



You Care, We Care
Spring 2023

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Save Paper, Save the Environment

Receive your copy of the magazine by email: contact **03456 434 435** also available online www.devoncarers.org.uk

www.devoncarers.org.uk
03456 434 435



WELCOME

Welcome to the Devon Carers magazine!

For those of you new to Devon Carers, we support unpaid carers to maintain their health, wellbeing, and independence by providing the information and advice they need in their caring role.

Our services continue to look a little different as we work to keep carers and our staff safe during Covid-19:

Helpline: open from 8am to 6pm Monday to Friday, and 9am to 1pm Saturday where you can talk to our advisors during these hours **03456 434 435**.

Webchat: with our Helpline during our opening hours by clicking on the 'ask' button on www.devoncarers.org.uk. Outside of these hours, automated answers will appear, which may answer your question, if not leave your email address and our Helpline will answer your query during opening hours.

The Helpline is not able to offer medical advice. For the latest NHS information and advice visit: www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/

Updated information is available concerning Covid-19 from the Government: www.gov.uk/coronavirus

If you become unwell and are worried about looking after the person you care for, contact Care Direct **0345 1551 007**.

Website: with up to date information and guidance for unpaid carers: www.devoncarers.org.uk

Peer Support: If you haven't already accessed our Peer Support, now is the time to contact us, visit:

<https://devoncarers.org.uk/support/peer-support/> or call our Helpline **03456 434 435**.

Carers Skills Workshops: We offer online and face-to-face sessions, view them in this magazine or visit: online: <https://www.devoncarers.org.uk/support/training/online-training/> or face-to-face: <https://www.devoncarers.org.uk/support/training/face-to-face-training/>

Health and Wellbeing Checks/Reviews (Carers

Assessments): will be carried out over the telephone where possible. We will only make home visits where this is essential, AND an individual risk assessment shows this is safe for carers and staff to do so. During any essential visits, we will observe social distancing, face-covering and hand sanitising rules.

Please note: Services are provided on behalf of Devon County Council; if you do not want your information recorded on their systems, please inform our Helpline **03456 434 435**.

We apologise if you have recently informed us of no longer being a carer and have still received this magazine. We are in the process of working through our deletions and appreciate your patience. All information correct at time of going to press.

Hand-crafted delights at Killerton Christmas tree event

One of our Carer Friendly Devon supporters, National Trust Killerton, kindly invited our Peer Support Craft Group to help raise awareness of carers by decorating one of their community Christmas trees. Situated in their beautiful chapel, our craft group displayed their amazing skills by creating handmade decorations to adorn the Devon Carers Christmas tree.

One of our carers commented *"After becoming a carer for my father I unfortunately lost the time, inclination, and joy for doing any crafts. Life seemed bleak. However, after joining the Devon Carers Peer Support craft Zoom meetings and being given a project deadline to design and complete decorations for the Christmas tree, a flame has been ignited and I have started crafting again, so a BIG thank you to you all."*



If you would like to join our Peer Support Craft Group and are registered with us email: peersupport@devoncarers.org.uk If you aren't registered with us yet, you can do so online: <https://devoncarers.org.uk/register-for-support/> or call our Helpline: **03456 434 435**.

Carers from our Peer Support Craft Group at the Killerton Christmas in the Chapel event.

Helping you to overcome barriers to accessing COVID-19 vaccinations

Our carers have reported many obstacles which have left them unable to have their vaccinations, which not only puts them at risk of serious illness from COVID-19, but also those they care for too. We understand how important it is to access vaccinations but also know that at times it has been extremely challenging to do so. We can help you.

