

“Care Assessment”

This will help assess the practical and emotional needs of the carer

“Needs Assessment”

This will help assess the practical and emotional needs of the person with dementia

“Financial Assessment”

This will help assess the financial situation of the person with dementia to determine if the local authority will pay for, or contribute towards costs of care, at home, in respite or nursing care

All carers are legally entitled to a carer’s assessment from their local council which could lead to them, or the person they are caring for, getting social care support to help with caring. The assessment is a conversation that will look at how caring **impacts the carer’s ability to cope**, including their physical, mental and emotional needs, and whether they are able or willing to carry on caring

Caring can be a struggle and you may wonder whether any support is available. Emotional, financial and other pressures can all take their toll on your wellbeing.

It’s important to know that support is available from local councils and getting extra support by arranging an assessment of your needs is a very good place to start.

The support could range from some extra practical help with household chores to gaining help with cover so that you can take a break every so often. You are also entitled to a review of your needs regardless of how much income or savings you have or whether you are working or not.

Here are some of the key tips we share with carers who are seeking support for the first time:

The first step is to contact Carers Trust, who are funded on behalf of Warwickshire County Council. They will be able to carry out a free "Care Assessment" for you: **Call 0800 197 5544**

Here is the website link: <https://www.caringtogetherwarwickshire.org.uk>

The second step is to contact Adult Social Services at Warwickshire County Council.

They will be able to carry out a “Needs Assessment” for the person with dementia: **Call 01926 410410**

Here is the website link: <https://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/needsassessments>

Ideally, an assessment should take place face-to-face. It's a really good idea to have a relative or friend with you, especially if you're not confident explaining your situation.

They can also take notes for you – which is important.

If the needs assessment identifies that you clearly need help to cope day-to-day and a joint plan is agreed, you will then have the opportunity of a separate financial assessment to see if the council will pay towards the cost of care. This assessment will look at the financial situation of the person with dementia.

Seeking help for the first time can sometimes feel like an uncomfortable step and sharing details about something so personal to you as your caring role can stir up a lot of different emotions.

It is helpful to keep in mind that your own needs for support are as valid as your partners.

Preparing in advance

Make notes on the support you currently have, the support you provide and the support you need, before your assessment and have these to hand during your assessment. This will help greatly.

This exercise will help you ensure you cover all aspects without missing anything out. **It is extremely helpful to keep a diary of the care you provide, to help the assessor understand the extent of your caring role and also for future care needs.**

Consider what your needs are right now and what your needs might be in future, including if you cannot continue, or need a break from, your caring responsibilities. You could write a list of things that you are no longer able to do as a consequence of caring, such as working, studying, cleaning your home, exercising, socialising, or maintaining a hobby.

Consider your own needs

You could ask what paid care options are available if you need to take time off from your caring role, for example to pursue a hobby or catch up with friends.

Whatever it may be, try to explain the level of care and support you can and are willing to give. Give as much detail as possible about the effects it is having on your own life, both physically and mentally. If you are overcommitting yourself, don't be afraid to say so. You may also have your own health issues.

Never feel guilty or ashamed for putting your needs forward. If you would prefer, you could speak to the assessor in private. Also let them know whether you expect your needs to change because of other responsibilities that you may have.

If possible talk to your partner

If possible, try to have a conversation with the person you care for. If you feel comfortable, talk about your goals and wishes and ask for their view. It may be a good opportunity to discuss, if appropriate, specifics about the social care they need now, or will need as the dementia progresses. This discussion will help you work out any areas of worry or concern for both of you.

Would a joint assessment help?

It is possible to have a Carer's Assessment and Needs Assessment (for the person cared for) carried out at the same time. One advantage is that it could save time as you wouldn't have to re-explain your situation during another appointment.

If you both agree to this arrangement, you would need to specifically ask for it. Alternatively, you may prefer for them to be carried out separately at different times or on different days. Also, it is important to know that it is not necessary to have a Needs Assessment when having a Carer's Assessment carried out, and vice versa.

Don't hesitate to ask for another assessment.

If you feel that your needs are still not being met or if your circumstances have changed, you can ask to be reassessed.

In reality, if social services are aware that your circumstances are likely to change, they are more likely to assess your needs over a protracted period either continuously or at intervals.

Your local council should review your needs regularly, usually once a year, even if your circumstances haven't changed. You have legal rights as a carer under the 2014 Care Act.