

# Carer Passport



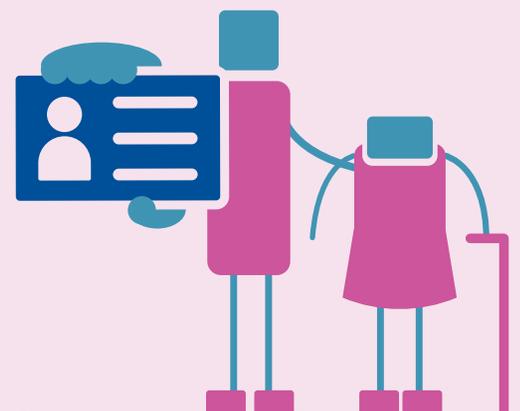
Funded by



Department  
of Health &  
Social Care

# Your guide

The new Carer Passport  
in your community



This Carer Passport Guide has been created by:

[carerpassport.uk/  
community](https://carerpassport.uk/community)

 **carersUK**  
making life better for carers

 **carerstrust**  
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# About this guide

The aim of this toolkit is to provide you with the know-how, insight and expertise to build your own Carer Passport scheme within the community – to provide a clear offer to carers, as well as links to advice and information and provide a mechanism to improve identification and support.

There is a clear recognition that Carer Passport schemes are often owned and developed locally, or by an employer, to suit their needs. We use the experience and knowledge from key leaders who have developed a Carer Passport locally as well as the experience of carers to provide all the insight and content needed to get a scheme going.

The work is being carried out by Carers UK and Carers Trust with funding from the Department of Health and Social Care with the aim of increasing the number of Carer Passport schemes in England which seek to support carers. It is part of our broader work and drive to build Carer Friendly Communities.

## What benefits can a Carer Passport bring?

Experience locally shows that a Carer Passport schemes can:

- Aid identification and support of carers.
- Raise awareness of caring.
- Provide a concrete, easily understandable offer of support.
- Provide a mechanism that makes carers feel valued.
- Provide help/assistance to managers or key professionals.
- Provide a short-cut to knowing what support is needed, without having to ask lots of questions.
- Help in local discussions and support.

## Where are Carer Passports currently used?

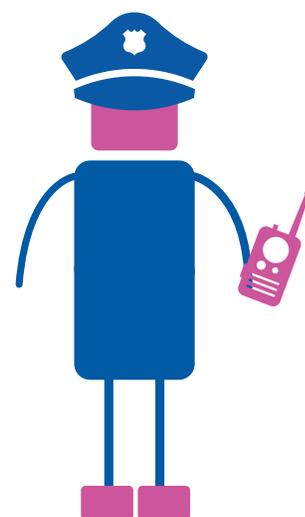
- Employers use a Carer Passport to support carers in the workplace.
- Hospitals use a Carer Passport and similar schemes to identify, recognise and support carers on specific wards or across the whole hospital.
- In a local community a Carer Passport scheme looks at whole a range of support and information as well as discounts for local services. They are often a popular way of engaging with carers who might not otherwise ask for help.
- Schools, colleges and universities have a Carer Passport to support pupils and students who might need additional information and advice or adjustments because they are caring.



