

# GP Carers Pack



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# Introduction

A carer is someone who spends a significant proportion of their life providing unpaid support to a relative, partner, friend or neighbour who is ill, frail, disabled, has mental health problems or addiction.

If you support someone who normally lives in Bedford Borough or Central Bedfordshire then you are a carer and are entitled to information support and advice regarding your caring role. You may also be entitled to financial support.



## Bedford Borough

The unitary authority covering the urban areas of Bedford and Kempston and rural wards in the old north Bedfordshire area.

## Central Bedfordshire

The unitary authority covering the towns of Ampthill, Biggleswade, Dunstable, Flitwick, Leighton Buzzard, Shefford and rural wards in the old mid and south Bedfordshire areas.



# Introduction

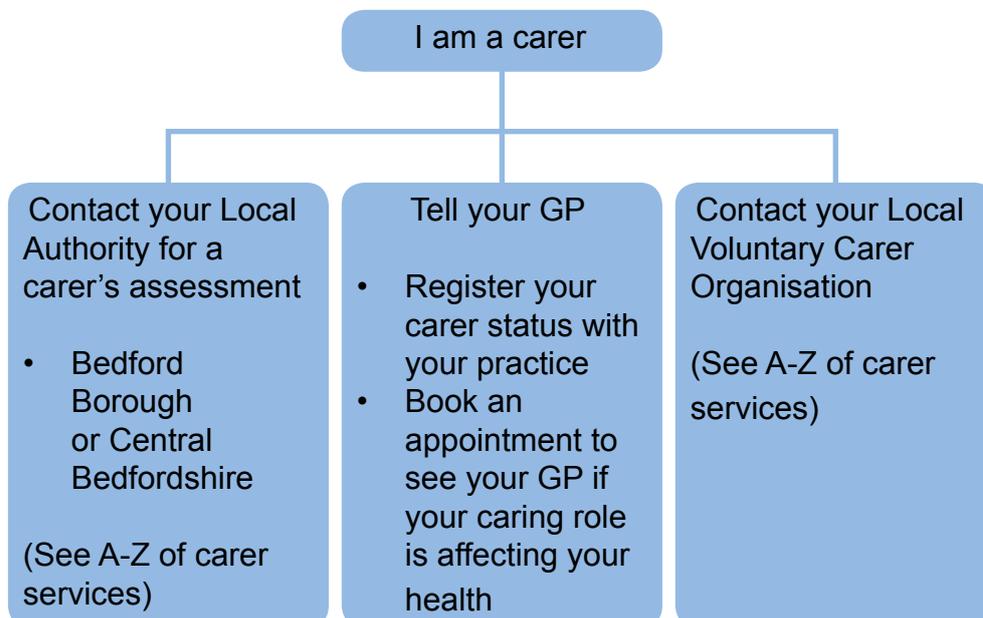
The pack has been produced by NHS Bedfordshire in partnership with Bedford Borough Council, Bedfordshire Rural Communities Charity, Carers in Bedfordshire, Central Bedfordshire Council, Rethink Carers, Spurgeons and carers themselves with funding from NHS Bedfordshire. This comprehensive and easy to navigate carers pack has been designed to provide unpaid carers with a central place to find information regarding all aspects of their caring role.

A downloadable version is also available on both Local Authority websites as well as NHS Bedfordshire's website.

- [www.bedford.gov.uk](http://www.bedford.gov.uk)
- [www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk](http://www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk)
- [www.bedfordshire.nhs.uk](http://www.bedfordshire.nhs.uk)

The information in this pack is correct at the time of printing. We welcome feedback on this pack and invite you to comment by emailing: [lianne.bowskill@bedfordshire.nhs.uk](mailto:lianne.bowskill@bedfordshire.nhs.uk) or by calling 01525 636987.

# Carer Pathway



# A-Z of local carers services



# Alzheimer's Society

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## Description:

Alzheimer's Society offers specialist information, advice and social opportunities for carers of people with dementia.

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## Contact details:

2A Duke Street  
Bedford  
MK40 3HR

Telephone: 01234 327380

Email: [bedfordbranch@alzheimers.org.uk](mailto:bedfordbranch@alzheimers.org.uk)

Website: [www.alzheimers.org.uk](http://www.alzheimers.org.uk)



# Aragon Telecare Team

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## Description:

Provide assessments and support for telecare and assistive technology that can enable people to remain living independently at home for longer.

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## Amphill Office:

Katherine's House  
Dunstable Street  
Amphill  
Bedfordshire  
MK45 2JP

Telephone: 01525 862461

## Sandy Office:

2 Shannon Court  
High Street  
Sandy  
Bedfordshire  
SG19 1AG

Telephone: 01767 685800

Website: [www.aragon-housing.co.uk](http://www.aragon-housing.co.uk)



# Autism Bedfordshire

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## Description:

Autism Bedfordshire provides information, advice, emotional and practical support for parents/carers of children/young people with Autistic Spectrum Conditions.

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## Contact details:

St Marks Church Community Centre  
Calder Rise  
Bedford  
MK41 7UY

Telephone: 01234 350704  
Email: [enquiries@autismbeds.org](mailto:enquiries@autismbeds.org)  
Website: [www.autismbeds.org](http://www.autismbeds.org)



# Bedford Borough Council

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## Description:

Carers are entitled to request an assessment of their needs and aspirations. This may lead to support for carers to take a break to pursue social, work and educational opportunities.

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## Contact details:

Telephone: 01234 267422

Email: [care@bedford.gov.uk](mailto:care@bedford.gov.uk)

Website: [www.bedford.gov.uk/health\\_and\\_social\\_care/carers.aspx](http://www.bedford.gov.uk/health_and_social_care/carers.aspx)

Information for carers with a learning disability in the Bedford Borough area should contact the Adult Learning Disability Team for information on:

Telephone: 01234 276762

Address: Adult Learning Disability Team  
Bedford Borough Council  
Borough Hall  
Cauldwell Street  
Bedford  
MK42 9AP

There is also a support group for carers who look after someone with a learning disability which meets monthly. Please contact the Adult Learning Disability team for more information.

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# Bedfordshire Rural Communities Charity (BRCC)

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## Description:

With a proven track record of more than 50 years BRCC is a leading community development agency that offers a range of services to the public. Health and Well-being services offered are:

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## Contact details:

The Old School, Cardington, Bedford, MK44 3SX

Email: [info@bedsrcc.org.uk](mailto:info@bedsrcc.org.uk)

Website: [www.bedsrcc.org.uk](http://www.bedsrcc.org.uk)

## Care Schemes:

Care Schemes are 'good neighbour' schemes that provide easy access to help and support, acting as a safety net for everyone in a town or village, regardless of age. They can help to lessen the impact on a community caused by the decline in services and facilities such as public transport, shops, Post Offices, doctor's surgeries and pubs. They can also help to reduce feelings of isolation and exclusion experienced by some individuals if families and friends move away in the search for employment, education or affordable housing.

**For more information about this service contact: 01234 832648**

## Walking4Health:

Walking4Health delivers a programme of regular, volunteer-led walks aimed at those who want to walk on a regular basis in company, together with training for the volunteer walk leaders.

**For Bedfordshire walks information please contact: 01767 626453**



# Bobby Scheme

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## Description:

Run by the Bedfordshire Police Partnership Trust the service is for those people over the age of 65, or who are vulnerable or disabled.

The Bobby Team carry out a survey of the house and identify any vulnerable areas and where appropriate, improve the security with locks, door chains and viewers etc. We also work in partnership with Bedfordshire and Luton Fire and Rescue Service who fit smoke detectors.

The service is generally free, but as the Bedfordshire Police Partnership Trust is a charity, donations of any amount are always welcome.

The Bobby team are dressed in uniforms similar to the local police in order to offer reassurance to victims. They also carry ID cards with them at all times.

If you know a vulnerable person who would benefit from the services of the Bobby team, please contact:

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## Contact details:

Telephone: 01234 842619

Or the Trust Administrator: 01234 842612



# British Red Cross

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## Description:

Provide loans of medical equipment including wheelchairs.

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## Contact details:

Baker Street  
Hertford  
SQ13 7HT

Telephone: 0844 412 2830

Email: [AdminBHE@redcross.org.uk](mailto:AdminBHE@redcross.org.uk)

Website: [www.redcross.org.uk](http://www.redcross.org.uk)



# Cafph (Centre for All Families Positive Health)

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## Description:

Gives one to one and group support and training for all those affected by HIV/AIDS.

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## Contact details:

Kingham House  
Unit 1  
Kingham Way  
Luton  
LU2 7RG

Telephone: 01582 726061  
Email: [info@cafph.org.uk](mailto:info@cafph.org.uk)  
Website: [www.cafph.org.uk](http://www.cafph.org.uk)



# Carers in Bedfordshire

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## Description:

Carers in Bedfordshire provide emotional and practical one to one and group support including training and social opportunities for all carers including young adult carers, parent carers, sibling carers and former carers. We also liaise with statutory services to ensure carers concerns are taken into consideration.

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## Contact details:

Goldington Centre  
Barkers Lane  
Bedford  
MK41 9SJ

Telephone: 01234 214914

Sea Cadet Hut  
Station Road  
Biggleswade  
SG18 8AL

Telephone: 01767 315079

Email: [contact@carersinbeds.org.uk](mailto:contact@carersinbeds.org.uk)

Website: [www.carersinbeds.org.uk](http://www.carersinbeds.org.uk)

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## Projects run by Carers in Bedfordshire:

These services are available across bedfordshire. Please call for further information.

### Carers Cafes

These are held at Biggleswade, Bedford and Houghton Regis. They take place on Saturdays once a month and provide an opportunity for Carers and the person being cared for to enjoy a relaxing afternoon and access various treatments such as chiropody, hairdressing and pampering. Refreshments are provided and carer support workers are on hand to offer information and advice.

### Parents Together

A specialist service for parents caring for a child with additional needs.

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# Carers in Bedfordshire

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## Sibling project (4-16 years)

Supporting children and young people who have a sibling with additional needs.

## The Hub

A specialist project supporting Young Adult carers aged 16-24 years.

## Carers Breaks

An opportunity for carers whose health is affected by their caring situation to apply for a grant to enable them to have a break or access a training course.

## Art and Craft project

An opportunity for carers to relax and gain confidence through art and creativity.

## Training

A variety of training courses - including first aid, understanding dementia, stress management, prevention of falls, one to one computer training and raising self esteem are offered free of charge to all carers.



# Carers Direct

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## Description:

Carers Direct is the official website designed to help you get the help and support you need as a carer. We offer all the information you should need to get the financial help you're entitled to, as well as advice on getting a break from caring, going to work and much more.

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## Contact details:

Telephone: 0808 802 0202

Email: Online email service

Website: [www.nhs.uk/carersdirect/Pages/CarersDirect](http://www.nhs.uk/carersdirect/Pages/CarersDirect)



# Central Bedfordshire Council

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## Description:

Carers have the right to request an assessment of their needs as a carer. This may lead to a service to support you in your caring role or help you enjoy life outside of your caring role.

Central Bedfordshire Council funds voluntary and community organisations supporting carers. They also run support groups for people caring for someone with a learning disability.

10.30am-12.30pm on the 2nd Tuesday of the month in Biggleswade and 3rd Friday of each month in Dunstable.

