



# For Carers, by Carers: Working with professionals and services



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Statutory services are set up and regulated by the Scottish Government, who give local government money to ensure that the legal requirements of these services are in place. At some point, you are likely to meet with staff from social care, health or from the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP or the Benefits agency), who provide these services at local council level. These services are there to provide you with support, and it is better if they can be involved as part of an action plan as opposed to reacting to a crisis situation when you feel under pressure. Wherever possible, early interventions will support forward planning, person centred assessment of need for the person with dementia and, crucially, a carer support plan for you.

Feedback from carers has highlighted the need to know your rights as a carer, and it has provided examples on how carers have approached and managed working as 'Equal Partners' with statutory services. These experiences and ideas may help you to manage these situations.



**“You are the expert in what works and doesn't for the person with dementia. Working with services to agree care plans can help you find something that works.”**



“Developing a good relationship with the GP and surgery staff keeps this vital support service informed. The GP can be most supportive in referring to services as needs change and other agencies become involved.”

#### What carers would like to share with you:

- “Local Carers’ Centres can be very supportive throughout the process of getting a Carer’s Assessment.”
- “Going to the GP with the person who has dementia, introducing yourself to their GP and giving them your contact details can be helpful in coordinating their healthcare.”
- “Try to plan ahead if you can. Health and Social Care professionals should be able to help you plan for the future in order to avoid having to make decisions in a crisis situation.”
- “If a professional uses a word you don’t understand, don’t be afraid to ask what it means.”



### And did you know:

1. There may be times when you don't understand or agree with the decisions of your GP or another health professional. If that is the case, you may wish to seek further advice or information or, eventually, consider making a complaint. The Citizens Advice Bureau's Patient Advisory Support Service or another local carer or advice agency can advise you further.
2. As a carer, you have a right to ask Social Care for an assessment of your needs or the needs of the person you care for, and Social Care is obliged to provide you with one. If you meet the eligibility criteria, Social Care has an obligation to provide support. If you disagree with any part of that assessment or any aspect of the resulting care plan, you have the right to challenge that decision. It is a good idea to seek professional advice with this. Your nearest Citizens Advice Bureau or another local carer or advice agency can advise you further.



3. You can also be reassessed if your circumstances change. Sometimes, the physical and emotional demands of caring are such that you will need a break (called 'respite'). In this instance, your Social Worker can re-evaluate your Carers' Assessment and discuss your possible respite options.
4. The Carer's (Scotland) Act 2016 will be coming into effect in April 2018. The act is there to support carer's health and wellbeing, helping to make caring more sustainable.
5. If you have internet access, search for any of the topics above for further information. You can also contact your nearest Citizens Advice Office. They are a very useful point of contact. They have local knowledge of what is available, links with carer groups and charity services such as Alzheimer Scotland's support groups, drop in centres and the more formal statutory services.

