

Appendix 3:

What support is available to carers of people with dementia?

Many carers of people with dementia do not initially think of themselves as a carer, particularly if the person with dementia is a partner, parent or close friend.

However, it is becoming increasingly important to health and social care services nationally to recognise that both the person with dementia and their carer will need support to understand and accept the changes in symptoms, and to adapt to changes in presentation that will come.

It is recommended that carers recognise that they have taken on a very significant role and will need additional support.

All GP practices now have a Carer's Register, and all carers are advised to register. This enables specific forms of support to be provided, such as arranging 'double appointments' for both themselves and the person they care for, to avoid having to visit the surgery twice.

Many GP practices have a designated member of the practice who is assigned to support carers. This 'Carer's Champion' can offer support and help signpost the carer to further support networks.

It is well documented that carers can be at risk of experiencing poor physical and mental health, including depression, stress and high blood pressure, as a direct consequence of their caring role. As such, carers on the register are offered free annual health checks, invited to have their flu jabs early, and may be eligible for assistance with prescription charges.

Official recognition of their role as carer can facilitate greater involvement in the care planning and assessments of the person with dementia.

(<https://www.dementiauk.org/get-support/looking-after-yourself-as-a-carer/the-importance-of-registering-as-a-carer-with-your-gp/>)

Some organisations offer guidance and advice on how to help and support carers of a person with dementia. For example:

- Dementia UK (<https://www.dementiauk.org/>)
- Carers UK (<https://www.carersuk.org/>)
- Carers Trust (<https://carers.org/>)
- Age UK (<https://www.ageuk.org.uk/>)
- Independent Age (<https://www.independentage.org/>)
- Alzheimer's Society (<https://www.alzheimers.org.uk/>).