For more information on carers with a learning disability in the Central Bedfordshire please contact us on the details below:

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## Contact details:

Central Bedfordshire Council  
Priory House  
Monks Walk  
Chicksands  
Shefford  
Bedfordshire  
SG17 5TQ

**Carers Helpline:** 0300 300 8036

**Email:** [carers@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:carers@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk)

**Website:** [www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk](http://www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk)

There are a range of carers factsheets available to download from the website.



# Citizens Advice Bureau

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## Description:

The Citizens Advice Bureau provides free, independent, confidential and impartial advice to everyone on their rights and responsibilities. They can also help you with completing forms.

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## Contact details:

### Amphill

Woburn Street

Amphill

MK45 2HX

Telephone: 0844 477 1600

### Bedford

7a St Paul's Square

Bedford

MK40 1SQ

Telephone: 01234 354384

### Biggleswade

Century House

Market Square

Biggleswade

SG18 8UU

Telephone: 0844 477 1600

### Dunstable

Grove House

76 High Street North

Dunstable

LU6 1NF

Telephone: 01582 661384

### Leighton/Linslade

Bossard House

West Street

Leighton Buzzard

LU7 1DA

Telephone: 01525 373878

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# Citizens Advice Bureau

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## Parkside Neighbourhood Centre

Parkside Drive  
Houghton Regis  
LU5 5QN

## Sandy

Sandy Health Centre  
Northcroft  
Sandy  
SG19 1JQ

## Shefford

Orchard Children's Centre  
School Lane  
Shefford  
SG17 5XA

## Tithe Farm Neighbourhood Centre

Tithe Farm Road  
Houghton Regis  
LU5 5JB  
Telephone: 01582 867692



# Disability Resource Centre

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## Description:

The Disability Resource Centre offers a focal point for disability services locally and combines a variety of statutory and voluntary sector services under one roof providing advice on equipment and Direct Payments.

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## Contact details:

Disability Resource Centre  
Poynters House  
Poynters Road  
Dunstable  
LU5 4TP

Telephone: 01582 470900

Email: [information@drcbeds.org.uk](mailto:information@drcbeds.org.uk)

Website: [www.drcbeds.co.uk](http://www.drcbeds.co.uk)



# Jobcentre Plus and Carers Adviser - Bedfordshire

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## Description:

A Carers adviser is available in your local jobcentre to offer the following support:-

- Advice and support for carers preparing for work
- Leaving work to care for someone
- Returning to work
- Caring for someone whilst working

## Contact details:

Telephone: Bedford Office 01234 361500  
Leighton Buzzard 01525 252929  
Dunstable 01582 658200  
Biggleswade 01767 275750

Website: [www.jobcentreplus.gov.uk](http://www.jobcentreplus.gov.uk)

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## Work Focused Support for Carers:

### What is Work Focused Support for Carers?

Work Focused Support for Carers (WFSC) is a voluntary scheme designed to help people who wish to combine paid work with their role caring for someone.

You can choose to take part, and are free to stop taking part, at any time. Even if you don't feel ready to work now but might like to in the future, you can still take advantage of the support available.

### Who is eligible?

Work Focused Support for Carers is available to carers who:

- do not work or work less than 16 hours a week
- are aged 18 or over
- are not able to get help from any of the other Jobcentre Plus employment support programmes such as New Deal or Pathways to Work.

### Will my benefits be affected?

If you are in receipt of benefits they will not be affected by taking part in WFSC. If you find a job you are interested in, your personal adviser will be able to tell you how your benefits will be affected if you start work and help you apply for any in work benefits or tax credits if appropriate.

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# Jobcentre Plus and Carers Advisor - Bedfordshire

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## What help will Jobcentre Plus give me to find work?

Your adviser can help you with advice on training, finding a job, local childcare and local replacement care. Also, if you start work, your adviser can continue to provide support and advice.

## What other support is available?

Jobcentre Plus may be able to help pay for things like replacement care while you attend appointments with the personal adviser, take part in a training course or attend job interviews.

## Where should I go for more information?

To find out more about getting into work or training, you can:

- visit [www.direct.gov.uk/carersemployment](http://www.direct.gov.uk/carersemployment)
- arrange an appointment with an adviser at your nearest Jobcentre.



# Rethink Bedfordshire

## Carer Support

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### Description:

Provide support and information to those caring for someone with a mental health illness of working age in Bedfordshire (excluding Luton).

What we offer:

- One to One Support
- Support Groups:
  - Dunstable Group – Salvation Army Hall, Bull Pond Lane, Dunstable (2nd Tuesday of each month at 6pm)
  - Leighton Buzzard Group – Leighton Buzzard Library (Last Monday of each month at 7pm)
  - Men's Group – meet in Maulden (3rd Thursday of each month at 7.30pm)
  - Walking Group – various locations throughout central Bedfordshire (3rd Tuesday of each month at 10am-12noon)
  - The new Bedford afternoon tea group meets at the Well-being Centre in Bedford (2nd Tuesday of each month at 1pm-3pm)
- Pampering clinics – providing free 45 minute therapeutic treatments with a professional therapist. Treatments include: neck and back massage, reflexology etc
- Information events
- Advice on carers rights and accessing direct payments and carers assessments
- Social opportunities including quiz nights, day trips and themed nights
- Opportunity to get involved as a carer representative and influence mental health service provision locally, as a volunteer.

We welcome referrals from professionals, as well as self referrals.

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### Contact details:

Rethink Bedfordshire Carer Support  
Disability Resource Centre  
Poynters House, Poynters Road  
Dunstable, Bedfordshire  
LU6 3NS

Telephone: 01582 470986  
Fax: 01582 667319  
Email: [beds.carers@rethink.org](mailto:beds.carers@rethink.org)  
Website: [www.rethink.org](http://www.rethink.org)

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# Sight Concern

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## Description:

Support groups for carers of people with visual impairments including regular training for new carers.

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## Contact details:

Kings House  
245 Ampthill Road  
Bedford  
Bedfordshire  
MK42 9AZ

Telephone: 01234 311555  
Email: [office@sightconcern.org.uk](mailto:office@sightconcern.org.uk)  
Website: [www.sightconcern.org.uk](http://www.sightconcern.org.uk)



# Spaced

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## Description:

Support and information for those worried or concerned about someone's drug or alcohol use.

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## Contact details:

CAN  
22 Grove Place  
Bedford  
MK40 3JJ

Telephone: 01234 354193

Email: [info@spurgeons.org](mailto:info@spurgeons.org)

Website: [www.can.org.uk/services/SPACED.htm](http://www.can.org.uk/services/SPACED.htm)



# Spurgeons Young Carers Project (4-18 years)

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## Description:

The project supports children and young people who are caring for another person within their family. The cared for person must be living at the same address.

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## Contact details:

229 Bedford Road  
Kempston  
Bedford  
MK42 8DA

Telephone: 01234 857826  
Email: [jlightfoot@spurgeons.org](mailto:jlightfoot@spurgeons.org)  
Website: [www.spurgeons.org](http://www.spurgeons.org)

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## Group Support

### Clubs:

The project runs six clubs, which take place one evening once a month. Three take place in Bedford Borough, held at Kempston Youth Centre and three in Central Bedfordshire, held in different locations: Biggleswade, Flitwick and Dunstable. Each club provides the opportunity to meet others in a similar situation as well as respite from the caring role and the opportunity to have fun.

### School Holiday Activities:

The size of the group will vary. Each young carer is offered a minimum of 2 holiday activities a year. The activities range from a picnic in the park to an 'activity weekend' and anything in between.

### Signposting:

If the project cannot support the Young Carers in a particular area we will work in partnership with other specialised organisations.

### Individual Support:

#### 1-2-1 Visitors

A 1-2-1 visitor, (volunteer) will support an individual young carer. The young carer is taken out once a fortnight.

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# Stroke Association

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## Description:

Information, advice and training for carers of people affected by a stroke.

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## Contact details:

3 Ombersley Road  
Bedford  
MK42 9JX

Telephone: 01234 792 686

Email: [leslie.knowles@stroke.org.uk](mailto:leslie.knowles@stroke.org.uk)

Website: [www.stroke.org.uk](http://www.stroke.org.uk)



# NHS Bedfordshire Support for carers



# Carers Breaks

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## Description:

Carers can apply for funds in order to take a break from their caring role or access a training course. Examples include a course of holistic treatments, a theatre break or an overnight stay.

Carers can apply directly to Carers in Bedfordshire through their carers breaks coordinator or can make an application through another organisation, such as Rethink or The Alzheimer's Society.

Carers Breaks are funded by NHS Bedfordshire but is managed by Carers in Bedfordshire.

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## Contact details:

Telephone: 01767 315079

Email: [linda.dimichele@carersinbeds.org.uk](mailto:linda.dimichele@carersinbeds.org.uk)

Website: [www.carersinbeds.co.uk](http://www.carersinbeds.co.uk)





# Carers Direct

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## Description:

Carers Direct is the official website designed to help you get the help and support you need as a carer. We offer all the information you should need to get the financial help you're entitled to, as well as advice on getting a break from caring, going to work and much more.

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## Contact details:

Telephone: 0808 802 0202

Email: Online email service

Website: [www.nhs.uk/carersdirect/Pages/CarersDirect](http://www.nhs.uk/carersdirect/Pages/CarersDirect)



# GP Exercise referral

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## Description:

Referral by own GP to participating Bedfordshire Leisure Centre Gym.

There are a wide range of medical conditions for which people are eligible for inclusion onto the programme.

Programme is for 12 weeks and patients can access 1-2 sessions a week.

SUBSIDISED FEES FOR PERIOD OF REFERRAL.  
VARIOUS PAYMENT OPTIONS AVAILABLE AFTER.

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## Contact details:

Telephone: 01525 636892

Email: [stuart.king@bedfordshire.nhs.uk](mailto:stuart.king@bedfordshire.nhs.uk)



# Health Champions

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## Description:

Health Champions exist to support local people assess their health and lifestyle risks. Health Champions work closely with partnership organisations to put people in touch with local health, social care and community services.

They signpost and support people with lowering alcohol consumption, with weight loss and stopping smoking.

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## Contact details:

Telephone: 01234 897158

Email: [aruna.sharma-balls@bedfordshire.nhs.uk](mailto:aruna.sharma-balls@bedfordshire.nhs.uk)



# NHS Choices

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## Description:

Free, up-to-date, online, comprehensive information from the National Health Service on conditions, treatments, local services and healthy living in the workplace and at home.

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## Contact details:

Website: [www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk)

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# NHS Counselling

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## Description:

GP referral (for Bedfordshire residents only)

The Counselling Service will send a letter within a few days of referral, inviting the client to call and make an appointment to see a counsellor.

NO CHARGE

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## Contact details:

GP Referral only



# NHS Direct

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## Description:

For health advice and reassurance, 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. Our health professionals are here for you - online and on the phone.

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## Contact details:

Telephone: 0845 4647

Website: [www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk](http://www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk)



# NHS Bedfordshire Mental Health Information Website

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## Description:

Click on – Your health

Click on – Mental health

There are several therapies available through the NHS to help support people with anxieties and other mental health difficulties.

NHS Bedfordshire commissions mental health services from a range of providers.

A patient leaflet describing all therapies available can be found at: [www.bedfordshire.nhs.uk/downloads/psychological\\_leaflet.pdf](http://www.bedfordshire.nhs.uk/downloads/psychological_leaflet.pdf) or a hard copy can be found at the back of this pack (Appendix 1).

