

**This information pack
should be supplemented
with the information
links and menu options
available on the Social
Care and Health
information for carers
pages on
www.birmingham.gov.uk**

HEALTH INFORMATION

There is a wide range of health information available through different sources.i.e. Internet, books, journals, CD Roms etc.

If you require further information about any health condition, illness or disability, please complete the evaluation form at the end of this pack.

The Birmingham Central Library also has a range of health information on a wide variety of topics. Most of these books and other materials are suitable for the person who may not have in depth medical knowledge. If you want to find out the basics about a health-related topic, then visit the Social Sciences Department. Many topics are covered.

- Health services in your area
- Physical and mental illnesses and treatments
- Alternative medicine and therapies
- Improving your health through exercise and fitness
- Sexual matters and pregnancy
- Child health
- Information for carers
- Magazines on various health matters
- Coping with disabilities.

They also have videos and tapes on health matters, which can be viewed in the library.

You may wish to contact the NHS Direct help line

NHS Direct operates a 24-hour nurse advice and health information service, providing confidential information on:

- What to do if you or your family are feeling ill;
- Particular health conditions;
- Local healthcare services, such as doctors, dentists or late night opening pharmacies.
- Self help and support organisations.

Telephone **0845 4647**

Web site www.nhsdirect.co.uk

The NHS In Birmingham

Following the latest NHS reforms, Birmingham Health Authority is now officially known as Birmingham & The Black Country Health Authority.

The new Authority was formed on the 1st April 2002 from the merger of Birmingham, Solihull, Sandwell, Dudley and Wolverhampton Health Authorities.

From this date the management of local NHS services was reorganised such that primary care and community health services are run by Primary Care Trusts (PCT's). Most other health services will continue as before.

Primary Care Trusts (PCTS)

The role of PCTs Primary Care Trusts are responsible for improving the health of people living in their area, developing services provided by local GPs and their teams (called primary Care) and making sure that other appropriate health services are in place to meet local people's needs.

North Birmingham Primary Care Trust

The Primary Care Trust serves a population of 149,000 towards the north of the city. It encompasses the areas of Kingstanding, Oscott, Perry Barr, Sutton Four Oaks, Sutton New Hall and Sutton Vesey.

Heart Of Birmingham Teaching Primary Care Trust

The Primary Care Trust serves one of the most deprived and culturally diverse communities at the heart of the inner city. The local population of 310,000 residents suffers from high levels of deprivation across the majority of its communities.

The area is characterised by a black and ethnic majority population, which is surrounded by the affluent city centre. There are 81 practices and 162 GP's working in the inner city of Birmingham of which over 80% are single-handed practices providing quality health services in one of the most challenging areas in the country.

These health professionals include some of the most creative and passionate people who are involved in some of the most innovative healthcare developments in Birmingham.

The Teaching Primary Care Trust (TPCT) encompasses the areas of Aston, Handsworth, Ladywood, Nechells, Sandwell, Small Heath, Sparkbrook, Sparkhill and Soho.

Eastern Birmingham Primary Care Trust

The Primary Care Trust serves a population of 246,000 towards the east of the city. It encompasses the areas of Acocks Green, Erdington, Hodge Hill, Kingsbury, Shard End, Sheldon, Stockland Green, Washwood Heath and Yardley.

South Birmingham Primary Care Trust

The Primary Care Trust serves a population of 368,000 towards the south of the city. It encompasses the areas of Bartley Green, Billesley, Brandwood, Edgbaston, Fox Hollies, Hall Green, Harborne, Kings Norton, Longbridge, Moseley, Northfield, Quinton, Selly Oak and Weoley Castle.

The PCT also has a management responsibility for all the community hospitals across Birmingham. These include:-

- Birmingham Dental Hospital
- John Taylor Hospice
- Moseley Hall Hospital
- Sutton Coldfield Cottage Hospital
- West Heath Hospital

Primary Care Teams

The NHS have now divided into **four teams** , covering the whole of Birmingham, providing an area-based health support to service users.

East Birmingham

Waterlinks House,
Richard St,
Aston,
B7 4AA
0121 333 4113

South Birmingham,
Moseley Hall Hospital,
Alcester Road,
B13 8JL
0121 442 4321

Heart of Birmingham,

Carnegie Centre,
Hunters Road,
Hockley,
B19 1DR
0121 255 7695

North Birmingham,

Blakelands House,
400 Aldridge Road,
Perry Barr,
B44 8BH
0121 332 1900

Carers Support Initiative

Moseley Hall Hospital

Alcester Road
Moseley
Birmingham
B13 8JL
Tel: 0121 442 3468

Who are we? The Carers Support Initiative is part of the South Birmingham PCT. It has 4 part time and 1 full time staff, 3 Carers Support Officers, a Training Officer and a secretary. Part time staff all work less than 22 hours.

Where are we? The staff are based at Moseley Hall Hospital. The project covers the whole of South Birmingham at present.

What are we? The project's aim is to support Carers in the community by offering information, liaising with other services, helping to support Carer's groups, developing training packages for Carers and be a listening ear. The staff also encourage Carers to look at ways of maintaining and improving their own health, something which is of vital importance to help Carers, but something they often see as a low priority.

The staff also provide information and support to other paid staff and produce a wide range of display materials for training, conferences and workshops.

How do you access it? There is no formal referral system and anyone can phone the above number to talk to staff. If there is no one on the office an answerphone is on and staff try to return calls within 5 days.

Please call Pat Marsan, Alison Christie, or Chris Vinnicombe for further information.

Training post and Secretarial post vacant at present.

WELFARE BENEFITS

If you are a Carer these pages give you information about:

Income Support

Carer's Allowance

Council Tax Benefit

Housing Benefit

(Including leaflet on how to get your Housing and Council Tax Benefit paid)

For the person you look after

Disability Living Allowance (DLA)

Attendance Allowance (AA)

Please note we will be extending this list in the near future but in the meantime if you want to know if you or the person you are looking after, are entitled to any additional benefits – please contact the Department Of Work and Pensions - formerly Benefits Agency, (see telephone directory for address and telephone numbers), or Neighbourhood Offices or your local Citizens Advice Bureau (see telephone directory for address and telephone number).

