

Unpaid Carers Welcome Pack

A guide to the support available
to you in Lewisham



Foreword



This Welcome Pack shows what can be achieved when Lewisham residents and our council officers work together to share their knowledge to focus on those areas which new carers would find most useful without burdening them with too much information. This is a great achievement and I commend all those involved.

Cllr Paul Bell, Cabinet Member for Health and Adult Social Care



At Lewisham Council we are strengthening the care available to our unpaid carers. We want all our unpaid carers to have access to advice, support, and the opportunity to meet up and make friends. This Welcome Pack sets out the practical support available across the various agencies and how to get involved in the unpaid carer community including the Imago Community, Better Leisure, and the Unpaid Carers Open Forum.

Whilst it is aimed at people who are new to the unpaid carer role, residents who are already carers may find it useful too. We know many of our unpaid carers struggle financially and there is advice on how you can access free services and financial support.

Listening to our unpaid carers on what it feels like to be an unpaid carer in Lewisham has shaped the services we have developed in recent months. Our Unpaid Carers Forum meets every other month on a Tuesday from 1pm to 3pm in the Civic Suite. You can register to join the Forum or simply turn up on the day to get involved in discussions and have your say.

Getting to know many unpaid carers in Lewisham has shown me that the best advice is that shared between unpaid carers. There is an unlimited supply of knowledge and kindness which this Welcome Pack will guide you to.

Cllr Laura Cunningham, Cabinet Adviser for Unpaid Carers

Message from unpaid carers

When we became unpaid carers, we felt lost, exhausted, and isolated. It is so hard to navigate the systems when your priority is the wellbeing of the person you are caring for. You forget to care for yourself. We developed this Welcome Pack with Lewisham Council so that residents who become unpaid carers for a family member or friend in future know where to turn for help.

We wanted to share the knowledge we have built up so that others don't experience the hurdles and the stresses that we encountered when we first became carers. There is a great deal of support and advice out there. You just need to know where to look. This pack is written by unpaid carers to help you at the time you most need it.

We are grateful for the support Lewisham Council has given to co-produce this Welcome Pack.

"Through my own struggles, I've learned that unpaid carers need every bit of support they can get. This Welcome Pack serves as a guiding tool, empowering carers to navigate their journey with strength and confidence." **Shanitha Naidoo, Unpaid Carer.**

"I wish something like this had been available and accessible when my daughter transferred from Child to Adult Services. This would have taken away much of the stress of the situation. I hope that copies of this will find their way to not just Carers but to all the agencies involved in supporting and assisting Carers. I am proud to live in Lewisham. I hope other boroughs use this model to assist their Carers too." **Hilary Davies, Unpaid Carer**

Lewisham Council's offer to unpaid carers

Dear Carer,

This Welcome Pack explains why it is important for you to recognise yourself as an unpaid carer and introduces you to the wide range of support available in Lewisham.

If you would like to access any of the services listed here or if you are struggling with your caring role and need more support, please contact our Lewisham Council Unpaid Carers Hub.

Email: ucwellbeing@imago.community

Tel: 0300 373 5769

Web: www.imago.community/Carers/lewishamcarers



Or walk into the Lewisham Council Unpaid Carers Hub at Glass Mill Leisure Centre.

Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm

Saturday, 10am to 1pm

Please note: the Council contracts Imago Community to provide you with support. By accessing Imago Community Service, you can receive tailored support, including assistance in completing a care assessment and a regular newsletter. Also, you can withdraw from their service anytime by submitting a written request, and your details will be removed. You can email them at unpaidcarer@lewisham.gov.uk.

Are you an unpaid carer?

The Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) describes an informal/unpaid carer as:

"...someone who provides unpaid help to a friend or family member needing support, perhaps due to illness, older age, disability, a mental health condition or an addiction, as long as they are not employed to do so".

Why is this welcome pack important to unpaid carers?

Hilary and Shanitha both experienced what it was like to be a new carer who didn't know where to turn. They are sharing their knowledge to help new carers understand what they need to do and how to get help in those early days.

The content focuses on accessing key advice to alleviate the initial stress. New carers do not want to be overloaded with too much information.

This pack is aimed primarily at new carers, but all unpaid carers are likely to find it helpful. All agencies supporting unpaid carers should be fully aware of what carers need and how to access help. This pack will help them connect with other services.