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## Contact details:

Website: [www.bedfordshire.nhs.uk](http://www.bedfordshire.nhs.uk)

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# NHS Bedfordshire Stop Smoking Service

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## Description:

The stop smoking service provides free one to one, online and group support.

Specialist advisors offers face to face informal groups to encompass behavioural peer support for 7 weeks with the use of Nicotine Replacement Therapy (NRT), Zyban or Champix (see note below). Engaging with all types of smoker including more addicted ones. Also provide interventions by one to one support, telephone support and online group support all available within local area.

Note - Normal prescription charge applies for NRT – 8-12 week course.

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## Contact details:

Telephone: 0800 013 0553

Email: [stop.smoking@bedfordshire.nhs.uk](mailto:stop.smoking@bedfordshire.nhs.uk)

Website: [www.smokefreebedfordshire.nhs.uk](http://www.smokefreebedfordshire.nhs.uk)



# PALS (Patient Advice and Liaison Service)

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## Description:

The Patient Advice and Liaison Service focuses on improving NHS services for patients.

The service aims to:

- Advise and support patients, their families and carers
- Provide information on NHS services
- Listen to your concerns, suggestions or queries
- Help sort out problems on your behalf
- Provide information and advice on the NHS complaints procedure.

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## Contact details:

Patient Advice and Liaison Service  
NHS Bedfordshire  
Gilbert Hitchcock House  
Bedford  
MK40 2AW

Telephone: 01234 897211

Email: [PALS@bedfordshire.nhs.uk](mailto:PALS@bedfordshire.nhs.uk)

Website: [www.bedfordshire.nhs.uk](http://www.bedfordshire.nhs.uk)



# Step by Step

(formerly known as Improving Access to Psychological Therapies - IAPT)

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## Description:

GP or Self Referral (for Bedfordshire residents only)

This is a free service provided for short-term mental health problems such as anxiety and depression, particularly when they are beginning to affect daily life making living and work difficult. The aim is to give support before the problems become overwhelming and for the client to be able to access this support quickly.

Initial contact within 3 days.

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## Contact details:

Telephone: ONE CALL - 0845 602 4064

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# Weight Watchers Referral Scheme

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## Description:

Referral by own GP or Practice Nurse.

Patient must meet referral criteria in order to access programme.

Referral is for 12 weeks free access to Weight Watchers Group.

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## Contact details:

Telephone: 01525 636892

Email: [stuart.king@bedfordshire.nhs.uk](mailto:stuart.king@bedfordshire.nhs.uk)



# Benefits and allowances



# Benefits and Allowances

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Please find below a list of benefits and allowances that you and your cared for may be entitled too. This information is for guidance only as benefits and allowances are subject to change.

For the most up to date information please visit the Carers Direct Website:

[www.nhs.uk/carersdirect](http://www.nhs.uk/carersdirect) or call their helpline on 0808 802 0202.

Please also speak to your Social Worker, a Welfare Rights Service or the Citizens Advice Bureau for further support.

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- **Attendance Allowance for the person you care for**

Is a tax free allowance not affected by savings or other income. Is for people over 65 needing assistance with personal care and keeping themselves safe.

- **Disability Living Allowance**

Non-means tested Tax free benefit. For people under 65 years.

- **Carers Allowance**

Paid to people who spend at least 35 hours a week caring for someone.

- **Carers Premium**

An allowance used in the calculation of means tested benefits. A carer premium is included in the benefit calculation if the carer allowance is paid (or if carer allowance is not awarded because another benefit is paid at a higher rate).

- **Tax Credits**

Child Tax Credit for people caring for a child aged under 16 (or 19 if in full-time education).

Tax credits may be available if you are a parent carer of a disabled child.

Working Tax Credit for people who are working.

Is dependent on level of income and personal circumstances.

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# Benefits and Allowances

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## Caring and your Pension – National Insurance Contributions

Carer's Credit is a National Insurance credit which helps carers build up qualifying years for the basic State Pension and additional State Pension.

## Pension Credit/Income Support/Housing Benefit/Council Tax Benefit/Employment and Support Allowance

The above are means tested benefits. Entitlement will depend on your financial circumstances.

## Council Tax Band Reductions

In Central Bedfordshire and Bedford Borough Council the Disabled Band Reduction scheme provides for a reduction in the Council Tax rate if an extra room is required for special needs, or if extra space is needed for wheelchair access indoors. The Disabled Band Reduction scheme effectively reduces the amount of Council Tax payable by one band. This reduction can be applied for through your local council.

## Disabled person's band reduction

### Who can qualify?

You may qualify for a band reduction if someone substantially and permanently disabled is living in your property. The property must have at least one of:

- a room which is used mainly to meet the needs of the disabled person
- an extra bathroom or kitchen, or
- extra floor space for a disabled person who needs to use a wheelchair indoors

The extra room does not need to be specially built. It can be an existing room used specifically for the person with the disability. However, it needs to be essential or of major importance to the well-being of the disabled person.



# Benefits and Allowances

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To apply for a reduction or for further details please contact your local authority:

[www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk](http://www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk) or call Central Bedfordshire Council 'money and benefits helpline': 0300 300 8306

[www.bedford.gov.uk](http://www.bedford.gov.uk) (application forms can be downloaded from the website) or for general enquiries call: 01234 267422

## Bedford Borough Council - Welfare Rights Service

Bedford Borough Council has a small team of Welfare Rights Advisors. They provide advice, support and information on welfare rights issues to people living in Bedford Borough area. The Advisors usually advise through referrals and do not normally provide direct advice to the public unless they are referred through a social care worker or other Council staff.

Benefits checklists are available from our website [http://www.bedford.gov.uk/advice\\_and\\_benefits/welfare\\_rights\\_service.aspx](http://www.bedford.gov.uk/advice_and_benefits/welfare_rights_service.aspx) which provide an overview of the benefits you may be entitled to claim. There are also details of who to contact for further information and advice.

Telephone: 01234 267422  
Email: [care@bedford.gov.uk](mailto:care@bedford.gov.uk)

## Central Bedfordshire

You can access support with benefits from [www.direct.gov](http://www.direct.gov)

If you care for someone with cancer, an online benefits service is available from [www.macmillan.org.uk](http://www.macmillan.org.uk)

Your local Citizens Advice Bureau can also help you with completing forms. Please see A-Z of carers services.

## Jobcentre Plus

Work focused support for carers.

### What is Work Focused Support for Carers?

Work Focused Support for Carers (WFSC) is a voluntary scheme designed to help people who wish to combine paid work with their role caring for someone (please see section 1 for further information).



# Carers rights



# Carers rights

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A carer is someone who spends a significant proportion of their life providing unpaid support to a relative, partners, friend or neighbour who is ill, frail, disabled, has mental health problems or addiction.

You have a choice as to whether you wish to provide care to the person you care for.

## The Carers (Recognition and Services) Act 1995

Gives adult, parent and young carers who provide or intend to provide a substantial amount of care on a regular basis the right to:

- Have their views sought when a decision is made about services for the cared for person
- Request an assessment or review of their own needs and the needs of the cared for person being assessed
- Have the outcome of their carers assessment taken into account when deciding on services for the cared for person.

## The Carers and Disabled Children's Act 2000

- means
- Carers can request an assessment of their own needs even if the cared for person has refused an assessment or services
  - The local authority can provide services direct to carers
  - The local authority can provide Direct Payments to carers aged 16 and over and parent carers of a disabled child.

## The Carers (Equal Opportunities) Act 2004

places a duty upon Local Authorities to:

- Inform carers of their right to request an assessment
- Consider the social, educational and employment aspirations of the carer during the assessment and when deciding about services to the carer.

## The Work and Families Act 2006

- gives carers the right to request flexible working if they have 26 weeks continuous employment at the date they make a request. This act covers carers who are:
- A parent of a disabled child under 18
  - Caring or expect to be caring for a spouse, a partner who they live with, a civil partner or a relative (relatives include parents, parents-in-law, an adult child, an adult adopted child, sibling, in-law siblings, uncles, aunts, grandparents and step-relatives
  - Living at the same address as an adult in need of care



# Carers rights

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**The Children Act 1989** covers parents/carers of children with a disability

- Parent carers should be assessed under the Framework for the Assessment of a Child in Need.
- The assessment should be done in the same way and cover the same issues as any other carers assessment.
- The Local Authority may provide a service to any member of the child's family if it is provided with a view to safeguard and promote the child's welfare.

**Young Carers** are assessed as a Child in Need but the assessment must comply with the Carers Equal Opportunities Act 2004 requirement to consider the social, educational and employment aspirations of the carer.

Young Carers are assessed under the Framework for the Assessment of a Child in Need

The Local Authority may provide a service to any member of the child's family if it is provided with a view to safeguard and promote the child's welfare.

Young Carers aged 16 and over may receive a Carers Direct Payment to help them in their caring role or enable them to enjoy a life of their own outside of their caring role.

## **Equalities Act 2010**

Protects people being treated less favourably than someone else because of age or disability.

Carers may be able to argue that they have subject to discrimination because of their association with an older person or a person with a disability.

The Equalities Act also protects people from being indirectly discriminated against because a service, criteria or practice is applied to everyone but disadvantages someone because of their age or disability.



# Carers rights

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## Mental Health Act - Nearest Relative

The nearest relative (NR) is the family member who can use the rights and powers given to them under the Mental Health Act 1983. It's important to remember that the NR and the next of kin may be two different people. The next of kin is usually a relative or close friend chosen by someone soon after they are admitted to hospital.

Key points:

- NR is a legal term used in the Mental Health Act 1983
- The NR has certain rights in relation to someone who is detained under the Mental Health act (or sectioned)
- Rights include requesting someone be assessed for detention in hospital and applying for the discharge of someone who is sectioned
- If someone does not feel that their relative is a suitable person to act they can apply to the County Court for them to be removed as their nearest relative
- The NR does not have automatic rights to information about the person detained in hospital. This depends if the service user consents to information being shared
- There may be an advocacy and/or support service available in the hospital.

## Residential Care

If your circumstances change and you are no longer able to look after the person you care for at home or within their own home, then another option is to look at residential care homes.

A residential care home provides accommodation, meals, and personal care for older people, people with disabilities or people who are unable to manage at home, for whatever reason.

The level of care varies from home to home, but generally the type of care the cared for person would receive includes: help with eating, washing, bathing, dressing and toilet needs; and care if they become ill. However, residential care does not include nursing care.



# Carers Rights

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You can get advice and information to help you make this important decision from:

- your social worker or care manager
- a district nurse
- a health visitor
- your family doctor

All residential homes, whether council-run or private, are regularly inspected by the Care Quality Commission (CQC). You can find out more about this organisation by visiting their website at [www.cqc.org.uk](http://www.cqc.org.uk). Reports compiled by CQC on individual care homes are able to be downloaded free of charge.

A Care Directory which lists the care homes, domiciliary care agencies and nursing agencies that are available in Bedfordshire is available from either of the Local Authorities.



# Carers assessments

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## Getting the most out of your carers assessment

You have told us that you are a carer and are exercising your legal right to request an assessment of your needs as a carer. This is an opportunity to talk about:-

- The impact of your caring role
- What might help you in your caring role
- Your aspirations for a life outside of your caring role.