We spoke to Sarah, who cares for her husband John, who lives with Parkinson's, about the barriers she faced. She commented *"I know that vaccinations are the best way to ensure protection for both myself and my husband but living in a rural area has made it very difficult. My local GP surgery - which would be more convenient for me to walk to - is no longer providing them, so I have to travel further to a vaccination centre. This not only means time away from my husband as I don't like to leave him on his own for long periods, but also the additional cost, as I no longer drive."*

She continued *"I spoke to Devon Carers and they told me about their project called **Help to access your Covid-19 vaccination**. They were able to find a volunteer carer from a local provider to sit with him while I attended my appointment. That was really helpful as I then wasn't stressed about leaving him. But I was most impressed with the fact they paid for a taxi to take me and the driver sat and waited while I had my vaccination. He then drove me home afterwards, what a wonderful service. I am so grateful to them!"*

If something is preventing you from accessing your COVID-19 vaccine, please get in touch today - a member of our team will discuss your situation with you. To ask how we can help you to access your vaccination please email us at info@devoncarers.org.uk, chat online by clicking on 'ask' on www.devoncarers.org.uk or call our Helpline **03456 434 435**.

Raising awareness of carers at our Information and Advice Fair

Thank you to everyone who was able to take time out from their caring roles to visit us at our Information and Advice Fair in November for Carers Rights Day. From people who didn't immediately recognise themselves as carers, to those who have been caring for a long time, we were able to chat with everyone about our free services and those offered by the wide selection of fantastic organisations who joined us on the day.

Talking to attendees at the fair there was a common theme of people not reaching out for support early on enough in their caring journey. Many reported that they think it is their "duty" as a partner or family member to look after those they care for on their own and often don't seek help until they find themselves overwhelmed and completely exhausted.



Carers finding out about services at our Information & Advice Fair which took place in November 22 on Carers Rights Day.

We were pleased to help these carers by registering them with us and being able to support them immediately by booking them onto Carers Skills Workshops, requesting Carers Assessments, helping them to apply for Carers Break Funds and referring them to our Peer Support Groups.

Held on Carers Rights Day, the fair also enabled us to highlight the rights of unpaid carers including; the right to a Carers Assessment and your identified needs being met, rights at work, the right not to be discriminated against because of your caring role, the right to be recognised as a carer, the right to be included in hospital discharge planning, the right to a break and the right to be registered with your GP as a carer to enable you to access health checks and vaccinations.

If you would like more information about our services, please visit: www.devoncarers.org.uk, or chat with our friendly Helpline online by clicking on the 'ask' button or call us on **03456 434435**. Alternatively, if you know someone who doesn't recognise themselves as a carer but is looking after an adult who couldn't cope without their help, please encourage them to get in touch with us, to find out how we can support them.

Taking the strain out of hospital admissions for carers



Caring for others can be emotionally and physically exhausting and this can be dramatically increased if either you or the person you care for are unexpectedly admitted into hospital.

You may have fears about how you are going to cope when you or they return from hospital and ask who is going to support you in this difficult time? Devon Carers Hospital Services scheme can!

This scheme is available in all four of the main hospitals in Devon (Royal Devon & Exeter

Hospital, Torbay Hospital, Derriford Hospital and North Devon District Hospital).

This service conveniently takes place over the telephone and provides support if you find yourself having an unexpected stay in hospital. If at discharge, you feel unable to provide the same level of care as you did previously, or that your recovery will be affected if you do not receive additional assistance, we can provide personalised support.

This practical support is put into place for up to six weeks to help ease the stress and may include; delivery of ready meals, cleaning, help to set up online shopping, referrals for a sitting service or the purchase of non-medical equipment. It can also provide emotional support or signposting to relevant services, help to navigate the health and social care systems, liaise with hospital staff, help with benefits or fire safety checks and undertake carers assessments.

Carers who have accessed our service have commented *“You have supported me through one of my most challenging periods. Speaking to you has helped me feel calmer and get my thoughts in order, I am very grateful for your help.”*

If you or the person you care for has an admission into an NHS hospital, either ask the hospital staff for a referral to Devon Carers Hospital Services scheme or click on the ‘ask’ button on our website to chat online www.devoncarers.org.uk or call our Helpline to refer yourself on **03456 434 435**.

“ It has been very positive having your help and guidance when it felt as though things were falling apart. Your service has been great and a real weight off my shoulders, I really appreciate your support! ”

Make your mental health a priority!

This year's Mental Health Awareness Week (15th-21st May) focuses on anxiety. Anxiety is one of the most common mental health problems people face. Unfortunately for carers this a very real issue, as we not only worry about the health of those we care for but we also need to take care of our own.

