

UNPAID CARERS GUIDE

Helping you find the right support when you need it



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Welcome

If you look after someone, this guide is for you.

You may not think of yourself as an unpaid carer, but if you support a family member, friend or neighbour who couldn't manage without your help, you are not alone.

Caring can be rewarding, but it can also be challenging, especially when you don't know where to go for support.

About this guide

This guide has been co-designed with unpaid carers and local organisations in Bexley.

It brings together clear, practical information to help you:

- Understand your role as an unpaid carer
- Find support and services
- Know your rights
- Look after your own well-being

You don't need to read it all at once; use it in a way that works for you.

About the Carers Partnership Board

This guide has been developed by the Carers Partnership Board, a group of local organisations working together to improve support for unpaid carers in Bexley.

The partnership includes health services, Adult Social Care, voluntary and community organisations, and unpaid carers themselves.

By working together and listening to unpaid carers, we aim to make it easier to access the right support at the right time.



Are You an Unpaid Carer?

You might not think of yourself as an unpaid carer, but if you regularly help someone who couldn't manage without your support, you are likely an unpaid carer.

This could be a:

- Partner
- Parent
- Child
- Relative
- Friend or neighbour

You might be an unpaid carer if you:

- Help someone because of illness, disability, mental health needs, or age
- Support them with daily tasks like cooking, shopping, or personal care
- Help manage medication or attend appointments
- Provide emotional support or help keep them safe
- Organise care or deal with paperwork

Even if you receive carers' allowance, you are still an unpaid carer.

Many people become unpaid carers gradually; it often doesn't happen overnight.

You may not have chosen this role, and you may not have had time to prepare.

Why recognising these matters

Recognising yourself as an unpaid carer can help you:

- Access support and advice
- Understand your rights
- Get help earlier, before things become overwhelming

You do not have to live with the person or care for them full-time to be an unpaid carer.

Carer's Rights

You have the right to support, even if you have not had an assessment or do not receive services.

The Unpaid Carer Journey

There is no single starting point for becoming an unpaid carer.

You may be at any stage of this journey, and that's okay.

THE UNPAID CARER JOURNEY





Getting Started as a Carer

You don't need to do everything at once or in this order.

Use this quick checklist to help you see what might be helpful for you right now.

First Steps

- I have told my GP that I am a carer
- I know who to contact for local support
- I have spoken to someone about my situation

Understanding Your Rights & Support

- I know what a carer's assessment is
- I have had (or requested) a carer's assessment
- I understand what support I may be entitled to

Financial Support

- have checked what benefits I may be entitled to
- I know where to get help with forms or applications
- I understand financial support is available for the person I care for

Day-to-Day Support

- I know what help is available for the person I care for
- I have looked into equipment or adaptations
- I know where to go for practical advice

Looking After Yourself

- I know how to take a break (respite)
- I have someone I can talk to
- I know where to find emotional support

Planning Ahead

- I know what to do in an emergency
- I have thought about what would happen if I couldn't care
- I have important information written down in one place

Carer's Rights

You have the right to be supported to understand what help is available to you.

Start Here: What To Do First

When you first become an unpaid carer, it can be hard to know where to begin. These simple steps can help you get started.

1. Tell your GP you are a carer

Letting your GP know means they can support your health and well-being. You may also be offered things like health checks and advice.

2. Ask for a Carer's Assessment

A carer's assessment is free and looks at how caring affects your life and what support could help.

It can help you access:

- Respite (a break from caring)
- Help at home
- Support groups
- Advice on benefits

It is not a test of how well you are caring; it is about supporting you.

You are entitled to a carer's assessment even if:

- The person you care for does not receive support
- You live separately
- You are not caring full-time

(Turn to page 8 for more information)

3. Check whether the person you care for has had a Care Needs Assessment

If the person you care for is struggling with daily tasks, personal care, safety, mobility, or managing at home, they may be entitled to support from Adult Social Care. Making sure the right support is in place for the person you care for can also reduce pressure on you as a carer.