## Carer Passport guide:

# Community

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# Community

## Key facts about carers

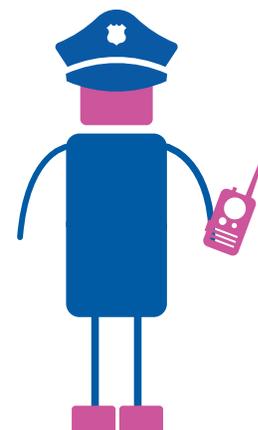


### What is a carer?

- A carer is anyone who cares, unpaid, for a friend or family member who due to illness, disability, a mental health problem or an addiction cannot cope without their support.
  - A young carer is someone under 18 who helps look after someone in their family, or a friend, who is ill, disabled or misuses drugs or alcohol.
  - Young adult carers are young people aged 16–25 who care, unpaid, for a family member or friend with an illness or disability, mental health condition or an addiction.
- 
- 3 out of 4 carers don't feel their caring role is understood and valued by their community.<sup>1</sup>
  - 91% said they missed out on practical or financial support (or both) as a result of not being identified as a carer.<sup>2</sup>
  - 29% of carers said they were always able to maintain relationships with close friends and families, compared to just 9% of carers whose communities didn't value and understand them.<sup>3</sup>
  - Over half (53%) of carers stated that they were always able to get to essential shops or services, compared to a third (32%) of carers whose communities didn't value and understand them.<sup>4</sup>
  - 35% of carers without good social support experienced ill-health, compared to 15% of those with good support.<sup>5</sup>

**3 in 4**

**carers don't feel that their caring role is valued by society**



1 Building Carer Friendly Communities: Research for Carers Week 2016, Carers Week, 2016  
2 Missing Out: The identification of carers, Carers UK, 2016  
3 Building Carer Friendly Communities: Research for Carers Week 2016, Carers Week, 2016  
4 Building Carer Friendly Communities: Research for Carers Week 2016, Carers Week, 2016  
5 Mental Health of Carers, Singleton, ONS, 2002



## What is a Carer Passport in the community?

There is a varied understanding of Carer Passport schemes within the wider context of local areas, and it is probably fair to say that no existing initiatives realise the full potential of a Passport for carers in their community.

### Identification and recognition

Where models exist, they tend to include some form of identification, for example a card held by the carer and a sticker displayed by local businesses to show that they are part of the scheme. They usually provide written information to the carer (in the form of a leaflet) about services for carers in their area and other ways in which they can access support. They may also provide access to a directory of local services and businesses which have signed up to offer discounts or concessions in recognition of the role of carers.

Recognition is a strong theme amongst carers and, as part of this, community Passport schemes tend to have a physical tool (such as a plastic card) which easily identifies the carer. This can be for reasons of practicality, but also because it can help avoid the labelling of the person being cared for. One carer explains, 'I find it awkward to explain I'm a carer when my son is standing with me, like he's different to everyone else. It's soul-destroying, and I think it would make it more discreet ... rather than pulling out loads of proof at counters for discounts or special seating needed'. Another adds that 'in the community, it would be brilliant – total proof that you're a carer'.

### A local offer

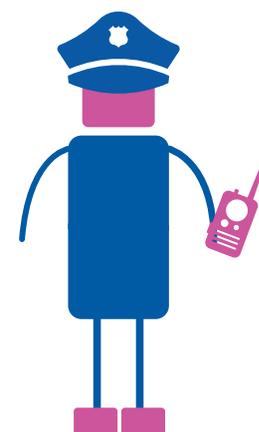
Local services and businesses are well placed to help identify carers and direct them to sources of advice and support. This may include carers who self-identify for the first time, having not accessed services previously and not necessarily wanting to label themselves as a carer.

At this stage, they may simply welcome information in the form of a leaflet and awareness of benefits offered locally. Where carers become increasingly connected, the offer can be more comprehensive and include carers who are signed up to local carers services.

In some parts of the country, this already includes discounts in local shops and for professional services, eg. legal advice, complementary therapies, etc. Within Hertfordshire and Dorset,



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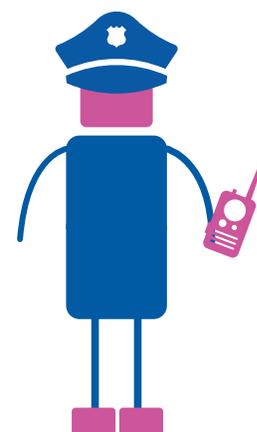


for example, carers can access a list of specific offers in their area though this can be a challenge in rural areas where internet access may be limited – where internet access is a problem, there are mediated solutions in Dorset, making it an offer which is genuinely relevant to where they live.

### Engagement

There is also great potential for a local offer which meaningfully engages carers. Carers play a key role in community life, and should have an increasing say in feeding back on service responses to them and those they care for. Many carers would welcome the opportunity to have more involvement in decision-making around social care for the people they care for, as well as in relation to the wider support needs of carers. Working with the Carers Service, carers can help commissioners and service providers better understand the needs of carers locally, the gaps in provision and the ways in which local organisations could make a difference to their daily lives.

