

If you look after someone, we look after you

The quarterly magazine for unpaid carers

Spring 2025



What's inside:

- Welcome
- Carers Stories
- Carers Skills Workshops
- News and info
- Health and wellbeing
- Peer Support Groups

Save Paper, Save the Environment

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





Welcome!

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 free support services for adults caring for people 18 years plus include:



Website:

For up to date information and guidance for unpaid carers visit: www.devoncarers.org.uk



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:

Chat online 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

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



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 workshops:

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

Face-to-face workshops:

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



Health and Wellbeing Checks/Reviews

(Carers Assessments):

These 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.

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.

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Our contact details:

Helpline: 03456 434 435

Email: info@devoncarers.org.uk

Webchat: www.devoncarers.org.uk

Carer celebrated in BBC Make A Difference awards

One of our fantastic Devon Carers volunteers and carer has been recognised in the BBC Radio Devon Make A Difference awards, which celebrates people who make a difference in communities across the county.

Jane Taylor, from Okehampton, is an ambassador for Westbank's Devon Carers service and an unpaid carer for her husband, who has advanced MS. Jane received her trophy from BBC Radio Devon presenters at a ceremony where she won the prestigious Carer award, which celebrates those who improve the lives of another person or people through their helpfulness, compassion and support.

Jane said, *"I am so shocked and thrilled to be given this award; it's so important that ALL carers are recognised and supported for the tireless work they do for the vulnerable in our communities. Caring is relentless, it's hard for*

both the carer and the cared-for person; I am so grateful to the BBC for raising awareness with awards like this. Thank you so much."

Jane is among just a handful of winners in 2024's BBC Radio Devon awards which is a testament to her incredible volunteering efforts for which we are incredibly grateful for.

Would you like to make a difference in an unpaid carer's life? Chat with us about the various volunteering roles available. Email: volunteering@devoncarers.org.uk or for more information visit: <https://devoncarers.org.uk/community/get-involved/volunteer-with-us/>



Devon Carers recognition at Care and Support Awards

We are proud to announce that Andy Hood, who oversees Westbank's Carers Services including Devon Carers, was named Team Leader of the Year at the Care and Support West Awards 2024.

Andy attended a ceremony at Ashton Gate Stadium in Bristol to receive a trophy in recognition of his leadership of our team that supports more than thirty thousand unpaid carers across Devon.

Andy said, *"I'm absolutely delighted to win a Care and Support West Award this year for my role leading Westbank's Devon Carers service. It's great to be recognised in this way and for the hard work from my team that's gone into developing our fantastic service for unpaid carers."*



He added, *"It's particularly rewarding for us to receive this accolade in the year during which Devon Carers is celebrating its 25th anniversary."*

The Care and Support West Awards celebrate the hard work and dedication of some 500 Care Providers in the South West, which together employ around 19,000 people, who have a positive impact on the lives of some of the most vulnerable in society.

Our Devon Carer's service is delivered by Westbank Community Health and Care which helps people of all ages across Devon to lead healthier, happier and more fulfilled lives. To find out more about their work visit: <https://www.westbank.org.uk/>



Heavy snow hits Carers Rights Day!



We were so disappointed that we had to cancel our Carers Rights Day events due to the inclement weather in November.

Our main concern was for the safety of our carers and the risks they would have faced if they had tried to attend. Fortunately, we were able to continue with our small awareness event at North Devon District Hospital and were very pleased to chat with everyone who was able to visit us.

The national Carers Rights Day annual campaign aims to help carers recognise and understand their rights, and to access the support available to them, whenever they need it.

Every day, 12,000* people become unpaid carers for a partner, family member or friend – many of whom don't see themselves as carers, often unaware of their legal rights and what they're entitled to in terms of support and benefits. 2024's Carers Rights Day theme was 'recognising your rights'.

As a carer, knowing your rights empowers you with information about what you're entitled to. This helps you feel confident asking for what you need, as well as challenging things when your rights are not being met – whether that is in the workplace or education, in accessing health or social care, or when interacting with other professionals or at home.

Your rights include:

- Your right to unpaid Carers Leave
- The right to request flexible working
- Your right to ask your GP practice to identify you as a carer
- Your right (and choice) to request a free flu jab
- Protection against discrimination and harassment
- Requesting a carers assessment
- Being consulted when the person you care for is discharged from hospital



We are busy planning our awareness events for 2025 where there will be plenty of opportunities to pop along and chat with us about your rights and our free services for carers, including large events in Exeter, the South Hams and Axminster, to mention just a few! Keep an eye out for our latest updates in our magazine and online on our social media and website.