These tips may help you to manage stress and anxiety:



Acknowledging that you are feeling anxious is the first step to recovery: Reach out to the people you trust and talk to them about it. You'll find that you are not alone, many of us feel like this, so share your worries and support each other.



Attend a Carers Skills Workshop: Feeling anxious and worrying about others can be very stressful and can cause mental health problems. Join our Managing stress session for stress reduction techniques. Or if you care for someone with anxiety, register for our Living alongside anxiety disorders session.



Take time out: Apply for a Carers Break Fund to spend on doing something you enjoy. From £50-£187, the fund can be used to join a fitness class, enjoy a hobby or anything which gives you time away from caring. Visit: <https://devoncarers.org.uk/information-and-advice/looking-after-me/carers-break-fund/>



Practice self-care: It is important to look after yourself when supporting others. Join our Self-care for carers session for techniques to look after yourself physically and emotionally. See our Carers Skills Workshops section for more information.



Reach out for mental health support: Caring can fill you with an overwhelming sense of anxiety and responsibility. If you are struggling to cope with your mental health, help is available, refer yourself to TALKWORKS - a free NHS mental health service www.talkworks.dpt.nhs.uk or call 0300 555 3344.

For more tips on mental health self-care and for a list of organisations you can contact for more help visit: <https://devoncarers.org.uk/information-and-advice/i-care-for-someone-with-mental-health/>

Did you know our friendly and informative Helpline is here to answer your questions?

From registering you as an unpaid carer, signposting, offering general advice and support, to referring you for carers assessments, Peer Support, Carers Skills Workshops, Carers Break Fund to Hospital Services and so much more, we are here to help you!

Open Monday to Friday 8am - 6pm and Saturday 9am - 1pm

Click on the 'ask' button on our website to chat online
www.devoncarers.org.uk or call 03456 434 435.

Finding the light through Carers Skills Workshops



When you become a carer knowing how to cope can be difficult for many of us, but imagine the challenges when you find yourself caring for someone who was previously caring for you!

That's the situation that faced Andrea 10 years ago when her partner Ray had a stroke and was later diagnosed with vascular dementia. Andrea has lived with a brain injury since childhood and Ray became her carer when they met a decade earlier.

But with Ray's declining health Andrea found roles fully reversed.

"When we got together Ray was the one caring for me," she said. "Now I have had to start caring for him. It's been such a steep learning curve. At first, I didn't know which way to turn."

The turning point for Andrea came through a referral to Devon Carers from the charity Headway that supports her.

"My support worker told me about the Carers Skills Workshops that Devon Carers run. I have an anxiety disorder and a lot of the things I was facing with Ray made my anxieties worse. I have learnt a lot from their sessions, one of the most important being not to get too stressed myself."

She continued *"I have learnt about Ray's condition, how to understand him more, how to react and how to communicate with him. At times it felt like I was walking on eggshells, but now I know what to do, and I'm not so scared. What I have learnt has been so helpful."*

Andrea has taken online Zoom workshops and attended face-to-face sessions, learning about; managing stress, various dementia-related sessions, how to identify a financial scam, living alongside anxiety and relaxation in nature with mindfulness practices, to name but a few.

"I'm not at ease on the computer," said Andrea, "but someone phoned me and talked me through how to put my camera and microphone on. It wasn't easy, but I managed. It's all about adapting."

"The online workshops were good because I could do them from home. I enjoy the face-to-face sessions too, meeting other carers, everyone shares their input, and it makes you feel like you are not on your own. I've learnt mindfulness, breathing techniques, and how not to burn out."

Andrea found she was also able to use her own awareness of living with a brain injury to help other carers. *"Because I can talk with experience of living with brain damage, I have been able to share that in the workshops. Other people have shared things which have also helped me."*

"Devon Carers have been so supportive. I wouldn't have managed without taking these sessions, they've been a godsend. Before I received this support becoming Ray's carer was scary and difficult, not knowing what to do, I was in a bit of a pickle. But I found the light at the end of the tunnel and that light was Devon Carers."

"The courses have been invaluable. I will be doing more of them, and I would recommend them to everyone."

Andrea was interviewed by fellow carer Jo Earlam.

