



COMING HOME CARER SKILLS

Module 1: Your caring role

A short guide for family carers, with questions to write in

Coming Home Carer Skills. For England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland

October 2026

About this course

Coming Home Carer Skills is our own free course for family carers. Its topics follow the 16 Care Certificate standards (2025) from Skills for Care, NHS England and Skills for Health. It is not the Care Certificate, it is not a qualification, and those organisations have not endorsed it.

This guide to Module 1, Your caring role, is correct at October 2026. We've written it in good faith as general information to help family carers. It isn't legal, financial or medical advice, and it can't teach practical skills such as moving someone or first aid. For those, ask the person's nurse or therapist, or find an in-person course. To the extent the law allows, we can't accept liability for any errors or omissions, or for decisions made on the strength of this guide. In a medical emergency call 999. If you need advice quickly, call NHS 111. In Northern Ireland, contact your GP out of hours service.

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How to use this guide

This guide goes with the online module. Read one section at a time. There are questions near the end, with space to write, and example answers at the back.

If you are worried about someone's health, contact their GP, or call NHS 111. In Northern Ireland, contact your GP out of hours service. In an emergency, call 999.

01

What family carers do



If you help someone because of their age, illness or disability, you are a carer. It does not matter if they are your mum, your husband, your son or a friend.

Many people do not use the word "carer" at first. That is fine. But using it can open the door to help.

Family carers do many kinds of things. You might:

- help with washing, dressing or meals
- go with the person to appointments
- do the shopping, cleaning or laundry
- sort out bills, letters and forms
- keep them company, or stay with them if they cannot be left alone

All of these count as caring. The NHS website gives a list much like this one.

Caring is often about small, everyday things. A cup of tea made just how they like it. A chat about the old days. Noticing when they seem quieter than usual.

**Remember**

You also know the person better than anyone. You know what they enjoy, what upsets them and what helps. That knowledge matters. Paid carers, nurses and doctors will often want to hear it.

In this module, you will learn what your role is, where the limits are, who can help, and how to ask for support for yourself.

Source: NHS website, "Carer's assessments", section "How to tell if you're a carer" (read 8 Oct 2026): www.nhs.uk/social-care-and-support/support-and-benefits-for-carers/carers-assessments/

02

Where the limits are



You do a lot. But you are not expected to do everything. Some things are not yours to do.

Some tasks need training. Examples are helping someone move, giving some kinds of medicine, or caring for a wound. If you have not been shown how, do not try it. Ask the person's nurse, therapist or pharmacist first.

The person's own plan comes first. If they have a care plan, or written instructions from their nurse, therapist or pharmacist, follow those.

Never change medicine doses yourself. If you think a medicine is not right, ask their GP or pharmacist.

If someone falls and you cannot help them up safely, do not lift them. Call for help.

The person still makes their own choices, as far as they can. Your job is to support them, not to take over. Module 5 says more about this.

You can say what you can and cannot do. In England and Wales, the law says a carer's assessment must look at whether you are able and willing to keep caring. In Scotland, your carer support plan records this too. Being honest about your limits is not failing. It helps you get the right support.



Get help

Worried about someone's health? Contact their GP, or call NHS 111. In Northern Ireland, contact your GP out of hours service. In an emergency, call 999.

Sources (read 8 Oct 2026): Care Act 2014, section 10(5), www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2014/23/section/10; Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014, section 24(4), www.legislation.gov.uk/anaw/2014/4/section/24/enacted; mygov.scot, "Get an Adult Carer Support Plan or Young Carer Statement", www.mygov.scot/help-for-carer/carers-support-plan; nidirect, "GP out of hours service", www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/gp-out-hours-service; NHS website, "Falls" (do not try to lift someone yourself; when to call 999), www.nhs.uk/conditions/falls/

03

Working with paid carers, GPs and social workers



You are part of a team, even if it does not always feel like it.

Paid carers. If paid carers come in, get to know them. Tell them what the person likes and how they like things done. Agree how you will share news, such as a notebook or a phone call. If something about the care worries you, talk to the care agency first. Module 3 explains how to make a complaint.

The GP. Tell the GP practice that you are a carer, and ask them to note it. If the person you care for agrees, the practice can talk with you about their health. Write your questions down before an appointment, so you do not forget them.

Social workers. Social workers work for the local council. In Northern Ireland, they work for the Health and Social Care Trust. They can arrange an assessment of what the person you care for needs. They can also arrange a separate assessment for you.

**Try this**

Keep a list by the phone. Write down the names and numbers of the GP practice, the pharmacy, the care agency, the social worker and a family contact. It saves time when you need help.

