



KNOW YOUR RIGHTS

A Short Guide for Carers

Written by Clackmannanshire CAB with
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Across Scotland today 759,000 people are carers, supporting a loved one who is older, disabled or seriously ill. Every year over 160,000 people start caring for a family member or friend. Helping a loved one get the most out of life can be incredibly rewarding, but it can also be very tough.

Whether you've been caring for years or are just starting out, it's important to be aware of your rights and where to go to get help.

Am I a carer?

You are a carer if you provide unpaid help to someone who depends upon you because of:

- frailty
- mental or physical health problems
- illness or drug/alcohol misuse.

You may not live in the same house and you don't have to be related to the person you care for.

Adult Carer Support Plan

You have a right to advice and an Adult Carer Support Plan (previously referred to as a carer's assessment). You don't have to be providing a lot of care to be entitled to help. You can have this Support Plan even if the person you care for hasn't had or doesn't want an assessment themselves.

Carers of all ages are entitled to an Adult Carer Support Plan, although for young carers this is called a Young Carers Statement.

The Adult Care department in Social Services (Clacks Council) should tell you about your right to this, but you will still need to ask them to carry out an Adult Carer Support Plan for you.

This is a way of identifying your needs as a carer; what your role is; how being a carer affects you; how much you can do and any help you may need.

You can find more information about what this support plan will involve on:

- Clacks Council's website clacks.gov.uk/social/carerssupportplan/
- Carers UK website carersuk.org/scotland/help-and-advice/carers-act

You don't have to have a carer's assessment to get advice about available support. Falkirk & Clackmannanshire Carers Centre, your local carers centre, aims to ensure that carers are recognised, valued, receive the information and support they need to allow them to care with confidence and in good health, and are empowered to have a life of their own outside caring. You will find their contact details in the Useful Contacts section at the end of this booklet.

Carer's card

The Forth Valley Carers Card is a carer identification and recognition card which has been developed by carers across Forth Valley. It was developed with the intention of making carers more easily identifiable by Health and Social Care professionals, enabling them to voice their views and ideas and participate in care planning discussions. Register with your local carers centre to receive one.

Caring while working

Combining paid work and caring can be difficult and there is a growing recognition of the support needs of working carers. Taking on caring should not mean you have to give up work. An Adult Carer Support Plan should take into account a carer's wish to work.

Taking a break from caring

If the person you care for is in contact with Social Services, speak to them about short-break respite care arrangements. Your Support Plan helps identify what breaks you need and how these will be arranged.

Falkirk & Clackmannanshire Carers Centre can offer support to help you fund a short break for yourself if your family's financial position means this would be difficult otherwise.

Benefits for carers

Get a benefits check to ensure you are claiming all the benefits you are entitled to.

Always seek advice on benefit entitlement for the carer and cared for person, an experienced adviser will be able to establish whether you should claim certain benefits.

If you're unsure on what you're claiming for and why, you can end up worse off financially by making the wrong benefit claim. So speak to an advice agency before making any claims if you are unsure of entitlement.

You can contact your local CAB (01259 219404 or [clackscab.org.uk/contact-us](https://www.clackscab.org.uk/contact-us)) to have a benefits check and find out which benefits you could be eligible for as a carer or visit <https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/scotland/family/help-for-adults-in-the-community-s/carers-help-and-support/>.

Carer's Allowance is the main benefit for carers. You may be eligible if you are looking after someone for 35 hours a week or more. [For full details of individual entitlement, visit gov.uk/carersallowance.](https://www.gov.uk/carersallowance)

Carers Allowance Supplement - carers who receive an actual payment of Carers Allowance can qualify for the twice yearly Scottish Supplement.

This is not means tested and does not affect other benefits, you don't have to apply and you will qualify if you are in receipt of Carer's Allowance on the qualifying dates.

These payments are made twice a year and if you meet this criteria you should be paid automatically. This is paid by Social Security Scotland. See the Scottish Government

website for more details <https://www.mygov.scot/carers-allowance-supplement>.

Carer's Credit - if you are not eligible for Carer's Allowance, you may instead be eligible for Carer's Credit. See gov.uk/carers-credit for details.

Long-term illness or disability - there are also benefits to help pay for the extra costs of long-term illness or disability. They are not dependent on how much money you have but there are important criteria that you need to fulfil in order to receive them. Visit Citizens Advice Scotland's advice website for more details (<https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/scotland/benefits/sick-or-disabled-people-and-carers/benefits-for-people-who-are-sick-or-disabled/>)

You may also be entitled to **contribution based benefits such as ESA or JSA**, and **means tested benefits** can top up carer's and disability benefits which can also help with your rent. Some carers who currently qualify can also get **more Housing Benefit** to help with rent costs.

Council Tax Reduction - every council in Scotland offers the same Council Tax Reduction scheme to help people on low incomes who have less than £16,000 in capital or savings.