Carers communicate the challenges around navigating services, systems and people to ensure that they – and the person they care for – have access to available support. Resources and schemes which facilitate coordination and joined-up approaches would help carers to be more in control, would recognise their role and value, and would provide them with better and more effective access to support. The Carer Passport can be one tool for facilitating this.





## What examples are there?

Within the wider community, beyond specific sectors such as the NHS or workplace, carers still require recognition and support. In all aspects of community life, the responsibilities and challenges of caring come into play and there is more that local services and businesses can do to respond to this. Where this is already happening, it is welcomed by carers as growing evidence of an appreciation of the crucial part they play in our communities – the beginnings of the realisation of Carer Friendly Communities.

In some areas, discount schemes have become well established and this has perhaps led to a perception that this is what a communitybased Carer Passport is. This perception should not suggest that this is the extent of the offer which a Passport can make. The offer should be wider, even if some carers choose to use only the discount element. Indeed, another carer may have no interest in discounts or concessions offered locally, but find the Passport of real value in giving them a voice within a hospital setting.

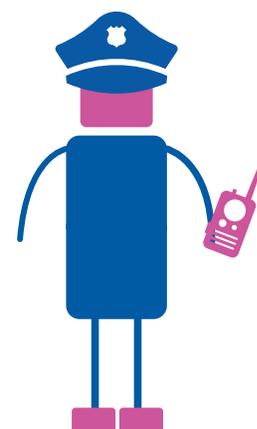
### Carers In Hertfordshire

The community-focused Passport offered by Carers In Hertfordshire does have a strong focus on discounts (hence it is often referred to as the Carers Discount card), while also having wider reach. It is currently held by 10,000 carers. Early engagement with carers by Carers In Hertfordshire begins a relationship which makes a broad offer and seeks to normalise the caring experience. In early 2017, over 3,500 additional carers registered for the card – with GPs referring 1,000 carers to Carers in Herts. The card is valid for three years. And this gives an opportunity to review the carers' situation and details if they have not already had a review.

Elsewhere, one professional mentions carers at a local dementia partnership meeting who had made their own laminated ID cards to show they are carers. This arose simply because, when they tried to explain to the GP receptionist and others that they are a carer, the person they care for had become agitated or embarrassed. Having a card which they could show made this easier. These carers loved the idea of a credit card like card which would further legitimise their position as carer.

### Dorset

In Dorset, carers who registered with the Carers Information Service are offered a Carers Card which gives them access to discounts in a wide range of the businesses. The



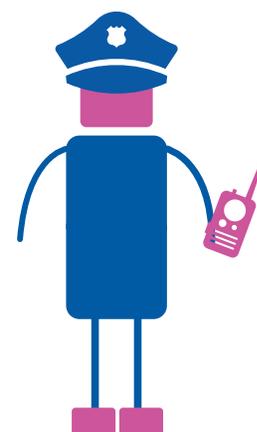
scheme is funded by Dorset County Council, Bournemouth Borough Council, and Borough of Poole and Dorset Clinical Commissioning Group. It provides free and easy sign-up and has the potential to reach 6,000 carers locally. Over 150 businesses are signed up, some with several branches across the county but has the potential to reach more. In Bournemouth and Poole and Dorset, carers were sent leaflets with their cards in order to urge local businesses of their choice to join the scheme. Interest from carers has also increased membership of the local Carers Information Service, which is open to all carers. Feedback from carers has been positive and staff delivering the scheme have seen its potential to widen to new settings, explaining that 'as a concept, it's almost limitless!'

In some local authorities, carers are signed up to a Carers Register and given a Carers Card which enables them to access certain services. Carer Support Services operate full and comprehensive services to carers throughout the country, proactively identifying carers, creating a record, assessing their needs, coordinating or navigating support and services with carers, and providing an offer of support directly to carers themselves. These services also have a range of branded literature, raise professional awareness and promote self-identification. However, while each service could be considered to be offering a local Passport to carers, they don't currently identify their own services (or offers) with the Carer Passport concept.

