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**Where do I start and what are my options?**

I think it's really important, really important, first of all, to go and get some support. If you're going through this for the first time, it's all going to be new. Usually it's social services isn't it, is the first professional point of call, the local authority.

Everyone should be asking their local authority for an assessment, for social work to come round to interview the cared for as well as the carer.

I think it's important that you do have that carer assessment. Or you could also get some information from, particularly if the person you care for has any involvement with the local authority, say direct payments or something like that, you can talk to the social worker.

So one of the key resources that I've made use of is Carers UK's forum. It's free, all you have to do is sign up, and it allows you to access a network of other carers who can obviously give you suggestions. Create a network around you, whether that's your friends who constantly ask 'if you need a break, let us know, let us know’ that's them saying, 'we can help you’.

If you're doing it for the first time, see if you can have somebody there who knows more about the legalities for example, the paperwork, the questions, the meanings behind the questions, the buzzwords, the questions to ask because if you don't ask the right questions, you're not going to get the right information. And that might sound really simple, but until somebody says that to you, you don't think of it.

My mum has a mental health disorder, so getting her an assessment always is an uphill battle. Just persevere. That's all I can say, just persevere.

Transcript of the film *Carers’ breaks: Where do I start and what are my options?*

**carersuk.org/break**