The questions below are to help you think about your caring role and prepare for your face to face conversation with a social worker so don't feel you have to answer every question if you don't think it's relevant to you. If you would like support to record your thoughts please speak to your social worker.

The conversation about your caring role is a journey and the focus is on getting the best possible outcome for you and the person you care for. Use this opportunity to tell your story in terms of the problems you feel you have so that your social worker can support you to explore the most appropriate solutions.

During your conversation with the social worker you may want to change what you have written and this is fine. At the end of the conversation, the social worker will complete their assessment of your needs and aspirations and agree future actions with you.

## The type of support you provide for your relative, friend or neighbour

- What do you do on behalf of the person you care for? Is it personal care, assisting with mobility, behavioural or emotional needs?
- How does caring role impact on your daily routine?
- Do you provide all the care on your own?

## Social and leisure opportunities

- Are you able to take part in social activities such as eating out, going to the cinema, exercise?
- Are you able to have time away from your home environment?



# Carers assessments

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## About your home environment

- Do you live with the person you care for?
- Is there pressure on accommodating all your family members?
- Are you able to manage your home environment (e.g. cleaning, cooking, gardening?)

## Employment and educational opportunities

- Are you employed? How do you manage your caring role alongside your work commitments?
- How supportive do you feel your employer is about your caring role?
- Are you aware of your employment rights as a carer such as the right to request flexible working?
- Are you unable to return to work because of your caring role? Do you want to return to work or train for employment?
- Are you accessing any learning programmes or courses?
- Are you aware of any employment and learning opportunities to help carers, such as Job Centre Plus carer advisors and the National Extension College 'Carers Into Education' course?

## Family and community relationships

- How is your relationship with other relatives? Do they support you in your caring role?
- Do you know many people in your local community? Do they support you in your caring role?

## Support for you

- Do you have a network of support to help you in your caring role?
- What are your main concerns about being able to maintain your caring role in the future?

## How are you feeling

- Do you experience any anxiety or stress because of your caring role?
- Do you feel emotionally vulnerable or depressed because of your caring role?
- Do you find it difficult to be motivated to do things?
- Do you find it hard to cope with your caring role?



# Carers assessments

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## Your physical health

- Do you have any physical, sensory, medical or any other needs?
- Do these needs make your caring role more difficult?
- Are you taking any prescribed medicines?
- Do you think your health will impact upon being able to continue your caring role?

## Finance (this is not a financial assessment)

- Has your caring role had an impact on your finances? Do you have an adequate income?
- Have you received any information or support with applying for benefits such as carers allowance, disability living allowance, etc?

## Transport

- Are you able to drive?
- Are you able to access public transport?

## What would help you most

- In your caring role
- To enjoy a life of your own outside of your caring role

Following your assessment you may be eligible for support from the Local Authority.

## What if I need help to say what I want?

If you do not speak English well or you use sign language, we can arrange for an interpreter to be at our assessment.

If English is your first language, but you need help to say how you feel, people called advocates can help you. We can arrange for an advocate to be present at your assessment. You can also have a family member or friend there to support you, if you so wish,

The assessment will enable us to work with you to agree the most appropriate form of support based on the impact and sustainability of your caring role. The Local Authorities currently provide services to people in moderate, substantial or critical need. All carers will receive advice and information.



# Taking a break from caring



# Taking a break from caring

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Everyone needs to take a break occasionally and this is especially important if you are a carer. It can help you recharge your batteries and also maintain your health whether physically or emotionally. A break for some people could be just for an hour or two or for a week or more. There are a variety of different breaks available and the options are listed below.

- Having a friend or family member come to visit/stay
- Volunteer befrienders– some organisations may provide this service. Ask your local social services department if there are any schemes running in your area
- Care at home- care can be provided at home, to allow the main carer to take a break for anything from an hour to a week or more. Some home-care agencies can provide live-in carers, which may provide an alternative to going into a Care Home
- Day centres– people can attend on a daily basis depending on their needs. Social services will have to carry out an assessment in order for the person to attend the day care placement
- Respite care homes– The person you care for goes away to be looked after by someone else for a while using a registered and approved care home/placement, stays are usually for 1 or 2 weeks. This can be arranged through social services
- Supported holidays - some organisations can provide supported and escorted holidays for anyone who needs caring support to enable them to get away. A website of a holiday provider that may be of interest is [www.vitalise.org.uk](http://www.vitalise.org.uk)
- Following a carers assessment the local authority may be able to help you access a break
- NHS Carers Breaks
- Services for carers - there are also other services carers can access to enable them to take a physical break, for example, voucher schemes or direct payments.



# Health and Well-being



# Health and Well-being

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Staying healthy is important for everyone, but it's especially important for carers. Many carers have little time to themselves for relaxation and exercise, feel stressed and sleep badly, making them more prone to poor health. In this section you'll find information on different ways to keep well. **(Please also refer to the section - NHS Support for Carers, section 3)**

## Eating well

Having a balanced diet is an important part of staying healthy. A balanced diet contains the right proportions of starchy foods, fruit and vegetables, protein-rich foods, milk and dairy foods, and fat and sugar.

## Emotional problems

Being a carer can be a difficult role to take on, and it can affect you emotionally as well as physically. Many carers say they feel anger, resentment, guilt, loneliness and depression. Talk to your friends and family. Let them know how you're managing, what problems you're facing and ask them for their support and help.

- Get in touch with a local carers group - please see the A-Z of Carers Services section for more information.
- Talk to your GP. They may be able to refer you to a counselling service or give you information about local support groups.
- If you need someone to talk to, call the Samaritans. The helpline, 08457 909090, is open day and night.

## Back care

As a carer, you may find that lifting the person you care for, helping them dress or move around may place a strain on your back. If you are currently experiencing pain or strain, contact your GP. They may prescribe anti-inflammatory medication to relax your muscles or suggest physiotherapy.

It may be impossible to avoid lifting and handling the person you care for but you can get advice on guidelines to follow that may reduce the risk of injury.



# Health and Well-being

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## Coping with stress

As a carer, it is important that you pay attention not only to the well-being of the person you care for but also to your own physical and emotional health and well-being.

Being a carer can be rewarding but can also be emotionally and physically demanding. For example, you may be finding it difficult to cope with the level of care you are providing and don't know where to turn – perhaps feeling resentful that you have little time to yourself.

You may suddenly face becoming a carer after the illness of your partner – perhaps feeling anxious and depressed about these changes in your life. It is important to acknowledge these feelings – they are normal. Sharing these feelings can also help. This could be with a friend or family member or another carer, GP or counsellor.

## Guilt and resentment

Many carers can all too easily get caught in a cycle of resentment and guilt - resentful that their life is no longer their own - and guilty for feeling like this. It is important to acknowledge these feelings and not bottle them up. It is normal to feel resentful that your life isn't perhaps the one you imagined.

Perhaps your relationship with the person you care for has changed and you miss how it used to be. The person you are caring for may not always seem to appreciate what you are doing for them. You are bound to be affected by this. You may feel that you should be doing more, or doing something better, in terms of your actual caring role. Then you feel guilty because you “aren't doing a good job”. Remember too that in some situations the person you are caring for may also feel guilty. It's possible they feel guilty about being a “burden” or they see the effect caring has on your life.

The important thing is not to push those feelings away - talk about it. Either to the person you are caring for or to someone else that you trust. It is important to allow yourself to feel these perfectly normal feelings and not get overwhelmed with guilt. These are feelings that you might not be able to talk to friends and family about. Talking to other carers can help. Do you know someone who has been a carer? Is there a carers group nearby? Can you join an online carers discussion forum? Talking to others about it will help give some context to how you feel so the feelings don't get built up out of proportion.



# Health and Well-being

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## Stress

Stress is part of everyday life and, for many carers, stress can be a major factor affecting their health. Stress is caused by the many demands made on our time and energy and the expectations we have of ourselves.

Not all stress is negative – stress can alert you to potential dangers and can also spur you on to achieve a goal or complete a task. However, sometimes the balance tips too far and the pressure becomes so intense or so persistent that you may feel unable to cope.

Stress can make it hard to cope with the demands of caring. You can become more and more exhausted, tense and irritable. This can make you feel you are losing control over your life and that there is no way of regaining this control. But, there are a number of steps you can take to help reduce stress and cope more effectively with its effects:

Find ways of relaxing. You can find out more about relaxation techniques from your local stress or healthy living centre, from your GP or, from some of the organisations listed below. Your local library may have books or tapes about relaxation.

Allow yourself some breathing space. For example, try to take a break from caring – even if just for a couple of hours each week and treat yourself to something you enjoy.

Take up a physical activity like walking or swimming to help relieve tension.

Find someone you can talk to and use their support to talk through your feelings. Not everyone finds this easy but it may be a surprise to find that others feel the same way as you. Find a carers support group near you in the A-Z of Carers Services.

Try to pace yourself and tackle one thing at a time. Be realistic about what you expect of yourself. Learn to say “no” to other people, some of the time at least. Set aside time for yourself to do what you enjoy.



# Health and Well-being

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## Healthcare

Your GP (General Practitioner) and primary care team can provide you with invaluable support, advice and information.

As soon as you begin caring (or if you are already a carer, as soon as you can) tell your GP that you are a carer.

This can be recorded on your medical records. If they know you are a carer and likely to be under pressure at times, they will find it easier to offer the advice and support you need and if necessary diagnose and treat you in the future.

Carers of people with serious/chronic health conditions or who are frail can also qualify for an annual flu vaccination. Ask your GP or practice for more information.

Your GP may be able to help you as a carer by:

- Providing information and advice on medical conditions of and treatments for the person you care for to help you feel more confident in your caring role.
- Carrying out home visits to you or the person you care for if your caring responsibilities make it difficult to attend appointments at the surgery.
- Arranging appointments for both you and the person you care for at the same time to avoid having to visit the surgery twice.
- Arranging for repeat prescriptions to be delivered to your local pharmacy to save you picking them up.
- Putting you in touch with other sources of support and advice. This could include the social work department and local voluntary agencies.
- Providing information on services provided by the NHS such as continence services and patient transport to hospital appointments.
- Providing supporting letters and information to enable you and the person you care for to access benefits such as Attendance Allowance or for your local housing department or blue badge scheme.



# Health and Well-being

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- Remember to have regular check-ups and if you are ill, visit your GP
- Prescriptions for some illnesses are free. You can also get a prepayment certificate that saves you money if you need more than 3 items in 3 months or 14 items a year. Ask your pharmacist.

## Looking after you

Caring can be rewarding but it can also be very tiring, placing demands on your physical and emotional energy. As a carer you need to be as healthy as possible. It is easy when you are simply coping day to day and responding to the needs of others, to forget your own well-being. Speak to your GP or a member of NHS staff.

## Blood pressure

Many people living in the UK aren't aware they have high blood pressure. That's understandable because usually there are no symptoms. But, if left untreated, the condition can lead to heart problems, strokes and damage to other vital organs. The good news is that blood pressure can normally be lowered by making lifestyle changes such as losing weight and exercising.

## Diabetes

In total, over 2 million people in the UK are diagnosed as having diabetes, however it is suspected there are another half a million people in the UK who have the condition but aren't aware of it. Some people are more at risk than others. If you're over 40, have a history of diabetes within your family, are overweight or don't do much exercise you may be at an increased risk.

