

Welcome Booklet

Devon
Carers



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Welcome to Devon Carers

If you look after someone who couldn't manage without your help, we are here **for you**.

We provide support for unpaid adult carers of adults in the Devon County Council area. All our support is free of charge and can be accessed without the need for a financial assessment.

We are here to help you:

- access the information and advice you need
- engage with our services that are right for you
- find support in your community
- find support from other organisations and services
- access a carers assessment if you need further support



Contact us

There are many ways to get in touch with us:

Helpline: 03456 434 435



Our helpline is open from Monday to Friday: 8am – 6pm and on Saturday from 9am – 1pm. If you have any queries about anything at all, please do not hesitate to give us a call. We respond to voicemails within four working hours.

Webchat: www.devoncarers.org.uk



When you go onto our website, you will see an 'ask' button on the bottom right of the page. If you click that button, you will connect to our Helpline Team through webchat. This is a great way to have a private chat with us safely and securely.

Email: info@devoncarers.org.uk



If you do not need a response urgently, you can send us an email and we will get back to you within two working days.

"The Helpline Support worker was incredibly helpful and so wonderful to talk to."



Where to find information

Understanding your role as a carer as well as doing your best to look after yourself is essential. Maintaining your own health and wellbeing is important for you to be able to continue to care. There is a range of information available to you:

Devon Carers website

Our website is a regularly updated hub of resources to cover all the information you will need as an unpaid carer in Devon.

"I am impressed with the content and user-friendly nature of the website; I intend to continue to come back and use it again."

Devon Carers magazine

Our magazine comes out every quarter and is an easy way to keep up to date with the latest carers news, Peer Support groups, Carers Skills Workshops and events. You can either get the magazine through email or request to get a printed copy and you can view every issue on our website too. Large print and spoken word versions available.

Devon Carers social media

You can follow our accounts on Facebook (@devoncarers), X [formerly Twitter] (devoncarers) or Instagram (devoncarers) to see the latest news and updates for unpaid carers in Devon.

Carers UK Digital Resource – www.carersdigital.org/

Carers UK have brought together helpful information to help support you in your caring role in their Digital Resources section of their website. These resources and online courses, will help support your own physical, emotional health and wellbeing alongside managing your caring responsibilities.

Go onto the website link above and create an account and use this free access code provided by Devon County Council: **DGTL8827**



Support for you

Who else understands the challenges of caring better than other carers! As a carer you can sometimes feel lonely or isolated and this can affect your health and wellbeing. Our Peer Support groups and Carers Skills Workshops can help you feel more confident and able to look after your cared for person.

Peer Support

Our Peer Support team supports carers to meet other carers (both online and face-to-face), to share knowledge and experiences as well as emotionally and practically supporting each other.

"I always leave the group feeling better."

Carers Skills Workshops

Joining one of our Carers Skills Workshops will enable you to meet up with other carers whilst picking up lots of skills and tips – the workshops cover a range of topics, from specific health conditions to health and wellbeing sessions.

"Thank you so much for organising the Dealing with Stress Workshop, I found it most interesting and helpful."

For more information about which Peer Support groups and Carers Skills Workshops are available you can look on our website, in the latest magazine or give us a call.



Carers Story

Peer support

Making time for yourself can be hard when you're an unpaid carer, but with conversations held during our Peer Support groups, Peter has realised he needs to make it more of a priority. Peter cares for his adult daughter who has a mental health illness. Since retiring Peter's caring role has increased, providing both practical and emotional support. Through his initial conversation with us it was recommended he considered Peer Support.

He decided to attend two online Peer Support groups, one for carers who support those with mental health issues and another one purely for male carers who look after people with a range of conditions. He finds both groups a big help in receiving advice and sharing his own experiences. "These meetings help a lot," said Peter, "they give an insight into what other people are going through. I find if you talk about a problem, someone else has had something similar and they can help to steer you in the right direction. It was at the Peer Support groups that we chatted about needing to look after ourselves first, physically and mentally, because as carers if we are not OK, then we won't be able to support others as well as we would like. With this in mind, I'm now getting up at 7am and taking an hour's walk first thing to help me clear my mind and cope with the day ahead. It's perhaps not for everyone, but it helps me and is time to myself. I really would recommend anyone who hasn't attended a Peer Support group to give it a go."

