Stirling Carers Centre provides information, advice and support to unpaid carers throughout the Stirling Council area.

We aim to give you all the help you need to enable you to make informed decisions about your situation, and to support you in your caring role.

Advice & information
Carers’ Assessments
Benefit checks
Help with forms
1:1 support
Basic advocacy
Respite events
Hospital support
Peer support groups

All our services are free, confidential and impartial.
Are you an unpaid carer?

If your life has become restricted by taking responsibility for the care of another who, due to illness, disability or age, cannot manage on their own, then you are a carer.

Carers can be parents, partners, children, friends or neighbours and can be any age, from the very young to the very elderly.

Carers are ordinary people who simply get on with what has to be done when someone close to them needs support.

Stirling Carers Centre works with unpaid carers - people who do not get paid for the caring role that they take on. In this pack, when we refer to ‘carers’ we mean people who have chosen to take on the responsibility of caring for a loved one.

New to caring?

Becoming a carer can happen gradually through the course of a progressive illness or it can happen overnight. You may be faced with dramatic changes in your life, including:

- having to learn new skills
- accepting major disruptions to your routines
- balancing caring with your job
- trouble maintaining your social life and relationships.

There may be many things you will have to find out, many confusing emotions that you will have to deal with. You may find that many different people from a variety of services will come into your life. It may all seem overwhelming and too much to cope with.

At some point, you may have to make major decisions, such as giving up your job or moving house. In instances like these, it is best to first speak to someone who understands who will be able to give you advice on any implications.
Signs of Stress

- Difficulty in sleeping, irritability or tearfulness
- Change in appetite and digestive problems (eating more or eating less)
- Drinking or smoking more than usual
- Problems with concentration
- Headaches, tiredness or frustration
- Increased heart rate

As an Unpaid Carer you can be working long, unsociable hours, and it’s easy to forget that your own health needs are important too.

High levels of stress can lead to tiredness, illness and irritability. This can make your caring role more difficult and further increase the amount of stress you are under.

If you are able to recognise the signs of stress then you may be able to improve the situation before it gets the better of you.

To reduce stress, try some of the following:

- **Identify the causes.** Write a list. Can you change or avoid any of the situations?
- **Try to give yourself a break** from your role as an unpaid carer. You may wish to look at the possibility of a short break (respite), even if only for a couple of hours.
  - **Talk to someone about your worries**, don’t keep them bottled up. If you are unable to speak to friends or family there are other options. Staff at Stirling Carers Centre are always willing to listen, or your GP may be able to refer you to a counsellor you could speak to.
  - **Make some time for yourself** to do something you enjoy...and don’t feel guilty about having time for you!
  - **Eat a healthy diet** and avoid excessive alcohol intake or smoking too much.
  - **Gentle exercise** can lower stress levels and also keep you fit.
A Carer’s Assessment is written plan developed from a conversation between a Carer Support Officer and you as an unpaid carer which looks at:

- the caring duties you undertake
- how well you are coping and if your own health is affected
- the support you already receive (if any)
- the help you need to improve the situation

A Carer’s Assessment aims to identify the support you need to allow you to continue your caring whilst managing any worry or stress you experience.

It is important that the conversation recognises your physical, mental and social needs as a carer in order to work out what needs to be done to improve the situation.

Why should I get one?

Providing care can have an impact on many aspects of a carer’s life. These might include:

- negative effect on carer’s own health
- damage to other relationships e.g. losing touch with friends
- unable to maintain paid work
- lack of time and space to relax
- the need for emergency planning
- financial hardship.

Every caring role is different, but almost every situation can be made a little more manageable by talking through the issues and making a plan to get you the support you need.
What happens once the plan is written?
Once the plan is written the Carer Support Officer will review it with you to identify what, if any, actions are necessary. These will be highlighted on the plan as recommendations.

Stirling Carers Centre may be able to support you with all the recommendations or, with your permission, it may be necessary to pass the plan to Social Work Services to arrange additional services and support for you and the person you care for.

Your Carer Support Officer will monitor the progress of your plan and will review it with you to make sure you are receiving the support that you need.

What if my support needs change?
As circumstances change, so too will your needs as a carer. Regular review dates can be set to ensure that your Carer’s Assessment remains relevant, helpful and effective.

Where can I find out more?
You can read more about Carers’ Assessments on our website: www.stirlingcarers.co.uk/adult-carers/ca
or contact the Centre and speak to any of our Carer Support Officers.

I would like a Carer’s Assessment. What do I do?
The next step is to speak to one of our Carer Support Officers. Contact the Centre to arrange an appointment.

Call 01786 447003, email info@stirlingcarers.co.uk or complete the information request form included in this pack.
Confidentiality Policy

You may have given us personal information about yourself and the person you care for. This ensures we are able to maximise the service and support we provide for you. For your peace of mind, we would like to tell you what we do with this:

- Confidentiality is paramount.
- We are registered under the Data Protection Act 1998 and all personal information provided is kept in accordance with this legislation.
- We do not pass on information to any other body or individual without your prior knowledge and approval.
- To prevent unauthorised access to your information, any paper files are kept in locked cabinets and our database is password protected.
- No information is kept on file any longer than necessary.
- You are entitled to see your personal information we have on file. For such requests a fee is payable in line with our Data Protection Policy.