### **Carers in Bedfordshire**

Carers in Bedfordshire runs a scheme which is a similar discount scheme for carers which, like Hertfordshire, links back into other areas of support for the community such as some local leisure centres. Volunteers play a key role in supporting the scheme, issuing cards and keeping the discount offers up to date. It received funding initially with paid workers to start the project and they worked closely with Carers in Hertfordshire to learn more about their scheme and how to run it well.

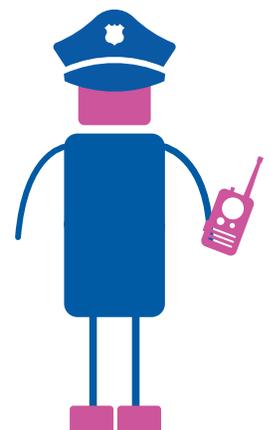
The scheme has strengthened relationships with local businesses some of whom offer support in other areas of work, such as events and mention us in social media (and vice versa). Card holders are informed of new discounts in an e-bulletin and encouraged to suggest new businesses to approach.



### **Caring for Carers at Improving Lives Plymouth**

In some areas, schemes are started with funding, but continued expansion is supported by volunteers.

Caring for Carers at Improving Lives Plymouth has a well-developed scheme. Over 6,000 carers have been registered and receive a card. Carers and local carers groups are asked what discounts might be useful and a volunteer then approaches local businesses to see if they wish to take part. Participating businesses can put a decal in their window.





## What difference does it make?

### To carers?

"It's the first time I've been proud to call myself a carer."

– Carer from Hertfordshire

"It's even recognised beyond Plymouth and they are not part of the scheme."

– Carer from Plymouth

"I go free as a carer and the person I care for has a discount too. It's just brilliant! Using my discount card for luxuries like trips and visits with the person I care for means we get to do happy and lovely things together and I still have money for all the everyday essentials too."

– Carer

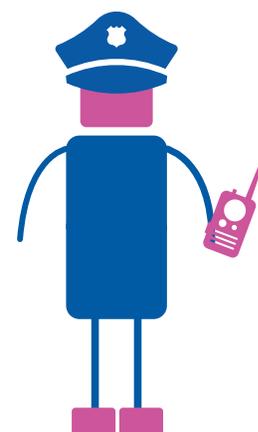
### To the community as a whole?

"Our passport has been an important way to provide access to a wide variety of integrated services for carers in health, social care and the wider community. The card provides a useful tool that doesn't wait until carers are struggling but encourages them to come forward without fear of judgement. It provides privacy and dignity for the carer and the person with care needs and has been helpful to us in showing which carers are least likely to be identified and taking steps to make sure they aren't slipping through the net."

– Michele Stokes, Chief Executive, Carers in Herts

"The discount card scheme reminds the wider community that carers are out there amongst them and that there is actually something real that it can do to support them. This increased visibility helps carers to feel a normal part of society and entitled to that little extra support."

– Carol Solaiman, Carers in Bedfordshire





## Introducing a Carer Passport scheme in the community

### The benefits and business case

Within every community are carers and those they care for. The benefits for them of providing more support across every aspect of their lives are resoundingly clear. One carer describes living with her father for 15 years while he had dementia, and how they moved between home, hospital and a nursing home – explaining that ‘a Carer Passport would have been useful in all three care settings’.

An important element of the Hertfordshire scheme is that it is designed to connect back into the core Carers In Hertfordshire provision for carers. When signing up, carers are linked to advice and information, carers support groups, newsletters, etc, to ensure they receive ongoing support if they wish to remain connected. Hence, the scheme offers more than simply a discount card. With the integrated offer, it can demonstrate sound health and wellbeing outcomes for carers.