Carers have told us that training is very beneficial to supporting them in their caring role. We have devised a series of online, real-time and face-to-face Carers Skills Workshops, where you can learn in the comfort of your own home, or in a Covid-secure venue.

It is essential to book your place. No booking is guaranteed until you have received confirmation from our training team. To find out more about the workshop content, please visit: For live, online sessions: <https://www.devoncarers.org.uk/support/training/online-training/> For face-to-face sessions: <https://www.devoncarers.org.uk/support/training/face-to-face-training/>

To book your place or if you have any queries about our workshops email: training@devoncarers.org.uk with the workshop name, date, your name and date of birth. Please do not contact the venue.

KEY:



Live, online
Zoom workshops



Face-to-face
workshops at a venue

Assertiveness

Would you like to become more assertive in how you communicate with people? This workshop will give you practical skills and tools to help you become more assertive. In this face-to-face session we will:



- Help you understand why we communicate the way we do
- Eliminate resentment in your communication
- Give you practical skills to speak out
- Talk about how to deal with confrontational people
- Help you to eliminate the need for others' approval
- Discuss how to take control of your life and your choices
- Set boundaries without confrontation or guilt

Thursday 16th February

10.00am to 12.30pm

Exeter CoLab, Wat Tyler House,
King William Street, Exeter, EX4 6PD

When caring changes to supporting someone in residential care

Your caring duties do not stop once the person you have been caring for goes into residential care. Once this happens as an unpaid carer, you face a new set of unique challenges. In this live real-time zoom session we will:



- Look at the different circumstances you now face as a carer
- Assure you that you are still an unpaid carer and look at the support you can receive from Devon Carers
- Look at hints and tips with other carers within the group, such as how to manage your life from a new different perspective

NEW COURSE

Tuesday 21st February

10.00am to 2.00pm

Online on Zoom

Thoughts, feelings & challenges

Have you ever given yourself the time to sit and think about your thoughts and feelings on being a carer?



In this live, real-time Zoom or face-to-face session we will:

- Give you space to talk about your thoughts and feelings on being a carer
- Allow you to explore them and look at strategies to help you manage those challenges

Thursday 23rd February	10.30am to 12.30pm	Exeter CoLab, Wat Tyler House, King William Street, Exeter, EX4 6PD
Tuesday 25th April	6.30pm to 8.30pm	Online on Zoom

Basic first aid skills

Caring for someone can be a worry if the person you care for suddenly becomes ill or has an accident. This practical and interactive session will focus on life threatening conditions. In this face-to-face session we will:



- Inform you of how to safely approach a scene
- Complete a casualty assessment, place someone in the recovery position and understand why we do it
- Perform CPR and treat a choking casualty safely and effectively
- Discuss common injuries; bleeds, fractures and burns
- Give you time to ask Q&A's

Tuesday 28th February	10.00am to 12.30pm	Manor Hotel, The Beacon, Exmouth, EX8 2AG
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Sleep workshop

Do you have trouble sleeping? This workshop will enable you look at improving the quality of your sleep patterns to chat through related issues with other carers.



In this live, real-time Zoom or face-to-face session we will:

- Allow an informal discussion to identify sleep problems
- Find solutions that carers need to get a good night's sleep

Wednesday 1st March	10.30am to 12.30pm	Barnstaple Library, Tuly Street, Barnstaple, EX31 1EL
Wednesday 29th March		Online on Zoom

Managing stress

Caring can be rewarding but also stressful at the same time. We will look at stress, its causes, symptoms, and a variety of ways of limiting its effect. We will use a variety of techniques to find methods that work for you.



In this live, real-time Zoom or face-to-face session we will:

- Discuss the awareness of stress, its symptoms and how it affects us
- Develop an understanding of mindfulness and resilience
- Equip you with coping strategies to help you manage stress
- Identify the point when further assistance may be needed
- Guide you on what to do if they are feeling overly stressed and where to get further support and advice

Wednesday 8th March	10.30am to 12.30pm	Old Heathcoat School Community Centre, 81 King St, Tiverton, EX16 5JJ
Thursday 27th April		The Courtenay Centre, Kingsteignton Rd, Newton Abbot, TQ12 2QA
Wednesday 10th May	2.00pm to 4.00pm	Online on Zoom

