

from one carer to another

Caring for a loved one, relative or friend can be challenging, physically and emotionally, and leave you feeling like no-one understands. But you're not alone. If you have all the information and support you need, life can be easier.

Thank you to all the local older carers who were willing to share their experience and tips to help others on their caring journey. Here is some of their advice.



Don't try to go it alone

Accept support when it's offered. Friends, neighbours and relatives are often happy and willing to help but aren't sure how, so don't be afraid to ask them.

"When someone offers help it's such a relief." Jack



Don't be too hard on yourself

You might feel unappreciated and some days will be harder than others, but keep going, you're doing well.

"Just go with the flow and try not to stress about jobs that don't get done." Liz

Find out what professional help is available

Build a good relationship with your GP and other professionals involved and make sure they know you're a carer. Keep a list of important numbers to hand. You know your loved one the best, so make sure professionals are listening to you. Ask lots of questions and if there's something you don't understand, make sure it's explained to you properly.

"It's so tiring, I'm getting older and it's a struggle." Judy



Get the practical things in order

It's likely that you will both be entitled to benefits, and the extra money could make a big difference. Some benefits are non-means tested, so you won't need to provide details about your savings or income. Make sure Wills and Powers of Attorney are up to date.



"I found it helpful to get online, my computer has become a lifeline." Susan

Keep the lines of communication open

Make sure you remain in touch with friends and family who can support you, practically and emotionally, even from a distance



"Even though my daughter lives away, her support is invaluable. She helps us by contacting our GP to make appointments." George

Top Tips

Our carers said, being prepared for what is to come is important, but the most consistent tip from them was **don't try to manage by yourself, ask for help.**

Acknowledge you're a carer

It sounds obvious, but recognising yourself as a carer, telling friends, family and professionals how you feel is a good thing.

Look after yourself too

Eat well and try to stay active, mentally and physically. You can ask for a break if it helps you both, so use this time for yourself. If you are entitled to benefits, you could use some of this money to pay for someone to take over for a couple of hours. Bear in mind that if you ever need care yourself, it will be easier if you've planned for it.

"I'm not that well myself, but everyone always asks about my husband." Jean

Talking to other carers can really help



It's easier if you identify as a carer to other people, so think about joining in groups and activities.

"She's in a nursing home and I miss her, particularly on special days. It's lonely." Stephen



To find out how we can help if you're a carer, call our Help Team on **01452 422660** (option 1) or visit ageuk.org.uk/gloucestershire/our-services/carers-information

Thank you to the Carers Gloucestershire Legacy Fund for their support.