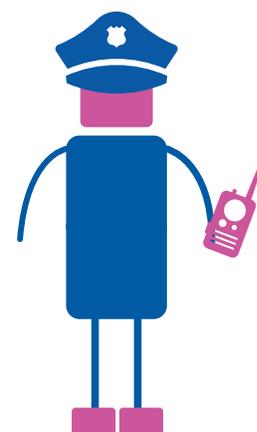
The discount scheme is, in itself, an acknowledgement of the impact of caring on household budgets. The Hertfordshire model lists 350 offers, via a booklet and online. It is promoted via local libraries, for example, who sees the benefits for their service in terms of increased footfall. Local coffee shops display stickers on their doors. For local businesses, there are clear benefits attached. They are part of a positive strategic partnership initiative in their area, perhaps connected into the NHS and other essential services. One community-based scheme mentions the opportunity to perhaps seek sponsorship from local businesses. Dorset are looking to extend the scheme to other services areas not already covered.

More broadly, there are clearly enormous benefits for local commissioners and service providers when they listen to carers about how they can make services more effective in meeting their needs and the needs of those they care for.

### Elements of success

There are three key features emerging when we look at good practice in this area.

Firstly, when carers are recognised and valued by the existence of a Carer Passport in their community, it normalises their role and goes some way towards removing some of the stigma attached to caring. The discount aspect of the Passport provides an important recognition of the challenges facing



carers, but also of their need to live full lives – to promote their own wellbeing through use of local leisure services, to perhaps visit the local cinema in their time off, to pop into a local café.

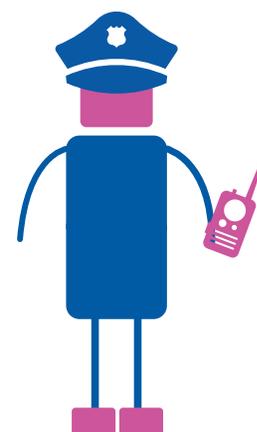
Through having that strong identity as something which directly benefits carers, there is also less risk that it will be seen as a bureaucratic tool.

Secondly, easy access to the scheme results in carers immediately seeing its benefits for them – and partner organisations (eg. high street businesses) seeing the benefits for them too. The signposting of further information and advice to carers usually happens at the start of engagement, and in a way which is immediately supportive and practical. Carers repeatedly mention the value of personal, one-to-one contact with someone who listens, avoids jargon, and takes time to help. Service providers sometimes recognise this too, and of the importance that staff in all settings realise that ‘what carers often want is simply a person to actually speak to – someone who is calm, rational and knowledgeable’.

Thirdly, good practice demonstrates a joined-up, coordinated response from sectors of the community. The Passport is clearly more beneficial when access is across multiple organisations, so that carers are likely to be identified earlier and can experience better coordination and navigation between services. To have a positive impact on carers lives and enable them to get the tailored support they need, the scheme needs to be co-delivered between the local authority, Carers Service and other service providers. This ensures there is expert advice and support available, local ‘buy-in’, and that this is a truly local partnership.

The experiences of many carers is a reminder of the complexities of navigating ‘the system’ and the need for a cross-community (and services) approach to carers.

Good practice examples are all developed alongside organisations that represent carers and/or carers themselves. Local Carers Services are embedded within their community and will have insight into the needs of the local population. Carers, who all have lived experience, are uniquely placed to help commissioners design a service that will have a positive impact on the ground. Those developing similar initiatives must ask their local carers what they want from the Passport, what support it should signpost them to, and what benefits would make a difference to their lives.



## Any challenges

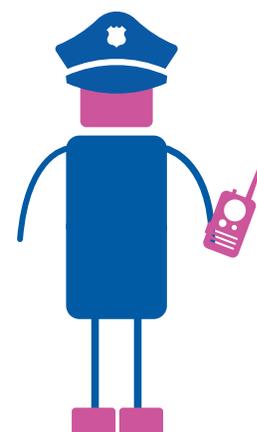
One of the biggest challenges is that carers aren't always aware of schemes, and from the start of their caring situation. Similarly, when schemes are operating in specific settings, there can be issues with professional awareness. Whatever the setting, the offer to the carer must be clear. It also needs to be clear what carers living in one area (of one local authority or borough), but caring for someone living elsewhere, can receive. This is likely to be the area in which the person they care for receives services, less so where they themselves live.