WELFARE BENEFITS

Income Support / Minimum Income Guarantee

Income Support is paid by the Department Of Work and Pensions (Benefit Agency). You can find out more and get help with claiming these and other benefits from your Neighbourhood Office, Advice Centre or Citizens Advice Bureau.

Income Support can top up Carer's Allowance (Invalid Care Allowance), and certain other benefits or part time earnings.

You can claim if you are working less than 16 hours per week and if you have a partner they must be working less than 24 hours per week.

You must be aged 16 or over.

Savings (Capital Limits) –different capital limits apply depending on what benefit is involved and whether you or your partner are aged over 60. There are also different capital limits if you live permanently in residential or certain other accommodation.

The basic rule is that if you have over £8,000 you are **not** entitled to benefit. However the first £3,000 is ignored and does not affect your weekly benefit at all. If you have between £3,000.01 and £8,000 you may be entitled to some benefit but some income from your capital is assumed. This is called a tariff income.

Minimum Income Guarantee (Income Support for Pensioners) If you are aged 60 or over you could get extra money each week on top of your pension. This is paid as Income Support. For Minimum Income Guarantee, the Capital limit has increased to £12,000 and the first £6,000 is ignored. The tariff income rules apply to capital between £6,000.01 and £12,000. To apply for Minimum Income Guarantee you can call the **Claim Line on 0800 028 1111** or contact the Organisations below.

There are separate rules on Residential Care and if you need clarification on these please either contact your local Department Of Work and Pensions, Neighbourhood Office or Citizens Advice Bureau.

Your needs are made up of:

Personal Allowances for yourself, your heterosexual partner (if you have one) & any children.

Possibly the interest on your Mortgage if you own your property.

Premiums for extra needs. (for example a Carers Premium or Disability Premium)

For more advice and help in completing the Income Support / Minimum Income Guarantee application form, please contact the Department Of Work and Pensions, Neighbourhood Office or Citizens Advice Bureau.

WELFARE BENEFITS

Carers Allowance (Invalid Care Allowance)

Carer's Allowance is a benefit paid to people who are caring for severely disabled people.

Carers Allowance was formerly known as **Invalid Care Allowance** and was renamed in April 2003.

The new name will remove the negative connotations associated with the word "invalid" and will emphasise that **the Benefit is for the Carer** and not the disabled person. Carers who are already in receipt of Invalid Care Allowance do not have to make another claim.

You do not have to have paid National Insurance contributions to qualify for ICA.

You can claim Carer's Allowance if you are:

- aged 16 or over.
- the care you give is regular and substantial, at least 35 hours per week.
- you are caring for a person receiving either the higher or middle rates of Disability Living Allowance (DLA) Care Component, Attendance Allowance or Constant Attendance Allowance in respect of Industrial or War Disablement.

Carer's Allowance is a weekly benefit.

An award of Carer's Allowance will give you class 1 National Insurance contributions credits.

If your wife or husband is working, Carer's Allowance will be extra money in your pocket.

You cannot get Carer's Allowance on top of other benefits like Retirement Pension, Incapacity Benefit etc but you should still apply so that you can be eligible for the Carers Premium. If you claim Income Support, Council Tax or Housing Benefit, then you can get the Carer's Premium as part of your assessment, which may result in an additional amount of benefit, being awarded. You may also be eligible for these benefits for the first time.

You can collect Carer's Allowance application form, from your local Social Security Office, Neighbourhood Office or Citizens Advice Bureau who can also provide further comprehensive advice and assistance. You can also contact the Carer's Allowance Unit on 01253 856123.

Please note that Neighbourhood Offices offer advice, information and support for carers in obtaining money and benefits, other services, which are available, and details of Carers Support Groups.

WELFARE BENEFITS

Council Tax Benefit

Council Tax Benefit is money from the Council to help you pay your Council Tax.

If you get Income support, or Income Based Jobseekers Allowance, you will get maximum benefit that is all of your Council Tax paid, unless you have non-dependants living with you.

You can claim Council Tax Benefit even if you work as long as your income is low enough.

How much you get is dependent on your circumstances and income.

You must have savings of less than £16,000,

Further rules apply in relation to Savings (Capital Limits) –different capital limits apply depending on what benefit is involved and whether you or your partner are aged over 60.

The basic rule is that if you have over £16,000, you are not entitled to Council Tax Benefit. However the first £3,000 is ignored and does not affect your weekly benefit at all. If you have between £3,000.01 and £16,000 you may be entitled to some benefit but some income from your capital is assumed. This is called a tariff income.

Aged 60 or over the above rules have been modified. For Council Tax Benefit the first £6,000 is ignored. The tariff income rules apply to capital between £6,000.01 and £16,000.

If you cannot get Council Tax Benefit because your income is too high, you may still be able to claim, If someone is living with you, for instance your grown up son or daughter and they are on a low income you may be entitled to Second Adult Rebate.

If you have started work then you may be able to get your current Housing and Council Tax benefit paid for the first four weeks regardless of your new income.

You have to enquire whether you are eligible for this payment from your local Job Centre or Neighbourhood Office. This payment is called Extended Council Tax and Housing Benefit.

You will need to apply for Council Tax Benefit please enquire at your local Neighbourhood Office or **Contact Birmingham** on **0121 303 1111** or the Benefit Services on **0121 464 7000**.

Please see the enclosed leaflet on “How to get your Housing and Council Tax Benefit paid “ for more details.

WELFARE BENEFITS

Housing Benefit

Housing Benefit is money from the Council to help you pay your rent.

You can claim Housing Benefit if you pay rent to the Council or to a private landlord or Housing Association.

