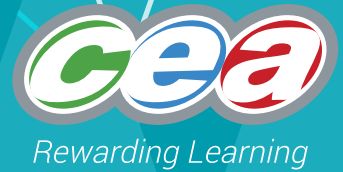


FACTFILE:

GCSE

HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

UNIT 1: PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT,  
HEALTH AND WELL-BEING



## Taking on a caring role

### Learning Outcomes

Students should be able to:

- assess how the following life change may affect an individual's physical, intellectual, emotional and social development:
  - taking on a caring role.
- demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the support that individuals coping with life changes can expect from these sectors:
  - statutory;
  - private;
  - voluntary;
  - informal; and
  - self-help groups; and
- apply their knowledge and understanding of the support available these sectors provide to individuals coping with life changes.
- demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the following types of support these sectors offer:
  - emotional support;
  - advice and information;
  - practical help;
  - medical care; and
  - social care; and
- apply their knowledge and understanding of the types of support listed above to individuals coping with life changes.

### What is meant by taking on a caring role?

This does not mean taking on a formal job role as a carer, but rather it is about taking responsibility as an informal carer for a family member or friend. This might be a full time responsibility, with the informal carer giving up his or her full time job to take on the role, or it might involve caring for someone in addition to having a job.

Examples of taking on a caring role:

- Jane, aged 59, takes early retirement from her own job as a teacher to care for her elderly parents who live nearby as her mother has mobility problems and her father is struggling to cope as he has become frailer in recent months.
- Joseph, aged 76, is caring for his wife Elsie, who has developed dementia and can no longer be left alone at home because she becomes confused and upset easily.

- Tony, aged 68, a retired plumber, helps look after his neighbour Sean who has suffered from depression for many years.
- Sarah, aged 37, decides that her older brother Kenneth, who has Down's syndrome, should move in with her and her family following the death of their mother whom Kenneth used to live with; Sarah will reduce her hours as a nurse to work only the two days a week that Kenneth goes to a day centre.
- Tom, aged 14, has to care for his mother Lucy before and after school every day as Lucy has MS and her condition has deteriorated to the extent that she needs help with lots of tasks like cooking, getting washed and dressed and going to the toilet; Lucy has a care package that includes carers coming in twice during the day when Tom is at school, but she is becoming more and more dependent on him the rest of the time.
- Kathy, aged 47, has two sons with Duchenne's muscular dystrophy which is a progressive disease; both are now wheelchair users and need a great deal of time and attention, so Kathy has asked her law firm for a career break so she could become a full-time carer for her sons.



According to a report by the Northern Health and Social Care Trust, there were approximately 213,980 informal carers in Northern Ireland when the last census was taken in 2011 (NHSCT, 2012).

Depending on the needs of the individuals they are caring for, informal carers do a whole variety of tasks. A report on young carers in Northern Ireland by the Patient and Client Council (PCC) showed that the main tasks they performed were washing and dressing the person they care for, watching over the person, helping the individual to use the toilet, managing medication, house cleaning and cooking.

Other tasks included feeding, getting the person to bed, helping the person up the stairs, gardening, getting shopping, keeping them company, paying bills, communicating with them, making sure they enjoy themselves and, where the person being cared for is another child or young person, helping with school work (PCC, 2012).

## Activities

Choose one of the examples of caring roles listed previously, and imagine you are the carer – Jane, Joseph, Tony, Sarah, Tom or Kathy.

What sorts of things might you have to do for the person/people you are caring for?

How do you think this might affect different aspects of your development (physical, intellectual, emotional and social)?

Complete the table below.

OR

Speak to someone you know who has taken on a caring role.

What does this person do in this role?

How has this affected/is this affecting the different aspects of his/her development (physical, intellectual, emotional and social)?

Complete the table below.

### Carer chosen:

Aspect of development	How development might be affected by the caring role
<b>Physical development</b>	
<b>Intellectual development</b>	
<b>Emotional development</b>	
<b>Social development</b>	

- (b) (i) Working in a small group, find a short video about the life of an individual of any age who is a carer for a friend or family member. There are lots of examples at [www.youtube.com](http://www.youtube.com)

In your group assess how being a carer is impacting on the physical, intellectual, emotional and social development of the individual.

Which aspect of development do you think was affected most? Can you think of any positive effects?

- (ii) Show the video to the class and tell them what you thought the effects of being a carer would be in this case study.

