Am I a Carer?

Do you help a family member, friend or neighbour that is frail, has a chronic physical or mental illness, and/or has a disability or special needs?

Is this help regular and ongoing and include helping with personal care, cleaning, cooking and other personal and household activities including medication or other health care?

Would this person be able to manage on their own if you were not able to provide this regular and ongoing support?

If you can answer yes to any of the above then you are a Carer and know that you matter!

Some suggestions and tips to help

• Register yourself as a Carer at your GP Surgery.
• Request a Carers Assessment for yourself with the Social Services team at your local Council.
• Request a needs assessment for the person you care for with the Social Services team at your local Council.
• Find out what support groups may be available to help you.
• Keep a list of contact names and useful telephone numbers.
• Make sure you are claiming all relevant financial help and benefits available.
• Ensure the person you are caring for has been assessed and provided with the appropriate aids to make life easier for them.
• Use pharmacy services such as blister packs, prescription ordering and delivery services.
• Keep a diary of symptoms, treatment, contacts, advice etc.
• If the help you are paying for is unacceptable, change it!
• Recognise when you need outside help. It is not a weakness.
• Make sure that you have some time for yourself, away from the person you are caring for. You too are important.
“I have only recently joined the team of Carer Support Volunteers. Having been retired for over three years I had been thinking of volunteering at Willen when a friend sent me an advert for the Carer Support Volunteer role. I was a little nervous when I turned up for the training course. There were a number of other people with the same intention to volunteer and the training we had was very interesting and comprehensive. The staff were always supportive and we have ongoing support on a regular basis.

The atmosphere at the Hospice is always peaceful and calm, and all the staff and volunteers are friendly and welcoming.

It feels very rewarding to be able to give a few hours of my time to just ‘be there’ for patient carers at the drop in sessions that are held at various times in the week.”

Rona

“Having recently retired from a career within the NHS, I decided to do some volunteer work which would give me the same satisfaction in helping and supporting people within the community. Willen hospice was looking for new volunteers for their ‘career support service’ and I immediately thought that would give me the opportunity that I was looking for.

I completed my training just two months ago and am at present working alongside other experienced volunteers in ‘family and friends drop in’ sessions getting to meet some carers and learning how to provide them with appropriate support. I have also spent some time sitting with a hospice patient who would otherwise be on their own a lot of the time.

I have found both activities extremely rewarding and am looking forward to offering further support in the future.

Everyone I have met, both staff and volunteers have been friendly and welcoming and I feel privileged to be part of the services provided by the Hospice.”

Pauline
“Hi, I’m Karen, married with two children and have lived in Milton Keynes for just over 37 years.

Being local, I have always known about Willen Hospice and the valuable work they undertake, supporting them wherever I could over the years in various ways.

Now my children have grown up and left home, I find I have more time on my hands to devote to helping others. At first I was apprehensive joining the Willen team but the professional training & support from the rest of the staff have eased my fears and they made me most welcome.

I am now a carer support volunteer which enables me on my visits to listen and help those going through difficult and probably the most traumatic times in their lives, having myself experienced similar experiences hopefully carers will benefit from my support.

In the short time as a volunteer I have related to many people from all backgrounds of society each with an interesting story to tell.”

Karen

“Having worked most of my life I, like so many found myself full of trepidation at the thought of my imminent retirement.

I saw the advert for the Carers Support Service and thought that this was something I could do with the right training and supervision.

I have always considered myself a ‘people’s person’ and one of my concerns about leaving work was not mixing and meeting new people.

The training for the CSS was fairly comprehensive with a great bunch of like minded individuals. I was a little anxious attending the 1st drop-in session, but needn’t have worried as everyone was very welcoming. Shadowing the experienced volunteers was reassuring and helped quell the nerves. The carers I have chatted to look forward to meeting other carers, to have the opportunity to be themselves and talk freely about any feelings or concerns they might have, which they cannot share with family members or their loved ones.

I realise I am still a novice and have much to learn. Everyone is unique, an individual with different experiences, relationships and concerns about the future. I feel very privileged to be a volunteer at the hospice. It truly is an amazing place to be and provides an invaluable service for the community.”

Sue
We often become aware of parents who will be experiencing the despair of being diagnosed with a life limiting condition who may also be raising their child/children alone. Not only do they have the extreme sadness of leaving their children behind when they die but the added worry of who will look after them.