*Carers UK website <https://www.carersuk.org/news-and-campaigns/our-campaigns/carers-rights-day/>



An apples-lutely wonderful time at Killerton!

Carers involved with our Peer Support service were warmly welcomed by the National Trust Killerton Estate in the autumn to enjoy a fantastic afternoon celebrating apples!

From a tour of the estate's bountiful orchards, picking apples, apple juice tasting, watching an apple-pressing demonstration on their 250-year old apple press, to eating a scrumptious slice of apple pie (and treacle!), everyone had a lovely time!



Our unpaid carers were very thankful to Killerton - who are one of our Carer Friendly Devon supporters - and they thoroughly enjoyed their afternoon and the break it gave them from their caring roles.

They commented: *"What great fun with welcoming and engaging companions at Killerton, what a wonderful event!"*

If you would like to know more about our Peer Support service and the projects and events you can be involved with email: peer.support@devoncarers.org.uk and visit: <https://devoncarers.org.uk/support/peer-support/>



Conversations about the future with Rowcroft

"I wish I'd known that before" is a phrase frequently said by carers about the impact of a caring role. Having to navigate systems and services can be challenging.

It's one of the reasons Rowcroft Hospice was originally approached by NHS Devon Clinical Commissioning Group to develop a 'Planning for the Future Hub' for people facing significant and serious illness and their families.

Following work with focus groups, Rowcroft developed a digital space hosted on their website featuring common topics which people have requested further information about or help with.

The first ten topics cover practical areas such as financial, legal, digital and funeral planning, as well as emotional planning – how to start conversations with loved ones, including young people, and those with a learning difficulty.

As a visitor to the hub, you can choose which topic (if any), you would like further help with and, by clicking on the link, you will be guided to helpful organisations, documentation, films and resources.

Rowcroft's aim is that it will encourage realistic choices, help you with decision-making and encourage those who may not know where to start. In time, they hope that more of us can be heard saying, *"With a little support, I know what I need to do for me, and I've been able to help others who matter most to me."*

You can visit the Rowcroft Hospice online hub by clicking on this link: www.rowcroffhospice.org.uk/planning or using your camera on your phone / device, scan this QR code:



Finding 'me' again with Carefree Breaks

Are you a full-time unpaid carer in need of some time away for yourself? With over four million full-time carers in the UK, 68% report that they are unable to take a break when they need one.*

We have teamed up with Carefree Breaks to enable full-time carers (who are available to provide unpaid care for at least 30+ hours per week) to book a break away from their caring role.

Carefree is reshaping carer breaks nationwide by working with the hotel industry to donate its excess capacity. Every week there are 1 million unsold hotel rooms in the UK. Carefree turn those empty rooms into priceless short breaks for unpaid carers in need of respite.

A break gives you, the carer, the chance of a good night's sleep, the time to connect with your family or friends and the opportunity to enjoy activities you ordinarily don't have time for, like reading a book, going out for dinner or enjoying a swim or a walk.

Carers only have to pay an admin fee of £33 per break (one allowed per year) and you can choose from a list of hotel locations across the UK for a 1-2 night stay (depending on hotel availability). You can invite someone else along with you, but it cannot be the person you

care for, to truly enable you to relax and take the time you need to recharge.

One of our registered carers who has benefitted from these breaks is Linda. She cares for her husband John full-time who had a stroke which led to Aphasia and is recently recovering from bowel cancer.

She commented, "After two near carer breakdowns, I felt in desperate need of some time away. As a carer you can lose a sense of yourself, your life is dictated by the needs of the person you care for which can grind you down. I really needed time to be 'me' again. When I was recommended Carefree Breaks it was the perfect opportunity."

"I really needed time to be 'me' again. When I was recommended Carefree breaks it was the perfect opportunity"

She continued, "I found the Carefree Breaks website easy to navigate and once I registered I could search for quality hotels in locations across the UK. I chose to take a break in Basingstoke so I could catch up with my cousin. I also wanted to visit Bath for a shopping trip and as it is on the way back from Basingstoke on the train, I managed two whole days away full of the things I wanted do! It enabled me to feel refreshed, like I had achieved something and it really opened up my world."

