

ADULT & COMMUNITY SERVICES

Adult & Community Services Directorate is part of *Worcestershire County Council* and aims to make sure that people with 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 manage at home for as long as they want and feel able. 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

In *Worcestershire*, social care staff support children, adults, older people and carers in times of difficulty. This could be as a result of a physical disability, learning disability, hearing or sight loss, mental health problem, alcohol or drug misuse, which reduces a person's ability to cope without some additional support. Some doctors' surgeries or Health Centres also have attached Social Workers.

The *Worcestershire Carers' Unit* has a team of development workers offering specialist support for carers. They will provide information and advice, Carers' Assessments, access to an adult sitter service via a voucher scheme, a Direct Payments scheme, an Emergency Card and a training scheme.

How to contact them

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

- phone - 0845 607 2000
- e-mail - socialcare@worcestershire.gov.uk
- post - Adult & Community Services, PO Box 585, Worcester WR4 4AD
- fax - 01905 768056
- minicom - 01905 768052
- visit - to your nearest HUB/customer centre (address in address website list)
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If you need urgent emergency help out of office hours, ring the *Emergency Duty Team* on 01950 768020.

Assessment

Before you can receive help from *Adult & Community Services*, there is a process of assessment. A Social Worker will carry out a **Adult Care Assessment** which should include a joint assessment of your needs. The Social Worker should also advise you of your right to a separate **Carer's Assessment** which helps you to consider the impact of caring on your own health and well being. If the person you care for would be eligible for a service from *Adult & Community Services*, but is not receiving a service/assessment for any reason, you as a carer are still entitled to a separate Carer Assessment. This is usually carried out by the relevant Social Work team. However, if for any reason this would not be possible, in the first instance contact *Worcestershire Carers' Unit* to discuss who would be most appropriate to complete the assessment with you.

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. *Worcestershire Association of Carers* has some information sheets that may also help. 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.

It 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 given 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. The *Adult & Community Services* booklet called "What happens next - a guide to assessment" is available.

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. As your circumstances might change, you might need to contact them again to ask for a reassessment or a review of your needs. However, at present services and support to carers via the *Worcestershire Carers' Unit* are not means **tested**.

Charging for services

There is likely to be a charge for the services provided. How much you have to pay will depend on your income, benefits and savings. This will be worked out following a **Financial Assessment**, which the Social Worker or Finance Assessor will carry out with you. 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!** 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 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

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 enables 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 - just as if you were being assessed for services to be provided directly by *Adult & Community Services*.

Direct Payments will not affect your benefit entitlement and is not taxable. To set up Direct Payments you need a separate bank account and to keep records and receipts to show how you spent your money, you can then make your own care arrangements. Support with Direct Payments can be provided by *Penderels Trust*, who can help you through the process of setting up a Direct Payment and managing it afterwards. There is a guide to Direct Payments produced by *Worcestershire County Council* and also by the *Department of Health* that may also be useful to you.

This Direct Payments scheme is separate from the Direct Payments scheme specifically for carers (see 'Getting a break').

Independent Living Fund (I.L.F.)

This funding is for people aged 16-65 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 at least £200 per week of services through *Adult & Community Services* or Direct Payments and have limited capital. For further information please contact *Adult & Community Services*.

Buying help privately

Even if at the time you 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.

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