If you have any questions about our Confidentiality Policy, or feel that the policy has been breached, please contact the Centre and speak to the Centre Manager.
Equality and Diversity Policy

Stirling Carers Centre is committed to equality, diversity and inclusion. We are committed to providing an environment in which the equality and diversity of all service users, staff, job applicants and volunteers are valued and respected, and which is free from discrimination, prejudice, intimidation and all forms of harassment and bullying.

Stirling Carers Centre strives to be an inclusive organisation and seeks to provide equality of access and opportunity in service delivery and in the workplace. Any complaints of discrimination or harassment will be treated seriously, be fully investigated and any appropriate action taken by Stirling Carers Centre.

If you have any questions about our Equality and Diversity Policy, or feel that the policy has been breached, please contact the Centre and speak to the Centre Manager. A copy of our full Equality and Diversity Policy can be obtained by contacting the Centre.
Complaints Procedure

Many of our service improvements have come from suggestions made by you. Your views are very important to us. If you think there is something that we could do better or something you are unhappy about, please share this with us. We welcome your feedback.

What is a Complaint?
A complaint arises if in some way you are unhappy about our service or as a result of the attitude of any member of our paid or voluntary staff.

A complaint may be made verbally or in writing, however, if your complaint is made verbally the Centre Manager may also ask you to put it in writing.

We will deal with your complaint positively and constructively as we regard this as an opportunity to improve our service to you.

Complaints Process

- Firstly please raise any complaint with the Centre Manager. We want to deal with any complaint as quickly as possible and we hope that most complaints can be resolved immediately.

- If you are not satisfied with the Manager’s response you should write to the Chair of the Board of Directors of Stirling Carers Centre at 65-69 Barnton Street, Stirling, FK8 1HH, marking your envelope “Confidential”.

- In both cases above you will receive a full response within 10 working days, or if some matters require more detailed investigation, a timescale for a full response will be discussed with you. All complaints
will be thoroughly investigated and we will respect the confidentiality of clients at all times.

• If you are still dissatisfied and you want to seek further resolution, you should contact:

Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator
2nd Floor, Quadrant House
9 Riverside Drive
Dundee
DD1 4NY
Or visit: www.oscr.org.uk

• If your complaint is about our fundraising practice, please contact:

Scottish Fundraising Complaints
Tel: 0808 164 2520
Web: www.fundraisingcomplaints.scot
Email: scottishfundraisingcomplaints@scvo.org.uk

Making a Complaint

You can submit your complaint by post, email, through our website or speak to any one of our Staff.

Please include the following details:

• Your name
• Your organisation (if applicable)
• Your address
• Your telephone number
• Details of the complaint including any staff members involved
• How could we best resolve your complaint?

This information is also available in accessible formats including electronic, plain text and alternative languages. Please contact the Centre to request a copy.
To make an official complaint about Stirling Carers Centre, its staff or activities, please complete this form, giving as much detail as possible to help us to address the issue.

**Your Complaint**

Details of your complaint, including any staff members involved:

What can we do to put things right?

Have you reported this to us before?  Yes □  No □

If yes, to whom?

Date you reported this previously:  DD/MM/YY

Continued overleaf
Your Details

Name: 

Organisation (if applicable): 

Address: 

Email: 

Phone: 

Preferred method of contact from Stirling Carers Centre: 
  Email [ ]  Phone [ ]  Mail [ ]

Signed: 

Date: 

Please return this form (marked ‘Confidential’) to:
Centre Manager
Stirling Carers Centre
65-69 Barnton Street
Stirling, FK8 1HH

Complaint received:  DD/MM/YY  Complaint resolved:  DD/MM/YY
I would like to:

☐ register with the Centre.
☐ arrange an appointment to speak with a Carer Support Officer.
☐ receive more information about:

I would like to receive the Carers Connection newsletter:

☐ by post.
☐ by email.

Other comments:

Your Contact Details

Name: ____________________________
Address: ____________________________
_________________________ Postcode: ____________
Phone: __________________ Mobile: ____________
Email: __________________

Please contact me by:

☐ Phone ☐ Email ☐ Post
If you have any questions, concerns or feedback on our services we’re always happy to speak to you. Visit the Centre, or make an appointment to speak to one of our Carer Support Team.

01786 447003
info@stirlingcarers.co.uk

Visit us

The Centre is open:
Monday - Friday
9am - 4pm
65-69 Barnton Street, Stirling
(opposite the Sheriff Court)

Find us online

www.stirlingcarers.co.uk
@stirlingcarers
www.facebook.com/stirlingcarers

The information in this pack is also available in accessible formats including electronic, plain text and alternative languages. Please contact the Centre to request a copy.