If you are in receipt of Income Support or Income Based Job Seekers Allowance you will be entitled to maximum Housing Benefit, which will usually be equal to your rent.

However you may receive less than the total rent paid if you have a non-dependant living with you, or if the Rent Officer sets the rent on your property to a figure lower than that which your landlord is charging you. In this case you may have to make up the difference yourself. If you are having difficulty in paying the difference, contact your local Neighbourhood Office for advice on Discretionary Housing Payments, which can act as a top up to your existing Housing Benefit depending on your circumstances.

You can also claim Housing Benefit if you are working. In this case the amount of Housing Benefit you receive will be determined by how much money you have coming in.

You must have savings of less than £16,000.

Further rules apply in relation to Savings (Capital Limits) –different capital limits apply depending on what benefit is involved and whether you or your partner are aged over 60.

The basic rule is that if you have over £16,000 you are **not** entitled to Housing Benefit. However the first £3,000 is ignored and does not affect your weekly benefit at all. If you have between £3,000.01 and £16,000 you may be entitled to some benefit but some income from your capital is assumed. This is called a tariff income.

Aged 60 or over the above rules have been modified. For Housing Benefit the first £6,000 is ignored. The tariff income rules apply to capital between £6,000.01 and £16,000.

If you have started work then you may be able to get your current Housing and Council Tax benefit paid for the first four weeks regardless of your new income.

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If you wish to apply for Housing Benefit, please enquire at your local Neighbourhood Office or **Contact Birmingham** on **0121 303 1111** or the Benefit Services on **0121 464 7000** for more details.

Please see the leaflet on “How to get your Housing and Council Tax Benefit paid “ for more details.

WELFARE BENEFITS

Disability Living Allowance (DLA)

Disability Living Allowance is extra money if you have care needs and/or have problems walking.

It is tax free and is paid on top of any wages and all other benefits so it is a real increase in your income.

There are no rules about savings.

You must be under 65 when you claim.

If you are **over 65** you may be able to **apply for Attendance Allowance**.

To get this benefit you must have needed the help for at least three months and need it for at least a further six months.

If you are terminally ill and likely to die within six months then you can get help with your care needs straightaway.

Disability Living Allowance is split into 2 parts called Mobility and Care Components, which can be paid together or separately.

Disability Living Allowance --- Care Component

There is no lower age limit. You do not have to have someone looking after you.

Parents should claim for children under 16.

It can be paid at three rates

- **Higher rate** - if you need help during the day and night
- **Middle rate** - if you need help looking after yourself during the day or night.
- **Lower rate** - if you need less help to look after yourself or need help to cook a main meal for yourself and you are over 16.

You can live on your own and still receive the Care Component.

How you spend it is up to you.

(CONTINUED OVERLEAF)

WELFARE BENEFITS

Disability Living Allowance

(CONTINUED)

Disability Living Allowance--- Mobility Component

You must be aged between 3 and 65 to claim the Disability Living Allowance Mobility Component.

It is paid at 2 rates

- **Higher Rate** - if you are unable to walk
or virtually unable to walk e.g. the effort of walking causes severe discomfort
or the effort needed to walk causes would put your health at risk.
- **Lower rate** - if for most of the time you are walking, you need guidance or watching over. For example if you have sight or hearing problems or have learning difficulties.

You can get the mobility component even if you do not have a car.

How you spend it is up to you.

Motability

Motability is a charity incorporated by Royal Charter. It runs a scheme to help you lease or buy a car if you receive the higher rate of Disability Living Allowance Mobility component. You pay your DLA mobility direct to Motability .You may also have to make a down payment. If you drive more than 12,000 miles a year you may have to make further annual payments. For further information, write to Motability, Goodman House, Station Approach, Harlow, Essex CM20 2ET or telephone 01279 635666.

Motability produces leaflets on its schemes for car leasing and hire purchase of new cars, used cars and electric wheelchairs.

(CONTINUED OVERLEAF)

WELFARE BENEFITS

Disability Living Allowance

(CONTINUED)

If you become entitled to Disability Living Allowance then you may then be entitled to Income Support, (additional Income Support if you are already in receipt) and also you may be entitled to claim Council Tax Benefit and Housing Benefit (or additional Benefit if you are already in receipt).

Please contact your local Social Security Office, Neighbourhood Office or Citizens Advice Bureau for further advice.

Completion of the form

The Disability Living Allowance form can be a daunting form to complete and if you want any help filling in the claim pack or any part of it then please do one of the following:

- Ring the **Benefit Enquiry Line** for people with disabilities (**BEL**) **0800 882200** The person you speak to may need to arrange for someone to phone you back. The person who calls you back is specially trained to help you fill in these forms. They will have a copy of the pack and they will go through it with you over the phone. Or they can fill in the form for you.

If they fill in the form for you they will then send it to you to check and sign and then send it back. They can send the form in large print or Braille and they will also send you a prepaid envelope you will not need a stamp.

- You may be able to get help from an organisation that specialises in helping people with your illness or disability. Phone them and ask if they can help you.
- You can also seek advice and help completing the form at your local Neighbourhood Office (see Neighbourhood Office section of this pack for details) we recommend that you book an appointment before you visit. If you are not able to visit please ask them if they can arrange for a home visit.
- You can also contact your local Citizens Advice Bureau (please see telephone directory for details).

If you wish to complete the form yourself then they can be collected from the Department Of Work and Pensions office or your local Neighbourhood Office.

WELFARE BENEFITS

Attendance Allowance

Attendance Allowance provides extra money if you have care needs and you are aged 65 or over. There is no upper age limit.

You do not need to have someone looking after you.

It is paid on top of all other benefits- so it's a real increase in your income.

It is tax-free and there are no rules about savings, so you can claim, whatever you have saved.

To get Attendance Allowance you must have needed help for at least 6 months and need it for a further 6 months.

If you are terminally ill and likely to die within 6 months then you can get help straightaway.

