

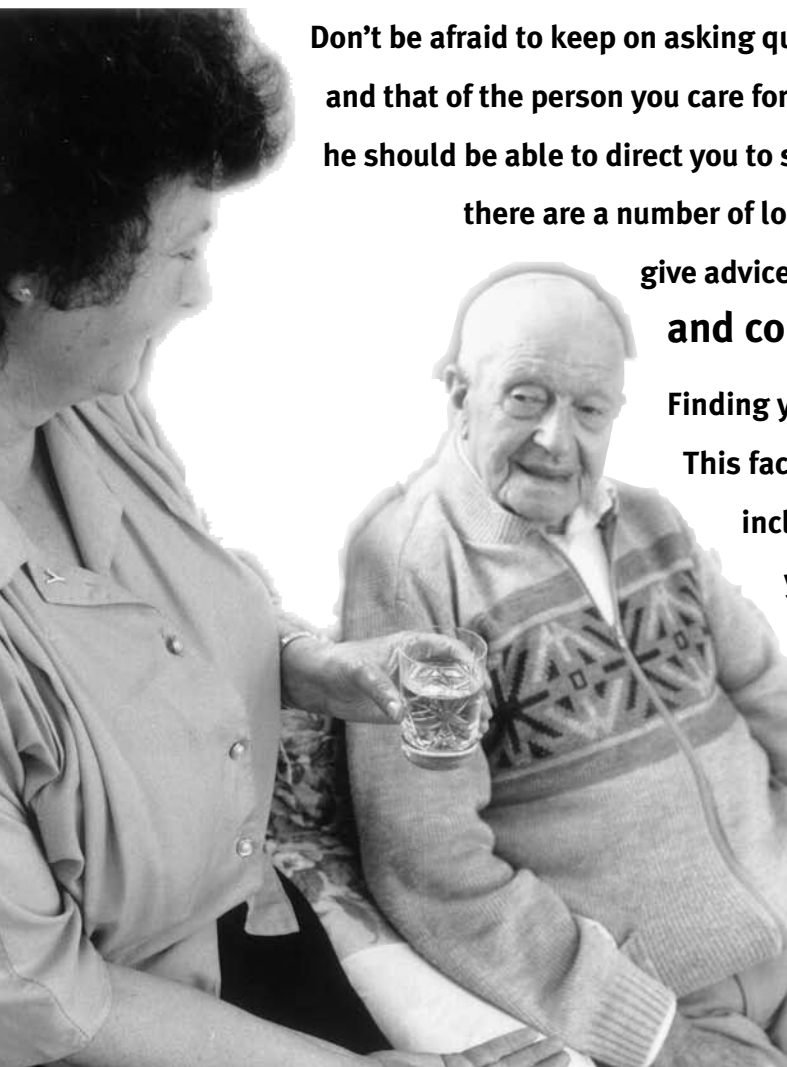
health care

As a carer it is important to ensure that **your health needs** are met, as well as those of the person for whom you care. If you feel your own health is suffering because of your caring responsibilities don't be afraid to say so.

It is important to let your doctor (GP – general practitioner) and any other health professional you have contact with know about your role as a carer. Ask your GP to put you on the **practice carers' register**. Your doctor and other members of the practice team can give information and advice as well as treatment. GPs also have close links with their local health clinics and health centres and can put you in touch with a range of **community health services**.

Don't be afraid to keep on asking questions – you have a right to know about your health and that of the person you care for. If one professional cannot give the answer she or he should be able to direct you to someone who can. As well as the statutory services there are a number of local and national voluntary organisations that can give advice and information relating to **specific illnesses and conditions**.

Finding your way around the health service can be confusing. This factsheet outlines the structure of the service in Brent, includes information on **accessing help** for both you and the person for whom you care, and gives sources of further information.



National Health Service (NHS) structure in Brent

Brent Teaching Primary Care Trust (**Wembley Centre for Health and Care, 116 Chaplin Road, Wembley HA0 4UZ, 020 8795 6000, www.brentpct.nhs.uk**) is responsible for identifying local health needs, determining how these needs should be met and working with GPs (family doctors), primary care services and hospital trusts to ensure that appropriate services are available. It is also responsible for NHS services provided by doctors, dentists, opticians and pharmacists.