## Cholesterol and Heart health

Heart disease is a huge problem in the UK with millions of us at risk of developing it within the next 10 years. But the good news is that there's a lot you can do to look after your heart and cut the risk of a heart attack or heart disease.



# Health and Well-being

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## Eye tests

As you get older, it becomes even more important to have regular eye tests. A regular eye test is a vital health check for your eyes. Conditions like glaucoma, cataracts, diabetes and age-related conditions can seriously affect your vision. They often develop slowly which means they can remain undetected until more serious damage has been done. But if detected early enough, most conditions can be successfully treated.

## Managing medicines

Managing someone else's medication for them is a big responsibility and many carers can feel worried or afraid. However there is plenty of help out there to support you and make sure it's done properly.

The way someone takes prescribed medicines can make a big difference to their effectiveness. It's easy to make mistakes without even realising it.

Understanding how and when to take medicines, and how to control any side effects, is important.

Your pharmacist can be a big help and many pharmacies offer services to help you manage the medicines. Speak to your pharmacist about how they can help with marking medicines so they state days and times to make taking medication easier. Chemists are trained professionals qualified to advise on all aspects of medication. Your local pharmacy may be help you in caring by:

- Giving you advice and information on your own health or medical concerns.
- Arranging to collect repeat prescriptions for the person you care for from your GP surgery. You would only need to make a visit to the pharmacy, without needing to first visit the surgery.
- Giving you advice on the side effects of medicine, the best time to take them and how they should be stored.
- Providing a delivery service to have your prescription delivered to your door.

## Sleep well

Carers can often find it difficult to have a good night's sleep. You may be looking after someone who needs care during the night or you may have too much on your mind to relax.



# Health and Well-being

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It is important to find out the reasons behind a lack of sleep and to try and find ways around the problem. Lack of exercise, an unhealthy diet, stress and depression can be factors in an inability to sleep.

The tips below may help with sleeping problems but, if sleeplessness becomes intolerable, a visit to your GP may help.

1. Try to keep a regular pattern of going to bed and rising at the same time every day, even if you are not tired.
2. Ensure that your bedroom is comfortable – not too hot, cold or noisy.
3. Ensure that your bed is supportive. It should be not be so firm that your hips and shoulders are under pressure or so soft that your body sags. You should try to replace your bed every 10 years so that it maintains maximum support and comfort.
4. Try and take some regular exercise. This may help you cope with worries and stress, which may be contributing to your lack of sleep.
5. Try to cut down on tea and coffee in the evening.
6. Try not to eat or drink a lot late at night. Try to have your evening meal earlier.
7. As a carer, you may find it difficult to unwind properly and get a good night's sleep. Try and take some time to relax properly before going to bed – a warm bath may help. There are many different relaxation techniques. You could try tapes and books available in your local library or you could join a class.
8. If you cannot sleep, try not to lay in bed worrying. Get up and do something you find relaxing like reading, watching TV or listening to quiet music. After a while you may feel tired enough to go to bed again.
9. If your sleep is disturbed – for example, if you are having to get up during the night to help the person you care for go to the toilet or to turn them to prevent sores, you may be entitled to extra support during the night from your local authority, to allow you to get a break.



# Helping you as a carer



# Helping you as a carer

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## Occupational Therapists

An occupational therapist can help you adapt to changes in your everyday life and to overcome practical problems. They do this by:

- providing advice
- looking at ways an everyday task can be done differently
- recommending alterations or changes to your home
- referring you on to other services that can help - for example, speech and language therapy
- helping you to address work-related issues

Occupational therapists have specialist knowledge and can advise you on disability equipment, housing adaptations and adaptations to the workplace.

There is a range of gadgets, equipment and services which are designed to help you and the person you care for manage everyday life more easily.

## Equipment

Ask your GP, district nurse or social work department to advise on lifting, turning or moving aids to assist you. These could include:

- Lifting equipment such as a hoist to move the person you care for from their bed to a chair.
- Mobility aids to help the person you care for move around the house more easily without your assistance.
- Bath aids such as a motorised bath seat that raises and lowers the person you care for in and out of the bath or, a walk-in shower suitable for wheelchairs.
- Grab rails beside the bed or toilet to help the person you care for stand or pull themselves up.
- Organisations like Carers in Bedfordshire provide free training to support you with moving and handling and looking after yourself. Find out more in the A-Z of Carers Services.



# Helping you as a carer

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## How much will it cost?

Any equipment, which the Social Services department can loan you to help around the home, is available free of charge. However, our supplies are limited, and for some equipment for example, bathing equipment, lifting equipment or high chairs, there is a waiting list.

Should you wish to purchase your own equipment, the Social Services department will still be able to offer you advice as to which particular pieces of equipment suit your needs. You can try out a range of equipment and get support to find what is right for you from the Disability Resource Centre. Please see the A-Z of Carers Services section for more information.

Professional advice from an Occupational Therapist can help you avoid costly mistakes to your pocket and your health.

Some equipment, such as wheelchairs can be obtained on loan from the British Red Cross. To find out more, including the possibility of home delivery, please contact the Red Cross Central Distribution Centre at Harlow on 0844 412 2772.

## Continence care and laundry services

Bedfordshire Continence Service provides advice, support and treatment for people with bladder and bowel problems. You can be referred for an assessment by your GP or any other health professional or social worker from whom you or the person you care for may be receiving support.

Continence advisors are trained nurses who have undertaken specialist training in continence management and they can assess your continence problems and plan a treatment programme for you. Following assessment, your continence advisor may prescribe disposable incontinence pads for you, which will be delivered to your home.

Children can be referred to the service by a health professional from the age of four years.



# Helping you as a carer

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## TeleCare and assistive technology

TeleCare is a technology-based system that can help provide peace of mind and independence for carers and the people they are caring for.

The Telecare Service is provided by Aragon Housing Association in partnership with Central Bedfordshire and Bedford Borough Council Social Services, Bedfordshire Primary Care Trust, Tunstall Group and North Herts Careline. The objective is to enable vulnerable older people to be cared for in their own homes for longer. The Telecare Service is also known as Assistive Technology; the use of which has many benefits.

The Telecare Service can often delay the move into residential care as well as providing support to people returning from hospital – in some cases leading to an earlier discharge date.

Contact the Aragon Telecare Team on 01525 862461. Referrals are welcome from social workers, health professionals and many other agencies including families, carers and self-referrals.

The Telecare Team has three dedicated officers who are individually responsible for north, mid and south Bedfordshire.

Once we have received a referral, a Telecare officer will arrange an appointment to visit you at home to carry out an assessment. It is often helpful if you as a carer are present at the time of the visit. The assessment ensures that the appropriate equipment can be identified to best support your individual needs. The Telecare officer will discuss their recommendation with you and those present, and with agreement they will arrange for this to be installed.

## Alarms

Personal alarms enable the person you are looking after to remain at home and stay independent. Alarms differ from TeleCare as they are not connected to any outside call centre or agency but enable you and the person you look after to stay in touch and have peace of mind.

## Meals on wheels

A meals on wheels service for the person you are looking after can have a knock-on benefit for the carer by allowing you more time to concentrate on other areas of their care.

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# Helping you as a carer

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## Adapting your home and Disabled Facilities Grants

Major adaptations to the home to deal with a disability might include installing a wheelchair ramp, widening doors, fitting a stair lift or installing a major hoist system. Disabled Facilities Grants are made by the housing departments of local authorities to pay for the work.

## What you can use it for

A grant can be used for adaptations to give you better freedom of movement into and around your home and/or to provide essential facilities within it.

If you are disabled, acceptable types of work include:

- widening doors and installing ramps
- providing or improving access to rooms and facilities - for example, by installing a stair lift or providing a downstairs bathroom
- improving or providing a heating system which is suitable for your needs
- adapting heating or lighting controls to make them easier to use
- improving access to and movement around the home to enable you to care for another person who lives in the property, such as a child

Initially the cared for will need an assessment by an Occupational Therapist to determine their individual needs. Occupational Therapists work with people who have a physical impairment, medical condition, a mental health problem or a learning disability. They help people who have difficulties with practical everyday tasks.

The aim of occupational therapy is to enable the person you care for to live as independently as possible - at home, in employment or in education. Occupational therapists work in health and social care and work closely with health, housing and educational services.

## Maximum grant amount

The maximum amount of grant that a council is required to pay is £30,000 in England per application less any assessed contribution from you. If the cost of the eligible works is more, the council can use discretionary powers to increase the amount.

## Effect on other benefits

A Disabled Facilities Grant will not affect any benefits you are currently receiving.

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# Getting around



# Getting around

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## Blue Badge

The Blue Badge Scheme provides a national arrangement of parking concessions for people with severe walking difficulties who travel either as drivers or passengers. The scheme also applies to registered blind people, and people with severe upper limb disabilities who regularly drive a vehicle but cannot turn a steering wheel by hand. It allows badge holders to park close to their destination and the national concessions apply only to on-street parking. Details are set out in the 'Where to park' section below. In addition, other concessions may be available to badge holders - see the 'Other concessions for badge holders' section below.

New applicants should be aware that the application process can take six to eight weeks to complete. Renewal applicants, if eligible for a renewed badge should receive their new badge approximately one week before the expiry date of your current badge.

You can apply for a blue badge if the person you care for:

- receives the higher rate of the mobility component of the Disability Living allowance
- receives a War Pensioners' Mobility Supplement
- uses a motor vehicle supplied for disabled people by a Government Health Department
- is registered blind
- has a severe disability in both upper limbs, regularly drive a motor vehicle but cannot turn the steering wheel of a motor vehicle by hand even if that wheel is fitted with a turning knob
- has a permanent and substantial disability which means you are unable to walk or have very considerable difficulty in walking. In this case you may be asked to answer series of questions to help the local authority determine whether you are eligible for a badge People with a psychological disorder will not normally qualify unless their impairment causes very considerable, and not intermittent, difficulty in walking.

Note: Children under two years of age do not qualify for a badge because they would not normally be expected to be able to walk independently. Organisations caring for disabled people meeting one or more of the above criteria may be able to get a badge, but this is entirely at the local authorities' discretion and the conditions for using such badges must be strictly observed - see point 3 in section 80.



# Getting around

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For more information on how to obtain a blue badge contact:

## Central Bedfordshire Council

Telephone: 0300 300 800

Website: [www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/health-and-social-care/disabilities/parking\\_permits/default.aspx](http://www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/health-and-social-care/disabilities/parking_permits/default.aspx)

Or you can download the blue badge application form and covering letter from the website and return the completed form (with the requested enclosures) to:

Car Badges

Customer Finance

Central Bedfordshire Council, Technology House,  
239 Ampthill Road, Bedford, MK42 9BD

## Bedford Borough Council

Telephone: 01234 718009

Website: [www.bedford.gov.uk/transport\\_and\\_streets/parking/disabled\\_people\\_-\\_parking\\_bays.aspx](http://www.bedford.gov.uk/transport_and_streets/parking/disabled_people_-_parking_bays.aspx)

Or you can download the blue badge application form from the website and return it to:

Customer Services

Car Badges, Borough Hall, Cauldwell Street,  
Bedford, MK42 9AP

Or you can email: [blue.badges@bedford.gov.uk](mailto:blue.badges@bedford.gov.uk)

## Disabled parking bays

If you are disabled and wish to have a disabled bay marked on the road outside your house, then you need to make an application to Central Bedfordshire Council via the Highways Helpdesk. We will record the request, issue a report number and forward the request to Highways engineers who will make an assessment.

