



You Said...

41% of carers said that they had not had a Carer's Assessment. When asked why, many said that they feel it is a lengthy complex process with lots of paperwork which is time consuming and overwhelming. Many said they did not know how to arrange an assessment or that they have not attempted to arrange one due to previous bad experiences.



We Did...

We have worked with The Reading and West Berkshire Carers Partnership to develop a carers annual review form that is quicker, less repetitive and avoids the need for a lengthy assessment every year – subject to eligibility criteria. There is now a single point of contact for the partnership which makes requesting an assessment very simple.

Of those who have had a recent Carer's Assessment, they reported it was "extremely helpful and informative" and "transformative"

19.4% of respondents are not registered as a carer with their GP and 26.2% are not sure. Of the 54.1% who are registered, many said it had made little difference to their experience as a carer.



We are working with General Practices to become 'carer friendly'. This includes displaying carer information, posters and leaflets in practices, training staff on carer awareness and support and working with social prescribers who engage with carers most.

By letting your GP surgery know you are a carer, you will be offered a free annual Flu jab, be able to set up proxy access to manage appointments for the person you care for and should be offered wellbeing support and signposting.

62.3% of carers said their caring role has a bit impact, and 9.8% a small impact on their ability to access paid employment. Only 4.9% said it had no impact. Carers stated this is due to difficulty finding employers who offer flexible working or allow frequent time off at short notice. Some found it difficult to find employment due to their caring role being seen as a 'gap' in their employment.



We are beginning a project working with key employers across Reading to promote carers employment rights and to encourage appointment of a carers champion to support their employees who are working carers. We then aim to set up a carers network with employers. Small and Medium sized business in Reading will be able to access resources and support to implement these changes.



You Said...

When asked to rank ways in which caring impacts your health and wellbeing, the top 3 responses were feeling worried about the future, feeling stressed/overwhelmed and feeling tired. When asked what aspect do you worry about the most, the top 3 answers were feeling stressed/anxious, getting enough sleep and feeling depressed.

We did...

We worked with Compass Recovery College on developing a Wellbeing for Carers series of workshops focussed on managing stress and anxiety, creating healthy boundaries and regaining a sense of self. We are preparing to launch a Carers Breaks pilot offering carers a sitting service for their loved one to allow them to take a break. This will be flexible to suit their needs.

There are various support groups for carers across Reading which help promote improving mental health and wellbeing. See [Reading and West Berkshire Carers Partnership](#) for more details.

When asked about emergency planning, only 4.9% of carers had a formal emergency plan in place. Many carers said they would rely on their friends or family, but over 35% of carers said they don't know what they would do or where they would go for help.

We commission the Reading and West Berkshire Carers Partnership to complete emergency plans with carers. These are then shared with their GP surgery to be added to a shared record so it accessible in case of emergency. We are actively promoting this service to increase uptake.

Those who have an emergency plan in place report feeling some reduction in anxiety about the future. Knowing the plan is shared with health and social care means if something were to happen to the carer, the professionals would know your wishes about ongoing care for your loved one.

Feedback was also captured through focus groups, held across various existing support groups including: Prospect Park Mental Health carers support group, Age UK Reading Dementia Carers Support group, Mencap All Carers support group and Stroke Association support group.

These gave rich qualitative feedback about different circumstances. Key findings included:

Mental Health – join up services between health and social care. Provide access to mental health support for carers

Learning Disability and Autism – provide more support for adults with Autism. Provide whole family support including for siblings.

Older people – provide support for carers in transitions e.g. loved on going in to care home, out of hospital, after passing away