North West London Hospitals NHS Trust

(020 8864 3232, trust@nwlh.nhs.uk, www.nwlh.nhs.uk) runs the Central Middlesex, St Mark's and Northwick Park Hospitals, Wembley NHS Walk-in Centre and Edgware Urgent Treatment Centre.

Central and North West London NHS Foundation

Trust (020 3214 5700, www.cnwl.org) provides mental health services in Brent (covered in the factsheet *Carers of people with mental health problems*).

Registering with a GP

A GP (general practitioner, family doctor) will usually be the first person to contact about health problems. If you are not already registered you can get a list of GPs and advice on how to register from Brent and Harrow PCT Contractor Services (020 8427 7888).

You can also contact the above number if you want to change your doctor (which you are entitled to do).

Your health needs

Two of the most common health problems for carers are physical injuries – particularly back strain – and stress-related illnesses.

Feeling well physically and knowing the person you care for is receiving appropriate health care can help relieve stress. More information about this issue is given in the factsheet *Looking after your emotional needs*.



LOOKING AFTER YOUR BACK

Back problems often arise because carers have to help the person they care for move around. Not knowing how to move or handle someone properly can cause physical problems for carers, in particular through back strain, and may mean loss of dignity, frustration and physical harm for the person you care for.

Community physiotherapists (see below) can advise carers on how to avoid injury or strain when moving or holding someone and run 'back school' sessions to which your GP can refer you.

BackCare (helpline: 0845 130 2704, www.backcare.org.uk) provides information about diagnosing back pain, treatments available, exercise and supports. There are also local branches (ring for details), which offer mutual help. Some also arrange classes.

Community health services

Brent Teaching Primary Care Trust has a range of services that aim to keep patients in the community.

They are available in health centres and clinics, and some can be provided at home. Certain services have to be accessed via your doctor or another health professional; in some cases self-referral is possible.

SINGLE POINT OF ACCESS

A number of the community health services are accessible through the **Single Point of Access Referral Service (SPA Service)**. Anyone referred via the SPA will receive an acknowledgement letter, letting them know their referral has been received, and that they are now on a waiting list. If patients have queries about when they are to be seen, they can contact the SPA (020 8438 7200).

DISTRICT NURSES

District nurses provide skilled nursing care in clients' homes, as well as help and advice to carers on the practical and medical aspects of caring, such as training on giving medication and managing continence. They will also advocate for you, liaise with and make referrals to other health services on your behalf and provide informal counselling when appropriate. Referral is open, so you or the person you care for is able to contact the service, as well as being referred by your doctor.

Ask your GP or local community health clinic for details of your local team or ring 020 8438 7184.

COMMUNITY PHYSIOTHERAPISTS

Physiotherapists, based in the multidisciplinary **Brent Rehabilitation Service** (020 8438 7240), provide treatment to address mobility and rehabilitation needs and can advise carers of people receiving treatment about looking after themselves. They make home visits to assess needs, which could be treatment or physical aids such as walking sticks and frames, and will make a referral to another team or service (for example occupational therapy or social services) if other help is needed. It is possible to self-refer but referral via a GP or other health professional is preferred.

PODIATRY (CHIROPODY)

The **Podiatry Service** provides foot care to ease the symptoms of foot disease and increase mobility. This is particularly important for people with diabetes or rheumatoid arthritis. If you have any doubts or difficulties about the foot health of the person you care for don't hesitate to ask for help. The service is available at health centres and clinics. Transport can be provided and home visits arranged for people who are housebound. Referral is via your GP or other health professional, according to clinical need.

DENTAL HEALTH

The **Community Dental Service** (020 8795 6313/6315) provides services at health clinics and health centres for people who have difficulty attending dental surgeries because of disability, frailty or illness. Home visits are also possible for people who are housebound. Telephone for session times or to arrange a home visit. (Also see 'Emergencies'.)

OPTICIANS

Some opticians will make home visits, although there may be a charge. For further information telephone 020 8427 7888 or see www.harrowpct.nhs.uk.