List of services

Lewisham Council Unpaid Carers Hub.....	6
Requesting a Carers' Assessment	7
Lewisham Carer Card	8
Accessing free counselling support	9
Lewisham Council leisure centres	10
Benefits and financial support for unpaid carers	11
Carer breaks and respite care.....	12
Emergency care	13
Applying for Personal Independence Payment	14
Cinema Exhibitors' Association card.....	15
Access card	16
Taxi card	17
Accessible toilets	18
Write your will for free.....	19

Lewisham Council Unpaid Carers Hub

What the service offers

Lewisham Council Unpaid Carers Hub supports unpaid carers to maintain their health, wellbeing and independence; and to care safely, confidently and effectively through provision of:

- Information, advice and support through each stage of the caring journey
- Helpline from 9am to 5pm. An out of hours on-call system from 5pm to 8pm. From 8pm an answering machine will provide emergency contact details
- Financial support helping unpaid carers to access specific advice on finance, debt and benefits
- Assistance with completing a statutory Carer Assessment
- Unpaid carer passport – a passport-style wallet to keep a personalised unpaid carers ID card, alert card and information booklet
- Regular news and what's on updates via the Carer website
- Free face-to-face and information sessions allow unpaid carers to develop new skills and knowledge to become more confident in their caring role
- Emotional support and crisis interventions
- Peer support, bringing unpaid carers together for mutual support by offering regular groups, one-to-one support, or a variety of small group activities
- Free counselling is available 7 days a week, with flexible times offered. Based at the Lewisham Council Carers Hub

How you can access this service

Web: www.imago.community/Carers/lewishamcarers



Email: ucwellbeing@imago.community

Tel: 0300 373 5769

Walk-in: Lewisham Council Unpaid Carers Hub at Glass Mill Leisure Centre,
41 Loampit Vale, London, SE13 7FT

Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm

Saturday, 10am to 1pm

Requesting a Carer's Assessment

What is a Carer's Assessment?

A Carer's Assessment is a conversation that helps determine what support is needed to help an unpaid carer continue in their caring role. The assessor will discuss:

- Your role as a carer
- How you feel about caring
- Whether you're able or willing to carry on as a carer
- Your health
- Your work
- Other caring responsibilities
- What you enjoy doing in your free time
- Planning for emergencies

It is important to be realistic about your caring role. If you put on a brave face or play down any difficulties, you could miss out on help and support.

Benefits of requesting a Carer's Assessment

Caring for someone can mean that households have additional costs or have lost some of their previous income. The amount you can claim will depend on your personal situation. It is therefore important that you know what benefits you can claim as an unpaid carer.

How you can access this service

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Lewisham Carer Card

What is the Lewisham Carer Card?

This is a card that you can keep with you when you are out and about. It has a 24-hour response service number on it that you can call in an emergency.

Benefits of holding a Lewisham Carer Card

If you are involved in an accident or emergency, the emergency services or others will use this card to contact Linkline, the 24-hour response service, to make sure the person you care for is looked after.

By carrying one, ideally in your purse or wallet, you can be confident that in an emergency the person you care for won't be left without the support they need. The card is free to all carers living in Lewisham.

How to request a Lewisham Carer Card

Online: lewisham.gov.uk/emergencycarecard



Tel: 020 8690 8675 and an application pack will be posted to you.

Accessing free counselling support

What the service offers

In partnership with Imago Community, the South London Counselling Support Service provides one-to-one counselling based in Glass Mill Leisure Centre seven days a week during opening times.

Benefits of this service to unpaid carers

Counselling is a chance to focus on you and think about what you want. A counsellor is a qualified listener who can help you think about your situation, look at your options, and find ways to cope. When you talk to a counsellor you will get the chance to explore your feelings, including your relationship with the person you care for.

How you can access this service

Web: www.imago.community/Carers/lewishamcarers



Email: ucwellbeing@imago.community

Tel: 0300 373 5769

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Lewisham Leisure Centres in partnership with Better

What the service offers

Unpaid carers can attend any of the Lewisham Council leisure centres (operated by Better) for free, if they are supporting someone with a disability use the leisure centre.

At least once a year Better works with Carers UK to support Active Carers Month in April. During this 6-week period, unpaid carers can receive a reduced membership fee of £30 per month if they wish to use the leisure centre without the person they are supporting.

Benefits of this service to unpaid carers

National research by Carers UK shows how important being physically active is to carers, with 73% saying that being physically active makes them feel good about themselves and helps them to feel more connected to other people.

However, three quarters of unpaid carers (76%) are not able to do as much physical activity as they would like because of the pressures of their caring role. Many want to know how to build this into their busy lives. Only 14% of carers are active, compared to 54% of all adults, and nearly 75% of carers don't feel able to access local sport and leisure facilities.