To request an assessment:

Call OneBexley on 020 4530 6580. Or make a self-referral by visiting www.onebexley.org

Or call Adult Social Care on 020 8303 7777, Monday to Friday, 9 am–5 pm

4. Check what financial support you may be entitled to

You may be able to claim benefits such as Carer's Allowance or other support.

5. Talk to someone

You don't have to manage alone. Talking to someone, whether a professional or another carer, can help you feel more supported.

Carer's Rights

You have the right to be guided and supported; you should not have to navigate services alone.



Understanding Carer's Assessments

What is a Carer's Assessment?

A free Carer's Assessment is your opportunity to talk about:

- The care you provide and how it impacts you.

It is not about judging the care you give; it is about making sure you get the support you need.

You can have a Carer's Assessment even if:

- The person you care for does not receive support from Adult Social Care
- The person you care for refuses an assessment
- You share caring responsibilities with others
- You live separately
- You are still working, studying or caring for children

The assessment focuses on you as a person, not just your caring role.

How to get a Carer's Assessment

You can request a Carer's Assessment via OneBexley:

OneBexley is a partnership of local charities and can be contacted on 020 4530 6580. Or make a self-referral by visiting www.onebexley.org

You can also contact Adult Social Care on: 020 8303 7777, Monday to Friday, 9 am–5 pm

Visit www.bexley.gov.uk/adultsocialcare to complete a self-assessment

You can ask for:

- A stand-alone assessment (just for you)
- A joint assessment alongside the person you care for (if you both agree)
- If you prefer a separate conversation for privacy or comfort, this can always be arranged. Remember, your carer's assessment is confidential and is not shared with the person you are caring for.

What to Expect During a Carer's Assessment

You will be contacted to arrange a suitable time for your assessment.

This can be done:

- In person, by phone or via a video call
- During a joint visit with the person you care for (only if you choose this)

The assessment is a conversation, not a test. It usually lasts between 45 and 90 minutes and covers:

1. Your caring role

- What tasks do you help with
- How often you provide care
- Whether you provide support during the day, at night, or both
- Emergency care responsibilities

2. How caring affects your life

- Your physical and mental health
- Your own goals, ability to work, study or volunteer
- Your social life and relationships
- Your sleep, stress levels and emotional well-being

3. Your goals and choices

You can talk about:

- What you want to continue doing
- What you may want to change
- What would help you feel more in control
- How you want to balance caring with your own life

4. Planning for the future

They will discuss:

- What happens if you are unwell or unable to provide care
- Contingency planning
- What support networks you already have

5. What support might help

They will explore a range of options, such as:

- Information and advice
- Carer support groups
- Emotional support or counselling
- Training (e.g. moving and handling, dementia awareness)
- Short breaks or respite care

- Help with planning and organising care
- Technology or equipment to make caring safer and easier
- Workplace support and carer's rights at work

The goal is to help you continue caring without harming your own well-being, safety or independence.

After your Carer's Assessment

After your assessment, you will receive:

- A copy of your assessment, and if applicable, your support plan
- Information about whether you have eligible needs under the Care Act
- A plan detailing what support may help you

Even if you do not meet the eligibility criteria, you will still receive:

- Information or advice
- Signposting to local and national support
- Practical suggestions to help you continue caring safely

Carer's Rights

You have the right to a free carer's assessment, regardless of how much care you provide or your financial situation.



Getting Support

Getting the right support for the person you care for can make a big difference to both of you.

Support may include:

- Help at home
- Equipment or adaptations
- Support from health and social care services
- Access to day centres or activities

You can explore available services through local directories such as the Care Hub Bexley, which helps you find support based on your needs and location.

Respite (Taking a Break)

Caring can be physically and emotionally demanding.

You may be able to access short breaks (respite), such as:

- Support at home
- Day services
- Overnight or short stays

This allows you time to rest while ensuring the person you care for is supported.

Support Groups

Many carers find it helpful to connect with others in similar situations.