"Carers at the Peer Support groups don't necessarily have all the answers, but you find people there who understand."



More support for you

There may be times during your caring journey when you need some extra support to help you. To work out exactly what help you need we complete an assessment.

Carers Conversation –

Chat with us to look at how caring affects the many areas of your life, including physical, mental and emotional wellbeing, ability to be able to work, ability to take breaks or to take part in hobbies. You will be helped to decide what you would like to achieve and advised of the support available to you. This is a proportionate assessment on behalf of Devon County Council. If after the conversation there is still eligible needs, you may choose to continue on to a Health & Wellbeing Check.

Health & Wellbeing Check –

This is provided by Devon Carers on behalf of Devon County Council. This assessment expands on the carers conversation. You will be helped to decide what you would like to achieve and the support you might need to make any changes. It also explores your feelings and choices around your caring role.

Support Planning

Following your Health and Wellbeing Check, you and your Carer Support Officer will work together to create your support plan. This will set out how the support needs identified during your assessment will be met. This will be reviewed to ensure the support put in place is working for you.



Need a break?

We understand how exhausting caring can be, and taking a break can help re-charge your batteries. If you need a break away from caring and the person you care for needs a professional to support them whilst you are not available (such as a care worker, day centre or residential care), this is known as replacement care. Replacement care is a service for the cared for person and is not free of charge; most people have to pay something towards the cost. Devon County Councils Charging for Care Services Team is responsible for working out how much the cared for person will have to pay.

While we can not provide replacement care, we do provide two services explained below that can help give you a break.

Time For You

Time For You is a sitting service designed to give you a worry-free break from your caring role.

We work with providers from the voluntary sector, the third sector and community partners to deliver a low-cost sitting service, by providing volunteers to spend time with the person you care for whilst you take time out. The role of the volunteer is to provide companionship for an agreed number of sitting hours but they are **not** able to provide personal care. Volunteers will be matched with the person you care for and all volunteers are DBS checked and trained for this role.

To find out more, give us a ring or visit the website here:
www.devoncarers.org.uk/support/time-for-you-sitting-service/



Carers Break Fund

The Carers Break Fund scheme provides a small amount of money to enable you to enjoy an activity, hobby or anything else that helps provide time out from your caring role. The scheme is open to all adult carers of adults in the Devon County Council area who **have not** had a Carers Break payment 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.

To find out more, give us a ring or visit the website here:
www.devoncarers.org.uk/information-and-advice/looking-after-me/carers-break-fund/



Your Carers Passport

How will it help you?

Your Carer Passport is part of the national Carer Passport scheme that you can use to identify yourself as a carer.

The ID card –

Your two-sided card identifies you as a carer, with your name and unique Devon Carers reference number on one side and the Carer Friendly Devon logo on the other side.

You will be able to access discounts, offers and carer friendly support, such as subsidised parking at certain hospitals.

The Booklet –

The pocket sized booklet includes short snippets of all the information you will need around your rights and who you can contact if you need more support or guidance. It also includes a small template that you can fill out and give to your GP to let them know you're a carer.

"The passport makes me feel recognised and valued as a carer."



Carer Friendly Devon



What is Carer Friendly Devon?

We work with organisations and businesses across the county to raise awareness of unpaid carers and their contribution to their community. This consists of Carer Friendly Employers & Carer Friendly Communities.

How can Carer Friendly Devon help carers?

Carer Friendly Employers undertake training to understand the struggles of carers within their workforce and the rights they have. Carer Friendly Community businesses can offer carers anything from free entry and discounts to seating for cared for people.

How can I know a business is Carer Friendly?