How you can access this service

Drop in to any of the local centres:

- Glass Mill Leisure Centre, 41 Loampit Vale, London, SE13 7FT
- Bellingham Leisure and Lifestyle Centre, 5 Randlesdown Road, Bellingham, SE6 3BT
- Forest Hill Pools, Dartmouth Road, Forest Hill, London, SE23 2HZ
- Ladywell Arena, Silvermere Road, Catford, Lewisham, SE6 4QX
- Wavelengths Leisure Centre, Giffin Street, Deptford, SE8 4RJ

Or visit www.better.org.uk/leisure-centre/london/lewisham



Benefits and financial support for unpaid carers

What the service offers

Information, advice and guidance on any benefits available to unpaid carers, including:

- Carer One Off Payment (COOPs)
- Carer's Allowance
- Pension Credit
- Carer's Credit
- The Carer Element of Universal Credit
- Additional grants from local councils
- The Household Support Fund
- Help with paying for prescriptions and other healthcare costs
- Discounts on gas, electricity bills, TV licenses, and council tax

Benefits of this service to unpaid carers

Caring for someone can mean that households have additional costs or have lost some of their previous income. What you can claim will depend on your personal situation. It is therefore important that you know what benefits you can claim as an unpaid carer.

How you can access this service

Web: www.imago.community/Carers/lewishamcarers



Email: ucwellbeing@imago.community

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Carer break and respite care

What the service offers

Respite care means having a break from caring, while the person you care for is looked after by someone else. There are lots of respite care options, ranging from:

- Getting a friend or volunteer to sit with the person you look after for a few hours.
- A paid carer or a family member could visit them at their home to look after them.
- A short stay in a care home or with a relative for the person you look after, so you can go on holiday.
- The person you look after could go to a day care centre.

Benefits of this service to unpaid carers

Carer breaks, whether it's time away from your caring duties to get respite or a holiday with the person you care for, can provide a change of scenery that helps you feel better equipped to manage your caring role.

How you can access this service

Web: www.lewisham.gov.uk/myservices/socialcare/adult



Tel: 020 8317 7777 (option 1).

Email: gateway@lewisham.gov.uk

Emergency care

What the service offers

In event of an emergency or unexpected situation (for example, the carer is in crisis, unwell or has been admitted to hospital), Lewisham Adult Social Care can provide support to meet social care needs in the short-term and carry out an assessment afterwards.

Our Duty Team can provide emergency support and arrange the following help:

- Arrange to visit the person at home to ensure that they are safe
- Arrange urgent care, for example emergency home care, respite care, if necessary
- Ensure longer term arrangements are in place where required.

Benefits of this service to unpaid carers

Getting the right and timely 1:1 support for the person you look after should you experience an emergency and/or you need urgent time out from your caring role is very important.

Lewisham Council aims to provide you with emergency care and support as soon as possible.

Carers Emergency Support provides emergency support to unpaid family carers at a time of personal and family crisis. This gives peace of mind to carers when a crisis occurs.

How you can access this service

For immediate support during working hours, Monday to Friday, please contact Lewisham Adult Social Care Tel: 020 8314 7777 (option 1).

If you need immediate support outside of normal working hours, please contact the Emergency Duty Team (EDT) 020 8314 6000.

Applying for Personal Independence Payment (PIP)

What the service offers

Personal Independence Payment (PIP) can help with extra living costs if you have both:

- A long-term physical or mental health condition or disability
- Difficulty doing certain everyday tasks or getting around because of your condition

You can get PIP even if you're working, have savings or are getting most other benefits.

Benefits of this service to unpaid carers

PIP provides extra money if you have a long-term physical or mental illness or disability. It doesn't matter what your condition is – what matters is how it affects you.

If you have difficulty with everyday tasks such as washing, dressing, or getting around outside, you may be eligible.

It also doesn't matter what your income or savings are as it is not means-tested.

Support available to access this service

Lewisham Disability Coalition

2 Catford Broadway, SE6 4SP

Tel: 020 8697 9920 and 020 8697 0100.

Email: info@ldcadvice.co.uk

Turn2us offer stage by stage support to complete the online application

www.turn2us.org.uk/get-support/apply-for-grants



Irish Centre supports completion of the application forms.

Francesca Cook

Tel: 07494 029668

Email: Francesca@lewishamirish.org.uk

Cinema Exhibitors' Association (CEA) card

What the service offers

The CEA Card is a national card scheme developed for UK cinemas by the UK Cinema Association (UKCA) and enables a disabled cinema guest to receive a complimentary ticket for someone to go with them when they visit a participating cinema.