Local organisations offer:

- Coffee mornings
- Support groups
- Online communities

These can provide both practical advice and emotional support.

Remember: If the person you care for is supported, it can make your role easier too.

Carer's Rights

You have the right to have your needs considered when decisions are made about support for you and the person you care for.

Financial Support and Benefits

What financial support might be available?

Caring can have an impact on your finances. There is support available for both you and the person you care for.

This page gives a simple overview to help you understand where to start.

1. Disability benefits (for the person you care for)

These are often the first step and are not based on income or savings.

- **Personal Independence Payment (PIP)** – for people aged 16 to State Pension age
- **Attendance Allowance** – for people over State Pension age
- **Disability Living Allowance (DLA)**

Why this matters:

These benefits can open the door to other support, including payments for carers and help with bills.

2. Support for you as a carer

If you are working age:

- **Carer's Allowance**
You care for 35+ hours a week
Your earnings must be below a set weekly limit
- **Universal Credit** (carer element)
May top up a low income or part-time work

If you are pension age:

- You may not receive Carer's Allowance and State Pension in full
- You could still get an "underlying entitlement" (this may increase Pension Credit)
- Pension Credit (carer addition) can increase your income

Why this matters:

Even if you cannot receive a payment directly, claiming can increase other benefits.

3. Help with household costs

You may be able to reduce your bills through:

- Council Tax reduction
- Disabled band reduction
- Single person discount (if applicable)

You may also get help with energy costs:

- Warm Home Discount
- Winter Fuel Payment (for many pension-age households)
- Cold Weather Payments
- Energy supplier grants

Why this matters:

Caring can increase household costs. This support can help reduce financial pressure.

4. Other helpful support

- Free prescriptions (depending on age or benefits)
- Travel concessions (Freedom passes)
- Blue Badge (for mobility needs)
- Carers Card (discounts and tickets) – visit www.carerscarduk.co.uk



What You Might Be Entitled to

Use this as a simple checklist to understand what to explore next.
For more information on benefits, visit: www.gov.uk/benefits

Step 1: Start here

Does the person you care for receive:

- Personal Independence Payment (PIP)
 - Attendance Allowance
 - Disability Living Allowance (DLA)- (if the person you care for is under 16)
- No** → This is usually the first thing to apply for
- Yes** → You may be able to access more support

Step 2: Your situation

If you are working:

- Do you care for 35+ hours a week?
- Are your earnings below the Carer's Allowance limit?

→ You may be able to claim Carer's Allowance

→ Also check Universal Credit (carer element)

If you are pension age:

- Have you claimed Carer's Allowance (for underlying entitlement)?
- Check Pension Credit (carer addition)

Step 3: Reduce your bills

- Council Tax Reduction www.bexley.gov.uk/council-tax
- Disabled band reduction
- Energy support schemes

Step 4: Get a full benefits check

You don't have to work this out alone. You can:

- Speak to Carers' Support Bexley, visit – www.carerssupport.org or call 020 8302 8011
- Contact Citizens Advice Bexley, visit – www.bexleycab.org.uk or call 01322 916 021
- Use online tools (such as Turn2us), visit – www.turn2us.org.uk
- Use the Gov.UK benefits checker – www.gov.uk/benefits

Ask for a "benefits check" for carers.



Carer's Rights

You have the right to request a Carer's Assessment, which may include advice on financial support and help you access benefits.

Your Rights as a Carer

As an unpaid carer, you have legal rights. These are there to help you get the support you need and to recognise the important role you play.

Many carers told us they were not aware of their rights at the start of their caring journey.

This page gives a simple overview to help you understand what you are entitled to.

Key rights you should know:

The right to a Carer's Assessment

If you care for someone, you have the right to ask your local council for a Carer's Assessment.

This looks at:

- How caring affects your life
- Your physical and mental well-being
- What support could help you

You can ask for this at any time, even if the person you care for does not receive support.

The right to be involved in decisions

With consent, you have the right to be involved in decisions about the care of the person you support.

