



A Guide to Parent Carers Needs Assessments

Halton Local Offer



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What is a Parent Carer's Needs Assessment?

The aim of a parent carer's needs assessment is to give you a chance to tell Halton Children and Family Services about the things that could make looking after your disabled child easier for you.

The assessment focuses on you as a parent and your needs. We will discuss issues like the help you need, and whether there is anyone else who helps or if you are your child's only carer.

The parent carer's needs assessment will also consider your wellbeing, including health and safety issues, and important commitments like relationships and employment.

What the law says

The Children and Families Act 2014 amended the Children Act 1989 (sections 17ZD, 17ZE12 and 17ZF). Under it, local authorities must assess parent carers if:

- 'it appears to the authority that the parent carer may have needs for support',

Or if they

- 'receive a request from the parent carer to assess their need for support.'

The Act also says that:

A parent carer's needs assessment must include an assessment of whether it is appropriate for the parent carer to provide, or continue to provide, care for the disabled child, in the light of the parent carer's needs for support, other needs and wishes. (Children and Families Act 2014 section 17ZD (9))

They must also take into account:

- 'the well-being of the parent carer'

and

- 'the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of the disabled child cared for and any other child for whom the parent carer has parental responsibility.'

The Wellbeing Duty (Children and Families Act 2014 section 17ZD (10))

This 'wellbeing' duty is an important addition. It means local authorities must consider a person's:

- personal dignity and respect
- physical and mental health and emotional wellbeing
- protection from abuse and neglect
- control by the individual over day-to-day life
- participation in work, education, training or recreation
- social and economic wellbeing
- domestic, family, and personal relationships
- suitability of living accommodation
- contribution to society.

Who is eligible for a Parent Carers Needs Assessment?

If you are a parent looking after a disabled child and you have Parental Responsibility for that child then you can have a Parent Carer Needs Assessment. This includes non-birth parents, such as relatives who have gained Parental Responsibility for a child through a legal process.

The Carers (Recognition and Services) Act 1995 remains in force for other family members who are providing care to a disabled child. For example a grandparent, aunt or uncle who provide care, but does not have parental responsibility for the child. If this is the case you may be able to access assessments if you are providing substantial and regular care (usually defined as 35 hours or more care per week).

When can I ask for a Parent Carers Needs Assessment?

All parent carers have a right to ask for an assessment of their needs at any time. You can also have your needs re assessed if you have had a previous Parent Carers Needs Assessment and your needs or circumstances have changed.

However, if your child who has a disability/additional needs is having an assessment of their needs then this should also take into account the needs of the rest of the family members, including parents and siblings. It should consider your needs as a carer and your capacity to continue with caring. The Lead Professional who is working with your family should talk to you about whether you wish to be referred for a Parent Carers Assessment in addition to them considering your needs as a carer in your child's

assessment, when planning services to meet your child's needs and when reviewing their plan.

If your child has not had an assessment of their needs then you can request one. You don't need to have a diagnosis for your child to get an assessment or help from Halton Children Services. If your child needs help or support, an assessment of their needs can be completed by any professional who is working with your family via a MAP (Multi Agency Plan) Assessment. Alternatively, you can request an assessment of your child's needs by calling [Halton Borough Council's Contact Centre](#) on **0303 333 4300**. They will take your contact details and pass on your information to the Integrated Contact and Referral team who will deal with your request.

How do I ask for a Parent Carers Needs Assessment?

Parent Carers can request an assessment by contacting [Halton Borough Council Contact Centre](#) on **0303 333 4300**. The Contact Centre worker will screen the request and will make a referral to Halton's Short Break Service for Children with Disabilities who will then allocate the referral to the Carers Assessment and Support Officer based within the service.

Professionals working with families of disabled children living in Halton should explain to Parent Carers what a Parent Carers Need Assessment is and if you think that you would like to have an assessment of your needs, then, with your consent, they should complete a referral form and send it to Halton's Short Break Service for Children with Disabilities.

How will the Parent Carers Need Assessment be completed?

Halton's Short Break Service for Children with Disabilities has a dedicated part time worker called a **Carer Assessment and Support Worker**. When a referral is received to complete a Parent Carers Needs Assessment then the worker will contact you to arrange to visit to complete the assessment form – see attached.

The information you provide will remain confidential between you and the worker unless you share anything that they are concerned poses a risk to your child/ren, yourself or others. In these circumstances, they will be required to share the information with the Manager or Senior Worker in the team and if there may be an immediate risk then they will contact [Halton's Integrated Contact and Referral Team](#) to discuss their concerns.

Once the assessment has been completed, the worker will discuss any appropriate actions to be completed by them, or yourself, or referrals to other services. They will complete the plan at the end of the form and then ask you to consent to the information being shared with your child's Lead Professional if they currently have a multi-agency plan.

What will happen after the Parent Carers Needs Assessment has been completed?

Once the Carer Assessment and Support Officer has completed your assessment and plan, you may be entitled to certain services including short break services, carer support and services. This will usually be arranged through your child's multi-agency plan and can be reviewed and updated if your child's needs, your family circumstances or your caring responsibilities change.

It may be decided that there is no need for services, which could result in your case being closed with no further action taken. If you disagree with this decision you can challenge it using the Halton's complaints procedure and the Carer Assessment and Support Officer can tell you how to do this.

What happens as my child gets older?

When children and young people with a disability prepare for the transition to adult services it is important that their Parent Carers have support and appropriate services during this period. They have rights to an assessment under the Care Act 2014. This is called a child's carer's assessment 'in transition'. When these assessments take place is not specified in the Act, but it states that they should take place when of most 'significant benefit' to the young person or carer.

Further information

[Carers UK](#) have information on a range of issues affecting carers on their website at

[Contact a Family](#) is a national charity for families with disabled children who provide information, advice and support including carer's issues.

[Halton Carers Centre](#) provide information on local support and services available to all carers living in Halton.

[Halton Local Offer](#) website has information on services available for disabled children, young people and families.

Appendices

- [Parent Carer Needs Assessment Referral Form](#)
- [Parent Carer Needs Assessment Form and Plan](#)