A Carer Passport scheme in the community is at risk of not realising its true potential if there is not effective coordination between the multiple organisations and agencies which come into contact with a carer's life.

A joined-up response is essential – as it is across the NHS too – but with one organisation leading. It would need to become part of the package of support to carers in the various settings, and immediately offered by whoever they first come into contact with (including issuing the card, so the carer is not sent elsewhere for this). The reach of the scheme across sectors will be limited if a coordinated response and senior level buy-in is not built in from an early stage.

A number of schemes have grown from small beginnings, but have recognised their potential from the start and have had clarity of purpose. Establishing record-keeping systems, capturing data on effectiveness, and setting useful KPIs (and tracking them) can all present administrative challenges for those organisations involved. A further challenge is recording carer information, including information sharing protocols, data protection and ensuring that all the data is kept up-to-date. Sending carers the right information, and at the right time, can be a challenge when people's circumstances and needs change. The resourcing needs to be in place if the initiative is to be properly embedded and sustained.

With any Carer Passport which operates a discount element, there may be concerns about fraud. Mitigating this can include having expiry dates on the Passport (so there is a buffer zone for carers moving on from a caring role, for example), or asking carers to come in to the Carers Centre to renew it. However, from the evidence to date, there appears to be minimal experience of fraudulent use of the scheme – so this may be a perceived risk, rather than a real one. If the identity card contains a photograph, this can reassure businesses that the card user is the carer.



Finally, businesses and service providers need to see the benefits of their involvement. In rural areas, for example, they may not initially see the footfall back to them. Growth of the scheme needs to be relatively rapid to build confidence, and successes shared. Where there is investment, this confidence will build over time. Having clarity of purpose remains key, so that even when schemes start small, they can grow – realising the great potential which Passports can offer local communities.

### Promoting the Carer Passport in the community

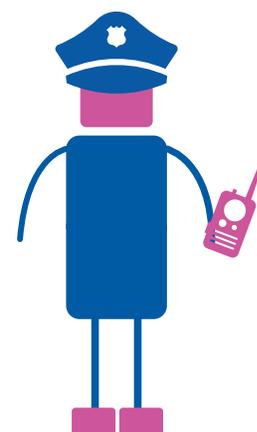
The most effective schemes appear to be those which have high visibility within communities, with Carer Friendly stickers displayed in shop windows and a recognition of carers via leaflets and posters at GP surgeries. Promotion and implementation needs to ensure that the caring experience is normalised, and the stigma currently attached to it reduced.

Having a clearly branded local offer aids promotion within specific settings and across multiple settings. This aids buy-in and improves carer awareness of a scheme. Ideally, the Carer Passport will have multiple agencies and services sign up to it, and multiple points of access for carers. It will be easily accessed by carers. It will have senior commitment from Principal Commissioners of the County Council, NHS and local voluntary sector organisations, and the endorsement of leading figures within the community.

One of the challenges facing those developing existing models is that not everyone has access to the internet, and hard copies of the list of local offers quickly goes out of date. However, local businesses usually display a sticker to indicate that they are members of the scheme and part of the offer. Again, personal one-to-one contact is key here, with one local initiative explaining that 'success depends on a conversation having been had'.

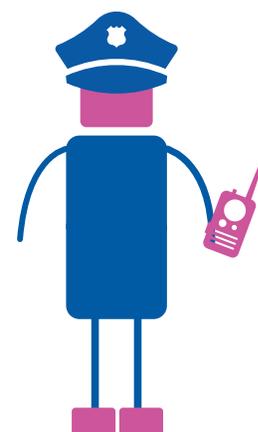
The Passport should be promoted through a number of channels to ensure it reaches far and wide, including to elderly and frail carers who may face heightened isolation. If the range of offers and geographical spread is broad, it can reach out to all carers and be relevant to their lives. This includes making sure that the needs of young carers are being met – that an offer is made to them too, that they qualify for concessions and can access them.