This can include:

- Care planning
- Hospital discharge
- Ongoing support

The right to request a flu jab

It is important to look after your health and well-being, so as a carer, you can request a free flu jab if you'd like to.

- Speak to your GP or local pharmacist

Rights at work

If you are working, you have rights to help you balance work and caring, including:

- The right to request flexible working

- The right to unpaid Carer's Leave
- Protection from discrimination

(See page 29 for more on working as a carer)

Why this matters

Knowing your rights can:

- Help you access support earlier
- Give you confidence when speaking to services
- Reduce stress and uncertainty

Find out more

For more detailed information about your rights:

- Carers Partnership Board, visit – www.bexleycarers.co.uk
- Carers' Support Bexley, visit – www.carerssupport.org or call **020 8302 8011**
- Carers UK (advice and guidance), visit – www.carersuk.org
- Citizens Advice Bexley, visit – www.bexleycab.org.uk or call **01322 916 021**



Respite and Breaks

Taking a Break from Caring

Caring can be rewarding, but it can also be tiring and overwhelming. Taking a break is not a luxury; it is an important part of being able to continue caring.

A break (sometimes called respite) can give you time to rest, look after your own health, or spend time doing something for yourself.

What is respite?

Respite means having a break from your caring role while the person you care for is still supported.

This could be:

- A few hours during the day
- Support at home from a care worker or volunteer (Befriender)
- Day services or activities
- A short stay in a care setting
- Help from family or friends

Why this matters

Many carers told us they:

- Felt exhausted or overwhelmed
- Didn't know where to find a break
- Were unsure what they were entitled to

Having a break can:

- Improve your well-being
- Help prevent burnout
- Make it easier to continue caring

How can I access respite?

You can request a Carer's Assessment (see page 8). This may look at whether you need support, including breaks.

Access to respite or short breaks will depend on the needs identified during the assessment process and, in some cases, a financial assessment may also be required.

A respite request will form part of a wider Care Needs Assessment. Taking part in a Carer's Assessment ensures that the voice of the carer is heard and the impact of the caring role is understood.

Self-funded options

If a cared-for person has over £23,250 in savings, they pay for the full cost of their care. People who pay for their care can be supported by the voluntary and charity sector to find their own support if they wish to. Carers can use the Your Life, Your Choice Bexley platform provided by the Council to match people and support requests without the need to wait for a social care assessment. People with Direct Payments can also use this platform.

Visit – www.bexley.gov.uk/your-life-your-choice

Some carers choose to arrange and pay for support, such as:

- Home care agencies
- Sitting services
- Day activities

Voluntary and community support

Local organisations may offer:

- Short breaks
- Support groups
- Activities for the person you care for, many of which are free
- Personal care services

Things to think about

- What kind of break would help you most?
- Would the person you care for feel comfortable with someone new?
- Do you need regular breaks or occasional support?

Real experiences from carers

Many carers told us:

“I just needed to know where to start.”

“Even a small break would make a big difference.”

Carer’s Rights

You have the right to request a Carer’s Assessment, which should consider your need for breaks and support.

Looking after yourself

Being an unpaid carer can mean that you spend a lot of your time focusing on someone else, and you may feel that you don't have time to focus on yourself.

However, your well-being matters too. Looking after yourself is not selfish. It is an important part of caring and helps you continue caring in a way that works for you.

When you feel supported, rested and listened to, it can be easier to manage day-to-day challenges and keep going in your caring role.

Your feelings matter

Caring can bring many emotions, such as worry, tiredness, frustration, loneliness or guilt. Some days will feel harder than others.

You do not have to cope with everything on your own.

Look after your well-being

Caring for someone can be stressful and tiring, so you must look after both your physical and mental well-being. Small breaks can help you stay well. This could be making some time for your favourite hobby or going for a walk in your local park.

You can also:

- Keep in touch with friends and family
- Eat a well-balanced diet
- Try to get enough sleep and rest
- Stay active in a way that feels manageable
- Talk to someone you trust
- Take a break when you need it (*more information on respite on page 17*)
- Let your GP know that you are a carer so you can look after your health too

DID YOU KNOW – If you are aged 40 to 74, you may be entitled to a free yearly flu jab and NHS Health Check every 5 years through your GP.