If you live in the Bedford Borough area then please contact the Bedford Borough Council Highways Helpdesk on 01234 228661 or email [highways.helpdesk@bedford.gov.uk](mailto:highways.helpdesk@bedford.gov.uk). Your call will be logged and an application form sent out, once this has been completed the Highways Assessment Manager will make an assessment.



# Getting around

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## Door to door services

Schemes provide a door to door service for those people who are unable to use ordinary public transport, because of a temporary or permanent disability. Vehicles used on the service are constructed for ease of access, even if you use a wheelchair. Drivers can escort your cared for to the door but cannot normally transfer them from their wheelchair.

## Bedford Borough

Door to Door:	01234 345327
Mid Beds Link a Ride:	01525 840511
South Beds Dial a Ride:	01525 222331

## Central Bedfordshire

Mid Beds Link a Ride:	01525 840511
South Beds Dial a Ride:	01525 222331
Buzzer Buses Dial a ride:	01525 853566

## Lister Hospital Health Shuttle: 01438 726219

Covers Arlesey, Clifton, Stotfold, Henlow, Shefford, Stondon and Shillington.

Available to any patient, visitor, or member of staff travelling to Lister Hospital, Monday-Fridays. Renal dialysis patients can have this service on Saturdays and possibly from other areas, £4.00 single fare to driver or at health shuttle desk. Patients on low income may be able to claim this back from cash office. Door to door journeys.

Villages with **Village care schemes** may be able to access one off transport.

To find out more information please contact Bedfordshire Rural Communities Charity on:

**Telephone:** 01234 832648 or see the A-Z of Carers Services section.



# Planning for an emergency



# Planning for an emergency

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You may be worried about what will happen to the person you care for if you are involved in an accident or crisis that prevents you continuing in your caring role. Here are some useful tips to help you plan in case of an emergency.

1. Find out about emergency help in your area. Help available might include:

- Emergency social work duty team
- Emergency respite and sitting services
- Community alarms / “panic buttons”

## Consider:

- What would you do if you were taken ill or injured?
- Who could support your relative, friend or neighbour if you were recovering from an illness, accident or operation?
- Is there someone who can put into action any pre-planned support arrangement you made for an emergency (e.g. Adult Social Care, NHS, a voluntary organisation)?

2. If you are relying on family and friends to help out in an emergency make sure you discuss with them in advance what’s involved in caring. Let them have details about the person you care for. Being prepared will mean they are more confident about helping out and you will have peace of mind of knowing they can cope. Include details such as:

- Medication
- Contact number for emergency social work duty team
- The person’s disability, illness or condition
- The person’s likes and dislikes
- Any other people involved in their care, for example; day centre’s, care agencies etc.

3. If you need professional help to draw up an emergency plan contact social services and ask for a carers assessment. Carers have a legal right to an assessment and it should cover planning for emergencies.



# Planning for an emergency

4. Make a list of useful phone numbers. Keep copies by the phone and in your purse / wallet. If you use a mobile make sure the numbers are programmed into your phone. Include:

- local social services emergency duty team.
- out of hours GP service
- numbers for day centre's and or other services attended by the person you care for.
- relative, friend or neighbour who knows about the person you care for.

## Central Bedfordshire Carers Card

The Central Bedfordshire Carers Emergency Card enables you to record what you would like to happen in case of an emergency. The small card can easily be stored in your purse/wallet, bag and in the Lifeline tub in your fridge. When people find the card they will know who to contact.

To obtain your card call 0300 300 8036.

## Carers Assessment

The carers assessment is also a way of thinking through what you and the person you care for would like to happen in an emergency and recording a plan that can be accessed 24 hours a day 7 days a week to give you piece of mind.

You can call the Central Bedfordshire Carers Helpline on 0300 300 80 36 or Bedford Borough Council on 01234 267422 to request an assessment of your needs as a carer including discussing an emergency plan. Outside of office hours, calls will be answered by our Emergency Duty Team.

## South East Partnership Trust Carers Card

Providing partnership services in Bedfordshire, Essex and Luton. Out of hours please call 0300 123 0808

## Other useful contact details:

- |                                 |               |
|---------------------------------|---------------|
| * Addenbrooke's Hospital:       | 01223 217 118 |
| * Bedford Hospital:             | 01234 355 122 |
| * Lister Hospital:              | 01438 314 333 |
| * Luton and Dunstable Hospital: | 01582 582 313 |
| * NHS Direct:                   | 0845 4647     |



# Planning for the future



# Planning for the future

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## Wills

Your local Citizens Advice Bureau (please see Benefits and Allowance Services) can put you in touch with solicitors specialising in the making of wills, and you should make sure that the person you care for has made a will. If there is a will, then the likelihood of family disputes and difficult situations arising later is greatly reduced. It can also save you expensive legal bills. Consult a solicitor if you are concerned about any legal matters.

## Power of Attorney

A General Power of Attorney is when someone is nominated to handle the affairs of the person you care for and ends when the person becomes mentally incapable. It is renewable annually. An Enduring Power of Attorney stays effective until death unless specifically revoked.

It is no longer possible to appoint an Enduring Power of Attorney but any made before 1 October 2007 remain valid. It must be registered at the Office of the Public Guardian when the donor becomes mentally incapable but maybe used before this under the donor's own supervision.

From the 1 October 2007 you will need to complete a Lasting Power of Attorney either for:

- Finance and property
- Personal health and welfare

Forms for both types are currently available from the website of the Office of the Public Guardian ([www.publicguardian.gov.uk](http://www.publicguardian.gov.uk)) together with guidance notes and booklets.

At the time the Lasting Power of Attorney is made, a certificate is required confirming that the donor:

- Has mental capacity
- Is not under duress
- Understands the nature and purpose of the document

Certain professionals may act as certificate provider or otherwise someone who has known the donor for at least two years. The Lasting Power of Attorney must be registered with the Office of the Public Guardian before it can be used, whether the donor retains capacity or not.

There will be a searchable register of Lasting Power of Attorney's available.

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# Planning for the future

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## Court of Protection

The Court of Protection takes decisions concerning the financial affairs of people who do not have the mental capacity to do this for themselves.

One way it does this is to appoint deputies who carry out the specific action. Permission is required for all major decisions until the individual loses capacity when management of their financial affairs generally will be granted.

The Court of Protection is only used when a person becomes mentally incapable and has not previously assigned someone to act on his/her behalf. The Public Guardian oversees supervision of deputies appointed by the Court of Protection. It also deals with registration of Enduring Power of Attorney's and Lasting Power of Attorney's.

## Living Wills

Living Wills at present only have power in Common Law but many of the wishes expressed can be taken into account by medical staff if you or the person you care for becomes incapable of making decisions or making sure your wishes are known.

From 1st October 2007 you will be able to complete a Lasting Power of Attorney for this which will override any prior Living Will provided the relevant section of Lasting Power of Attorney is completed. A Living Will completed after a Lasting Power of Attorney should be followed by the attorney.



# Having your say



# Having your say

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## Making comments, compliments or complaints about your Local Authority

You can telephone or write to the manager of the service you are giving feedback about or contact Customer Relations. If you require translation, interpretation or help to make a complaint the Local Authority can arrange this for you.

### Bedford Borough

Telephone: 01234 228597 or 01234 228992

Text: 07795 686459

Fax: 01234 228772

Email: [be.heard@bedford.gov.uk](mailto:be.heard@bedford.gov.uk)

Website: [www.bedford.gov.uk](http://www.bedford.gov.uk)

### Central Bedfordshire

Telephone: 0300 300 6077 or 033 300 4995

Email: [customer.relations@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:customer.relations@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk)

Website: [www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk](http://www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk)

Write to: Customer Relations  
Central Bedfordshire Council  
PO Box 1395  
Bedford  
MK42 5AN

We want to give you the best service we can. To do this we need your help. Please give us as many details as you can about your feedback. If possible these should include: the name of the person you spoke to and the date, what the complaint/comment/compliment is and what you would like us to do in response.

If your complaint is not resolved to your satisfaction you can take the complaint to the Local Government Ombudsman. This is an independent body who can investigate complaints about the Council. You can contact them on 0300 061 0614 or 0845 602 1983. You can write to the Local Government Ombudsman at PO Box 4771, Coventry, CV4 0EH. An online complaint form is also available at [www.lgo.org.uk](http://www.lgo.org.uk)



# Having your say

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## Carers Partnership Boards

Bedford Borough Council and Central Bedfordshire Council both have Partnership Boards that make strategic decisions about support for carers in your area. One of the aims of the Partnership Board is to ensure that the views of Carers are heard, acted on and that feedback is given. If you would like to be a part of the Carers Partnership Board or would like more information please contact:

### Bedford Borough

Telephone: 01234 276249

Email: [gemma.halfpenny@bedford.gov.uk](mailto:gemma.halfpenny@bedford.gov.uk)

### Central Bedfordshire

Telephone: 0300 300 8036

Email: [carers@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:carers@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk)

## Carers Forums

Bedford Borough Council have a Service User and Carer Action Group and in Central Bedfordshire there is a Carers Forum that brings together carers as expert care partners to monitor services and develop new initiatives. If you are interested in joining either of the groups please contact the relevant local authority.

### Bedford Borough

Telephone: 01234 228835

Email: [carole.johnstone@bedford.gov.uk](mailto:carole.johnstone@bedford.gov.uk)

### Central Bedfordshire

Telephone: 0300 300 8036

Email: [carers@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:carers@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk)

## Local Involvement Network (LINK) / Local HealthWatch

LINKs are an independent network of individuals, groups and communities who work together to improve local health and social care services.

In April 2012, LINKs will be replaced by local Healthwatch organisations.



# Having your say

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## Bedford LINK

Bedford LINK is one of over 100 similar networks operating throughout the country. It is an independent organisation made up of local individuals and groups in the Borough of Bedford.

The aim of LINK is to find out what people want from their health and social care service and then work with the providers of these services to bring about positive change.

Bedford LINK is much more than just a talking shop. It has powers to help bring about such change. Bedford LINK will report to the highest level locally.

**Telephone:** 01234 360510  
**Email:** [enquiries@bedfordlink.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@bedfordlink.org.uk)  
**Address:** Bedford LINK  
c/o Age Concern Bedford  
78-82 Bromham Road  
Bedford  
MK40 2QH

## (Central) Bedfordshire LINK

**Telephone:** 01582 733418  
**Email:** [beds-links@valuton.org.uk](mailto:beds-links@valuton.org.uk)  
**Address:** Voluntary Action Luton  
5 New Bedford Road  
Luton  
LU1 1SA

## PALS - Patient Advice and Liaison Service

**Telephone:** 01234 897211  
**Email:** [PALS@bedfordshire.nhs.uk](mailto:PALS@bedfordshire.nhs.uk)  
**Website:** [www.bedfordshire.nhs.uk](http://www.bedfordshire.nhs.uk)  
**Write to:** Patient advice and liaison service  
NHS Bedfordshire  
Gilbert Hitchcock House  
21 Kimbolton Road  
Bedford  
MK40 2AW

### Description:

The Patient Advice and Liaison Service focuses on improving NHS services for patients.

