

# social services

There are a large number of services available within the borough to support you and the person for whom you care. They include help with **everyday living** – such as personal care, cleaning, shopping and meals – social activities in day centres and lunch clubs, respite care – giving the person you care for a change and **giving you a break**, and residential care and nursing homes – when someone's needs become such that they need more constant care.

Brent Social Services is responsible for **arranging support** for those who need help to live in the community. This includes older people, people with a physical disability, people in need of occupational therapy services, people with a sensory impairment, people living with HIV/AIDS, people with a learning disability, people with a mental health problem and people who have a drug and/or alcohol problem. It also helps those **who care for others**.

This factsheet describes services for adults and explains **how to access them**, and covers the carer's assessment – what it is, who it is for, and how to ask for one.

Services for children and young people with special needs are described in the factsheet *Caring for children with special needs*; older people (men aged 65+ and women aged 60+) are covered in the factsheet *Older carers and carers of older people*; young carers are covered in the factsheet *Young carers*.



**Social services for adults** are covered by a number of specialist teams working in the following areas:

- physical disabilities
- occupational therapy
- mental health
- learning disabilities
- sensory impairment
- drugs and alcohol
- HIV and AIDS
- older people.

**Services for children and young people** are covered by Children's Services (see the factsheet *Caring for children with special needs*).

## Referral and assessment

**If you think the person you care for needs support, you can ask for a needs assessment by contacting the One Stop Shop (020 8937 4300 – see the factsheet *Useful contacts for addresses*).**

Staff there will ask for personal details of the person you care for, what services you are requesting and why.

The information recorded by the One Stop Shop is a **referral**. The referral is passed on to the duty officer of the relevant social services team, who will decide whether and what type of assessment can be offered.

If considered appropriate, a **care manager** will arrange a time to make an assessment, at which you can be present. You may also be entitled to a **carer's assessment** (see below).

The care manager will ask the person who needs help to describe how they manage day to day and the kind of help they need. This could be personal care such as getting into or out of bed, getting washed and dressed, or going to the toilet. The manager will also ask how they cope with preparing food and drink and whether they have any problems getting around their home. There will be questions about getting out and participating in social and recreational activities. For some people, depending on their illness, disability or age, there will also be questions about how safe it is for the person to stay on their own without supervision.

## The carer's assessment

### WHO IS ELIGIBLE?

Under the Carers and Disabled Children Act 2000 anyone aged 16 or over who provides a substantial amount of care on a regular basis to someone aged 18



or over is entitled to ask social services for a **carer's assessment**, even if the person for whom they care chooses not to be assessed or to receive services. Parent carers can also ask for an assessment under the Act (see the factsheet *Caring for children with special needs*).

You can also ask for an assessment if you are going to be providing care for someone in the future, for example after hospital treatment or if someone is coming to live with you.

### WHAT IS A CARER'S ASSESSMENT?

The carer's assessment is an opportunity for you to describe what practical help and support you provide, what you are prepared to continue to do, and what would make managing easier for you. Social services can support you directly, for example by providing a break from caring, and other services, or indirectly through the use of **direct payments** and **vouchers** (see below). They can also help you find other ways of maintaining your health and wellbeing to enable you to continue your caring role.

They can also provide services to the person for whom you care, thereby improving her or his quality of life, as well as making your life easier. This could be, for example, adaptations to the home such as a ramp, or a bath hoist to avoid you having to lift someone, respite care to give you a break, meals on wheels or help with cleaning, to give you more time during the day.

Before the assessment it is important to think carefully about your own needs and how much you feel you can do. Remember that you have the right *not* to be a carer. This can be very difficult – or impossible – to say, but you *are* entitled to say it.

### FURTHER INFORMATION

Carers UK publishes a very useful booklet *How do I get help? Carer's assessments made clear* which includes a sample letter requesting an assessment. It is available from 0845 241 0963 or [www.carersuk.org/Information/Orderpublications/](http://www.carersuk.org/Information/Orderpublications/).

The government website [www.direct.gov.uk/caringforsomeone](http://www.direct.gov.uk/caringforsomeone) includes information about carers' assessments.

## Care plan

**After the assessments (needs and carer's) have been done, the care manager will produce a care plan – a written plan describing how needs will be met.**

It will include:

- A description of needs
- Which services might be available to meet these needs
- Who will provide the services
- When the services will start
- How often they will be provided, and for how long
- Charges, if any, and details of how they will be met
- When the care plan will be reviewed.

A copy of the plan will be sent to the person who has been assessed and, with their agreement, to you, as the carer. After it has been agreed with you and the person you care for, the file will be 'closed'.

## REVIEWS

If the needs of the person you care for change, or you are finding it difficult to manage, you are entitled to ask for a **review**. The process is the same as asking for the initial assessment, ie you need to contact the One Stop Shop and make a new referral.

