

Supporting older carers

Tool 2: The caring timeline

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This tool supports practitioners to have conversations that encourage carers to think about the impact caring has on them, how things will change in the future and what they want to happen. It can be used to give information at the carer's pace, recognising that they may not yet be ready to talk about the longer term, nor consider themselves a carer. It can also support mapping and planning what services and support might be needed in future.

1 Step 1: You could start conversations by encouraging the carer to think about the questions set out below, either by writing down their thoughts and then discussing them with you or by talking through the questions together.

Me now

How do the support needs of the person for whom I care affect me now?

What is important to me as a person in my own right?

The near future – as things change a bit

How caring for them might affect me in the near future?

What might help me to still do the things I like doing?

The medium-term future – as things change a lot

How caring for them might affect me?

What will be important to me?

The long-term future

How caring for them might affect me?

What will be important to me?

These quotes from older carers who took part in the research project may help guide and inform your discussions:

'What helps? Having someone to really listen and understand and then find the services to match'

'I don't have any time now without being interrupted. The only time is when she's asleep but that is unpredictable too. The thing that would help most is substitute care and having support to help to arrange this'



'The day service won't have him back [now the cared-for person has developed more complex behaviour]. It makes it hard for me to cope. There needs to be in-between care, something between residential and day care services – day services that can cater for more complex behaviours'

'Getting away for any amount of time is difficult – I haven't had a holiday for eight years. Having help to arrange regular, consistent respite care is invaluable. It must be something that the cared-for can get familiar with'

'You're not going to ask for a lot in the early stage but having support just getting into the system in the early stage is very helpful. Then it's there when you need it'

2 Step 2: List the support services that might be helpful:

Support services in the near future	Support services in the medium-term future	Support services in the far future



Key points

- > Many older carers would never use the term carer, even if they plainly are one, as this is not how they wish to view their role, and it positions the cared-for person in the role of a dependent person who needs help which they may not be willing to locate themselves in. None of this diminishes their right to be recognised and supported. Offer support carefully whilst being mindful of language and respecting their right not to be called a carer.
- > Consider the changing capability of the carer over time as well as the cared-for person – the carer is ageing too and may be (or become) in need of care themselves, particularly with the added demands of the caring role.
- > Focus on existing networks and familiar community resources that could be built upon.



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