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# Having your say

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The service aims to:

- Advise and support patients, their families and carers
- Provide information on NHS services
- Listen to your concerns, suggestions or queries
- Help sort out problems on your behalf
- Provide information and advice on the NHS complaints procedure

Local carers organisations can advocate on your behalf as a carer.  
For more information, please see the A-Z of Carers Services.



# Top tips by carers for carers



# Top tips by carers for carers

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Disclaimer: the inclusion of a tip does not mean endorsement from Central Bedfordshire Council, Bedford Borough Council or NHS Bedfordshire.

- It's ok to ask for help – don't assume it will be offered
- Get help with form filling from a local Carers organisation or Citizens Advice Bureau
- Ask for a carers assessment that could help you take a break from your caring role
- Ask Carers in Bedfordshire about NHS Carers Breaks
- Ask Central Bedfordshire or Bedford Borough Council to see if TeleCare or Assistive Technology could be given to you to help in your caring role
- If you are a tenant of Aragon Housing, speak to their Tenant Liaison Officer who can put you in touch with their specialist services such as the Benefits Advisor
- If you are a tenant of Bedfordshire Pilgrims Housing Association (BPHA) there is a variety of services and information available to you, including money advice, cost-effective insurance, community development activities, and advice about rent. This information can be found on the BPHA website at: <http://www.bpha.org.uk/CUSTOMERSERVICES/Pages/default.aspx> or by calling Tel: 01234 791000 or email: [info@bpha.org.uk](mailto:info@bpha.org.uk)



# Top tips by carers for carers

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## **BPHA also run a CARELINK scheme.**

Carelink provides users with a direct link to help at the push of a button.

The button can be worn as a pendant or on your wrist like a watch. It works through a special link attached to your phone, which connects to BPHA's Carelink Control Centre when the button is pushed.

If you would like BPHA to come and demonstrate the system in your home free of charge and with no obligation to take up the service, please contact:

**Telephone:** 01234 716 420.

- Speak to the Occupational Therapy Team at Bedford Borough Council or Central Bedfordshire Council or the Disability Resource Centre
- Go on a 'moving and handling' course
- When moving a person on a bed, use a draw sheet with a slider sheet or a large piece of polythene underneath. You can then slide the person across, up and down the mattress using the draw sheet – but remember not to leave the polythene under the person
- To turn somebody in a car seat, use 2 carrier bags – it's cheaper than a swivel cushion
- If the person you care for uses a bottle at night, keep it in a bucket by the bed to avoid spillage
- Insulated mugs with lids are helpful for people who are unsteady on their feet
- Put on embolism socks by placing a carrier bag over the leg, put the sock on and then pull the bag through the hole in the bottom
- Join Carers UK on Facebook or Twitter (or speak to carer who uses a computer) and find out about top attractions in the UK where carers go free



# Top tips by carers for carers

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- Get as much information as possible about the condition of the person you care for and join a related group (e.g. Stroke Club) so you don't feel isolated and can speak to people who have experience
- Be kind to yourself – you have the right to some time for you! Try and get out by yourself each day – even if it's just 5 minutes
- Remember you can't do the impossible
- It's ok to go and scream in a cupboard
- Tell your GP you are a carer and ask to be put on the list for a flu-jab
- Ask for a benefits check from the Welfare Rights Service
- Prescriptions for some illnesses are free. You can also get a prepayment certificate that saves you money if you need more than 3 items in 3 months or 14 items a year. Ask your pharmacist
- If you care for someone with a Mental Health condition you may be entitled to a reduction in Council Tax
- If you convert a room for special use for the person you care for you may be entitled to a reduction in Council Tax
- Take photocopies of any information you send away. You can use a photocopier in your local library.



# Appendix 1

## A guide to choosing psychological therapies in NHS Bedfordshire



# A guide to choosing psychological therapies in NHS Bedfordshire

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This booklet is for anyone who is depressed, anxious, unhappy, or has emotional problems they cannot sort out on their own.

It tells you about NHS psychological therapies that are available in Bedfordshire.

It explains what they are and what they aim to do and will help you ask the right questions and make the right choices for you.

The information in this booklet is based on the best research evidence, Department of Health guidelines and recommendations from the National Institute for Clinical Excellence (NICE), for more information visit [www.nice.org.uk](http://www.nice.org.uk)

## What are psychological therapies and can they help me?

Psychological therapies usually involve talking and listening. Most of us want to talk to someone who listens and accepts us, especially when we're going through a bad time.

Sometimes it's easier to talk to a stranger than to relatives or friends. Some therapists will focus on things in your past that cause difficult feelings and help you understand and deal with them.

Some will help you identify unhelpful thoughts and patterns of behaviour that cause and maintain current difficulties.

All therapists aim to help you find better ways of coping. They are trained to listen attentively and help you find your own answers, without judging you.

People go for psychological therapies for a range of reasons:

- Maybe someone has died or left
- You may be depressed or feel isolated
- You may not be able to sleep
- You may have anxiety or panic attacks
- Or you may simply be trying to understand yourself better



# A guide to choosing psychological therapies in NHS Bedfordshire

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## What is the best solution for you?

You may find a counsellor or therapist can help you through a crisis or difficult patch in your life. Or you may find it more helpful to talk after the crisis has passed, to think about what happened and why.

Some people find psychological therapies enable them to find new, more helpful ways of thinking and behaving, in order to overcome problems such as depression or anxiety.

Psychological therapies can help you stay well, or help you notice when you are under pressure. They are most likely to help if you want to explore and change your feelings, thoughts and behaviour.

They do not offer magic solutions. You may find them hard work and progress can be slow or painful. It may not be the right time for you to talk, or talking about things may make you feel worse at first.

What you feel able to cope with is important and this can change over time.

There are many kinds of psychological therapies and they can overlap (see Different Approaches). Therapists have different types of training, so their approaches and ways of working will vary.

How well you get on with your therapist can influence how much you get out of a particular type of therapy. You need to feel you can trust and respect your therapist for therapy to work for you.

In Bedfordshire there are therapists and counsellors from different ethnic backgrounds who reflect the cultural diversity of the area. Your GP can ask for your preferences to be taken into account when arranging your treatment.

Therapies are also available from voluntary organisations, some of which are run by and for people from minority ethnic communities, women's organisations and groups for people with specific issues.



# A guide to choosing psychological therapies in NHS Bedfordshire

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## Who are these therapies for?

Psychological therapies are for all sorts of people. They can help whatever your background, age or ethnic group.

If you see your GP for an emotional or mental health problem, you may be given drugs such as anti-depressants to help with your symptoms. You may be offered a self-help programme, supported by a psychological well-being graduate worker, who can tell you about other types of psychological therapy.

Your GP can also refer you directly to a range of psychological therapy services available on the NHS in Bedfordshire. You can ask your GP to refer you, regardless of any diagnosis you have been given or any medication you are on. Tell your GP if you want therapy instead of drugs, or if you want to try a combination of drugs and psychological therapy.

Most therapists will be happy to work with you while you are on medication. There is no reason why the two should not be used together. Research shows drugs and therapy work better together than either on its own for people with moderate to severe depression.

In an ideal world, everyone who sees a GP because they are in emotional or psychological distress should be offered some form of therapy. But some people feel it is a sign of weakness to go for this type of help. Seeing a therapist doesn't mean you are self-indulgent or going mad. Don't let these sorts of prejudices stop you. You are actually being strong if you are prepared to look at yourself and your situation.

## How and where can I get therapy on the NHS in Bedfordshire

Psychological therapies are available free on the NHS at your GP surgery or clinic, at NHS Bedfordshire hospitals, or in the local community or health centres.

There will often be a waiting list, as NHS therapists can be in short supply. Seeing your GP is the first step. He/she can refer when appropriate to a primary care counsellor, cognitive behavioural psychotherapist, or clinical psychologist.

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# A guide to choosing psychological therapies in NHS Bedfordshire

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In Bedfordshire you will be offered the type of psychological therapy recommended for your problem by NICE, which issues guidelines about best practice.

If you are put on a waiting list, you can call to check if you are moving up it. If you have a long wait, you may want to think about other options.

Your GP could refer you to a local voluntary organisation for counselling, or you could approach them yourself.

## Psychological therapies outside the NHS

There are many voluntary organisations providing low-cost or free counselling services. They may ask for a donation, according to your means, but no-one is turned away if they cannot pay.

Some organisations, such as Triumph over Phobia, focus on a specific problem or some organisations see specific groups of people, such as the Asian Counselling Service. Others help with a wide range of difficulties, such as Mind (see Professional Organisations at the back of this booklet).

Many therapists work privately. They can be expensive, but may base their fees on your income. Ask about this and talk to several therapists before deciding who is right for you. Make sure they are members of a professional body, such as the British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy, or British Association for Behavioural and Cognitive Psychotherapy (see Professional Organisations at the back of this booklet).

## Other sources of help

If you can't get psychological therapy, or feel it's not right for you, other types of help or support are available. GPs can prescribe self-help books for mental health problems that you can borrow confidentially from the library

[www.galaxy.bedfordshire.gov.uk/webingres/bedfordshire/vlib/0.books\\_reading/books\\_on\\_prescription\\_home.htm](http://www.galaxy.bedfordshire.gov.uk/webingres/bedfordshire/vlib/0.books_reading/books_on_prescription_home.htm)

Some voluntary organisations in Bedfordshire run support groups and selfhelp networks where you can meet people who have similar experiences.

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# A guide to choosing psychological therapies in NHS Bedfordshire

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Supported physical exercise programmes have also been effective in reducing symptoms of depression and anxiety and your GP may be able to refer you to a local gym or leisure centre.

The GP Exercise Referral Scheme supports people with conditions for which there is evidence to suggest that a structured exercise/ physical activity and education programme is effective. One of the criteria is mild to moderate anxiety and depression. Programmes offer a range of guided physical activity and behaviour change interventions which are designed for, and agreed with, the individual. Clients meeting the criteria are referred by their GP to participating centres for a maximum of two sessions a week for up to 12 weeks i.e. a total of 24 sessions. A nominal charge is made to attend and there is normally an extended period of subsidised use of the leisure centre.

Many people find relaxation and breathing exercises using self-help tapes helpful. There is little reliable evidence for the long-term effectiveness of alternative therapies, such as hypnotherapy or acupuncture, but some people feel they benefit from them.

## Different approaches

There are a number of different sorts of psychological and interventions therapies, but the most common in Bedfordshire are counselling and cognitive behavioural therapy. As well as having different training, therapists develop their own individual styles of working. Some will use a mixture of approaches, others will specialise in one kind of therapy.

If you are unsure about a therapist's background, or the approach they use, don't be afraid to ask them. If they use any words you don't understand, ask them to explain in plain language. Don't feel stupid, as all therapists have to give a clear explanation of their therapy to every client at the first session.

Below we describe the main types of therapies provided by the NHS in Bedfordshire and the problems they can help. If research shows a particular therapy works for your problem, you will be offered that type first. But your GP should bear in mind what approach appeals to you most when referring you for therapy.



# A guide to choosing psychological therapies in NHS Bedfordshire

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What matters most for all types of therapy seems to be your relationship with the therapist. If you feel you can trust and work well with him/her, it is more likely to help you.

If you don't want the therapy offered, or you try it and it doesn't help, or you don't feel comfortable with the therapist, your GP should try to find you an alternative.

For many people short-term or medium-term help is enough to improve their problem and their ability to cope, but longer term therapy may be needed for complex problems.