Children who are about to be bereaved need the security of knowing who will look after them. We recommend single parents take legal advice and set up a Special Guardianship Order via the local court. This is a relatively new way of providing permanence for a child and enables the authorities to carry out assessments and checks regarding the safety and security needs of the child at this difficult time, it also offers support to the new family/friends taking on a bereaved child.

Grieving children are not only losing their only parent but they may experience the added stress caused by changing schools, leaving friends behind and the need to fit in as a part of a different family and home which can be overwhelming.

Sadly, this is a difficult decision that needs some thought, a private agreement with friends or family may sound ok for now but what if the person chosen to look after a child finds their circumstances change and they are no longer able to do so. Or maybe taking on a young child may sound easy but how will it be if the child changes into a challenging teenager? It’s also worth bearing in mind, missing or estranged parents named on birth certificate have the legal parental responsibility to take their children even if they have taken no part in the upbringing of their child.
MK50 Thank You

The event was organised to celebrate the 50th birthday of Milton Keynes and to recognise the “unsung heroes” from across the city who give their time and commitment to so many hardworking charities and community groups. Some of the organisations in attendance included Headway, MK Cardiac Group, MK Foodbank, MK Deaf Zone and Willen Hospice.

Sue and Margaret at Houses of Parliament

“On Wednesday 6th September, Margaret and I had a perfect day in London attending an evening reception held at Speakers House at the House of Commons within the Palace of Westminster. The reception was being held to thank volunteers who supported charitable organisations in Milton Keynes and on its 50th birthday, to celebrate and give thanks for the time they give.

We were both very proud and honoured to attend on behalf of Willen Hospice, and to accept thanks for everyone who is a part of this tremendous organisation.

On arrival at the entrance, Portcullis House, we were subject to rigorous security checks before gathering with the other attendees and being escorted to Speakers House through the inner workings of the Houses of Parliament. To reach Speakers House we proceeded down an escalator and along a walkway under the road leading to Westminster Bridge and through cloisters to the State Rooms of Speaker’s House within the House of Commons.

Waiting to be welcomed into the State Rooms, we had the opportunity to take in the splendour of Speakers House, the beautiful staircase leading up to the State Rooms. Curtains of crimson and gold draped the full length of the windows in a silk and linen brocatelle with a deep red luxurious thick piled carpet and oil portraits painted on the panelled walls, representing a magnificent collection of paintings of House of Commons Speakers, past and present.

We were welcomed with canapés and a choice of refreshments and greeted by staff and given time to absorb the splendour of the State Rooms.

Both MPs for Milton Keynes, Mark Lancaster and Iain Stewart gave speeches about the enormous value of volunteers in the community of Milton Keynes.

Three specific charities were given special mention during the speech given by Iain Stewart, with one of those being Willen Hospice and the invaluable support of Patient and Family Services and the work of the volunteers.

A perfect day that Margaret and I will remember with wonderful memories and such a privilege to attend.”

- Sue, Volunteer

“We are very lucky in Milton Keynes that we have a thriving and well connected charity sector. The only reason we have that is because of all the individuals that volunteer their time to making people’s lives better. We really can’t thank them enough and I hope all of those in attendance enjoyed the event.”

- Ian Stewart MP
Looking after Your Health and Wellbeing

**Carers often suffer ill health due their caring responsibilities so it’s important to let your GP know you are a Carer.**

It is important for you to make time for your medical appointments and attend regular check-ups, screenings and health checks.

- GPs can be an important source of information and advice on services provided by the NHS such as continence services and patient transport to hospital appointments.
- They can further support you as a Carer with information about the medical needs, treatments and possible side effects of medication, as well as general good advice to help you look after the person you care for.
- Carry out home visits to the person you care for if it is difficult to get both of you to the surgery.
- Synchronise appointments so you and the person you care for only need to make one trip.
- Organise repeat prescriptions to a local pharmacy, write supporting letters for benefits claims, provide free annual flu jabs (for Carers of people with certain health conditions) and may also run support groups specifically for Carers.

All [Pharmacies](#) have qualified pharmacists who can provide free and confidential health advice and treatment for a range of common illnesses, aches and pains, quickly without having to wait for a GP appointment.

**Taking care of your back.** Back problems are common amongst Carers. Lifting the person you care for, helping them dress and move around can place great strain on your back. [NHS Direct](#) provide information on what not to do and gives help and information on where to go for help.