If you are under 65 you can apply for **Disability Living Allowance**.

You must need either: -

Help with looking after yourself (e.g. going to the toilet, having a bath, dressing or undressing etc)

And/or

Need watching over to keep safe

Attendance Allowance is paid at two rates,

- **Higher Rate** - if you need looking after day **and** night.
- **Lower Rate** - if you need looking after day **or** night.

You can live on your own and still get Attendance Allowance.

How you spend it is up to you.

(CONTINUED OVERLEAF)

WELFARE BENEFITS

Attendance Allowance

(CONTINUED)

If you become entitled to Attendance Allowance you may then be entitled to Income Support, (additional Income Support if you are already in receipt) and also you may be entitled to claim Council Tax Benefit and Housing Benefit (or additional Benefit if you are already in receipt).

Please contact your local Social Security Office, Neighbourhood Office or Citizens Advice Bureau.

Many pensioners are missing out on benefits they may be entitled to because they do not know what they are entitled to so please ask.

Completion of the form

The Attendance Allowance form can be a daunting form to complete and if you want any help filling in the claim pack or any part of it, then please do one of the following:

- Ring the **Benefit Enquiry Line** for people with disabilities **(BEL) 0800 882200** The person you speak to may need to arrange for someone to phone you back. The person who calls you back is specially trained to help you fill in these forms. They will have a copy of the pack and they will go through it with you over the phone. Or they can fill in the form for you.

If they fill in the form for you they will then send it to you to check and sign and then send it back. They can send the form in large print or Braille and they will also send you a prepaid envelope, so you will not need a stamp.

- You may be able to get help from an organisation that specialises in helping people with your illness or disability. Phone them and ask if they can help you.
- You can also seek advice and help completing the form at your local Neighbourhood Office (see Neighbourhood Office section of this pack for details) we recommend that you book an appointment before you visit. If you are not able to visit please ask them if they can arrange for a home visit.
- You can also contact your local Citizens Advice Bureau (please see telephone directory for details).

- If you wish to complete the form yourself then they can be collected from the Department Of Work and Pensions office or your local Neighbourhood Office.

FINANCIAL INFORMATION

COUNCIL TAX - Can I claim a Discount?

SINGLE PERSON DISCOUNT

If you are the only adult aged 18 or over living at your property (and the liable person) then you are entitled to 25% discount off your Council Tax bill.

OTHER DISCOUNTS

Some people can be awarded a 25% discount if they apply to the list below. If two adults circumstances apply in the list below then a 50% discount can be awarded.

If the property is occupied by two or more adults, who do not apply to the list then no discount will be awarded.

Carers maybe interested in the details **highlighted** below.

- A Full time Student.
 - A Student Nurse.
 - An apprentice who earns less than £130.00 per week.
 - A youth training trainee (Under the age of 25 Years).
 - **A person who is severely mentally impaired.**
 - **A care worker earning less than £30.00 per week.**
 - **A carer looking after a person, entitled to certain benefits, who is not a partner or child under the age of 18.**
 - An 18 or 19 year old still at School or College or recently left.
 - A person who lives in certain types of hostel.
 - **A permanent hospital patient.**
 - **A patient living in a residential care home or nursing home.**
 - A person in prison (other than for fines or non payment of Council Tax).
 - A member of a religious community (monks or nuns).
 - A member of International Headquarters and Defence Organisations.
-
- For further information or for an application form on any of the above please telephone 303 9000, call at Customer Services, 7 Waterloo Street, City Centre or contact any Neighbourhood Office (telephone numbers in the Neighbourhood Office section) or contact their telephone team on 303 1111.

FINANCIAL INFORMATION

COUNCIL TAX – Can I claim a Reduction?

A reduction may be granted on the Council Tax bill in certain circumstances where the property has been improved or extended, or its use has been altered in order to meet the needs of a person with a disability.

Although a disability reduction is quantified as an amount of money, the essential effect is to place the property in the next lowest Banding. The logic being that any increase in the value of a property due to improvements made for people with disabilities should be disregarded.

This applies for all properties including those within Band A, regulations will set the amount each year, to be deducted from liability in this band.

Criteria.

In order to qualify 2 main criteria have to be met: -

- The person with the disability must live in the property; and
- The property (or its use) must have been altered in one of 3 specific ways (see **Property** section below).

The definition of a disability for these purposes is not linked to benefit entitlement, although this can clearly be used as supporting evidence if necessary. Neither is it related to being registered disabled.

The Regulations define a person with a disability in terms of someone who is “substantially and permanently disabled (whether by illness, injury, congenital deformity or otherwise)”. There is no lower or upper age limit.

Property.

The property must meet one of the following criteria: -

1. It must have a room (excluding bathrooms and kitchens) which is predominantly used by the person with the disability; or
2. It must have an additional bathroom or kitchen: - or
3. It must have sufficient floor space in order to facilitate the use of a wheelchair.

In addition, the facility must either be essential or of a major importance to the person with the disability.

The major opportunity for take-up is the discretion that exists around the first of the criteria. Although it does clearly include extensions and/or other structural alterations to properties, this is not necessary in order to qualify.

FINANCIAL INFORMATION

Council Tax- Can I Claim a Reduction - Continued

For example, a downstairs room, which has been turned into a bedroom because the person with a disability cannot use the upstairs, would qualify for the reduction even though there may not have been any building alterations.

How to Claim.

The claim has to be made by the liable person, although the liable person does not have to be the person with the disability.

There is a specific application form available from Revenues Division please contact telephone 303 9000, call at Customer Services, 7 Waterloo Street, City Centre or contact any Neighbourhood Office (telephone numbers and addresses are in the Neighbourhood Office section of this pack) or contact their telephone team on 303 1111.

The Council cannot award this discount without a written application.

Appeals.

The appeal process is in two stages: -

- By an internal review;
- And to an independent tribunal.

Review letters should be forwarded to the Head of Council Tax. There is no time limit within which the review request must be made although the Council are required to respond within 2 months.