Carer Friendly businesses and organisations should have a Carer Friendly Devon sticker on display. They will also be featured on our website:

www.devoncarers.org.uk/community/carers-friendly-devon/



"My husband whom I care for, has been able to go into a book shop for the first time in 8 years. Carer Friendly Devon is brilliant and made this happen."



Emergency Planning

As part of our emergency planning scheme, we will give you a **FREE Alert Card**. It is designed to be kept in your purse or wallet – if you are unable to inform people you are carer following an emergency, the card will be used to alert a 24 hour emergency call centre to get in touch with your emergency contacts to let them know the person you care for may need help.



The application form is easy to complete and will give you peace of mind whilst away from the person you care for. Completing the emergency plan ensures you have arrangements recorded. The plan helps you consider the important information you need to record to help others support the cared for person if you are unavailable. The NHS considers it essential that all carers have an emergency plan.

Escalation Planning

You may also be concerned how you will manage if you have changes in your or your cared for persons situation (for example, work commitments, change to cared for persons condition, studying). Our **escalation plan** guides you step-by-step to consider your options and detail them clearly.

To receive a copy of the escalation plan template, contact us by phone (03456 434 435), email (info@devoncarers.org.uk) or by pressing the blue 'ask' button on the website (www.devoncarers.org.uk).

If you need help completing the form, please contact us and one of our team will be in touch to help.

"The emergency plan is brilliant, I wish I had heard about it earlier!"

Hospital Service

What is it?

At some point during your time as a carer, either you or the person you care for may have an admission to hospital. Our Hospital Services team offers practical help, support, advice, problem-solving and signposting to ensure you and the person you look after can cope during the first few weeks at home following a hospital stay.

What type of support can I be offered?

A Hospital Liaison Worker will offer you 1:1 guidance and advice following the discharge from hospital. Practical support can be put in place for a limited time to ease stress or strain, this could include:

- Delivery of meals
- Cleaning and home-help, shopping, or support with setting up online shopping
- Transport to and from appointments
- Sitting service
- Purchase of non-medical equipment such as white goods, electronics, aids

This is not an exhaustive list, as the team try to be as creative as possible when looking for solutions to ease the situation.

How can I request help?

You can get in touch with us by either calling us, using the 'ask' button on our website or sending us an email to info@devoncarers.org.uk.

"I am very grateful for the meals that were provided, they were an absolute lifesaver and made things so much easier."



Devon Young Carers

What is Devon Young Carers?

Devon Young Carers works with young people aged 4 to 17 who help look after someone in their family, or a friend, who is ill, disabled or misuses drugs or alcohol. We work to make sure that young carers are supported through our service and others, which can include specialist advice, access to respite opportunities and 1:1 support as identified in an assessment.

How can I contact Devon Young Carers for advice or an assessment?

You can contact Devon Young Carers on our helpline: 03456 434 435 or send an email to youngcarers@devoncarers.org.uk

Getting Advice

A young carer has outlets of support from after school clubs, hobbies, classes and groups for when a young carer does not want to engage with any trips we may offer. We offer advice, signposting and referrals into other services for any families that are at the 'getting advice' level and the majority of young carers receive this.

Getting Help

Devon Young Carers provide a small number of trips / activities each year for young carers from 4 to 17 years old. When a young carer is at this level of support they are likely to be invited to 2 or 3 of these trips per year to give them a break from their caring role and the chance to meet and share an experience with other young carers.

Getting more help

When the caring role or impact of their caring role is their main concern or barrier in life we look to work 1:1 with the young carer for a short time period to alleviate their worries or concerns and come up with an action plan of how to get to where they want to be or be supported in their caring role.



More support for the person you care for

Get in touch with **Care Direct** (previously known as Adult Social Services) on **0345 1551 007**.

Care Direct will provide information, advice and support to help adults who are being cared for find the solutions they need. For example, they can help with support to stay living at home, home adaptations, housing options, arranging care and support, keeping safe and getting out and about.