Support is available

You do not need to identify as a carer or wait until things feel overwhelming to ask for support.

If caring is affecting your health, family life or ability to cope, it may help to speak to someone about what support is available.

A good place to start:

- Ask about a Carer's Assessment (*page 8*)
- Talk to your GP
- Look at local well-being and support services

Well-being support

- Carers Support Bexley: 020 8302 8011 or email info@carerssupport.org
- Carents: www.carents.co.uk
- Carers Trust online: www.carers.org
- Counselling Matters Bexley: 0800 047 2600 or email mail@cmbtalk.org
- Crossroads Care South East: 01322 336 086 or email info@ccsel.org
- Mind in Bexley: Well-being Line 020 8303 8932 or email info@mindinbexley.org.uk

Staying safe

Caring can affect both your physical and emotional well-being. It is important to recognise when you may need extra support, advice, or a break.

This might include:

- Feeling physically exhausted or run down
- Stress, anxiety, or low mood
- Difficulty balancing caring with your own health needs
- Worries about managing safely at home
- Feeling isolated or overwhelmed
- Situations where caring behaviours become challenging, or you do not always feel safe

Sometimes illness, dementia, mental health needs, confusion, or distress can affect a person's behaviour. If caring is impacting your well-being or safety, it is important to seek support early.

If you ever feel at risk, unsafe, or threatened:

- Move to a safe place if possible
- Contact someone you trust
- Speak to your GP, support worker, or carers service
- In an emergency, call 999

Support is available, and there are people who can help you make a plan to stay safe while continuing to care in a way that feels right for you.

Carer's Rights

You have the right to support to maintain your health and well-being.

Peer Support & Community Groups

You are not alone

Many carers told us that one of the most helpful sources of support is other carers.

Talking to people who understand your situation can:

- Reduce feelings of isolation
- Help you feel heard and understood
- Provide practical tips and advice

Why peer support matters

Carers shared that:

“Other carers are our biggest source of information.”

People with lived experience can often:

- Share what has worked for them
- Help you understand what to expect
- Point you towards useful support

Types of peer support

Local support groups

These may be:

- In community centres, libraries or local venues
- Condition-specific (e.g. dementia, autism)
- General carers groups

Online communities

- Carers Trust online: www.carers.org

These can be helpful if:

- You cannot leave the house easily
- You need flexible support

Community events and networks

- Carers events (e.g. Carers Week)
- Information sessions
- Community champions

Visit: www.bexleycarers.co.uk

Local support in Bexley

You can find local support groups at www.bexleycarers.co.uk

- Age UK (Bexley) 020 8300 0883 www.ageuk.org.uk/bexley
- The Alzheimer's Society (Bexley) 0333 150 3456
dementiaSupportLine@alzheimers.org.uk
- Bexley Mencap (learning disability) 020 8303 6336
email- office@bexleymencap.org.uk
- Bexley Voice (for parent carers) 07512 409 936 email - admin@bexleyvoice.org.uk
- Carers' Support (Bexley) 020 8302 8011, email - info@carerssupport.org
- Crossroads Care South East London 01322 336 086 email-info@ccsel.org
- Local charities and community organisations, visit - www.connectedbexley.co.uk
- Mind in Bexley 020 8303 8932 info@mindinbexley.org.uk

Please leave a message, and a member of the team will get back to you.

Things to remember

- You can join at any stage of your caring journey
- It's okay to listen at first
- You can take what is helpful and leave what isn't



Practical Tips

Top Tips for Everyday Caring

Small changes can make a big difference to your day-to-day life.

