



Carers (Scotland) Bill : Q & A for carers

What is the Carers Bill?

The Carers Bill is a Bill that was passed by the Scottish Parliament on 4 February 2016. It introduces new rights for carers and new duties for local councils and the NHS.

The Bill will become an Act later in 2016 and will be implemented in 2017. Until then current support for carers including [carer's assessment](#)¹ will still apply.

What will change under the new Bill?

Carer's assessments will be replaced by new assessments called **Adult Carer Support Plans** and **Young Carers Statements for carers under 18 years old**. These will be open to **all** carers and young carers who provide or intend to provide care. The person you care for does not have to be receiving community care services.

The Adult Carer Support Plan (ACSP) or Young Carers Statement (YCS) will identify your personal circumstances including how much care you provide, its impact on your wellbeing and day to day life and whether you are willing and able to provide care.

It must also support you to develop a plan for provision of care in the event of an [emergency](#)², for example, if you become ill and to look at plans for the future care of the person you care for (if you require this).

Which carers will receive support?

The ACSP and YCS will provide support to all carers. It will give carers who meet eligibility criteria a right to have their identified needs met.

Even if you do not meet eligibility criteria the local authority should help you access services such as information and advice and support from local carers centres. They will also have a power to offer you other support such as breaks from caring.

Will I be charged for any support I receive?

No. Carers cannot be charged for support identified in their ACSP or YCS. This includes replacement care to enable you to take a break from caring. The services the person you care for may still be chargeable, subject to a financial assessment.

Are there any special rules for carers of someone with a terminal illness?

The new Bill will introduce timescale for providing an ACSP and YCS to anyone caring for someone with a terminal illness.

¹ <http://www.carersuk.org/help-and-advice/practical-support/getting-care-and-support/carers-assessment>

² <http://www.carersuk.org/help-and-advice/practical-support/planning-for-emergencies>

Are there changes relating to health services?

Yes. For one thing, the NHS will be jointly responsible for developing a local carers strategy with local authorities. This will provide a lot of information about how they plan to deliver better support to carers, including support from health services.

Also, many carers have told us that they were not informed or involved in decisions about hospital discharge. The new Bill will introduce a new duty on the NHS to inform you and take account of your views in making decisions relating to their discharge from hospital.

What about information and advice?

The new Bill will introduce a duty on councils to ensure there is an information and advice service for carers in their area. These must provide information on a range of issues such as your rights, [benefits and finances](#)³, education and training, emergency and future planning, health and wellbeing and bereavement support services.

They will also provide carers with a copy of a Carers Charter which will be produced by the Scottish Government. This will ensure that you will have clear information on your rights under the Bill but also about other rights such as employment and housing.

What about involving carers?

The Carers Bill sets out that carers should be involved in planning and developing services in their area and in the development of the local carers strategy.

The Bill will also place a duty on councils and the NHS to involve you and take account of your views in determining the needs and services required for [the person you care for](#)⁴.

When will the change in the law come into place?

We don't know the exact date but have been advised that it is likely to be in April 2017.

Where can I find more information?

We have produced a briefing about the Carers (Scotland) Bill which gives more information. We will also produce information materials for carers in the lead up to the implementation of the Bill when it becomes an Act.

³ <http://www.carersuk.org/help-and-advice/financial-support>

⁴ <http://www.carersuk.org/help-and-advice/practical-support/getting-care-and-support/needs-assessment>