**Taking care of your wellbeing and mental health**

The [Carers Trust](#) on [www.carers.org/timetothinkaboutyou](#) has produced a prompt sheet which can help Carers identify when they may need some help. About 40% of Carers are thought to be at risk of depression, anxiety or stress because of their caring role. If you are feeling either anxious, stressed or depressed local carer support agency Carers Milton Keynes can also provide help and support [www.carersmiltonkeynes.org](#) if you feel you’re under too much pressure, not eating or sleeping properly, tearful, angry and anxious or feeling low and lethargic then you can get help by visiting your GP or speaking to someone either at the Hospice at [www.willen-hospice.org.uk/how-we-care/patient-and-family-services/patient-and-carers-support](#) or one of the previously mentioned Carers Agencies.

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**The Willen Hospice Singers**

The Willen Hospice Singers shared their sound at the Twilight Walk held at the Hospice on Sunday September 17th and will also be appearing at the Hospice Memorial Service on 15th October and Lights of Love on the 2nd December, 2017. They are also performing in Willen Hospice Beatles Concert on the 20th October in The Ridgeway Centre.

To find out more, visit [www.willen-hospice.org.uk/events](#)
**Dates for your Diary**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What</th>
<th>Family &amp; Friends Drop-In</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>When</td>
<td>Every Monday (except Bank Holidays) From 12 noon to 4:30pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Where</td>
<td>Wellbeing Centre at Willen Hospice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>About</td>
<td>Join us and meet others in similar situations, get information and advice, enjoy refreshments from our kitchen and take advantage of free complementary therapies and activities. Our trained team of volunteers will be on hand to tell you what we can do to help support you. Need a lift to get here? We can help. Just call us on <strong>01908 663636</strong>.</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What</th>
<th>Willen Hospice Singers</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>When</td>
<td>Every Monday (except Bank Holidays) 1:30 – 3pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Where</td>
<td>Church of St Mary Magdalene, Willen (next to Hospice)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>About</td>
<td>Formed 3 years ago to encourage family, friends, carers and volunteers to sing together for fun and fundraising.</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What</th>
<th>Family &amp; Friends Drop-In</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>When</td>
<td>Every Wednesday 4 - 6pm &amp; Thursday 2 - 4pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Where</td>
<td>The Garden Room at Willen Hospice</td>
</tr>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What</th>
<th>In-Patient Visiting</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>When</td>
<td>Saturday or Sunday from 2:30pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Where</td>
<td>Inpatient Unit, Willen Hospice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>About</td>
<td>One of our trained volunteers will visit patients and their visitors to explain our services and offer ongoing assistance.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
What we offer

Family and Friends Drop-Ins
Drop-Ins are held at the Hospice and enable family carers and friends to share experiences and gain information about community resources, whilst enjoying the company of others. There are a range of complementary therapies available by trained volunteers. If you need transport to attend, we may be able to arrange this for you.

Visiting Service
Trained Patient and Carers Support volunteers are able to visit a patient for a few hours a week, they can make tea, read or stay with the patient, enabling the carer to have some ‘me’ time. This may be to attend the Drop-Ins or enjoy some free time elsewhere. A Patient and Carers Support volunteer may also visit patients in the Hospice who may not have friends or family locally.

Emotional Support
One of our support volunteers can meet with carers either at home, within the Hospice or another suitable venue, to listen and offer support. This is a time to focus on the carer.

Letter Writing Service
We can assist patients who would like to write a personal letter to get back in touch with somebody or to a close relative, a young person or friend perhaps for later in life. We hold a choice of stationery to choose from.

Visiting the Hospice facilities
Some patients may consider the Hospice for day care or their end of life care. If you are interested in visiting the Hospice in order to find out about its facilities you are very welcome to do so. Please contact us for an appointment.

Visiting guidelines for carers and patients
After someone from the Patient and Carers Support Team has spoken to you about the possible support that we can offer you, a volunteer will ring and arrange a convenient time to visit or telephone you. We have both male and female volunteers who are all DBS checked and have undergone training for the role. All our volunteers are regularly supervised.

We always try to match patients, carers and volunteers as best as we can but we know that this is not always possible. If you would like to change a volunteer please contact a member of staff from Carers Support and we will make alternative arrangements for you.

Volunteers are not able to carry out any care tasks or moving and handling techniques. They can make tea, and will read, listen or talk, or if qualified carry out hand massage.
What can you expect from Patient and Carers Support Service?