Making things easier at home

- Remove trip hazards like loose rugs
- Use simple equipment to support independence
- Keep essential items within easy reach

Managing appointments and information

- Keep a notebook for key contacts and appointments
- Prepare questions before phone calls
- Ask for information in a way that works for you

Looking after yourself

- Take short breaks where possible
- Accept help when it's offered
- Speak to someone if you're feeling overwhelmed

Getting the right support

- Don't wait until things reach a crisis point
- Ask what help is available
- Check what you are entitled to

You are not alone

Many carers say the most helpful support comes from:

- Talking to other carers
- Sharing experiences
- Learning from others

Equipment and Adaptations

Simple changes at home can make a big difference, for both you and the person you care for.

The right equipment can:

- Help someone stay independent for longer
- Make everyday tasks easier
- Reduce the risk of falls or injury
- Take pressure off you as a carer

What kind of equipment is available?

Depending on your situation, this could include:

- Walking aids (e.g. frames or sticks)
- Bathroom equipment (e.g. grab rails, shower chairs)
- Kitchen aids (e.g. easy-grip utensils, kettle tippers)
- Beds and seating (e.g. adjustable beds, specialist chairs)
- Alarms and sensors (e.g. fall alarms, door sensors)

How do I get equipment?

You may be able to access equipment through:

- An assessment by Adult Social Care www.bexley.gov.uk/adultsocialcare
- An Occupational Therapist (OT), who can recommend what's right for your situation
- Health professionals (e.g. hospital staff, GP referral)

You can also explore equipment and request support online through: **Your Life Your Choice Bexley**

Visit: www.bexley.gov.uk/your-life-your-choice

This platform provides information about equipment, adaptations, and local services, and can help you find the right support for your situation.

What is an adaptation?

Adaptations are changes made to the home to make it safer or easier to live in.

This could include:

- Installing handrails
- Widening doorways
- Adding a stairlift
- Adapting a bathroom

Getting the right advice

It's not always easy to know what to ask for.

Speaking to an Occupational Therapist can help you:

- Understand what is available
- Find the right equipment for your needs
- Avoid spending money on things that may not be suitable

Next step

If you think equipment could help:

- Speak to Adult Social Care
- Ask your GP or health professional for advice
- Contact local support organisations for guidance



Planning Ahead

Be ready for the unexpected

Planning ahead can help you feel more prepared.

If something unexpected happens and you cannot provide care, having a plan in place can make things easier for you and the person you care for.

Start simple

Ask yourself:

- If something happened to me today, who would step in?
- Does anyone else know the person's routine, medication and needs?
- Would emergency services understand the situation quickly?

What to do:

- Identify at least one emergency contact (ideally two)
- Share key information with them
- Agree on how they could access the home if needed

If you can't provide care

This could be due to:

- Illness or hospital admission
- Work or family emergencies
- Unexpected appointments

Think about:

- Who could step in at short notice?
- Is there a backup care provider or agency?
- Have you discussed preferences with the person you care for?

Let services know you are an unpaid carer

- Register as an unpaid carer with your GP (see page 6)
- Ask for your caring role to be recorded
- Check if key information can be shared (with consent)

Build a support network

- List people who could help (family, friends, neighbours)
- Include organisations or services that may support you
- Be clear about what help might be needed (e.g. meals, sitting in)

Consider a Carer's Assessment

- You can request this via OneBexley (see page 8)
- This is your right under the Care Act 2014

This may help you access support, including respite, as part of your plan

Keep an Emergency Plan

Emergency plans help you keep important information in one place.

- Emergency contacts
- Daily routines
- Medication and health information
- Communication needs

What to do:

- Complete a plan before you need it
- Share it with someone you trust
- Tell people where it is kept
- Update it regularly

You can find a template here:

www.bexleycarers.co.uk/emergency-future-planning/

You may also be able to join your utility company's Priority Services Register for extra support during outages.

Store your plan safely

Make sure it can be found quickly:

- Keep a printed copy at home (in a clearly labelled place)
- Share a copy with your emergency contact(s)
- Save a digital version (e.g. on your phone)
- Where possible, share with professionals involved in care

Think about specific needs

Some conditions need extra planning.

