

**Subject:** The new Care Act - benefits for Carers not widely known

# The new Care Act- changes to know about



The new Care Act, which came into force on 1 April 2015, **gave carers rights on a par with the people they care for**, which includes an entitlement to an assessment of their own needs. Knowledge about its existence appears to be low, or that there are entitlements available to them.

*...promotional material from its launch*



The new act takes into consideration:

- the carer's health and well-being,
- family relationships, and
- their need to balance their home life with their education or work.

**If they are found to be eligible? they are entitled to support funded by their local authority.** In addition, all local authorities must provide advice and information and prevent carers' needs from getting worse.

**We know that approximately 10% of the local population undertake some sort of unpaid caring role**, Wokingham Borough Council thought it would be beneficial if Healthwatch survey local carers to measure their awareness of the Care Act and to hear what difference it is making to carers lives.

We planned to carry out 3 surveys of carers over a period of a year, from April 2015-2016 and have found it difficult to gain views on this, so we imagine it would

be even harder for statutory organisations such as the Council - [Our report on progress](#) is attached here for your information.

**Our recommendation** is that we would encourage the development of channels locally for carers to have their say and provide feedback. Healthwatch hears all the time about the difficulty in accessing information and people not being aware of their entitlements. One person did tell us:

*"I have been a carer for many years, until I spoke to you at this event today I didn't know I was entitled to an assessment or any particular help, if you are not told, how do you know what you are entitled to?"*



We are keen to **hear the voice of the carer** and find out about your experiences of local services for both yourself and the person you care for.

- You can change things by sharing your views, good ideas, experiences and concerns.
- Your comments and views can influence how future services are developed, or how changes to existing services are made.
- These could have a major impact on your life and the life of the person you care for.

If you are unsure about your entitlements or what services there are locally? get in touch with Healthwatch Wokingham Borough who can provide information, advice and signposting.

**If you have an experience of health or social care services? Good or not so good perhaps? [please tell us here](#)**

*Here are the Healthwatch team contacts should you have any questions...*

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WHEN IT'S NOT LIFE THREATENING  
CALL 111**

## Get In Touch

Of course let us know about the service you are receiving - good or bad!

**Call** and tell us on 0118 4181418

**Email** [enquiries@healthwatchwokingham.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@healthwatchwokingham.co.uk)

**Write** at Healthwatch Wokingham, c/o Citizens Advice, 2nd floor, Waterford House, Erfstadt Court, Wokingham RG40 2YF, or

**Come and see us** by visiting the Healthwatch Co-ordinator at the Citizens Advice Bureau in Wokingham and Woodley town centres, the Swallowfield Medical Practice (by appointment), Crowthorne Baptist Church (by appointment) or via the MICE Bus.

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