This may involve an assessment but do not forget that as their carer you can ask to be involved in this process with your cared for persons agreement.

"I was very impressed with the support I got from the Devon Carers team. It means so much as a carer to know that someone is caring about you. Their tone and the way they supported me, not just all the information they gave and work they did with me. It was excellent. It makes a big difference. Thank you so very much."



Working & caring

We understand it can be incredibly difficult to juggle paid work with caring. Carers may have to give up paid employment, despite their desire to carry on working. In other situations, deciding to stop work is the best choice for a carer and can feel like a huge relief.

If you want to remain in paid work there are steps you can take to help you manage your work commitments alongside your caring role.

Informing your employer

You may want to let them know that you're a carer or that your caring role is changing, so that you can both agree to adjustments to your working conditions as necessary.¹

Emergency entitlements

You are entitled to take reasonable time off work, sometimes referred to as 'dependant leave', in the event of unforeseen problems and emergency situations involving dependants or close family. Please note that this does not include anything that is planned in advance such as planned appointments. This will not usually be paid leave, unless your contract of employment includes that benefit.²

Can I reduce my hours?

All employees have a right to ask for flexible working after 6 months with the same employer, as long as you haven't already made a flexible working request in the previous 12 months. You can still make a request outside of these circumstances but your employer does not have a statutory obligation to consider it.

If you have a statutory right to apply for flexible working, as specified above, there is a formal process to follow. Please follow link 3 below for more information.³

Read more:

¹ www.carers.org/working-and-learning/working-and-learning

² www.gov.uk/time-off-for-dependants

³ www.carersuk.org/help-and-advice/work-and-career/your-rights-in-work/requesting-flexible-working/

Carers Story

Caring after a day's work

For Mandy, work isn't over after an 8-hour day in the office. Rather than going home she spends the evening caring for her mum Marina who has Alzheimer's, who is less able to live independently as the condition progresses.

Mandy gradually began to provide more support, but it's only now with a package of care and Mandy's daily visits that 87-year-old Marina is still able to live on her own. During the daytime whilst Mandy works, a private paid care worker helps Marina. After work, Mandy spends evenings with her mum, sorting her dinner, medication, chores around the house and helping her get ready for bed.

"It's quite challenging to balance the demands of work with those of being a carer. Although you can switch off from work when you get home, you can't switch off from the role of being a carer." Mandy realised she needed more support and contacted Devon Carers - they advised her to have a carers assessment. Talking to them enabled her to think through how to put support in place for herself, something Mandy described as "a breakthrough moment". "It was a validation of the role I was providing," said Mandy. "When you're an unpaid carer you can feel a bit adrift. Being able to talk through my caring role showed me that what I do really matters." Mandy found attending Devon Carers Peer Support groups helpful by sharing her experience with other carers and hearing their stories too. The recognition from Devon Carers has also helped her at work. She now feels more able to raise any caring issues with her line manager.

"Caring is a dynamic role and things shift, sometimes without warning. It's about recognising that and being prepared and I know Devon Carers are with me on this journey."



Help with benefits



As a carer you may be entitled to the Carer's Allowance if you meet certain criteria. The Carer's Allowance is not means-tested, so any savings you and your partner have will not affect your entitlement to the allowance. When you reach state retirement age, entitlement to Carer's Allowance becomes more complicated and many carers find that, where they were previously eligible to be paid Carer's Allowance, they no longer are.

Am I eligible?

The government website has up-to-date information on eligibility criteria for the Carer's Allowance:

– www.gov.uk/carers-allowance/eligibility

How do I claim Carers Allowance?