The **Outside Clinic** (freephone 0500 295 245, info@outsideclinic.com, www.outsideclinic.com) organises home visits for people who are unable to get to a high street optician. It also provides a service for carers who find it difficult to get to the opticians.

WHEELCHAIRS

The **Brent Wheelchair Service** (020 8438 7292) supplies manual and electric wheelchairs, cushions and other support and accessories. Referral is usually via a physiotherapist, but self-referral is possible.

It is possible to hire wheelchairs (and other aids) from the Harrow branch of the **British Red Cross** (020 8427 8788).

SPEECH AND LANGUAGE THERAPY

The **Speech and Language Therapy Team** provides a range of services, including home care, for people with communication or swallowing problems arising from, for example, a stroke, Parkinson's Disease or dementia. Self-referral (through the Single Point of Access – 020 8438 7200) is possible for communication problems; referral for swallowing problems must come from a GP or consultant. Therapists can also provide training for carers on speech and language issues.

CONTINENCE

Continence is often a 'hidden' health problem and one that can be difficult to discuss. However, many people can be helped to overcome incontinence, and it is important to acknowledge the problem and not to be embarrassed to ask for help. Specialists are available who will deal with all queries sensitively and confidentially.

Brent Continence Advisory Service (020 8795 6454/6452) can provide advice and training for carers and runs a clinic for patients. Self-referral is encouraged. District nurses can also help you and the person you care for.

The **Continence Foundation Helpline** (0845 345 0165: 9.30am-1.30pm, continence-help@dial.pipex.com, www.continence-foundation.org.uk), run by expert nurses, can give confidential advice and provide a range of literature, some of which can be downloaded from the website.

OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY SERVICE

Occupational therapists (OTs) advise about aids and adaptations to enable patients to be as independent as possible and assist their carer in their caring. OTs will make home visits to assess needs. Contact a One Stop Shop (020 8937 1200) to arrange an assessment.

Brent Teaching Primary Care Trust also runs an OT service for people aged 16 or over with physical disabilities, based within Brent Rehabilitation Service (020 8438 7240) (see 'Community physiotherapists'). Self-referral is possible, although GP referral is preferred.

BRENT STOP SMOKING SERVICE

The **Brent Stop Smoking Service** (020 8795 6669, stopsmoking@brentpct.nhs.uk, www.stop-smoking.org) provides group support and one to one advice to help people stop smoking.

Health centres and clinics

A range of services is provided in the following health centres and clinics.

Chalkhill Health Centre, Rook Close, off Chalkhill Road, Wembley HA9 9ER (020 8904 0911)

College Road Clinic, College Road, Wembley HA9 8RJ (020 8904 2299)

Craven Park Health Centre, Knatchbull Road, London NW10 8XW (020 8965 0151)

Helena Road Clinic, 16 Helena Road, London NW10 1JA (020 8208 2565)

Kilburn Square Clinic, 91 Kilburn Square, London NW6 6PS (020 7625 5115)

Monks Park Primary Care Centre, Monks Park, Wembley HA9 6JE (020 8453 5900)

Mortimer Road Clinic, 91-95 Mortimer Road, London NW10 5TN (020 8969 4040)

Peel Road Clinic, 5 Peel Road, Wembley HA9 7LY (020 8908 2958)

Perrin Road Clinic, Perrin Road, Wembley HA0 2NW (020 8904 9331)

Stag Lane Clinic, 245 Stag Lane, London NW9 0EF (020 8204 9117)

Wembley Centre for Health and Care, 116 Chaplin Road, Wembley HA0 4UZ (020 8795 6001)

Willesden Centre for Health and Care, Robson Avenue, London NW10 3RY (020 8438 7006)

Emergencies

Central Middlesex, Northwick Park and St Mary's Hospitals (see below) have 24-hour Accident and Emergency (A&E) Departments. If you need an ambulance to get to A&E ring 999.

Wembley NHS Walk-in Centre is a minor accident treatment service based at Wembley Centre for Health and Care (see above). It will treat injuries such as cuts, sprains and burns immediately, and has suturing (stitching) equipment on site. It is open from 10am to 7pm, Monday to Friday. No children under 16 without a GP referral.