You do not need to have all the answers. Your job is to share what you know and to ask questions.

Sources (read 8 Oct 2026): NHS website, "Carer's assessments" (carer's assessment is separate from the needs assessment of the person you care for), www.nhs.uk/social-care-and-support/support-and-benefits-for-carers/carers-assessments/; nidirect, "Assessments for carers" (social services in Health and Social Care Trusts), www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/assessments-carers; Carers UK, "Talking to your GP", www.carersuk.org/help-and-advice/your-health-and-wellbeing/talking-to-your-gp/; NHS England Digital, "Sharing information with unpaid carers", digital.nhs.uk/data-and-information/information-governance/guidance/sharing-information-with-unpaid-carers

04

Asking for a carer's assessment



A carer's assessment is a talk about you. It looks at how caring affects your health, your work, your free time and your relationships. It is not a test of how well you care.

It is free. It is separate from any assessment for the person you care for, but you can ask for both to be done at the same time.

It might lead to help such as:

- someone to take over so you can have a break
- help with housework
- being put in touch with local support groups
- advice about benefits for carers

**Tip**

Getting ready. Before the assessment, write down:

- what you do in a typical day and week
- what you find hardest
- what would help

Have the GP's details to hand. Give as much detail as you can.

You do not have to go alone. You can have a friend or relative with you, or an advocate. An advocate is someone who speaks up for you.

If you disagree with the result, you can complain. Ask the council, or the Trust in Northern Ireland, how.

The name and the route are a little different in each part of the UK. The next page explains.

Source: NHS website, "Carer's assessments" (read 8 Oct 2026; this page covers England): www.nhs.uk/social-care-and-support/support-and-benefits-for-carers/carers-assessments/. Similar help is listed for Northern Ireland on nidirect, "Assessments for carers": www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/assessments-carers

05

Carer's assessments where you live



England. Ask adult social services at your local council for a carer's assessment. The law is the Care Act 2014. The NHS website says anyone over 18 can ask for one.

Wales. Ask your local council for a carer's needs assessment. The council must offer one if you may need support. Your right to one does not depend on how much money you have. The law is the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014.

Scotland. Ask your local council, or your local carer centre, for an Adult Carer Support Plan. Young carers can ask for a Young Carer Statement. It is a written plan of your needs and the support agreed with you. The law is the Carers (Scotland) Act 2016.

Northern Ireland. Ask your Health and Social Care Trust for a carer's assessment. Each Trust has a Carer Coordinator who can help. If you are 16 or over and give regular and significant care to someone aged 18 or over, you have the right to one.

If you live in a different area from the person, ask the council or Trust where they live. In Wales, ask your own council. If you are not sure, your own council can tell you.

Under 18? Young carers have their own route. Ask your council, or your Trust in Northern Ireland.

Sources (read 8 Oct 2026): England: NHS website, "Carer's assessments", www.nhs.uk/social-care-and-support/support-and-benefits-for-carers/carers-assessments/ and Care Act 2014 s.10, www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2014/23/section/10. Wales: GOV.WALES, "Charter for unpaid carers", www.gov.wales/charter-unpaid-carers-html. Scotland: mygov.scot, www.mygov.scot/help-for-carer/carers-support-plan; Carers (Scotland) Act 2016 s.6, www.legislation.gov.uk/asp/2016/9/section/6/enacted. Northern Ireland: nidirect, "Carers' rights", www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/carers-rights and "Introduction to caring", www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/introduction-caring. Different area and under 18: Carers UK, "Carer's assessment", www.carersuk.org/help-and-advice/practical-support/carers-assessment/; Carers (Scotland) Act 2016 s.41 (the council where the cared-for person lives), www.legislation.gov.uk/asp/2016/9/section/41/enacted; NHS website, "Being a young carer: your rights", www.nhs.uk/social-care-and-support/support-and-benefits-for-carers/being-a-young-carer-your-rights/; nidirect, "Young carers", www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/young-carers

06

Get help



- **Carers UK helpline:** 0808 808 7777 (free). Advice for carers in all four nations. www.carersuk.org
- **Your local council:** ask adult social services about a carer's assessment. Find your council: www.gov.uk/find-local-council
- **Northern Ireland:** contact your Health and Social Care Trust and ask for the Carer Coordinator:
www.nidirect.gov.uk/contacts/health-and-social-care-trusts
- **Scotland:** your local carer centre or council:
www.mygov.scot/help-for-carer/carers-support-plan
- **Get hands-on training:** for practical skills such as first aid, look for an in-person course from the British Red Cross (www.redcross.org.uk) or St John Ambulance (www.sja.org.uk).
- **NHS help for carers:** www.nhs.uk/social-care-and-support/support-and-benefits-for-carers/



Get help

Worried about someone's health? Contact their GP, or call NHS 111 (or go to 111.nhs.uk). In Northern Ireland, contact your GP out of hours service (www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/gp-out-hours-service). **In an emergency, call 999.**

07

Your questions



Write here

Write your answers in the boxes. Take your time, and come back to them whenever you like. There are example answers at the back of this guide to compare with your own.