Combining single parenthood & being an unpaid carer

Being a single parent and an unpaid carer can present its own unique set of challenges. In this live, real-time zoom or face-to-face session we will:

- Give you time to identify the personal challenges you face
- Discuss strategies and hints and tips with other carers in the session, to look at how to manage and potentially improve the challenges you face

NEW COURSE

Wednesday 8th March	6.30pm to 8.30pm	Online on Zoom
Wednesday 3rd May	10.30am to 12.30pm	Exeter CoLab, Wat Tyler House, King William Street, Exeter, EX4 6PD

Looking at the challenges of caring for a parent who has Dementia

Are you an unpaid carer of a parent that has dementia, and are you experiencing particular difficulties and problems?

In this live real-time Zoom session we will:

- Give you time to identify the issues you are personally facing as a carer of a parent with dementia
- Allow time to come up with strategies and solutions with other carers in the group; that might be of benefit to help resolve the difficulties within your caring role

Thursday 9th March	6.00pm to 8.00pm	Online on Zoom
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Dementia and sleep

Does the person you care for have trouble sleeping?

In this live, real-time Zoom session we will:

- Discuss the importance of sleep and what happens to sleep patterns for someone with dementia
- Look at how sleep varies when we age
- Chat about which food and drink can affect our sleep
- Offer strategies to help improve sleep patterns

Friday 10th March	1.30pm to 3.00pm	Online on Zoom
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Dementia and effective communication

Caring for people with dementia can be difficult as we see them struggle with everyday tasks. But to communicate with the person you care for more effectively, we need to improve our own interpersonal skills.

In this live, real-time Zoom session we will:

- Look at five different types of dementia
- Discuss problems with communication and how to avoid miscommunication issues
- Chat about problems experienced by asking questions

Monday 13th March	10.30am to 12.00pm	Online on Zoom
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Relaxation in nature, with mindfulness practices

Would you like to enjoy the beauty of nature whilst learning relaxation and mindfulness techniques?

In this face-to-face session we will:

- Include a guided meditation
- Give you strategies to help you let go of your worries and find peace and joy in the moment
- Offer you time to reflect and share your experience with others

Tuesday 21st March	2.00pm to 4.00pm	Stover Woods, Newton Abbot, TQ12 6QG
Tuesday 9th May		Ashclyst Forest, Killerton, Broadclyst, EX5 3LE

Unpaid carers and the menopause



Caring for others can be stressful but with the added mental and physical pressures of the menopause, it can make coping even more challenging.

In this face-to-face session we will:

- Allow you to talk about the issues that you face with the menopause
- Discuss strategies to cope with the identified issues and how this will enable you to cope with your caring role

Wednesday 22nd March

10.30am to 12.30pm

The Courtenay Centre, Kingsteignton Rd,
Newton Abbot, TQ12 2QA

Living alongside anxiety disorders



There are a wide range of anxiety symptoms and people can exhibit a range of different behaviours at different times, which can make it hard to understand. This two-part workshop offers an opportunity to explore anxiety disorders openly and safely, in a small group. We will look at ways we can help and care for someone, and importantly, take time to explore and ways we can take care of ourselves.

In these live, real-time Zoom sessions we will:

- Part 1 - Understanding anxiety disorders:
 - Give you an overview of different anxiety disorders, including Generalised Anxiety Disorder, Obsessive Compulsive Disorder and Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder
 - Discuss the link between trauma and anxiety disorders
 - Look at experiences and perspectives of a person with an anxiety disorder
- Part 2 - Responding to anxiety disorders:
 - Give you supportive ways of responding to and caring for a person who has an anxiety disorder
 - Discuss how to help when someone doesn't want to be helped
 - Chat about looking after ourselves as carers (self-care tips and techniques)
 - Identify further help, support and resources

Tuesday 11th April (part 1)

6.00pm to 8.00pm

Online on Zoom

Tuesday 18th April (part 2)

Self-care for carers



Caring for someone can be very difficult at times, and it is important to practice self-care.