The 24-hour **Edgware Urgent Treatment Centre**, at Edgware Community Hospital, Burnt Oak Broadway, Middlesex HA8 0AD (020 8952 2381) also treats minor injuries, and has X-ray equipment.

NHS Direct (0845 46 47, www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk) is a 24-hour confidential telephone helpline staffed by qualified and experienced nurses. If you have a health problem and are not sure what to do or where to go, nurses staffing the helpline will put you in touch with the service that best suits your needs.

Emergency dental treatment (020 8867 1411) is available Monday-Friday 6pm-10 pm and 9am-10pm weekends and bank holidays.

Hospitals

Central Middlesex Hospital, Acton Lane, London NW10 7NS (020 8965 5733)

Kingsbury Hospital, Honeypot Lane, London NW9 9QY (020 8238 0900)

Northwick Park Hospital, Watford Road, Harrow HA1 3UJ (020 8864 3232)

St Marks Hospital, Watford Road, Harrow HA1 3UJ (020 8235 4000)

St Mary's Hospital, Praed Street, London W2 1NY (020 7886 6666)

Edgware Community Hospital, Burnt Oak Broadway, Edgware HA8 0AD (020 8952 2381)

First aid courses

Basic first aid skills are very useful if you are looking after someone at home.

The **British Red Cross** (0870 170 9222, www.redcross) and **St John Ambulance** (020 7258 3456, www.sja.org.uk) run courses throughout the year. Telephone for details of local training. Information about basic first aid techniques is available on the British Red Cross website under 'First Aid' and the St John Ambulance website at www.sja.org.uk/firstaid/info.

Brent Carers Centre runs first aid training courses for carers twice a year.



Voluntary organisations

There are a large number of voluntary organisations that can give information and advice about specific illnesses and conditions.

Telephone Brent Carers Centre (020 8795 6240) for details or see the Brent Teaching Primary Care Trust website (www.brentpct.nhs.uk), which includes links to a number of voluntary organisations (click on 'links' and pick a topic from the right hand menu).

Making a complaint

You are entitled to complain about unsatisfactory health services, including hospitals, community services, dentists, opticians and GPs.

In the first instance you should raise your concerns with a member of staff, ward manager or doctor, or the local complaints officer (whose name should be available from the service). If your complaint is not resolved in an acceptable way, or you prefer to make a formal complaint you should write either to the Chief Executive, North West London Hospital NHS Trust, Northwick Park Hospital, Watford Road, Harrow HA1 3UJ (hospitals) or the Chief Executive, Brent Teaching PCT, Wembley Centre for Health and Care, 116 Chaplin Road, Wembley HA0 4UZ (other services).

If you need help making a complaint contact:

- **North West London Hospitals Patient Advice & Liaison Service** (020 8869 5118, 0800 783 4372) (about hospital treatment).
- **Brent Teaching Primary Care Trust Patient Services Department** (020 8795 6771) (tPCT health services).
- **Independent Complaints Advocacy Service** (0845 120 3784 or www.adviceguide.org.uk (click on 'health') (any health services).

Other sources of information

- **The North West London Hospital Trust Patient Advice & Liaison Service (PALS)** (020 8869 5118, 0800 783 4372, pals@nwlh.nhs.uk) provides confidential help and support to patients and carers who use the Northwick Park or Central Middlesex Hospitals.
- **Brent Teaching Primary Care Trust Patient Services** (020 8795 6771) listens to concerns, suggestions or queries about services, helps sort out problems on behalf of the service user and facilitates the NHS Complaints Procedure, providing support to both service users and staff.
- **NHS Direct** (0845 4647) and **NHS Direct Online** (www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk) provides a range of health-related information, including details about illnesses and conditions, help choosing the best treatment and details of local services.

Remember that other factsheets in this pack may also include information useful to you



The Princess Royal Trust **Brent Carers Centre**
Wembley Centre for Health and Care, 116 Chaplin Road, Wembley HA0 4UZ Tel: 020 8795 6240