For example:

- **Dementia:** routines, communication, risk of wandering
- **Mobility needs:** equipment, moving safely, fall risks
- **Medication needs:** timing and dosage
- **Fluctuating conditions:** changing needs and key contacts

Including this information helps others provide safe care.

Plan for the future

Planning ahead is not only about emergencies. It can also help you prepare for the future.

- What would happen if you could no longer provide care?
- What are the wishes of the person you care for?

You may want to consider:

- **Making a will** – helps make sure your wishes are followed
- **A Lasting Power of Attorney (LPA)** – allows someone to make decisions if needed
- **A Deputyship** – if decisions need to be made for someone who no longer has capacity

Emergency planning checklist

- Named emergency contact(s)
- Shared key information
- Carer Information Pack completed
- Registered as an unpaid carer with your GP
- Backup care options identified
- Requested a Carer's Assessment
- Considered specific care needs

Get support and advice

You don't have to do this alone. Support is available from local and national organisations.



Carer's Rights

You have the right to be involved in planning for the future, including emergency and care arrangements.

Working while being a Carer

Balancing work and caring can be challenging.

Knowing your rights can help you manage work alongside caring and know where to turn for support.

Your rights at work

There are two types of rights at work:

- **Statutory rights** – set by national law
- **Contractual rights** – based on your contract, staff handbook or workplace policies

It is worth checking your contract, as some employers offer more support than the legal minimum.

Your key rights include:

Your right to unpaid Carer's Leave: An employee is entitled to a period of leave that is equal to their usual working week in a 12-month period.

Your right to protection from discrimination: If you look after an older or disabled person, the law (Equality Act 2010) protects you against direct discrimination or harassment because of your caring responsibilities.

Your right to flexible working: You can request flexible working from your first day.

The right to parental leave: If you care for a child, you may also be entitled to parental leave.

Getting advice and support

If you are unsure about your rights or are having difficulties at work, it can help to get advice early.

You could:

- Speak to your manager or HR department
- Check your contract or staff handbook
- Seek independent employment advice

For more information:

Carers UK – call 0808 808 7777 or email advice@carersuk.org www.carersuk.org

ACAS have advice on employment rights on their website – www.acas.org.uk

Or call their helpline 0300 123 1150

Parent Carers and Young Carers

A parent carer is someone like a parent, foster parent, or guardian who looks after a child under 18 who has a disability, long-term illness, or extra support needs. They do this without being paid and often have to provide more care than most parents would, such as helping with medical needs, managing difficult behaviours, or giving extra daily support.

Support for Parent Carers

If you care for a child with a disability or additional needs, your role as a parent and a carer is closely connected.

In Bexley, support for parent carers is usually considered as part of a Child and Family Assessment, which looks at the needs of the whole family, including how caring impacts you.

What is an assessment?

A Child and Family Assessment looks at:

- Your child's needs
- Your family's situation
- The impact of caring on your well-being, health, and daily life

This means your needs as a parent carer are considered alongside your child's needs.

Can I ask for an assessment?

Yes.

All parent carers have the right to ask for an assessment of their needs at any time.

You can also ask for a new assessment if:

- Your situation has changed
- Your child's needs have increased
- You feel you need more support

How to request an assessment

You can contact Children's Social Care:

Call the multi-agency safeguarding hub on – 020 3045 5440

Email – childrensocialcare.admin@bexley.gov.uk Call 020 3045 5440

Email- childrensocialcare.admin@bexley.gov.uk

More information is available on the Local Offer: www.bexleylocaloffer.uk

What support might be available?

Following an assessment, support may include:

- Advice and guidance
- Signposting to local services
- Support from Children's Social Care
- Health services
- Early Help services or Family Hubs
- Local support groups
- Benefits advice

Short breaks (respite)

If your child has severe or profound disabilities and meets eligibility criteria, short breaks may be offered as part of their support plan.

These can:

- Provide your child with activities and experiences
- Support their development
- Give you time to rest and recharge

If you are not eligible for support

Not all families will meet the criteria for statutory services.