In this face-to-face session we will:

- Discuss what is self-care?
- Highlight that you need to be able to look after yourself, to the best of your ability, both physically and emotionally
- Look at how this workshop can help you to care for your cared for person
- Help you to gain a better understanding by learning coping strategies and managing stress levels

Thursday 13th April

10.30am to 1.00pm

Manor Hotel, The Beacon, Exmouth,
EX8 2AG

First aid Q&A



Learning basic first aid is essential for every day caring roles to give you the confidence to act in a practical and safe way, should a medical emergency arise.

In this live, real-time Zoom session we will:

- Offer a Q&A session for first aid related questions
- Guide you in what to do when approaching the scene of an emergency/first aid situation and decision making to manage the situation effectively

Wednesday 19th April

2.00pm to 3.30pm

Online on Zoom

Young adult carers get creative!



Chrissie Franklin - Lead Practitioner Devon Young Carers preparing to welcome attendees at the Young Adult Carer Transition Peer Support Group at South Devon College.

A collaboration between Devon Carers, Devon Young Carers and Torbay Young Carers welcomed young adults at a Christmas decoration event kindly hosted by South Devon College.

Suzie Walters-Jeffries - Awareness and Peer Support Manager - commented *"Together we created the Young Adult Carer Transition Peer Support Group. We recognised that young people who became carers during lockdown might be unaware of what support is available to them as the world opens up again."* She continued *"It was important for us to meet them where they feel comfortable. We've introduced a space where unpaid carers aged 15 – 20 could find fun, friendship, and be helped to succeed with their studies, alongside personalised follow-up from the right supporting agency for each individual."*

If you'd like to know more about this group and our other Peer Support groups visit: <https://devoncarers.org.uk/support/peer-support/> or call our Helpline **03456 434 435**.

Views on Devon County Council's Adult Social Care Vision sought

Devon County Council is currently in the process of updating its overall Adult Social Care Vision and Strategies, last reviewed in 2018/19.

The draft Caring Well Strategy, which relates to Carers, alongside the Adult Social Care Vision and the Living Well and Ageing Well Strategies, can be viewed by visiting Devon County Council's Have Your Say page:

<https://www.devon.gov.uk/haveyoursay/>

Carer Ambassadors and the Carers Partnership Steering Group have been involved in discussions on the draft Vision and Strategies. Devon County Council would also welcome your views.

Visit the weblink above where you will find an email box to send your feedback or you can send it to us at the Freepost address below:

Devon Carers, Freepost RRYT-SASA-HZXZ, Westbank HLC, Farm House Rise, Exminster, EX6 8AT.

Practice self-care: apply for a Carers Break Fund

Carers are facing unprecedented pressure in today's climate and often the first thing people cut back on is self-care. But this can have a major effect on your health and wellbeing and your ability to carry on caring. In the latest Carers UK State of Caring Survey 22, 41% of carers said they hadn't taken a break.*

Our carers commonly tell us that they find caring for family and friends rewarding but at times also exhausting! If this is how you feel then why not recharge your batteries by applying for our Carers Break Fund?

From April '22 over 3,500 payments have been made to carers who have applied for the fund (£50 minimum but on average £187) and they are currently enjoying the benefits of taking time out, even if it is for short periods of time.

What can I use the money for?

It can be used on anything that gives you a break from your caring role. It cannot be used for items for the person you care for (these should be provided by the NHS or Adult Social Care).

Examples of what you can use it for include:

- To participate in a wellbeing activity; yoga, mindfulness or exercise
- Pursue a hobby; purchasing garden tools or arts and crafts materials
- Enjoy a relaxing activity; reading or listening to music
- Engage in technology by using it to pay towards; a smartphone or tablet to join in with online activities or chat with friends and family virtually
- Towards a trip or night away

The Carers Break Fund is open to adult carers of adults who haven't applied in the last 24 months and do not have a current Carers Health & Wellbeing Check (a carers assessment) that concluded that they have eligible needs. You are not able to apply if you are actively engaged with our Hospital Service.

How to apply

You must be aged 18 and over and caring for an adult who lives in the Devon County Council area. You must be registered with Devon Carers which you can do by using our self-referral form on our website <https://devoncarers.org.uk/register-for-support/> or click on 'ask' to chat online or call **03456 434 435**. Simply contact us and we will send you an application form to complete and return.