If the person is still dissatisfied an appeal may be made to an independent Valuation Tribunal Appeal, papers are available from the Valuation Office.

Reviews

The Council is required by Regulation to formally review disability reduction awards on an annual basis. Indeed the award can only be made each year up to the 31 March.

There is the usual requirement placed on the liable person to notify the Council of any changes of circumstances, which may affect entitlement to this reduction. These will most likely be when the person with the disability ceases to live in the property.

Council Tax

Information for Carers

If you care for another member of your household you may be entitled to a discount or exemption from your Council Tax bill.

Discounts

A discount may be available if someone in your household falls into one of the following categories. You will not be entitled to the Discount if there are at least two adults living in the property, who don't qualify.

- **Caring for someone living in your property.**

If you care for another member of the household, who is not your spouse or child under 18, you may be entitled to a discount.

- **Careworkers who are low paid.**

If you are a low paid careworker employed to care for someone else, who lives at the same address you may be entitled to a discount.

Exemptions

Your property will be exempt from Council Tax if it falls within one of the following categories. To qualify, the property must be unoccupied.

- **A property left unoccupied by someone receiving care.**

Properties, which have been left unoccupied by a person who is being cared for, at another address, are exempt from Council Tax.

- **A property left unoccupied by someone providing care.**

A property, which is unoccupied because the occupier has moved to another address in order to care for someone, is exempt from Council Tax.

How to apply

- **Application forms for the Discounts and Exemptions listed are available from the Council Tax Customer Services Office.**

How to contact us

The Customer Services office is available to assist you with all of your enquiries.

- **Customer Services, 7 Waterloo Street, Birmingham.**
- **Opening times are:** Monday to Friday 8.45 am to 5.00 pm.
- **Telephone : 0121 303 9000.** (*Lines open 8.00 am to 6.00 pm Monday to Friday*).

The Customer Services office has a number of services available to assist people with disabilities:

- Level access.
- Loop System for people with hearing difficulties.
- Lowered interview counters.
- Accessible toilets.

- Appointments available (**Telephone: 0121 303 7700**).
- Sign Interpreters available by prior request.
- Text Phone: (**0121 646 7676**).

You can also contact us using the following methods:

- By letter to: Finance Dept. (Revenues), PO Box 5, Birmingham, B4 7AB.
- Fax: 0121 359 8596.
- E-mail: CouncilTax@Birmingham.gov.uk
- Website: www.Birmingham.gov.uk/council-tax
- Home visits available if required.

Birmingham City Council Telephone Help-Line

Telephone: 0121 303 1111. (Lines are open from 8 am to 7 pm).

Advocacy for Birmingham Carers

The Advocacy Service has been set up to provide practical assistance and support for Birmingham Carers. This might be helping someone through a difficult period by writing letters for them, filling out forms, speaking up on their behalf, attending meetings or finding out about entitlements.

Advocacy enables people to take more control over their lives and is particularly important for Carers, who often feel isolated and undervalued. Advocates can help Carers express themselves more clearly and ensure that they are treated fairly and without bias.

Because of their caring responsibilities, Carers often find it difficult to communicate their wishes due to insufficient time and lack of adequate information. Advocates can help by finding out where to go, who to speak to and what to say.

Advocates are required to observe high standards of professionalism. All advocates are asked to sign an advocate agreement and a code of conduct whether they are volunteers or paid sessional workers. This establishes time commitments and alerts them to issues regarding confidentiality.

All advocates undergo an Advocacy and Information training course as part of their induction that introduces them to the principles of advocacy. Assertiveness skills and training using different types of resources are also included. Advocates have the opportunity to further develop if they so wish and regular reviews are part of the process. Training courses on disability awareness, equal opportunities and mental health issues are part of an ongoing training package.

The qualities that are important for an advocate are patience, good communication skills and a full understanding of the needs of Carers. Advocates should be sensitive but also know how to use assertion and negotiation skills when required. Above all, advocates support Carers by representing their wishes and promoting equal rights.

Although there are a few advocacy projects running in the City, we are quite unique in that we advocate for Carers who have up until now had little support for themselves and their problems. The importance of advocacy work cannot be underestimated and it is hoped that the benefits will be mutual. Advocacy work can also be immensely satisfying with many skills being developed.

To find out more about becoming an advocate for the Birmingham Carers Association, or to use the Advocacy Service, contact the Advocacy & Information Manager for details.

Birmingham Carers Association
16 Handsworth Wood Road
Birmingham
B20 2DR

Tel 0121 303 7214
Fax 0121 303 7208
Email advocacy@birminghamcarers.org.uk
Charity No 1086827

Birmingham Carers Forum

Birmingham Carers Forum started life as The Carers Panels back in the late 80's. When the Birmingham Carers Association was formed out of the membership of the panels in 1997, we changed the name of them to the Carers Forums to reflect the open nature of the attendance.

The Forums are open public meetings and can be attended by any member of the public with an interest in carers or caring. The forums have regular attendance from senior managers from Social Services, Health and Education. The representatives have a brief to answer questions either at the meeting or if they do not know the answer then to find the answer and report back to the next meeting.

The forums are held in Birmingham City Council House on the second Monday evening and the following Tuesday morning of February, March, April, May, June, August, September, October, November and December. There are joint meetings of the forums in July (our AGM) and January (New Year Lunch), these can be held on either a Monday or a Tuesday Morning or Evening.

More details can be obtained by calling **0121 686 4060**

HOW CAN I GET SOMEONE TO SIT FOR A FEW HOURS

There are organisations who can sit with the person that you look after, to enable you to go shopping, visit friends or simply take a rest.

Crossroads Care Attendant Scheme

Will sit with people of all ages. Service provides up to 5 hours per week – anytime of day or night to relieve carers of people who are physically disabled.