Disability reduction scheme - you may be able to pay less council tax under the disability reduction scheme if your home has had work carried out on it to help you or someone else living there with a disability.

Council tax discounts - people who live alone qualify for a 25% council tax discount. If there is no one in the property, the discount will be 50%. Some carers and some people with a severe mental impairment are not counted for council tax, which means the home may be classed as empty and you may qualify for the relevant exemption.

Protecting your pension - for every week that Carer's Allowance is paid or Carer's Credit granted, you are credited with a National Insurance contribution which protects your entitlement to the State Retirement Pension. If you are thinking about deferring your pension, do seek advice as in most cases you will not be any better off.

Adapting your home - if you need to adapt your home to make it suitable for a disabled person (for example to build a new bathroom), you can apply for a housing grant from your local Council.

Help with fuel costs

Winter Fuel Payments - if you have reached the qualifying age you may be entitled to a Winter Fuel Payment to help pay winter bills. This can be £100-300 depending on circumstances.

Warm Home Discount - the Warm Home Discount scheme means you could get a discount on your electricity bill if you meet certain criteria.

Cold Weather Payments - if you're receiving certain benefits you may be able to get a Cold Weather Payment for

each week that the average temperature in your local area is at, or below, freezing.

Reducing bills by improving insulation and efficiency

- one of the simplest ways to help prevent heat from escaping is to install loft insulation. If you are in receipt of Carer's Allowance or are over 60, you may also qualify for more help such as cavity wall insulation or a replacement boiler, contact Home Energy Scotland for more information on 0808 808 2282.

Help with health costs

In Scotland everyone is entitled to free prescriptions, eye tests and dental check-ups but, if you are getting certain benefits (and your income is below a certain amount), you qualify for help with additional NHS health costs as well.

This includes free dental treatment and vouchers to help pay for glasses/contact lenses, as well as reimbursement of fares to hospital for treatment for you or your child. You can also claim for the fares of a companion who needs to travel with you for medical reasons.

If you don't qualify for free NHS benefits but have a low income, you may be able to get help with health costs from the NHS Low Income Scheme.

Local support – Falkirk & Clackmannanshire Carers Centre

The Carers Centre provides support to adult carers, young adult carers and young carers.

1:1 Support

At the Carers Centre you will be given the opportunity to have a conversation with a Carers Support Worker, or a Young Carer Support Worker, about your caring role and what's important to you. Together, you can then decide what kind of information or support might suit you best and review things as you go along by having an Adult Carer Support Plan prepared, or a Young Carer Statement.

Group Support

There are weekly support groups that allow carers to come together for social purposes and for information sessions.

Care with Confidence

Free information sessions for all carers covering a range of topics twice a month.

Carer Forums

Carers Forum meetings take place every three months in Clackmannanshire. They provide an opportunity for carers to meet with other carers and representatives from statutory services to discuss Carer issues and receive updates about local provision.

Contact details

Telephone: 01324 611510

Email: centre@centralcarers.org

Website: www.centralcarers.org

Facebook: @CentralCarer

Useful Contacts	
Adult Care, Social Services (Clacks. Council) 01259 452 498 adultcare@clacks.gov.uk	To request an Adult Carer Support Plan.
Age Scotland 0800 12 44 222 www.agescotland.org.uk	Information, advice, support for people aged 60+
Care Information Scotland 0800 011 3200 www.careinfoscotland.scot	National information service on care and support for carers
Carer Positive 0141 445 3070 www.carerpositive.org	Support and award scheme for employers
Carers Trust Scotland www.carers.org/country/carers-trust-scotland	Charity for, with and about carers; details of local carer support services
Carers UK Adviceline 0808 808 7777 www.carersuk.org/scotland	Expert advice, information and support for carers
Falkirk & Clackmannanshire Carers 01324 611510 http://centralcarers.org/	Clackmannanshire's carer information and support service
Citizens Advice Bureau (Alloa) 01259 219 404 www.clackscab.org.uk	Clackmannanshire's one-stop advice service

Contact A Family 0808 808 3555 www.contact.org.uk	Information and support to families caring for disabled/SEN children
Enable 0300 020 0101 www.enable.org.uk	Membership organisation for people with learning disabilities and their carers
Independent Age 0800 319 6789 www.independentage.org	Advice and support for older age, including regular calls or visits
Jointly app www.jointlyapp.com	App from Carers UK to manage caring for someone between several carers
NHS Inform 0800 22 44 88 https://www.nhsinform.scot/	Health information you can trust
Shared Care Scotland 01383 622 462 www.sharedcarescotland.org.uk	Short breaks provision for people with care needs and their carers
Support in Mind Scotland 0300 323 1545 www.supportinmindscotland.org.uk	Information and advice services for people with mental illness and their carers

My notes:

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