* Carers UK State of Caring Survey published November 2022

SAVE THE DATE!

YCAD 2023
will be on
15 March



CARERS TRUST

Help Devon Young Carers raise awareness of young carers and young adult carers (up to 25 years).

Young carers reported to Carers Trust that they often feel overwhelmed but it doesn't have to be this way! Help them improve their health and wellbeing by calling for:

- improved support in schools
- more access to breaks
- better access to counselling support
- more financial support

Devon Young Carers is a service delivered by Devon charity Westbank, visit their website and social media for Young Carers Action Day events closer to the date!

<https://www.westbank.org.uk/Pages/Category/young-carers>

Care with confidence with our Carers Skills Workshops

Would you like to feel more confident in how you care for others? Or are you overwhelmed by the pressure and responsibility of supporting someone? Well, you aren't alone!

We speak to many carers who feel the same way, which is why we offer a bespoke selection of Carers Skills Workshops specifically to address your concerns.

Very few of us are professionally 'trained' to care, so when we find ourselves in a caring role, it can be daunting and stressful. Our skills workshops are carer-led and cover topics in small, friendly and informal groups and will help support you by offering a safe space. They allow you to take time out with other carers to learn helpful skills to make your caring role easier and give you techniques to help you look after yourself as an unpaid carer.

Our workshops cover a multitude of topics e.g. how to communicate with confrontational people assertively, manage stress, improve your sleep, relax in nature with mindfulness practices, cope with caring whilst going through menopause, to practical courses including basic first aid skills and looking at the challenges of caring for someone living with dementia.

Alternatively, if you would like to recommend a workshop topic for us to focus on, or you are part of any type of carer support group or Memory Café and you would like us to consider bringing training to you, then please do contact us:

training@devoncarers.org.uk

To view our face-to-face carers skills workshops visit:

<https://devoncarers.org.uk/support/training/face-to-face-training/>

To view our online, real-time carer skills workshops visit:

<https://devoncarers.org.uk/support/training/online-training/>

Mental health support from TALKWORKS

As a carer, you spend a lot of your time looking after the welfare of others, but how much time do you really put into looking after yourself?

Caring for someone can be challenging both in terms of the role you carry out, and the impact of this on your day-to-day life. It can be difficult to take time for yourself because of the guilt you may experience for doing so, however, it is important that you prioritise your own needs as well as the person you are caring for.

There are small steps you can take to improve your wellbeing including scheduling time for yourself each day to do something you enjoy, eating well, getting a good night's sleep and taking a break from your caring role to recharge your batteries. If however, you are feeling burnt out or overwhelmed, or are experiencing constant worry, low mood or sleep difficulties, you may be in need of some additional support.

TALKWORKS is an NHS talking therapy service for adults (aged 18+) living in Devon. The service is free to access, and here to improve your mental and physical wellbeing through offering treatment and support to help you feel more like yourself again. This includes one-to-one sessions with a therapist, group therapy sessions, wellbeing workshops and online self-help. You do not need to contact a GP to access TALKWORKS, you can refer yourself by completing an online referral at **www.talkworks.dpt.nhs.uk**.

or by calling **0300 555 3344**. For more information visit: **www.talkworks.dpt.nhs.uk**



Chance to win an £30 Amazon gift card by letting us know your views!

Your thoughts on our online digital offering?

As a service led by carers we are always looking for your opinions. In this survey, we would like to know your experiences of using our website, online chat or if you have used Zoom for any of our online workshops or Peer Support groups. For your chance to win a £30 Amazon gift card please fill in the survey below.

Click on the link below to complete the survey online or fill in this page and return Freepost via Devon Carers who will send them on to us at Devon Carers, Freepost RRYT-SASA-HZXZ, Westbank HLC, Farm House Rise, Exminster, EX6 8AT.

Online survey link: <https://kwiksurveys.com/s/pKFqFZtd>

1. If you have used our website, was it easy to find what you were looking for?

Very easy Fairly easy Not very easy

2. If you have used our online chat on our website, was it easy to use?

Very easy Fairly easy Not very easy

3. If you have attended any of our online Zoom workshops or peer support sessions, did you find them easy to access?

Very easy Fairly easy Not very easy

4. What changes would you make to our website?



Coming soon...
New podcast for carers - April 2023

In our next issue...