South and Central Birmingham – tel: 0121 449 1485

West Birmingham - tel: 0121 507 1183

Based at the Carers' Centre. Milton Grange, 16 Handsworth Wood Road.
B20 2DR

East Birmingham - tel: 0121 693 1909

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Birmingham Multicare Service

(formerly Birmingham Multi-handicap Group)

Birmingham Multi care
Prospect Hall
College Walk
Selly Oak
Birmingham B29 6LE
phone 0121 472 8220

Offer City-wide support through sitting service, overnight relief, play-schemes, clubs, advice centres, short term residential care for children/adults who have severe learning disability with one or more physical disabilities.

SOCIAL SERVICES FACTSHEETS

There are many other fact sheets available from your local Social Services and Neighbourhood Offices, which Carers may find useful. Please ask for the relevant fact sheet by the following code and/or title.

Adults

- AO2 Choosing A Residential Or Nursing Home
- AO5 Home From Home Services For Elderly People
- AO6 SHARE Scheme For People With Physical and /or Learning Disabilities
- AO7 Link UP-A Befriending Scheme For Adults With A Physical and /or Learning Disability
- AO8 Care Planning For Adults
- AO9 Day Services For People Who Are Elderly
- A10 Day Services For People With Physical and /or Learning Disabilities and Mental Health Problems
- A11 Employment Preparation Team
- A12 Occupational Therapy Services
- A13 Funeral Arrangements
- A14 Home Care Service
- A15 Home Care Night Service
- A16 Residential Services For People With Physical and /or Learning Disabilities and Mental Health Problems
- A17 Direct Meals
- A18 Blue Badges-Help With Parking For People With A Disability
- A19 Protecting Your Property And Belongings
- A22 Direct Employment Team-DET
- A23 Travel Passes For People With A Disabilities
- A24 Social Work Mental Health Teams
- A25 Home Care-Mobile Night Care
- A26 Day Care-Your 20 Rights
- A27 Residential Care-Your 20 Rights

Children

- CO1 Adoption
- CO2 After Care For Young People
- CO3 Care Planning For Children And Families
- CO4 Child Protection
- CO6 Family Centres
- CO7 Children's Residential Care
- C10 Placement For Children With Family Members Or Friends
- C11 Children's Support Service
- C12 Foster Care
- C13 Help For Children And Young People
- C14 Working With Young Offenders
- C16 Children's Rights Officer

General

- GO1 Area Offices
- GO3 Involving Users And Carers
- GO4 Services For People Infected/Affected By HIV/Aids
- GO5 Emergency Service "Out of hours"
- GO6 Your Right To Be Heard-Comments, Compliments Or Complaints
- GO7 Equipment Loan Service
- GO8 Personal Information On Social Services Records
- GO9 Birmingham Carers' Charter
- G10 Key Principles And Service User Rights

If you require any of these leaflets in an alternative language, please contact your local Social Services office.

Better Care Higher Standards - A Charter for Long Term Care

Introduction

In December 1999, the Government launched the Better Care Higher Standards Charter for the provision of long term care services by Health, Housing and Social Services. The Charter is for service users and carers, 18 years and older, who experience difficulties associated with mental ill health, advancing age, disability or a long term illness that necessitates additional care and support over a longer period.

The Government requires Social Services, Health and Housing to produce an updated Charter each year, that informs service users, carers and members of the public, of what services are available. The Charter for 2002/3 was produced following these guidelines and will tell you what services are available and the standards of service you can expect from staff within the three agencies when you approach them.

The 2002/3 Charter lists six service areas that relate to the rights of service users and carers. For example, each statutory agency must provide information to service users and carers that will **assist them to find out about services, help them to find a suitable place to live and, help them to get the right health care**. The Charter also set out a clear **Complaints process for each of the three agencies**, identify **what support and assistance is being provided to carers** and, how service users and carers can become more **involved in service development**. Finally the Charter also lists a **directory of national, local and emergency contact numbers and helplines that can be a useful aid to anyone needing a service**.

The Charter will also outline the principles and the values on which services are provided. These principles include:

- Treating people with courtesy, honesty and respect
- Ensuring that each person has equal access to a service that is right for his or her individual needs.
- Treating each person fairly and not discriminate against them on the basis of their sex, age, race, religion, disability, or sexual orientation.
- Helping People to maintain their independence in the community and;
- Making sure each person is given the opportunity to exercise their choice and contribute to any decisions that are being made about them or the service they receive.

The Charter is a very important document that provides service users and carers with information on services and standards. Most importantly, the Charter will provide information on your rights and the responsibility of these agencies to provide you with services and support that are appropriate to your individual needs, in a manner that gives due regards to your rights.

Copies can be obtained from Neighbourhood Offices, GP Practices and Social Services Area Offices.

USEFUL CONTACT NUMBERS
FOR ASIAN CARER'S & SERVICE USERS

VIRINDER MATHARU

INFORMATION AND ADVOCACY PROJECT ASSISTANT
BIRMINGHAM CARER'S CENTRE
16 HANDSWORTH WOOD ROAD
HANDSWORTH WOOD
BIRMINGHAM B20 2DR
TEL; 0121 303 4044

ASIAN RESOURCE CENTRE

OAKLANDS COMMUNITY CENTRE
HANDSWORTH
BIRMINGHAM 20
TEL; 0121 523 0580

ASIAN STROKE CLUB

110 HAMPSTED ROAD
HANDSWORTH
BIRMINGHAM B20 2QS
TEL; 0121 554 7337

SPARKBROOK NEIGHBOURHOOD OFFICE CARER'S GROUP

261 STRATFORD ROAD
SPARKBROOK
BIRMINGHAM B11 1QS
TEL; 0121 303 9110

PAULINE RADWAY

RAHBIR ASIAN WOMEN'S CARERS
STOCKLAND GREEN NEIGHBOURHOOD OFFICE
BROOMFIELD ROAD
BIRMINGHAM B23 7PX
TEL; 0121 303 5470

APNA GHAR DAY CENTRE

21/27 CLEVEDON RD
BALSALL HEATH
BIRMINGHAM B12 9HD
TEL: 0121 440 2266

MILAP DAY CENTRE

8 PAYTON RD
HANDSWORTH
BIRMINGHAM 20
TEL: 0121 523 7261

SHAKTI DAY CENTRE

117 HIGHGATE ST
HIGHGATE
B12 0XR
TEL: 0121 440 3338

THE CAPACITY PROJECT (LIVING WITH CANCER)

SOUTHSIDE
249 LADYPOOL ROAD
SPARKBROOK
BIRMINGHAM B12 8LF
TEL: 0121 693 6162

Provision of Telephone Equipment

Birmingham Carers' Association is able to provide the following telephone equipment to Carers.