The Carers Card in Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole is also available to young adult carers and parent carers whose children are moving towards transitions. In Dorset young



carers have access to children's services "Max Card" which is another Discount card. They send out the Carers Card for Dorset through their Local Offer site. Thereby ensuring a better transition between offers.

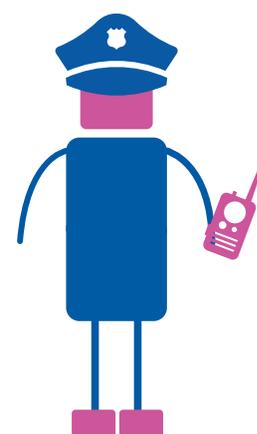
Developing and promoting local schemes with the involvement of carers themselves can help to build a package of support which is tailored to what they need and will be championed by them amongst their own networks.





## Going ahead

- Be informed by the expertise and insights of carers when developing this initiative, as the concept is one which clearly resonates with them.
- Define the purpose of the Carer Passport for use in the community, and how it will be described to carers and local services/businesses you are seeking to engage.
- Recognise that a discount scheme in itself is not a Carer Passport, while recognising the significance of discount schemes for many carers.
- Acknowledge that Carer Passports can achieve a high level of carer engagement at local level, provide an incentive to self-identify, and build community partnerships.
- Be clear about the scale and breadth of the offer to be made, including its reach beyond the discount scheme model to include (for example) carer involvement in decision-making around social care and the wider support needs of carers. Make it as meaningful as possible to carers.
- Build the offer for carers via the Passport, starting with local services and growing it from there to local businesses and beyond.
- Ensure broad eligibility for the Passport, making it available to as many people who identify as carers as possible, thus promoting a preventative approach which means that caring roles and responsibilities can be sustained.
- Understand the demographic of carers locally (eg. the amount who are young carers), and what any distinct groups may need from services and a discount scheme.
- Make sure that essential partners are in place from the start, including local authority representatives, health service providers, the local voluntary sector, carers services (or other organisations that support carers locally), and carers themselves. Identify a lead organisation, with senior buy-in from across the range of stakeholders.
- Build a joined-up, strategic approach which has the vision of Carer Friendly communities.
- Ensure that carers are at the heart of the design and development of the Carer Passport initiative.
- Seek a high profile for the Passport from the start, perhaps launching it with the involvement of carers, the local MP, businesses which have signed up.



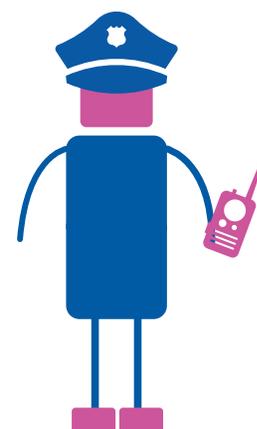
- Be aware of other Carer Passport initiatives locally, including those in specific sectors (eg. the health service and amongst education providers) to build on good practice and avoid duplication from a carer perspective.
- Explore the opportunity to develop one Passport which carers use across all services and local businesses, but which can make clear offers across the range of sectors.
- Explore the potential for local Passports to include offers from national services and businesses, and how this would be managed and planned for in terms of potential future take-up when schemes expand.
- Consider the time period for validity of the card, as carers circumstances may change (eg. two or three years in the areas consulted).

### In conclusion

A Carer Passport within a community setting can be a useful tool to promote the safety of it's members, engagement with carers and development of a truly inclusive community.

Each organisation can, in partnership with carers, plan and execute their Passports with creativity to meet the needs of their unique client base. A Carer Passport scheme can be an opportunity for communities to integrate the work they do with carers into their everyday practices and seeks better outcomes for community members, their carers and families.

**If you would like to view templates, good practice examples and get some ideas about developing your own Carers Passport, go to [www.carerpassport.uk](http://www.carerpassport.uk)**





## Appendix

### What might a Carer Passport offer?

#### Resources and templates

- >>> Leaflet to explain the scheme
- >>> Poster to promote the scheme
- >>> ID card template
- >>> Going Ahead summary



**Carer Passport**



Find out more and access resources at:

**[carerpassport.uk](https://www.carerpassport.uk)**