

Carers Information Sheet 4

Help from Health Services

BEING A CARER CAN ADVERSELY AFFECT YOUR HEALTH!

When you are a carer, it is important that you know about the services the National Health Service (NHS) can offer **you** (as well as the person you care for).

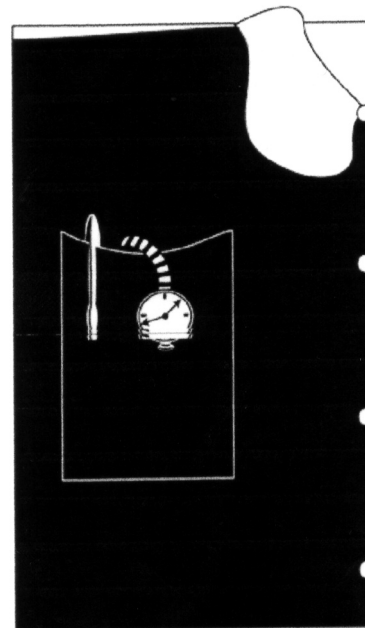
YOUR GP

Your GP is often the one you turn to when you are caring, and you are seeking information and support. There are many excellent GPs in Lewisham who will be able to direct you to the appropriate services.

However, it is important that your GP **knows you are a carer**. Please do not expect your GP to know this, unless you tell them - and even remind them if you have told them before. Your GP may then check regularly how you are coping, and how caring is affecting YOUR health. They can also note your extra responsibilities on your health records, which will remind the surgery to be considerate, e.g. to book convenient appointment times, etc.

It is also important that your cared for person's GP knows that you are caring for them. Once again, this means they can keep a helpful eye on how you are coping. The GP should ask you how YOU feel your cared for person is doing. You should also be able to ask them for information about the illness s/he has, about the drugs they may be taking and about how the illness/disease may progress. Obviously there may be issues of confidentiality, but the GP should be able to give you at least some basic information and advice.

Give them the yellow 'Tell your GP' card!



COUNSELLING NB: Many GPs can now arrange a few sessions for you at their surgery.

DISTRICT NURSES

Your local District Nurse can arrange nursing care at home for someone who needs help. S/he can also advise you about the following:

- moving and handling techniques (important if you are having to lift or move someone)
- diet
- incontinence (including assessment and pads)
- general health related problems

You can phone your surgery and ask for a District Nurse to visit you, if you have difficulty getting there.

Also ask at your local Health Centre about physiotherapy, chiropody, etc.

HOME VISITING SERVICES

If it is difficult for the person you care for to attend a dentist, optician or chiropody services, you can ask for the home visiting service. Ask your surgery for advice.

PRACTICE NURSE

Practice Nurses are qualified nurses working in GP surgeries. They can give basic medical services such as 'flu jabs, blood pressure or diabetes checks, etc.

COMMUNITY PSYCHIATRIC NURSES

Community psychiatric nurses (CPNs) are trained to help people with mental health problems. CPNs work to prevent serious problems or hospital admission, and to help people regain independence. Contact your GP for details, or see **Information Sheet 16** for more information.

LOOKING AFTER YOUR HEALTH

Remember that YOUR health is as important as that of the person you care for. If you don't look after yourself, you may not be able to look after them, or enjoy life! So it is important that you have regular check-ups yourself, and attend clinic and hospital appointments as needed. If you have problems leaving your cared for person to do this, and have no-one to stand in, Carers Lewisham will be able to help you with advice, sitting services, etc.

DEALING WITH PROBLEMS

If you feel you are not receiving the service you should, and you cannot get satisfaction from the doctor or surgery ('practice') manager, you are entitled to:

1. change GP. If you want to change practices, first ask to see the new practice's leaflet, which will outline the services provided, and any specialisms that they provide.

OR

2. make a complaint.

COMPLAINTS

For Hospital Services speak to the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS): Tel: **020 8333 3355**.

For other health service problems, contact the Primary Care Trust PALS: Tel: **0800 587 7027**.

(For mental health services, Tel: **0800 731 2864**.)

SOME USEFUL ADDRESSES

HEALTH CENTRES

- **Rushey Green Group Practice**, Hawstead Rd, SE6
Tel: **020 7138 7150**
- **Honor Oak Health Centre**, 20 Turnham Road, Brockley, SE4 Tel: **020 3049 2345**
- **Jenner Health Centre**, 201 Stanstead Road, Forest Hill, SE23 Tel: **020 3 049 2960**
- **Lee Health Centre**, 2 Handen Road, Lee, SE12
Tel: **020 3049 2070**
- **South Lewisham Centre**, 50 Conisborough Crescent, Catford SE6 Tel: **020 3049 2580**
- **Downham Family Medical Practice**, 7-9 Moorside Road, Bromley, BR1 5EP Tel: **020 3049 2030**
- **Sydenham Green Health Centre**, 26 Holmshaw Close, Sydenham, SE26 Tel: **020 3049 2820**
- **Waldron Health Centre**, Stanley St, Deptford, SE8 Tel: **020 3 049 3400**

NHS DIRECT

24 hours a day, 7 days a week, health advice and information by phone (or on the Internet). Contact them if you have any health worries about yourself or the person you care for.

Tel: **0845 46 47** or

www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk

Walk-in Health Centre

Waldron Health Centre, Amersham Vale, SE14 6LD
Tel: **020 3049 2370**

Open 8am to 8pm every day including weekends and Bank Holidays. No appointment necessary.



**Carers Lewisham, The Princess Royal Trust, Lewisham Carers Centre,
Waldram Place, Forest Hill, London, SE23 2LB
Tel: 020 8699 8686 Fax: 020 8699 0634
Email: info@carerslewisham.org.uk Web: www.carerslewisham.org.uk**