1/ A telephone alarm unit, operator controlled. This unit plugs into your existing telephone line and is operated by remote hand-held switch/button. When activated, it will immediately contact an operator, who will be able to talk to you through the unit and arrange help should you require it. The operator will have your details on a computer* The Alarm-unit will need an electric socket reasonably close to your telephone outlet socket. The operator service is part of Birmingham Housing Department's "Careline" Service and a small service charge, is payable quarterly, to Housing Department. **The Alarm-unit itself is provided free.**

2/ An independent, non-operator telephone alarm-unit, that plugs into your existing telephone line and operated, as above, by a remote hand-held switch/button. When activated it will ring up to four pre-programmed telephone numbers in sequence and when a response is received it relay a short pre-recorded message of your choice. The four pre-programmed telephone numbers can be your friends, neighbours or relatives. There is a facility that enables the person receiving the message to speak to you.* ***But for both this and the operator type of unit it is important that you choose people who are able to come and help you if necessary and are able to gain access to your home.***

Both units are most useful to those who use other community languages and are again provided at no cost to the Carer.

3/ Mobile telephones. These operate on a "pay as you go" basis with no service or contract charges and are provided to enable Carers to keep in touch with the person looked after. They are provided with an initial voucher or credit for some pre-paid call-time for a number of calls. Call-time can be "topped up" by buying vouchers at High Street outlets or Post Offices or by other arrangements. Mobile telephones are provided free of charge to carers and may be used in conjunction with the Independent Units referred to above.

Should you wish to apply and be considered for any of the above equipment, please ring the **Birmingham Carers' Association** on **0121 686 4060** to ask for an application form and return it to the address at the bottom of the form.

The provision of these items of equipment is subject to the availability of funding and approval by the Management Committee of the scheme.

CARERS DEVELOPMENT AND SUPPORT WORKERS

Heart Of Birmingham

Margaret Gilliver
Small Heath Health Centre
42 Chapman Road
Small Heath
Birmingham
B10 OPG
Tel 0121 255 4226
Adults only-Carer/Cared for

Eastern Birmingham PCT

Wendy Westley
Harvey Road Clinic
Yardley
Birmingham
B26 1TH
Tel 0121 255 2828
Any age-via GP referral

South Birmingham PCT

Pat Marsan/Chris Vinnicombe/Alison Christie
Moseley Hall Hospital
Alcester Road
Moseley
Birmingham
B13 8JL
Tel 0121 442 3468
Any age – open referral

Training and Development

Post vacant
Tel 0121 442 3474

North Birmingham PCT

No post at present

CARERS' QUESTIONNAIRE

The organisations that support carers are constantly striving to improve the quality of information that is available.

We would be very grateful if you could spend a little time completing this questionnaire, as it will enable us to provide a better service for you in the future.

The more information you can give us, the more improvements we can make.

WE ALWAYS LISTEN TO CARERS

Name.....

Address.....

.....

Postcode.....

Telephone Number.....

E-mail address.....

Date of birth.....

How would you describe your cultural or ethnic origin? Please tick appropriate box.

White- UK

Vietnamese

Irish

Yemeni

White – Other

Chinese

Indian

African

Kashmiri

African - Caribbean

Pakistani

Black - Other

Bangladeshi

Asian - Other

Gujerati

Mixed Parentage

Sikh

Other Please Specifiy -----

Is there any additional information that you would like included in this pack?

Please tick appropriate boxes.

Health Information

Illnesses/Conditions	<input type="checkbox"/>	Local support groups	<input type="checkbox"/>
National organisations	<input type="checkbox"/>	Patients/Carer web sites	<input type="checkbox"/>
Respite care	<input type="checkbox"/>	Day care services	<input type="checkbox"/>
Residential care	<input type="checkbox"/>	Nursing home information	<input type="checkbox"/>

Welfare Benefits/Other Financial Information

Social Fund Loan	<input type="checkbox"/>	Community Care Grant	<input type="checkbox"/>
Crisis Loans	<input type="checkbox"/>	Funeral Grants	<input type="checkbox"/>
Free Prescriptions	<input type="checkbox"/>	Incapacity benefit	<input type="checkbox"/>

This list is not exhaustive and we recommend that you contact your local Benefits Agency or Neighbourhood Office for further information and advice.

Would you like information about any charitable and/or voluntary organisations that may be able to help you? Please tick appropriate box.

Yes No

Is there any other information you require?

Do you have any comments or suggestions regarding the information in this pack as we are continuing to develop in order to make improvements?

Is there any information that you have found useful as a carer that you would like to share with others?

What is the age of the person you are caring for?

0 - 17

18 - 40

41 - 60

61 - 80

Data Protection

The details you have given on this questionnaire will only be kept for the purpose of providing you with the information you require. All information is kept in the strictest confidence.

How to return your questionnaire.

Thank you for completing this questionnaire. Please return to us in the pre-paid envelope supplied.