1. Think about a typical week. What do you do to help the person you care for? Write down as many things as you can, big or small.

2. Do you think of yourself as a carer? Why, or why not?

3. Your dad says, "Can you help me move from the bed to the chair?" You have never been shown how. What would you say, and who could you ask?

4. Write down one part of caring that you find hard to keep doing. Who could you tell about it?

5. A new paid carer starts tomorrow. Write down three things you would like them to know about the person you care for.

6. Make a list of useful names and phone numbers to keep by the phone.

7. Which part of the UK do you live in? What is a carer's assessment called there, and who do you ask?

8. Imagine you are at your carer's assessment. What would you want to say about how caring affects your life?

08

Quick quiz



Tick one answer for each question. The answers, with the reasons, are at the back of this guide.

1. Your mum says, "You're not my carer, you're my daughter." Which is true?

- ☐ You can only be a carer if you are paid
- ☐ You can be her daughter and her carer
- ☐ Carers must live in the same house
- ☐ You need a course before you count as a carer

2. Your dad's nurse has left written instructions for his care. A neighbour suggests a different way. What should you do?

- ☐ Try the neighbour's way
- ☐ Follow the nurse's instructions, and ask the nurse if you are unsure
- ☐ Stop following any instructions
- ☐ Do whatever is quickest

3. Your husband says his tablets make him sleepy. You wonder about giving him half a dose. What should you do?

- ☐ Give him half
- ☐ Skip a day and see
- ☐ Ask his GP or pharmacist before changing anything
- ☐ Give them at a different time without telling anyone

4. It is a mild day. Your dad wants to wear his old cardigan to the shops, but you would rather he wore his coat. What fits your role best?

- ☐ Insist on the coat
- ☐ Let him choose, and perhaps mention the weather
- ☐ Cancel the trip
- ☐ Hide the cardigan

5. Your dad has chest pain and is struggling to breathe. What should you do?

- ☐ Wait and see if it passes
- ☐ Call 999
- ☐ Book a GP appointment for next week
- ☐ Give him a drink and let him rest

6. A new paid carer is starting with your aunt tomorrow. What would help most?

- ☐ Stay out of the way and say nothing
- ☐ Tell them what your aunt likes, and agree how you will share news
- ☐ Tell them to do everything your way without asking your aunt
- ☐ Only ever speak to the agency, never the carer

7. Your friend says a carer's assessment is a test to see if you are a good enough carer. What is true?

- ☐ It is a test of your caring
- ☐ It is a talk about how caring affects you and what would help
- ☐ It is only about the person you care for
- ☐ You have to pay for it

8. Which of these is true?

- ☐ In Scotland, carers can ask for an Adult Carer Support Plan
- ☐ In Northern Ireland, you ask the Post Office for an assessment
- ☐ Carer's assessments only exist in England
- ☐ In Wales, your savings decide if you can have an assessment

09

Answers



Your questions

There are no wrong answers to most of these questions. These are examples to compare with your own.

1. There is no wrong answer. You might have written things like help with meals, washing or dressing, going to appointments, shopping, cleaning, sorting bills and letters, or keeping them company. All of these count as caring. Keep this list: it will help at a carer's assessment.
2. Many people say no at first, because they see themselves as a daughter, a husband or a friend. If you regularly help someone because of their age, illness or disability, you are a carer too. Using the word can help you get support.
3. You could say kindly that you do not want to hurt him or yourself, so you would like to be shown first. You could ask his nurse, therapist or GP, or ask the council about an assessment by an occupational therapist. Do not try a task you have not been shown.
4. Being honest about what is hard is not failing. You could tell a family member, a friend, your GP, or the Carers UK helpline on 0808 808 7777. You can also raise it at a carer's assessment, which looks at whether you are able and willing to keep caring.