- Whether you are a patient or a carer of a patient; we will listen to your concerns and worries.
- We offer emotional support and impartial, confidential advice.
- We aim to assist you to make informed decisions.
- We provide information on Carers Assessment and Continuing Health Care Assessments. Your needs as a carer of a patient are important to us.
- We assist with facilitating care planning meetings between patients, family members and local agencies.
- We take your views about future care very seriously and respect your choices.
- We provide information regarding funding available for care in the community and in a Nursing Care Home.
- We offer information about equipment and adaptations available in the community.
- We can direct you to information about local services including approved Nursing Homes in the area and domiciliary care agencies in Milton Keynes.
- We advocate for you and those you care for on your behalf.
- We can provide information about benefits you may be entitled to and grants you may want to apply for.
- We can give you information on support available after bereavement.
- If we cannot help, we signpost you to local agencies.
- We use your suggestions and feedback to develop the service further.

For more details visit us at www.willen-hospice.org.uk/pafs

We welcome any suggestions or feedback you may have. Your ideas, comments or requests are important to us and help us to develop the service further to improve the way we support you in your caring role.

Please email patient&carers@willen-hospice.org.uk or call us on 01908 663636 Ext 239 where you can also leave a message out of hours.

Know your rights as a Carer

**Carers Rights Day**

Friday 24th November 2017

Each year Carers Rights Day is brought to organisations across the UK together to help carers in their local community know their rights and find out how to get the help and support they are entitled to.

By clicking on the following links, you can find out more about what may be available to you, as a Carer.

- www.carersuk.org/news-and-campaigns/carers-rights-day
- www.carersuk.org/help-and-advice/get-resources/looking-after-someone
Did You Know?

**Carers Assessment**
Supporting a patient of the Hospice you may be entitled to a non-means tested Carers Assessment. For more information, visit [www.carersmiltonkeynes.org/carers-assessments](http://www.carersmiltonkeynes.org/carers-assessments) or contact Theresa or Fiona for more details.

**Carers Allowance**
For details of Carers Allowance, please visit [www.gov.uk/carers-allowance/overview](http://www.gov.uk/carers-allowance/overview).

**The Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB)**
Advisors and assessors can help you resolve your problem by explaining your options and the possible outcomes of different courses of action. Tel: 01908 604475 or visit [www.miltonkeynescab.org.uk](http://www.miltonkeynescab.org.uk)

**Advocacy**
For a range of free, confidential and independent advocacy services to help people make choices about their lives, to understand their rights, to be treated as equals and to be heard. Tel: 0300 456 2370 or visit [www.pohwer.net/milton-keynes](http://www.pohwer.net/milton-keynes).

**The Community Car Service**
The aim of the Community Car Service is to provide safe and reliable transportation for vulnerable members of the community in order to help them access a range of medical services or social care visits. For details call 01908 670309 or visit [www.milton-keynes.gov.uk/social-care-and-health/adult-social-care/directory-search/service/181](http://www.milton-keynes.gov.uk/social-care-and-health/adult-social-care/directory-search/service/181)

**Flexible Working**
The Employment Act states if the person you care for is a relative, or lives at the same address as you, you have the right to request a flexible working pattern from your employer to help balance your work and caring responsibilities. You also have the right to take a ‘reasonable’ amount of time off work to deal with an emergency involving a dependant. [www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1996/18/contents](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1996/18/contents)

**Your right to not be discriminated against**
The Carers (Equal Opportunities) Act recognises that it is illegal to be discriminated against because of your caring role, not only in relation to employment, but also in relation to goods, services, housing and other fields. [www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2004/15/contents](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2004/15/contents)

**To be informed and involved**
The Health and Social Care Act outlines every patients right to be informed about and involved in discussions and decisions about their health and care, including their end of life care. This extends to Carers where appropriate. [www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2012/7/contents/enacted](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2012/7/contents/enacted)

**Safeguarding**
Every adult and child has the right to lead a life free from abuse, neglect or exploitation. Abuse may be financial, sexual, physical or emotional, occur in a domestic, educational, health or care environment. In most cases the abuser is a relative, friend, health or care worker who knows the victim. If you are concerned about the welfare or safety of a patient, carer or child please do not hesitate to discuss this with a health professional or

**For adults**, contact ASCAT (Adult Social Care Access Team) on 01908 253772 or out of hours on 01908 605650; [www.miltonkeynesccg.nhs.uk/safeguarding-adults](http://www.miltonkeynesccg.nhs.uk/safeguarding-adults)