Help shape the future of healthcare

Annette, a volunteer from PenARC Patient and Public Involvement & Engagement Team at the University of Exeter says; *"Read my story in the next issue and find out how, with just a spare 5 minutes, you too can make sure that carers have a voice in shaping the future of healthcare."*

Remember to sign up to the free Priority Services Register!

In our last issue we told you about the free services you can receive if your energy supplies are interrupted, for example, due to adverse weather. To check your eligibility, how to register and the help you can receive visit:

<https://www.ofgem.gov.uk/information-consumers/energy-advice-households/getting-extra-help-priority-services-register>

Are you looking to meet and chat with other carers?

Why not join one of our friendly Peer Support groups (online and face-to-face) where carers mutually support each other practically and emotionally by sharing knowledge and experiences. To express your interest to attend any of these groups call our Helpline on **03456 434 435** who will refer you to our Peer Support team. For any queries once you have registered for the service, please email: **peer.support@devoncarers.org.uk**. All places need to be booked in advance with our Peer Support team. We are constantly adding new locations and dates, so please look out for our latest updates on social media, email and letters in the post.

Face-to-face Peer Support Groups

Please find below towns where the groups take place to see which is most convenient to you. Once you have spoken to the Peer Support team, they will send you updates on dates, times and venue addresses.

February: Bideford / Crediton / Exeter / Ivybridge / Newton Abbot / Okehampton / Tavistock / Teignmouth / Tiverton / Torrington / Totnes / Yelverton

March: Barnstaple / Crediton / Dawlish / Exeter / Ivybridge / Kingsbridge / Newton Abbot / Okehampton / Ottery St Mary / South Molton / Tavistock / Totnes

April: Bideford / Crediton / Cullompton / Exeter / Holsworthy / Newton Abbot / Okehampton / Tavistock / Teignmouth / Totnes

May: Barnstaple / Budleigh Salterton / Crediton / Dawlish / Exeter / Ilfracombe / Newton Abbot / Okehampton / Totnes

Online Zoom Peer Support Groups

Please find below dates and times when these online groups take place to see which is most convenient to you. Once you have spoken to the Peer Support team, they will send you updates on availability.

Games Night	Tuesday	07/02, 21/02, 07/03, 21/03, 04/04, 18/04, 02/05, 16/05	7.30pm - 9.00pm
Autism Group	Wednesday	01/02, 01/03, 05/04, 03/05	10.30am - 12.00pm
Dementia Group	Monday	13/02, 13/03	10.30am - 12.00pm
Mental Health Group	Wednesday	08/02, 22/02, 08/03, 22/03, 12/04, 26/04, 10/05, 24/05	12.00pm - 1.00pm
Male Carers	Wednesday	08/02, 08/03, 12/04, 10/05	2.00pm - 3.30pm
Craft Group	Thursday	09/02, 09/03, 13/04, 11/05	11.00am - 12.00pm
	Tuesday	28/02, 28/03, 25/04, 23/05	7.30pm - 9.00pm
Parent with Dementia Group	Thursday	16/02, 16/03, 20/04, 18/05	7.30pm - 9.00pm
Open Group	Thursday	23/02, 23/03, 27/04, 25/05	10.30am - 12.00pm
Living Room Disco	Thursday	02/02, 02/03, 06/04, 04/05	7.30pm - 9.30pm
LGBTQ+ Group	Tuesday	14/02, 14/03, 11/04, 09/05	7.30pm - 9.30pm
	Monday	27/02, 27/03, 24/04, 22/05	10.00am - 11.00am

www.devoncarers.org.uk | 03456 434 435

Please call **t: 03456 434 435** or **e: info@devoncarers.org.uk** for more information or if you would like to contribute to a future magazine. This magazine is made from FSC certified paper and printed using vegetable inks. Published by Westbank Community Health and Care: Registered Charity No 1119541 Company limited by guarantee Registered in England No 6243811. Devon Carers, Westbank, Farm House Rise, Exminster, Exeter, EX6 8AT.