Benefits of this service to unpaid carers

The cardholder is usually the person with a disability. However, the card can be used by the unpaid carer to obtain a free ticket when accompanying the cardholder to the cinema. The card is intended to help make it easier and more affordable for people with disabilities and their carers to enjoy a trip to the cinema.

To be eligible for a CEA card, the person with a disability must have a permanent and substantial disability that means they cannot go to the cinema without the help of another person. The CEA card is available to any individual with a disability and their carers across the UK.

How you can access this service

For further information on the scheme, including a list of participating cinemas:

Web: www.ceacard.co.uk



Tel: 01244 526016

Access card

What the service offers

Access Card is a small credit sized photo card that translates your disability or impairment into symbols which highlight the barriers you face and the reasonable adjustments you might need.

This then informs people quickly and discreetly that you might need additional support.

The card currently costs £15 for three years and you will need to provide proof of your disability in order to obtain one.

Benefits of this service to unpaid carers

The card can be used at over 3,000 events and venues across the UK and beyond including theme parks (such as Alton Towers, Drayton Manor and Paultons Park); live music events and venues, festivals, museums, zoos and much more.

For a full list of providers please visit their find a provider page
www.accesscard.online/find-a-provider

How you can access this service

Web: www.accesscard.online



Tel: 0330 808 5108

Email: cards@accesscard.online

Address: Suite GB, Pentagon House, Sir Frank Whittle Road, Derby. DE21 4XA

Taxicard

What the service offers

Taxicard is a subsidised service providing Black Taxis and private hire vehicles to those who might find it difficult or impossible to access other modes of transport. The subsidy applies directly to each trip.

Benefits of this service to unpaid carers

You can use your Taxicard any time, 24 hours a day, 365 days of the year, subject to taxi and private-hire vehicle availability.

How you can access this service

In order to be eligible automatically you should either:

- Receive the Higher Rate Mobility component of the Disability Living Allowance
- Receive 8 points or more for Moving Around Activity Component of Personal Independence Payment
- Be registered as Severely Sight Impaired/Blind (being partially sighted does not allow automatic entry)
- Receive a War Pension Mobility Supplement
- Receive Higher Rate Attendance Allowance in the following boroughs: Barnet, Islington, Newham, Redbridge, Sutton or Westminster

Proof will be required that you are in one of the above categories.

If you are not in one of the above categories you may still apply, but you will have to provide medical evidence to support your reason for applying and you will be required to have a mobility assessment.

To find out more, visit: www.londoncouncils.gov.uk/services/taxicard/apply-taxicard



Accessible toilets

What the service offers

RADAR NKS key: The National Key Scheme (NKS) offers disabled people independent access to over 9,000 accessible locked public toilets around the country. Toilets fitted with NKS locks can now be found in shopping centres, pubs, cafes, department stores, bus and train stations and many other locations in most parts of the UK.

Changing Places accessible toilets are toilets with extra features that a standard accessible toilet does not have. This can include an adult changing bench, a hoist system and plenty of space. You can find a toilet or plan a journey with accessible toilets along the route using the Changing Places toilet map.

Web: www.changing-places.org

Benefits of this service to unpaid carers

People with profound and multiple learning disabilities or with physical disabilities such as spinal injuries, muscular dystrophy and multiple sclerosis often need extra equipment and space to allow them to use the toilets safely and comfortably. These needs are met by Changing Places toilets.

How you can access this service

You can buy a Radar key from Disability Rights UK. You can also buy a list of NKS toilets in your area when you buy your key online. Scan below or search on shop.disabilityrightsuk.org



Write your will for free

What the service offers

Carers Trust has partnered with Farewill to offer a free will-writing service.

- Farewill is an easy-to-use service that allows you to write your will in under 30 minutes.
- Farewill is the largest will writer in the UK and has won multiple awards for its service.
- Every will is checked by their specialist team, ensuring your wishes are clear.

Benefits of this service to unpaid carers

You may not want to think about what will happen after you die and the thought of putting it down in writing can be upsetting.

However, writing a will allows you to set out what you want to happen after you die. It ensures that your wishes are set out clearly and you can choose who you want to deal with things on your behalf. By not planning for the future, you could be leaving your family with extra work at what is already an emotionally charged time.

Even if you don't think you have much money, belongings or property, it is still important to think about writing a will. A will can also help you make provision for a dependant who is unable to care for themselves. You should discuss this with a solicitor when drawing up your will.

How you can access this service

Find out more: farewill.com/carers22