## Psychological therapies in GP practices/clinics for common mental health problems

The term 'common mental health problems' means problems caused by anxiety or depression, which most of us will suffer to some degree at some time in our lives.

About 16% of the population at any one time may have anxiety and/or depression that affects their lives.

In Bedfordshire we offer easy and confidential access to psychological therapies for such problems in your GP surgery or clinic, so you don't have to attend a specialist mental health centre.

Your GP can refer you confidentially to the primary care based psychological well-being and therapy services, and one of the team will contact you quickly and discreetly. There are three main types of therapy - guided self-help for anxiety and depression, cognitive behavioural therapy and counselling.



# A guide to choosing psychological therapies in NHS Bedfordshire

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## Improving Access to Psychological Therapies (IAPT)

### Where do they work?

Five locality-based IAPT service teams operate in Bedfordshire in the Dunstable, Ivel Valley, Leighton Buzzard, West Mid Bedfordshire and Bedford areas.

IAPT interventions and treatments including self-help programme and CBT in each area are available Monday to Friday during office working hours with flexibility to arrange appointments between the hours of 8.00am and 7.00pm Monday to Friday to ensure access to the service.

### Self help programmes for anxiety and depression

If you suffer from depression, panic attacks or anxiety (excessive worry), your GP can offer you a confidential, guided self-help programmes for your problem through referral to IAPT (Improving Access to Psychological Therapies).

A psychological well-being practitioner attached to your GP surgery will contact you within a few days and offer you an appointment at the surgery for a confidential assessment.

He/she will show you a choice of programmes that you can use confidentially at home and offer you telephone support to help you with your treatment if you want it. Some people prefer to do without telephone support.

The support lasts from four to six weeks, depending on the programme, but the skills you learn can continue for life. Treatments include cognitive behavioural therapy programmes that have been tested and shown to be effective for these problems. Some of the treatments are delivered over the telephone, this is evidence based and means you carry it out at home and don't have to travel to weekly appointments.



# A guide to choosing psychological therapies in NHS Bedfordshire

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The packages are:

## For depression

- **Living life to the full** - a computer programme used on a home PC via the internet, or as a DVD to watch on your home TV.
- **Depression and low mood** - a workbook with structured treatment exercises.
- **Teenage depression and low mood** - a workbook with structured treatment exercises.
- **Postnatal Depression** - a workbook with structured treatment exercises.

## For generalised anxiety (excessive worry)

- **Overcoming anxiety** - a workbook with structured treatment exercises.

If you try one of these and find your problem has not improved as much as you would like, your primary care worker can easily refer you to another therapist for more intensive treatment.

## Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT)

‘Cognitive’ is a scientific term for thought or thinking. ‘Behavioural’ means the things we do, so the name means ‘thinking and doing therapy’.

CBT aims to help people change unhelpful patterns of thinking and behaviour that are causing or maintaining current problems.

Changing how you think about things, and what you do as a result, also changes how you feel. CBT focuses on the present and is a ‘doing’ and talking therapy. It involves planning practical exercises or experiments with your therapist and carrying these out together or as homework between sessions.

You may practise certain techniques and keep brief diaries of homework. It is a structured approach. You agree specific goals in overcoming your problems and work towards them step by step.

In Bedfordshire, CBT for common problems such as anxiety and depression is provided by qualified therapists. Your GP will refer you directly to a therapist accredited by the British Association for Behavioural and Cognitive Psychotherapy ([www.BABCP.com](http://www.BABCP.com)).

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# A guide to choosing psychological therapies in NHS Bedfordshire

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## What is it for?

CBT is an approach based on scientific research evidence. This means that the Bedfordshire CBT service will only offer treatment for problems that have been shown to improve with CBT in published research trials. The National Institute for Clinical Excellence has reviewed the research evidence and recommended CBT for the treatment of:

- Stress and Anxiety
- Bereavement
- Controlling Anger
- Depression
- Depression and Low Mood
- Obsession and Compulsions
- Panic
- Shyness and Social Anxiety
- Sleep Problems
- Stress

## Counselling

Counselling helps you look at problems you are facing now. It may focus on a specific problem like bereavement or post-natal depression, or on a decision, a crisis, or a relationship in which there may be conflict.

The aim is to help you find a greater sense of well-being. You are encouraged to talk about the feelings you have about yourself and the situation and the counsellor helps you find ways to tackle them.

Counsellors focus on patients' choices in life as a basis for their work. Counselling in Bedfordshire is usually short term. It may also help you to explore past problems that are still affecting your day-to-day life.

In Bedfordshire, GPs have primary care counsellors in their surgeries and can refer you directly. Longer-term counselling may be more like psychotherapy and is available through some voluntary organisations.



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## What is it for?

Counselling can help with ordinary problems of living and crises. It can help you stay well and prevent mental health problems. There is evidence that counselling can help people with the following problems:

- depression due to stressful life circumstances
- major life changes and crises including post-natal illness
- coping with illness and injury
- relationship issues
- family issues
- stress and trauma
- sexuality issues
- self image and identity issues
- unusual bereavement (e.g. death in traumatic circumstances, or death of a child or young person)
- emotional, physical and sexual abuse

The Department of Health (2001) suggests people who have difficulty adjusting to life, illness, disability or loss may benefit from counselling.

## Other therapies

Some therapy will be one-to-one – just you and the therapist. Group therapy tends to be for people with similar problems who may benefit from sharing experiences with others.

## What can I ask and expect from my therapist?

Therapists vary and different types can be better for some people or some problems than others.

In Bedfordshire, all NHS therapists are qualified and belong to a professional body (with a code of ethics and practice, complaints and disciplinary procedures).

A very small number will be in training or newly trained. The majority are fully qualified, accredited and experienced.



# A guide to choosing psychological therapies in NHS Bedfordshire

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You should ask therapists about their training and experience, but especially private therapists, as training courses can last anything from a week to several years.

It is important to check which professional body they belong to.

Your first one or two meetings should involve you and the therapist getting to know each other and deciding if you can work together.

You may not be offered a choice of who you see in the NHS, but you can still ask questions.

The more information you have about what to expect, the less likely you are to be disappointed.

## Possible questions for your therapist

- What kind of therapy do you offer and what is it trying to achieve?
- How long is a session and how often are they held?
- How long might therapy last and how does it end?
- How long before I should expect to feel some benefit from therapy?
- Can I contact you between sessions if I need to?
- What training have you had and how many years have you been practising?
- What professional organisation do you belong to?
- Have you had experience of working with people with similar problems to mine?
- Is therapy confidential and when might confidentiality being broken?
- In what circumstances might you refer me to another professional?
- (For non-NHS therapists) How much do I pay per session and is there a cancellation fee?

You may have different questions. Always ask if something is unclear.

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# A guide to choosing psychological therapies in NHS Bedfordshire

## NHS Bedfordshire Mental Health

From the 1 April 2010 the provider of these specialist mental health services is South Essex Partnership University NHS Foundation Trust (SEPT).

Website: [www.southessex-trust.nhs.uk](http://www.southessex-trust.nhs.uk)

They specialise in problems that require more intensive or longer term treatment.

Your GP can refer you directly to these services, which may be delivered in community mental health resource centres.

## Organisations providing psychological therapies commissioned by NHS Bedfordshire

### Mind

Bedfordshire and Luton Mind is the leading local mental health charity.

Telephone: 0845 766 0163

Website: [www.bedsandlutonmind.org.uk](http://www.bedsandlutonmind.org.uk)

### Horizon

Horizon Health Choices is committed to providing NHS patients with the best care possible.

Telephone: 01462 818700

Website: [www.horizonhealth.co.uk](http://www.horizonhealth.co.uk)

## Bedfordshire Community Health Services

NHS Bedfordshire.

Telephone: 01234 795714

Website: [www.bedfordshire.nhs.uk](http://www.bedfordshire.nhs.uk)

### SEPT

South Essex Partnership University NHS Foundation Trust (SEPT).

Telephone: 0300 123 0808

Website: [www.southessex-trust.nhs.uk](http://www.southessex-trust.nhs.uk)



# A guide to choosing psychological therapies in NHS Bedfordshire

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## Professional organisations

### British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy (BACP)

For lists of UK counsellors and psychotherapists

Telephone: 01788 578328

Website: [www.counselling.co.uk](http://www.counselling.co.uk)

### British Association for Behavioural and Cognitive Psychotherapies (BABCP)

For information on CBT and a list of trained CBT therapists

Telephone: 01254 875277

Website: [www.babcp.com](http://www.babcp.com)

### British Confederation of Psychotherapists (BCP)

For a list of trained psychotherapists

Telephone: 020 8830 5173

Website: [www.bcp.org.uk](http://www.bcp.org.uk)

### British Psychological Society (BPS)

For a directory of chartered psychologists and complaints about psychologists

Telephone: 0116 254 9568

Website: [www.bps.org.uk](http://www.bps.org.uk)

### General Medical Council (GMC)

For a register of doctors, complaints and disciplinary procedures

Telephone: 020 7580 7642

Website: [www.gmc-uk.org](http://www.gmc-uk.org)

### Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC)

For nurses' code of conduct, disciplinary procedures, complaints

Telephone: 020 7637 7181

Website: [www.nmc-uk.org](http://www.nmc-uk.org)

### UK Council of Psychotherapy (UKCP)

For information about psychotherapy and UK psychotherapists

Telephone: 020 7436 3002

Website: [www.psychotherapy.org.uk](http://www.psychotherapy.org.uk)

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# A guide to choosing psychological therapies in NHS Bedfordshire

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## Other sources of help

### NHS Direct

Telephone: 0845 46 47

Website: [www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk](http://www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk)

### NHS Choices

Website: [www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk)

### Samaritans

For confidential emotional support for people in crisis 24 hours a day

Telephone: 08457 909090

Website: [www.samaritans.org.uk](http://www.samaritans.org.uk)

### Mental Health Foundation

Telephone: 020 7535 7439

Website: [www.mentalhealth.org.uk](http://www.mentalhealth.org.uk)

### Health Services Ombudsman

For last resort complaints.

Telephone: 0345 015 4033 Or 020 7217 4051

Website: [www.ombudsman.org.uk](http://www.ombudsman.org.uk)

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NHS Bedfordshire  
Unit 2, Doolittle Mill  
Froghall Road  
Amphill  
Bedfordshire  
MK45 2NX

Telephone: 01525 636980

Website: [www.bedfordshire.nhs.uk](http://www.bedfordshire.nhs.uk)

Email: [enquiries@bedfordshire.nhs.uk](mailto:enquiries@bedfordshire.nhs.uk)

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## **Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)**

If you have any concerns or need advice about accessing NHS services, you can speak in confidence to the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) on 01234 897211.

This leaflet can be produced in large print, audio cassette, Braille and other languages on request.

NHS Bedfordshire  
Gilbert Hitchcock House,  
21 Kimbolton Road,  
Bedfordshire, MK40 2AW  
Tel: 01234 897200  
Email: [enquiries@bedfordshire.nhs.uk](mailto:enquiries@bedfordshire.nhs.uk)  
[www.bedfordshire.nhs.uk](http://www.bedfordshire.nhs.uk)

NHS Bedfordshire regards equality and diversity as integral to the way it works. Our staff will ensure that everyone is treated fairly and no one is discriminated against on the basis of their ethnicity, gender, disability, age, sexual orientation and religion or belief.

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