5. Good examples: how they like their tea, what they like to be called, their usual routine, things that upset them, things that cheer them up, and how you would like the carer to share news with you, such as a notebook or a phone call.
6. Your list might include the GP practice, the pharmacy, the care agency, the social worker, a family contact and a neighbour. Add the Carers UK helpline (0808 808 7777), NHS 111 (in Northern Ireland, the GP out of hours service), and 999 for emergencies.
7. England: a carer's assessment, from adult social services at your local council. Wales: a carer's needs assessment, from your local council. Scotland: an Adult Carer Support Plan, from your council or local carer centre. Northern Ireland: a carer's assessment, from your Health and Social Care Trust (ask for the Carer Coordinator).
8. You might talk about your own health and sleep, your work, your money, your free time, your friendships, and what would help, such as a regular break. Give as much detail as you can. It is a talk about you, not a test.

Quick quiz

1. **You can be her daughter and her carer.** Anyone who regularly helps someone because of age, illness or disability is a carer, and family counts.
2. **Follow the nurse's instructions, and ask the nurse if you are unsure.** The person's own care plan and instructions from their care team come first.
3. **Ask his GP or pharmacist before changing anything.** Never change medicine doses yourself. The GP or pharmacist can help.
4. **Let him choose, and perhaps mention the weather.** The person makes their own choices as far as they can. You support, you do not take over.
5. **Call 999.** This is an emergency. Call 999 and follow what the call handler tells you.

6. Tell them what your aunt likes, and agree how you will share news.

You know the person best. Sharing that, and agreeing how to keep in touch, helps everyone.

7. It is a talk about how caring affects you and what would help. A carer's assessment is about you. It is free and it is not a test.

8. In Scotland, carers can ask for an Adult Carer Support Plan. Each nation has its own name and route. In Scotland it is an Adult Carer Support Plan.

10

Sources

Every source was read on 8 October 2026. Each section also lists its own sources at the end.

- **Section 1. What family carers do.** NHS website, "Carer's assessments", section "How to tell if you're a carer" (read 8 Oct 2026): www.nhs.uk/social-care-and-support/support-and-benefits-for-carers/carers-assessments/
- **Section 2. Where the limits are.** Care Act 2014, section 10(5), www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2014/23/section/10; Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014, section 24(4), www.legislation.gov.uk/anaw/2014/4/section/24/enacted; mygov.scot, "Get an Adult Carer Support Plan or Young Carer Statement", www.mygov.scot/help-for-carer/carers-support-plan; nidirect, "GP out of hours service", www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/gp-out-hours-service; NHS website, "Falls" (do not try to lift someone yourself; when to call 999), www.nhs.uk/conditions/falls/
- **Section 3. Working with paid carers, GPs and social workers.** NHS website, "Carer's assessments" (carer's assessment is separate from the needs assessment of the person you care for), www.nhs.uk/social-care-and-support/support-and-benefits-for-carers/carers-assessments/; nidirect, "Assessments for carers" (social services in Health and Social Care Trusts), www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/assessments-carers; Carers UK, "Talking to your GP", www.carersuk.org/help-and-advice/your-health-and-wellbeing/

[talking-to-your-gp/](#); NHS England Digital, "Sharing information with unpaid carers", [digital.nhs.uk/data-and-information/information-governance/guidance/sharing-information-with-unpaid-carers](#)

- **Section 4. Asking for a carer's assessment.** NHS website, "Carer's assessments" (read 8 Oct 2026; this page covers England): [www.nhs.uk/social-care-and-support/support-and-benefits-for-carers/carers-assessments/](#). Similar help is listed for Northern Ireland on nidirect, "Assessments for carers": [www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/assessments-carers](#)
- **Section 5. Carer's assessments where you live.** England: NHS website, "Carer's assessments", [www.nhs.uk/social-care-and-support/support-and-benefits-for-carers/carers-assessments/](#) and Care Act 2014 s.10, [www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2014/23/section/10](#). Wales: GOV.WALES, "Charter for unpaid carers", [www.gov.wales/charter-unpaid-carers-html](#). Scotland: mygov.scot, [www.mygov.scot/help-for-carer/carers-support-plan](#); Carers (Scotland) Act 2016 s.6, [www.legislation.gov.uk/asp/2016/9/section/6/enacted](#). Northern Ireland: nidirect, "Carers' rights", [www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/carers-rights](#) and "Introduction to caring", [www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/introduction-caring](#). Different area and under 18: Carers UK, "Carer's assessment", [www.carersuk.org/help-and-advice/practical-support/carers-assessment/](#); Carers (Scotland) Act 2016 s.41 (the council where the cared-for person lives), [www.legislation.gov.uk/asp/2016/9/section/41/enacted](#); NHS website, "Being a young carer: your rights", [www.nhs.uk/social-care-and-support/support-and-benefits-for-carers/being-a-young-carer-your-rights/](#); nidirect, "Young carers", [www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/young-carers](#)



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