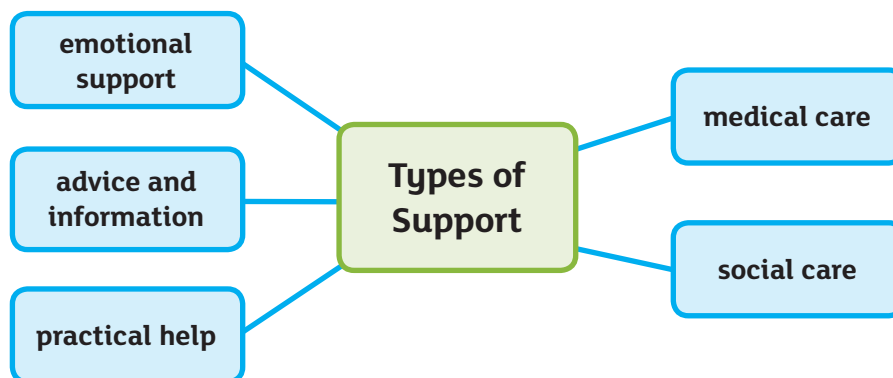
Whilst watching the presentations you should assess the different impact of caring in the different examples. Do some carers cope better than others? If so, is this because they have more caring or resilient personalities, or better support, or is it because the needs of the person they are caring for are easier to meet? What are the common problems? Are there many positive effects of being a carer?

## Support available

As with any life change, becoming a carer can mean individuals need support to help them cope. This might come from the following sectors:

- Statutory – this refers to government run and funded organisations, for example the health services and social services provided by the local trusts.
- Private – this refers to businesses in the health, social care and early years sectors, for example private crèches, private care homes and private social care providers.
- Voluntary – this refers to non-profit making organisations, often referred to as charities.
- Informal – this refers to family members, friends and neighbours.
- Self-help groups – this refers to people who are trying to cope with similar life changes coming together to support each other.

## Types of support



The sectors listed above can provide different types of support. Emotional support involves showing care and concern for individuals coping with a life change so they can feel they are not on their own. Advice and information involves giving guidance and facts to someone coping with a life change, for example, about the best ways to cope and where they can get help.

**Practical help** means actually doing things to help someone, for example, everyday tasks such as housework or childcare.

**Medical care** refers to the provision of care by doctors, nurses and other healthcare professionals.

**Social care** refers to personal and practical support given by workers such as social workers, homecare workers and support workers to help people live as independently as possible.

Examples of how the different sectors could support someone taking on a caring role and the types of support they might be given are illustrated in the table below:

Sector	Type of support given to individual taking on a caring role
<b>Statutory</b>	<p>A social worker could provide <b>advice and information</b> about the help the carer might be entitled to, such as the right to an assessment of his/her own needs.</p> <p>GP services can provide <b>medical care</b> for the individual being cared for to support the carer, for example 'telehealth' technology to monitor conditions such as heart failure means the carer can feel confident that the person's condition is being properly looked after.</p>
<b>Private</b>	A local private care provider could provide <b>social care</b> in the form of care assistants visiting to provide personal care such as washing and dressing the person being cared for to support the carer in his/her caring role (note, this private organisation might be paid for by social services/the statutory sector).
<b>Voluntary</b>	A voluntary organisation like Carers UK can provide <b>advice and information</b> , for example on financial benefits that a carer might be entitled to.
<b>Informal</b>	A family member could give <b>practical help</b> by shopping or making dinner for the carer's family.
<b>Self-help</b>	The carer could join a carers' support group and other members could provide <b>emotional support</b> by listening and showing empathy.

### Activity

Go to the website of Carers UK available at <http://www.carersuk.org/northernireland> and make notes on the types of support available to individuals taking on a caring role in Northern Ireland.

## Sample exam questions

1. Terri has left work to become a full-time carer for her partner Lou who has motor neurone disease which has left him unable to walk or wash, dress and feed himself.

Explain two ways taking on a caring role may affect Terri's physical development.

1. 4 lines/2 marks

2. 4 lines/2 marks

2. Describe how becoming a carer can affect each of the following:

Social development.

6 lines/3 marks

Emotional development.

6 lines/ 3 marks

3. Explain **two** ways a voluntary organisation might support an individual taking on a caring role.

1. 4 lines/2marks

2. 4 lines/2 marks

4. Describe how a friend or neighbour could support an individual taking on a caring role.

6 lines/3marks

5. Joanne, aged 50, has just given up her job as leader of a fashion design team for a major high street chain to look after her mother who has dementia. Assess how the life change of taking on a caring role may affect Joanne's physical, intellectual, emotional and development.

2 pages/12 marks

## References

NHST, 2012, 'Carers' Strategy 2012- 2017' available at

[http://www.northerntrust.hscni.net/images/NHST\\_Carers\\_Strategy.pdf](http://www.northerntrust.hscni.net/images/NHST_Carers_Strategy.pdf)

PCC, 2011, 'Young carers in Northern Ireland' available at

[https://www.patientclientcouncil.hscni.net/uploads/research/Young\\_carers\\_in\\_Northern\\_Ireland.pdf](https://www.patientclientcouncil.hscni.net/uploads/research/Young_carers_in_Northern_Ireland.pdf)

