

Carers Oxfordshire is a joint project between Action for Carers (Oxfordshire) charity number: 1149577 and Rethink Mental Illness. Action for Carers Oxfordshire is Registered in England and Wales.
Registered office: 10 Napier Court, Barton Lane, Abingdon, OX14 3YT.

Preparing for a carer's assessment

Carer's assessments at a glance:

- An assessment can take up to two hours to complete and can be done online or over the phone with support from Carers Oxfordshire
- Your needs will be assessed, and those needs will be met through support from Carers Oxfordshire, free community support, or through the help of the local authority
- A direct payment is not guaranteed on the completion of a carer's assessment
- No support plans will be made without your consent

Who is a carer?

A carer is someone who cares for a friend or family member who, due to illness, disability, a mental health condition or an addiction, cannot cope without their support. They are not paid for the support they give.

An unpaid carer is not the same as a care worker and may or may not receive Carers Allowance. A carer's assessment is not related to Carers Allowance.

Who can Carers Oxfordshire help?

People aged 18 or over who are caring, unpaid, for one or more people, an adult, child (or both) who is a resident in Oxfordshire.

If you are a carer, aged under 18, or there is a young person who helps you support someone, please contact Oxfordshire County Council on 0345 050 7666 and ask for young carer support.

What is a carer's assessment?

A carer's assessment builds a picture of the impact the caring role has on the carer e.g. if caring affects the carer's ability to achieve the everyday things that are important to them, and any effects on their wellbeing. It will help to identify if they need support and why. The assessment will last up to two hours.

What is wellbeing?

Wellbeing is a person's physical, mental, and emotional state. This means how they are in themselves, how well they feel they are coping with everyday life and how hopeful and confident they are about achieving their personal goals.

How can I complete a carer's assessment?

Online - You can do a carer's self-assessment online. It puts you fully in control and you can do it at any time of the day. To access the online carer's assessment, please visit www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/residents/social-and-health-care/carers-assessment.

Supported - If you are unable to do the carer's assessment online, we can support you to complete one. Please fill in a contact form on our website: www.carersoxfordshire.org.uk or call 01235 424715 and talk to one of our team.

(If you have already contacted us, one of our team will call you to make arrangements).

Combined - If the person you care for is having their own assessment, you might consider having your carer's assessment completed alongside them, but you and the person you care for must both agree. Talk to people who are assessing the person you care for to see if this is appropriate.

You can request a carer's assessment once a year or sooner if your circumstances have changed.

Taking part

If you feel you would like someone to be with you during your assessment, ask a friend or family member to be with you.

If you have a condition that means you need someone to help you e.g. if you have difficulty communicating or remembering, you use sign language, translation or advocacy or if you are subject to a safeguarding enquiry or review, you can ask someone you know who can help or if this is not possible we can arrange an independent advocate to help. An independent advocate is not a friend or family member. Please let us know before your carer's assessment so that we can make arrangements.

Independent advocates are provided by Oxfordshire County Council.

What will happen during my carer's assessment?

If you are completing the carer's assessment online you will complete the questions and provide any information yourself.

If we are supporting you, you will be fully involved in your assessment. You will be able to express your wishes and feelings, weigh up options and make decisions about what you can do and what is important to you. We will record parts of the conversation we have with you.

In preparation for your carer's assessment, it is useful to give yourself some time to think about your caring role.

Take time to think about what the carer's assessment will consider:

- your caring role and how it affects your life and wellbeing,
- your health – physical, mental and emotional,
- your feelings and choices about caring,
- your strengths and capabilities now and in the future,
- if there are things you would like to achieve that are affected by caring (your outcomes) and any support that may be necessary to help you achieve them.

We have listed some questions that will be asked to help you prepare:

- How do you help the person you care for including physical and emotional support?
- Do you have other responsibilities alongside caring including any children, parents, or other family?
- Does anyone else help you or provide support?

You will be asked about the things you do alongside caring and how caring affects your ability to do them such as:

- Are you or would you like to be in work, education, volunteering, or training?
- How you cope day-to-day with the upkeep of your home, healthy eating and your finances?
- Are there things that you are, or would like to be involved in within your community, such as groups, and hobbies?
- What relationships do you have or would like to have with friends and family?
- Housing e.g. how adequate and safe your home situation is?

Consider the things that matter to you and what you are doing or would like to do. Think about things that you have tried and try to identify how the things you want to do can be best achieved.

What will happen next?

We will consider your eligibility for support, which will include looking at:

- Are your needs the result of you providing necessary care?
Which means looking at what you do and if the person you care for could do the things you do themselves.
- Does your caring role have an effect on you? including:
 - is your physical or mental health at risk of getting worse?
 - are you able to look after other children or provide care to another person?
 - are you able to achieve the things you feel are important to you? You will be able to consider ways in which you feel you could achieve these things as much as possible.
- Is there, or is there likely to be, a significant impact from caring on your wellbeing? e.g. is the effect on you noticeable or important, you are best placed to judge your wellbeing.

We will make a decision of eligibility:

If you do not have eligible needs, we will give you advice about how to prevent developing needs in the future and any free community support that might help you.

If you do have eligible needs, then your needs must be met. Together we consider the information from our conversation about what you feel you would like to do; determine any help you need and from who. We will determine if Carers Oxfordshire can provide support and any other options that can meet your needs (with your permission).

Carers Oxfordshire will work with you to create your support plan. Your support plan will list the things you need help with and why you need support, we will identify what support is and how it will help. We will not make any decisions about support without you.

It may be that the best way to meet your needs is to consider provision of care and support directly to the person that you care for, in this case we will make a referral to the appropriate local authority service (with your and their permission).

You will receive a copy of your assessment and plan from, Oxfordshire County Council. If you wish, you can opt out of this by letting us know.

After your assessment we will contact you to talk about how things are going and to ensure any support we agreed is helping.