## Services

**Below is an outline of the services that may be included in the care plan.**

### SOCIAL WORK SUPPORT

Care managers, as part of the assessment process, can offer advice and support. They are trained to advise on a range of practical and financial problems and have a wide knowledge of specialist services for people with a range of care needs. Don't be afraid to ask them any questions you may have. If they don't know the answer they should be able to direct you to someone who can help.

### BREAKS FROM CARING

All carers need time off, and a change of scene can be a positive experience for the person you care for. Respite care can be provided in your own home, at a residential home, a residential care unit or with a family. There are also a number of specialist holiday and respite centres that welcome people being cared for, either with or without the carer. Some respite care grants are available. See the factsheet *Time for yourself* for further details.

Under the Carers and Disabled Children Act 2000 social services can issue **vouchers** to enable carers to have a break from caring, either as regular breaks or to cover a specified period. Vouchers can be exchanged for services provided by the council or an organisation approved by the council, and will normally be issued to the person you care for. You should ask at your assessment about vouchers.

### DAY CARE

Day centres offer activities and social contact for people with care needs and provide another opportunity for carers to have time to themselves. See the factsheet *Time for yourself* for further details.

### COMMUNITY CARERS

Community carers can help with personal care, such as getting into and out of bed or with washing and dressing, and provide social, emotional and practical support, such as preparing meals. Outreach workers aim to enable someone to stay in their home for as long as possible by assisting with tasks such as cooking and cleaning.

### MEALS AT HOME

The meals on wheels service delivers cooked meals at home at lunchtime. It is possible to specify specific dietary requirements and to ask for ethnic specific services, for example Halal, Kosher, African-Caribbean and vegetarian. The service is available seven days a week, every day of the year (including Christmas).

### AIDS AND ADAPTATIONS

Occupational therapists will make a home visit to advise people how to manage more easily at home. They can supply small items such as a raised toilet seat, a grab rail in the bath or an entryphone and advise on how to perform everyday tasks with ease and safety. They will also make the appropriate referral if a major adaptation such as a chair lift would enable the person with needs to stay in his or her home. For further information on aids see the factsheet *Housing*.



## RESIDENTIAL CARE

Social services may meet all or some of the costs of residential or nursing home care. Anyone moving into a residential home is advised to arrange it through social services. This is particularly important if you will be asking them for financial support in the future. For more details on moving into and paying for residential care see the factsheet *Housing*.

## OTHER SUPPORT

Social services can also supply telephones and alarm systems (see the factsheet *Housing*), disabled parking permits (Blue Badges, see the factsheet *Getting around*), respite care and respite care grants (see the factsheet *Time for yourself*).

## Paying for services

**There should be no charge for an assessment – either for you or the person you care for – but there is a charge for some community care services and for long-term residential care.**

Costs vary according to financial circumstances, so the person receiving services will have to give information about their income and savings. If they do not, they will be charged at the highest rate. In certain circumstances the local authority may charge carers for services they receive directly.

For current details about charges see *Fairer charges for home care*, available from Financial Services (020 8937 4214) and in One Stop Shops.

For advice about charges contact Brent Carers Centre (020 8795 6240).

## DIRECT PAYMENTS

Under the Carers and Disabled Children Act 2000, instead of providing support, social services can give carers direct payments – money to buy the services you need to help continue caring.

Direct payments allow you more control over getting the kind of support you need. You can use them to buy all or some of the support services you have been assessed as needing. However, using direct payments may mean you have to become an employer, and would have to sort out contracts and deduct tax and national insurance.

You should ask at your assessment about direct payments.

Further details are available on [www.brent.gov.uk/socserv2.nsf](http://www.brent.gov.uk/socserv2.nsf) (click on 'Further information').

## Comments and complaints

**If you have any comments or complaints contact a One Stop Shop or the Complaints Manager, Brent Adults and Social Care Department, 6th Floor, Mahatma Gandhi House, 34 Wembley Hill Road, Wembley HA9 8AD (020 8937 4240).**

You can also use an online complaints form on the Brent website [www.brent.gov.uk/complain.nsf](http://www.brent.gov.uk/complain.nsf).

A complaints leaflet is available at council offices and libraries and from [www.brent.gov.uk/complain.nsf](http://www.brent.gov.uk/complain.nsf).

## Emergency support

**Unexpected and emergency situations arise for everyone from time to time, for example accidents or emergency admittance to hospital.**

This can be particularly worrying if you are a carer and concerned about what will happen to the person for whom you care.

If such a situation arises, during working hours contact the One Stop Shop (020 8937 1200) and tell them it's an emergency situation. Out of hours (5pm- 8.30 am; 24 hours at weekends and bank holidays) telephone the **Emergency Duty Team** on 020 8863 5250. For details of emergency respite care see the factsheet *Time for yourself*.

## Further information

Staff at **Brent Carers Centre** (020 8795 6240) can advise and support you through the process of getting help from social services.

Contact details of other useful voluntary and statutory organisations are included in the factsheets *Useful Contacts* and *Carers from black and minority ethnic communities*.

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