GRANTS TO HELP CARERS	AMOUNT/ ITEM	CRITERIA	APPLICATION DETAILS
Carers Equipment Grant (Social Services)	Up To £300	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ To enable the carer purchase any item or activity that will help the carer take a break from caring. ✓ The carer and cared for must be 18 years of age or over. ✓ The carer or the cared for must be living in Birmingham. ✓ Only one grant application can be made in any two year period 	Birmingham Carers Centre 16 Handsworthwood Rd Handsworth Wood Birmingham B20 2DR Tel 0121 303 4044
Carers Holiday Grant (Social Services)	Up To £250	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ To enable the carer take a break from caring by providing financial assistance for a holiday or activity. ✓ The carer and cared for must be 18 years of age or over. ✓ The carer or the cared for must be living in Birmingham. ✓ Only one grant application can be made in any two year period 	Birmingham Carers Centre 16 Handsworthwood Rd Handsworth Wood Birmingham B20 2DR Tel 0121 303 4044
Carers Mobile Phone Grants (Birmingham Carers Assc)	Mobile phone Alarm unit (Operator responding) Alarm unit (non operator responding)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Enables carers to keep in touch with the person they are caring for. 	Birmingham Carers Centre Birmingham Carers Association 16 Handsworthwood Rd Handsworth Wood Birmingham B20 2DR Tel 0121 686 4060
Carers Break Fund Individual Application (Princess Royal Trust)	Up To £200	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ To assist with the costs of a wide range of breaks for carers to combat the stress and isolation often caused with their caring role. 	Birmingham Carers Centre Birmingham Carers Association 16 Handsworthwood Rd Handsworth Wood Birmingham B20 2DR Tel 0121 686 4060
Carers Break Fund Group Application (Princess Royal Trust)	Up To £750	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ To assist with the costs of a wide range of breaks for carers to combat the stress and isolation often caused with their caring role. ✓ There is no minimum age of applicant. ✓ The grant is awarded to carers throughout the United 	Birmingham Carers Centre Birmingham Carers Association 16 Handsworthwood Rd Handsworth Wood Birmingham B20 2DR

		Kingdom	Tel 0121 686 4060
Carers Relief Fund (Princess Royal Trust)	Up To £500	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Grants are intended to provide financial assistance in cases of extreme need. ✓ Priority will be given to cases where there is a health and safety issue. ✓ There must be a clear long-term benefit to the carer. ✓ The carer's financial situation must be such that they cannot afford to pay for the required item. ✓ There is no minimum age of applicant. ✓ The grant is awarded to carers throughout the United Kingdom 	Birmingham Carers Centre Birmingham Carers Association 16 Handsworthwood Rd Handsworth Wood Birmingham B20 2DR Tel 0121 686 4060
Education Bursary (Princess Royal Trust)	Up to £500	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Grants will be made for course fees with provision for books and equipment ✓ The course can be for education, personal development or simply for pleasure. To enable the carer to pursue interests outside their caring role. ✓ There is no minimum age of applicant. ✓ The grant is awarded to carers throughout the United Kingdom 	Birmingham Carers Centre Birmingham Carers Association 16 Handsworthwood Rd Handsworth Wood Birmingham B20 2DR Tel 0121 686 4060
Wooden Spoon (Princess Royal Trust)	Up To £300	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ The grant is awarded to make an immediate impact on the lives of the young carer by enhancing a skill, talent or interest over a period of time. ✓ The carer must be under 18 years of age. ✓ The grant is awarded to carers throughout the United Kingdom 	Birmingham Carers Centre Birmingham Carers Association 16 Handsworthwood Rd Handsworth Wood Birmingham B20 2DR Tel 0121 686 4060

Royal Bank of Scotland Return To Work Bursary (Princess Royal Trust)	Up To £500	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Awards are made to cover the costs of tuition/ training for carers wishing to undertake a course, which would greatly enhance the participant's prospects of entering or re-entering employment. This could include vocational, technical or academic training. ✓ The carer must be aged 16 or over. ✓ The grant is awarded to carers throughout the United Kingdom 	Birmingham Carers Centre Birmingham Carers Association 16 Handsworthwood Rd Handsworth Wood Birmingham B20 2DR Tel 0121 686 4060
Community Care Grant (Benefits Agency)	No maximum limit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ This grant is intended to promote community care by assisting people on income support or income based job seekers allowance to live independently in the community. ✓ Applicants must be 16 years of age or over. ✓ Applications can be made by anyone in the UK 	Benefits Helpline 0800 88 22 00 Your local Benefits Office or Neighbourhood Office
Budgeting Loans (Benefits Agency)	Dependable on application	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ This is an interest free repayable loan intended to help people who have been on IS or income based JSA to meet intermittent expenses for specific items for which it may be difficult to budget. ✓ It enables the cost to be spread over a period of time. ✓ Applicants must be 16 years of age or over. ✓ Applications can be made by anyone in the UK 	Benefits Helpline 0800 88 22 00 Your local Benefits Office or Neighbourhood Office
Crisis Loans (Benefits Agency)	The amount awarded in any crisis loan is the smallest amount needed to tide you over.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ This is an interest free repayable loan for people unable to meet their immediate short-term crisis. ✓ Applicant must be 16 years of age or over. ✓ You do not need to be in receipt of a qualifying benefit but all your available resources are taken into account. This may include any type of savings. ✓ Applications can be made by anyone in the UK 	Benefits Helpline 0800 88 22 00 Your local Benefits Office
Government Grant For Private Homes (Neighbourhood Energy)	Up To £2,500	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ The government funds the scheme in order to improve the quality of life, health and safety of your home. ✓ Applicants 60 or over should be in receipt of any of the 	Contact 07730 718 673 Or 0800 027 9777

Services Team)		<p>following benefits: IS, Housing Benefit, Job Seekers Allowance or Council Tax Benefit.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ Any Person who is in receipt of any of the following benefits: DLA, AA, Some War Pensions or Some Industrial Injuries Benefit.✓ Pregnant or have children under 16 and receiving any of the following: IS, Housing Benefit, Job Seekers allowance or Council Tax Benefit.✓ Applications can be made by anyone in the UK	
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