Apply online via the government website:

– www.gov.uk/carers-allowance/how-to-claim

Personal Independence Payment (PIP)

Personal Independence Payment (PIP) is a benefit paid to a disabled person, or someone with a long-term illness or health condition. Anyone who receives PIP can choose how they spend their payment. The payment is not means-tested and the amount you receive is determined by how your condition affects you, not by the condition itself. The PIP is made up of two sections daily living and mobility: standard and enhanced. You can find more detailed information about PIP and how to claim the payment at:

– www.gov.uk/pip

Attendance Allowance (AA)

Attendance allowance (AA) is a benefit for people aged over 65 who are disabled or have a long-term health condition and have care needs as a result of this. There are two rates of Attendance Allowance. The lower rate is paid to people who need help either during the day or night and the higher rate is for people who need help both during the day and at night. People with a terminal illness (and who meet the definition of terminal illness under AA rules) will get the higher rate.

Attendance Allowance can be spent in whichever way the claimant chooses and is there to help with the extra costs of living with a long-term health condition or disability. For more information on the Attendance Allowance, including how to apply, follow the link below:

– www.gov.uk/attendance-allowance

Useful Numbers

| | |
|-------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Devon Carers | 03456 434 435 www.devoncarers.org.uk |
| Care Direct | Devon County Council's Adult Social Care team 03451 551 007 www.devon.gov.uk/care-and-health/adults/ |
| Care Direct (out of hours) | Emergency out of hours contact 03456 000 388 |
| Disabled Children's Service (DCS) | Devon County Council's Disabled Children's Service team 01392 383000 and ask for the 'SEND local offer' |
| Carers UK | 0808 808 7777 www.carersuk.org |
| Department of Works & Pensions – Attendance Allowance | 0800 731 0122 www.gov.uk/attendance-allowance |
| Department of Works and Pensions – Carers Allowance | 0800 731 0297 www.gov.uk/carers-allowance |
| Independent Living centre | Solutions to stay safe, independent & active at home 01392 380181 www.independentlivingcentre.org.uk |
| Occupational Therapist advice | Via Care Direct |
| Samaritans (open 24hr a day) | 116 123 www.samaritans.org |
| Plymouth Carers Service (Improving Lives Plymouth) | 01752 201890 www.improvinglivesplymouth.org.uk/our-services/caring-for-carers |
| Torbay Carers Service (Signposts for Carers) | 01803 666620 www.torbayandsouthdevon.nhs.uk/services/carers-service |

Glossary

| | |
|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Adult | An individual over 18 years old. |
| Carer or unpaid carers | A carer is someone of any age, including a child, who provides unpaid support to a family member or friend who could not manage without this help. |
| Carers assessment | An assessment to establish eligible needs. |
| Carers initial conversation | This is DCC's proportionate assessment to what support might be beneficial without the need for a formal assessment (Health and Wellbeing Check). |
| Carers Support Officer | Devon Carers team, providing support to carers and undertake carers assessments and targeted 1:1 support. |
| Carers Trust | Carers Trust is a major charity for, with and about carers. Devon Carers is the network partner covering the Devon County Council area. |
| Child | An individual under 18 years old. |
| DCC | Devon County Council. |
| Direct Payment | A direct payment is money given to individuals by social services departments to buy the support they have been assessed as needing. |
| Eligible need | The Care Act specifies a number of needs that affect a carers ability to achieve relevant desired outcomes, and whether as a consequence, this has a significant impact on their wellbeing. |
| Health and Wellbeing Check | The Health and Wellbeing Check is DCC's assessment under the Care Act. This is used by Devon Carers to assess and record the impact of caring on you and agree support needs. |
| Hospital Support Worker / Officer | Devon Carers team, providing support to carers following a hospital admission. |
| Peer Support Officer | Devon Carers team, helping carers to support each other by providing opportunities for carers to meet, and find common areas and interests outside of their caring role. |
| Personal Care | Personal care is a broad term but mostly covers a carer providing personal hygiene and toileting, along with dressing and maintaining personal appearance. |
| Young Carer | A Young Carer is someone under 18 who helps look after a relative with a disability, illness, mental health condition, or drug or alcohol problem. |
| Westbank | Devon Carers is a service delivered by Westbank; with all staff employed by Westbank Community Health and Care. www.westbank.org.uk |
| Support Worker | Support Workers are employed by organisations to support individuals and their families through difficult times. |