However, you can still access support through:

- Local voluntary and community organisations
- Peer support groups
- Advice and information services

Many carers find these services helpful, especially in the early stages.

Other options

Some families choose to arrange their own support, including:

- Agency care
- Activities and clubs
- Short breaks funded privately or through benefits such as Disability Living Allowance.

Local support for parent carers

Support is available from local organisations, including:

- **Bexley Voice** – peer support, workshops, and advice for families
www.bexleyvoice.org.uk
- **Carers Support Bexley** – information, emotional support, and practical help
www.carerssupport.org
- **Crossroads Care South East London** – information, practical and emotional support
www.ccsel.org
- **Mind in Bexley** – well-being and peer support services www.mindinbexley.org.uk

Preparing for Adulthood (14-25)

As young people with additional needs grow older, support and services may begin to change. This is sometimes called “Preparing for Adulthood” or “transition planning.”

This can include support with:

- Education, training, or employment
- Independent living skills
- Health and well-being
- Social opportunities and community inclusion
- Moving from children to adult services

Planning early can help make transitions smoother and ensure young people and families are involved in decisions about the future.

For more information and local support:

- Bexley Local Offer www.bexleylocaloffer.uk
- Bexley Voice www.bexleyvoice.org.uk, email- admin@bexleyvoice.org.uk,
Call- **07512 409 936**
- Preparing for Adulthood services www.bexley.gov.uk/adultsocialcare

Are you a young carer?

A young carer is someone under 18 who helps look after a family member.

This could be because of:

- Illness
- Disability
- Mental health needs
- Substance misuse

You might be able to get help with:

- Household tasks
- Looking after siblings

- Helping someone move around
- Providing emotional support

You are not alone

Many young people help care for someone, but it can sometimes feel overwhelming, especially when balancing school, friendships, and your own well-being.

It's important to know that support is available for you, too.

What support can you get?

Young carers can get support to help with:

- Managing school, college, or education
- Having time for yourself
- Talking to someone about how you feel
- Accessing activities and support groups

Getting help

In Bexley, support is available through:

Imago Young Carers Visit – www.imago.community

Imago provides support for young carers, including:

- One-to-one support
- Group activities
- Advice and guidance
- Help to balance caring with education and social life.



Useful Contacts

If you are not sure where to start, these organisations can help.

Local support

- Age UK (Bexley) 020 8300 0883 www.ageuk.org.uk/bexley
- The Alzheimer's Society (Bexley) 0333 150 3456
dementiaSupportLine@alzheimers.org.uk
- Bexley Mencap (learning disability) 020 8303 6336
email- office@bexleymencap.org.uk
- Bexley Voice (for parent carers) 07512 409 936 email - admin@bexleyvoice.org.uk
- Carers' Support (Bexley) 020 8302 8011 email - info@carerssupport.org
- Crossroads Care South East London 01322 336 086, email-info@ccsel.org
- Local charities and community organisations, visit - www.connectedbexley.co.uk
- Mind in Bexley 020 8303 8932 email - info@mindinbexley.org.uk

Your Life, Your Choice (Bexley)

You can search for services, support and local organisations here:

www.bexley.gov.uk/your-life-your-choice

National support

Carers UK

Advice, information and support 0808 808 7777 www.carersuk.org

Carents

Practical advice, emotional support, and trusted resources to help you navigate every stage of caring for your parents. www.carents.co.uk

In an emergency

Call 999 for urgent help

Call 111 for NHS advice

About Bexley's Carers Partnership

The Carers Partnership is made up of local carers and voluntary sector organisations that support carers, as well as statutory organisations such as the London Borough of Bexley.

The partnership works together to make a positive difference to the lives of carers in Bexley and to raise awareness of the issues that local carers may face.

You can sign up to receive the Carers Partnership newsletter to stay up to date with national and local carers news. Visit – www.bexley.gov.uk/newsupdates



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Your views matter

Tell us what's working well and what could be improved. Your feedback helps us improve services for carers and the people they support.



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Thank you for the care and support you provide