



# factsheet



[www.carersindevon.org.uk](http://www.carersindevon.org.uk)

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## **Carers (Equal Opportunities) Act 2004**      **Factsheet 600 - 12 Sept 2006 (2 pages)** **Helping carers to pursue leisure, education, training and work**

The Carers (Equal Opportunities) Act 2004 requires assessments offered to carers, to consider the needs of carers in relation to **leisure, education, training and work**. Not all carers will wish to pursue all of these opportunities but practitioners completing assessments with the carer should be able to sign post carers to other relevant agencies.

### **Leisure activities including sports and keep fit opportunities**

Most district council will provide facilities locally for sports and leisure activities. Preferential rates may be available to carers to join local programmes. In some areas the Local Carers Links, Healthy Living Centres or the local Primary Care Trust may run programmes that carers will find helpful.

### **Education and Learning for Life**

Adult Education programmes are often available at local community colleges, or colleges of Further Education. For point of contact see local library or telephone directory.

- Most communities across Devon will also be covered by the University of the Third Age which provides a range of activities and as well as study opportunities.

The government is keen to enable carers who so choose, to build on existing knowledge and skills to achieve a recognised National Vocational Qualification as a possible entry to employment in the caring field. Action for Carers and Employment is a national organisation offering advice and information to carers and has developed a City and Guilds' pre-vocational training course for carers.

- For carers interested in studying from home for national qualifications there are a range of organisations offering study and support packages.
- The **Elizabeth Nuffield Education Fund** provides grants to women studying to improve their employment prospects. Grants may be available to women on low income studying for first qualifications in higher education and contributions may be available for caring costs.
- The local **Council of Voluntary Service** will provide advice, guidance and give an indication of the range of opportunities locally for those interested in unpaid work, often a useful stepping stone for those returning to work. Details can be found on website or in local telephone directory.

### **Exploring training and work opportunities**

When a carer is exploring work opportunities and is without formal qualifications or has not been in the work place for a while, refresher course or preparation for work retaining programmes can often give confidence and help update and learn new skills for competing in the employment market.

- For some carers on state benefits enquiring about work or re-entering the job market, the first point of call will be Jobcentre Plus.
- **nextstep** (sometimes co-located with Jobcentre Plus) will offer phone information and face to face advice on learning, preparation to enter the employment, and advice on work to anyone aged 20 or over, irrespective of an upper age limit. Whether carers are offered a personal interview or assistance over the phone, will depend on the carers previous educational attainment. **nextstep** also have a range of information leaflets on their website or telephone the nextstep enquiry line 0845 850 5070.

### **For Young Carers**

Connexions Cornwall and Devon have specialist careers and advisory service helping all 13 – 19 year olds, and works along side **nextstep**, offering impartial advice and guidance on learning, training and work to those under 19 years.

### **Carers already in work**

With the advent of the Carers (Equal Opportunities) Act 2004 many organizations are reviewing their HR policies and strategies to ensure all workers are supported and valued. Many employers are now working towards flexible working practices.

Many carers of working age are already combining caring duties with full or part time work. Carers finding the conflicting roles of caring and work, may need to seek the support of their employer and might consider approaching either, their line manager, the employer or their Human Resource department if this exists. Alternatively carers may seek advice from one of the specialist carer help lines.

Working Carers who have had an individual carers assessment may also consider sharing this assessment with their line manager as a first step in exploring how caring responsibilities impact on work patterns, and thereby providing an opportunity to begin a meaningful dialogue on what might be done to assist both the employee and the employer.

The working and Families Act which comes into effect April 2007 gives carers the right to request flexible working.

### **Carers whose caring responsibilities have ended and wish to explore training or work**

Jobcentre Plus and **nextstep** will also offer advice and information to those seeking help when caring duties have come to an end. Carers Links will also be able to assist.

For any one seeking advice on benefits further information can be obtained by contacting Care Direct 0845 1551 007. Carers in Devon website also has useful links [www.carersindevon.org.uk](http://www.carersindevon.org.uk)

### **Have you read our Factsheet 601, *Carers Assessment?***

#### **Websites for Carers employment and training issues**

- Information plus contact tel. numbers about volunteering [www.do-it.org.uk](http://www.do-it.org.uk)
- **nextstep** national [www.nextstep.org.uk](http://www.nextstep.org.uk) or **nextstep** local [www.nextstep-cds.org.uk](http://www.nextstep-cds.org.uk)  
[www.jobcentreplus.gov.uk](http://www.jobcentreplus.gov.uk) see website for local tel. numbers
- Action for Carers and Employment <http://www.acecarers.org.uk> 0808 808 7777
- Online courses [www.learnirect.co.uk](http://www.learnirect.co.uk) 0800 100 900
- Learning Skills Council information on learning [www.worktrain.gov.uk](http://www.worktrain.gov.uk) see website for tel. no.
- <http://www.learning-for-living.co.uk> 'The Level 2 Certificate in Personal Development & Learning for Unpaid Carers 020 7294 8217
- Carers UK -A self -assessment tool for employers is available from the Employers for Carers [www.carersuk.org](http://www.carersuk.org) 0808 808 7777
- The Elizabeth Nuffield Education Fund [www.nuffieldfoundation.org](http://www.nuffieldfoundation.org) 020 7631 0566

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**Care Direct 0845 1551 007** or email: [ssenquiries@devon.gov.uk](mailto:ssenquiries@devon.gov.uk)

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