the caring

Other people can help you. Explain to your family, friends and neighbours about dementia. Ask them if they can help. Perhaps someone could spend some time with the person with dementia for a couple of hours to let you go out? Just as important is the help you can get from services and benefits provided by the social work department, the health service, the Department of Work and Pensions and voluntary organisations. You have a right to have help so don't think twice about asking.

Social services

The person with dementia has a right to a community care assessment from the local social work department to work out what his or her needs are and what services would help, for example this may include arranging respite care. There is no charge for an assessment but there may be charges or a contribution required for some services.

As a carer, you also have the right to an assessment of your needs including a health review carried out in your home, and to be offered support from various services, many of which are free of charge.

Glasgow Carers Partnership has a network of support organisations for people caring for someone with dementia. For access to these supports or for more information please call the Carers Support Line for a Carers Booklet and DVD on **0141 353 6504**.

Money and legal matters

There is a range of benefits that may help you and the person with dementia. Contact the freephone Benefit Enquiry Line for the most up-to-date disability and carers' benefits information on **0800 88 22 00** (textphone users **0800 24 33 55**). They can give confidential advice on all available benefits for people with dementia and their carers and can complete forms for you over the phone.

Further Information

You can call the 24 hour freephone Dementia Helpline on **0808 808 3000** for further information or advice on anything that is worrying you about dementia. You can also find more detailed information on the Alzheimer Scotland website www.alzscot.org and specific information for carers at www.carers.org and from the Carers Support Line on **0141 353 6504**

This leaflet has been prepared to provide information for people with dementia, and for their carers.