

3. ADULT & COMMUNITY SERVICES (formerly Social Services)

Adult & Community Services Directorate is part of *Worcestershire County Council* and aims to make sure that people with a disability, health problems or who are elderly and frail, are being supported in the community. The aim is to help people of all ages to live as independently as possible and to be able to manage at home for as long as they can safely do so. Within this, it is also important to support carers with information and, where appropriate, services.

As a carer, there are a number of different professionals you could meet and these are some of the services they may provide:

- Home Care
- Special equipment for people with disability
- Day Care
- Meals on Wheels
- Residential or nursing home care for short periods, as well as permanently
- Support services for carers
- Emergency services after office hours

How to make contact:

You can contact *Adult & Community Services* to make a referral for support in a number of ways by:

- phone - 0800 389 2896 (for general enquiries)
- phone - 0845 607 2000 (for social care services)
- e-mail - socialcare@worcestershire.gov.uk
- post - Adult & Community Services, PO Box 372, Worcester WR5 2ZD
- fax - 01905 768056
- minicom - 01905 768052
- visit - to your nearest HUB/customer centre

If you need urgent emergency help out of office hours, ring the *Emergency Duty Team* on 01905 768020.

The *Worcestershire Carers' Unit* has a team of development workers offering specialist support for carers, and advice and guidance to social and health care professionals. Carers can receive information, advice and signposting to services.

Assessment

Before you can receive services from *Adult & Community Services* there is a process of assessment. If you are a carer providing regular or substantial care or are intending to do so, you have the right to ask for an assessment of your needs to help you to continue to care, irrespective of whether the person you are caring for has had or is having their own needs' assessment (however the person cared for must meet the eligibility criteria for services.) This **Carer's Assessment** is separate from that of the person you care for and will consider in detail the impact of caring on your own health and well being. To obtain an assessment you will need to contact the *Access Centre*.

When a Social Worker carries out an **Adult Care Assessment** on the person you care for, it should also include an identification and recognition of your needs and wishes as a carer. If the person you care for is eligible for a service from *Adult & Community Services*, but is not receiving a service or assessment for any reason, you as a carer are still entitled to a separate Carer's Assessment and to receive support services.

However if the person you care for is not eligible for services, you will not be eligible for a separate carer's assessment or services from Adult and Community Services, but the assessor should still summarise your needs, give you an information pack and point you to other organisations. The Worcestershire

Association of Carers will also provide information and support to all carers regardless of their eligibility for an assessment.

In the Carer's Assessment make sure you describe the support needed at the worst times, not just the best. Before having the assessment, think about the needs of the person you care for and your own needs; it may be useful to make a list.

The Carer's Assessment will cover:

- your role as a carer
- the impact caring has on your life
- the support you offer
- things that may concern you
- how care would continue if you were unable to cope due to health or other reasons; for example, an accident or sudden illness. It is important that your wishes are taken into account along with the views of the person you care for.

The assessment may also provide you with someone else to listen to you and to help to identify appropriate help and support that may be available to you.

At the end of the assessment, you should be sent a written copy of what is agreed at the assessment, called a **Carer's Support Plan**. This is a summary of your support needs and the services that you could be provided with if you are an eligible carer. These may include access to an adult sitter service via a voucher scheme, a Direct Payments scheme, an Emergency Card and training/information scheme. Your needs as a Carer should be reviewed on a regular basis or if your circumstances change.

Criteria for services

Like everyone else, *Adult & Community Services* have limited resources. They aim to treat people fairly and to focus on

measuring the needs of individuals to decide the level of support that can be offered. If a social worker is already involved, talk to them about your eligibility to assessment and/or services. Alternatively contact *Worcestershire Association of Carers* for more information on eligibility criteria for a carer's assessment.

Do remember that, as your circumstances change, you should ask for a re-assessment for yourself or the person you care for.

At present services and support to carers via the *Worcestershire Carers' Unit* are not means tested.

Charging for services

For the cared-for person there is likely to be a charge for the services provided. The amount to pay will depend on income, benefits and savings. This will be worked out following a **Financial Assessment**, which the Social Worker or Finance Assessor will carry out. Any charges by the Local Authority should be made clear to you and reflect your overall circumstances, before any services are provided. **If in any doubt... ask!** The Attendance Allowance or Disability Living Allowance, if someone is eligible for it, may help in paying for some services such as Home Care or Meals on Wheels. It is the cared-for person's income that is assessed, not yours! Do not let worries over whether you can pay stop you getting in touch with *Adult & Community Services*. Instead, discuss your problems with a Social Worker. You will not be charged for any assessment.

If you are not happy with what *Adult & Community Services* are offering, or any part of the service, contact them to talk through concerns. They have a complaints procedure you can follow through. You can also contact organisations, such as *Worcestershire Association of Carers*, *DIAL*, *Age Concern* or

the *Citizens Advice Bureau*, who can help and support you with any complaint (see **When things go wrong**).

Direct Payments

This Direct Payments scheme is separate from the Direct Payments scheme specifically for carers (see 'Getting a Break'). A Direct Payment in this context refers to a payment of money to the person you care for from *Adult & Community Services* to arrange for care as and when it is needed. Direct Payments enable the person to choose who provides support, when it is provided and where. It means the person can be independent, have control to choose and buy services to meet their assessed needs. These needs will be identified by a Social Worker, possibly using information gathered from your Doctor, carer or Community Nurse.

Direct Payments will not affect the benefit entitlement of the person you care for and is not taxable. To set up Direct Payments, a separate bank account will be needed and records and receipts kept; they can then make their own care arrangements. Support with Direct Payments can be provided by *Penderels Trust*, who can help through the process of setting up Direct Payments and managing it afterwards. Help is also available from the *National Centre for Independent Living* and there is a guide to Direct Payments produced by *Worcestershire County Council* and also by the *Department of Health* that may also be useful.

Independent Living Fund (I.L.F.)

This funding is for people aged 16-64 who receive the higher rate care component of Disability Living Allowance and are living in the community. To access this support you must be receiving a specified minimum amount per week of care services through *Adult & Community Services* or Direct Payments and have limited capital. For further information

please contact social worker direct or *The National Centre for Independent Living*.

Buying help privately

Even if at the time of assessment, you or the person you care for do not meet the eligibility criteria or your income and savings are too high, *Worcestershire Association of Carers* or *Adult & Community Services* can provide you with information on local agencies to help you purchase the services privately. The Commission for Social Care Inspection (CSCI) inspects and reports on care services and councils so, for independent reports for each care agency or care home, please call CSCI or view their website for details.