As a carer you have specific legal rights and entitlements. Knowing your rights can help you access the support that you need. This sheet identifies the basic rights for all carers.

The Carers (Equal Opportunities) Act...
The Act came into effect in April 2004. It helps to ensure carers are not disadvantaged because they are caring for another person. The law can help you in three ways.

Text in italics is reproduced from the Carers (Equal Opportunities) Act 2004

1. Your right to have authorities co-operate on your behalf
Under the act, your local authority must work with other authorities, e.g. education authorities, housing authorities and health service providers. These authorities must consider a request for assistance from each other if a local authority asks for help to plan services for carers or the people they care for, or when the carer’s role would be enhanced by the services provided by another authority. These services can be for either the carer or the person cared for.

You are entitled to a carer’s assessment regardless of whether or not the person you care for is having their needs assessed. For more information on assessment contact our information line on 01670 320025.

2. Your right to know about assessments
The act makes it a legal requirement for all local authorities to ensure you are made aware of your right to a carer’s assessment.

You're entitled to a carer’s assessment if you regularly provide a substantial amount of care for someone. Contact Adult Services on 01670 536400 or speak to your Care Manager and request a carer’s assessment.

For a more information or a copy of the Carers (Equal Opportunities) Act contact our information line on 01670 320025.
**Council Tax Reduction**

Certain adults are not counted for council tax purposes. They are referred to as disregarded persons. This means when the council count the number of people in your property they are ignored. If there is only one adult counted in your property you will be entitled to a 25% discount. Carers (other than caring for a partner/your own child under 18) where the disabled person receives a qualifying benefit are classed as “disregarded persons”.

**Discrimination**

The Equalities Act recognises the concept of ‘associative’ discrimination in relation to carers of disabled people. This means that it is illegal to be discriminated against because of your caring role, not only in relation to employment, but also in relation to goods, services, housing and other fields. Ask us for a copy of ‘The Law relating to carers and their rights’.

**Your rights at work.**

If you're working as well as caring for someone, you have the right to request flexible working arrangements to help you to fulfil your responsibilities. For help and advice speak to Kate Whitehead our Project Officer for Working Carers. You can call Kate on 01668 932 008.

**Carers Allowance.**

You may be eligible for Carer’s Allowance if you spend at least 35 hours a week caring for a disabled person (who claims qualifying benefit) and are not in full-time education or earning more than £100 a week. Carers Northumberland can provide you with more information on benefits, refer you for a welfare benefits check or find you help to complete the forms; contact our information line on 01670 320025.

**Protecting your pension.**

For every week that Carers Allowance is paid you are credited with a National Insurance Contribution. This is very important as if you are unable to work, or have to cut down your working hours as a result of caring, your state Retirement Pension may be at risk because of the reduction in your National Insurance contributions.