**For children** contact MASH, Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub on 01908 253169/70 or out of hours 01908 265545; [www.miltonkeynesccg.nhs.uk/safeguarding-children](http://www.miltonkeynesccg.nhs.uk/safeguarding-children)
**Finances**

For a benefits review please contact your local DWP office or online [www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-work-pensions](http://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-work-pensions) or the Macmillan Benefits Line on 0808 808 00 00 Monday to Friday, 9am - 8pm, or [www.macmillan.org.uk/information-and-support/organising/your-finances](http://www.macmillan.org.uk/information-and-support/organising/your-finances)


**Arranging Personal Care at Home**

If you would like to discuss or arrange care for the person you are supporting, contact your District Nurse or GP initially. You can also find more information on non-means tested NHS Continuing Care on [www.miltonkeynesccg.nhs.uk/continuing-healthcare](http://www.miltonkeynesccg.nhs.uk/continuing-healthcare)

If the person you are supporting does not meet eligibility criteria for free NHS Continuing Healthcare (CHC) you may contact Milton Keynes Council for an assessment on 01908 605650 or [www.milton-keynes.gov.uk/social-care-and-health/adult-social-care](http://www.milton-keynes.gov.uk/social-care-and-health/adult-social-care). You will also find there is a list of council approved care providers of domiciliary residential and nursing or respite care.

There may be many reasons why care at home may no longer be feasible. Either the home is not suitable or care needs are too complex to be met in the community. The decision for a residential or nursing home can be very difficult. For more information speak with your GP or District Nursing Service who can explain the process of assessment and funding application.

For more information contact

**Elderly Accommodation Council** on 0800 377 7070 or [www.eac.org.uk](http://www.eac.org.uk)

**The Care Quality Commission (CQC)** who publish regular inspection reports on 03000 616161 or [www.cqc.org.uk](http://www.cqc.org.uk)


**Counselling** – Mind MK and IAPT (Improving Access to Psychological Services) have joined to provide talking therapy and Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) – [www.talkforchange.org.uk](http://www.talkforchange.org.uk) or 01908 228830 (option 4)

**Planning future care** – consider starting a conversation with the person you are supporting using the Advance Care Plan available at any GP surgery or online at [www.miltonkeynesccg.nhs.uk/resources/uploads/files/The%20ACP%20document%20PDF%20April%202015%20editable.pdf](http://www.miltonkeynesccg.nhs.uk/resources/uploads/files/The%20ACP%20document%20PDF%20April%202015%20editable.pdf)

**Aids and equipment** – some aides, such as wheelchairs, walking frames, commodes and profiling beds, may be available through your District Nursing Service or contact the Red Cross on 01908 578344 or [www.redcross.org.uk](http://www.redcross.org.uk)

**A Community Alarm** may give you and the person you are supporting, peace of mind. For details on all Telecare options call 01908 222616 or visit [www.milton-keynes.gov.uk/social-care-and-health/community-alarm](http://www.milton-keynes.gov.uk/social-care-and-health/community-alarm)
Useful Organisations

Carers MK
For details of the Carers discount card, a variety of free services available to you including counselling, emergency care plans, benefits and legal matters contact Carers MK directly on 01908 231703 or visit www.carersmiltonkeynes.org

Age UK
Age UK offer a comprehensive range of services and products that may be of interest to you; from emotional and practical support, counselling, home help and fact sheets about choosing a care service, benefits or legal advice. Contact your local branch on 01908 550700 or www.ageuk.org.uk/miltonkeynes

SSAFA
A charity that provides lifelong support for members of the Armed Forces and their families. Call on 01908 217181 or www.ssafa.org.uk/buckinghamshire

Cinnamon Trust
The national charity for the elderly, terminally ill and their pets. If you need help to care for your pet, walk your dog and, as long as previously arranged, provide lifetime care for a bereaved pet. Contact 01736 757900 or www.cinnamon.org.uk

Useful Links
Our website provides a Directory of Helpful Links and Websites. To access these please go to www.willen-hospice.org.uk/how-we-care/patient-and-family-services/patient-and-carers-support/resources

MK Falls Prevention
MK Falls Prevention Service offer a variety of services to the elderly and vulnerable. Call on 01908 686751 or follow www.mkfalls.co.uk

If you would like this letter or information in an alternative format, for example large print or easy read, or if you need help with communicating with us, for example because you use British Sign Language, please let us know. You can call us on 01908 663636 or email patient&familyservice@willen-hospice.org.uk