Linda added "I find planning and researching a trip away as therapeutic as actually being on a break! It gives me something to look forward to and enables me to find my own identity again and to enjoy the things I love, but just don't have



time to do! I still have the memories and I look forward to booking another one next year."

If you are full-time unpaid carer who is 18 years plus, we can refer you to Carefree Breaks. For more information visit: <https://devoncarers.org.uk/support/carefree-breaks/> and www.carefreespace.org

*Carers Trust 2023 report - Carefree Breaks website



Free access to Carers UK Digital Resources

You can access the Carers UK Digital Resource platform which is packed with guides and tools to help you manage your caring responsibilities.

Set up your account today by clicking the link below and enter the free access code funded by Devon County Council **DGTL8827** when requested:

<https://carersdigital.org/login/index.php>

Top tips: Spring into spring!

With the improving weather, spring is the perfect time to get outdoors, meet up with friends and family, concentrate on decluttering your home or booking activities to look forward to later in the year, all of which will improve your health and wellbeing.

Connect with others:

Attend a new exercise class, pop out for coffee with friends or join one of our face-to-face Peer Support groups. If you can't take time away from the person you care for, join our friendly online Peer Support groups and enjoy mutual support with other unpaid carers over Zoom. Visit: <https://devoncarers.org.uk/support/peer-support/>



Spring clean:

It can be hard work but also therapeutic! Pick one room at a time to clean and tidy. Declutter unwanted items and donate them to charity. Or do you suffer with hoarding tendencies? Join our online 'Hoarding' Carers Skills Workshop where we chat about how it can affect your life and where to get help on Wednesday 19th February 10am-12pm, visit: <https://devoncarers.org.uk/support/training/online-training/>



Step outdoors for extra endorphins:

Spring is one of the best times to enjoy the outdoors! Make walking a daily habit, start with small walks and increase each day. It's free and will improve both your fitness levels and mental wellbeing.



Book events to enjoy:

Search for upcoming concerts, shows or activities you'd like to enjoy. If you book them rather than leaving it to the last minute, not only will you have something to look forward to but you are more likely to attend!





Carers Skills Workshops

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

The workshops enable carers to develop new skills and knowledge that they need to be more confident in their caring role, and meet other carers and be able to share similar experiences. Increasing your skills will help you grow in confidence and reduce your stress levels.

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 online (Zoom) 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 workshops@devoncarers.org.uk or call: **03456 434 435** with the workshop name, date, your name and date of birth. Please do not contact the venue.

Manual handling

It is important to look after your own health when looking after someone. In this face-to-face session we will:

- Discuss how to protect yourself in terms of back injuries
- Assess the risks involved when manual handling in your care role
- Look at falls, getting in and out of cars etc
- Pick up particular individual manual handling issues that carers might have



Thursday 13th February

10.30am to 12.30pm

Highwood Care Home, Abbotsham Road, Bideford, EX39 3AB

New: Hoarding

Do you or the person you care for have hoarding tendencies?

There are reasons for hoarding, and this workshop aims to explain what causes hoarding and how to deal with it.

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

- What hoarding is (and isn't)
- How it can affect your life
- Where to get support
- Ways someone can help themselves
- How you can help someone you're worried about



Wednesday 19th February

10am to 12pm

Online on Zoom

Dementia & 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 24th February

1.30pm to 3pm

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

Thursday 27th February

10.30am to 1pm

Exeter Community Centre,
17 St. Davids Hill, Exeter, EX4 3RG



Dementia & the environment

People living with dementia can be affected by environmental factors.

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

- Look at the environmental factors that affect people with dementia
- Discuss problems with depth perspective e.g. why they can't see the food on their plate or see patterned carpets
- Talk about stored and working memory
- Discuss the importance of routine and sleep

Monday 3rd March

1.30pm to 3pm

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 session we will:

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

Wednesday 12th March

10am to 12pm

Online on Zoom

Looking after you; looking after your relationship

Are you getting your relationship 5-a-day?

This two-part workshop will explore the changing nature of carers' relationships; with the cared for, family and friends.

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

- Look at relationships over time - an ever-changing situation
- Discuss communication vs connection – mistakes we make
- Chat about your family history and how you relate
- Manage conflict, crisis and change
- Discuss forgiveness with family and friends
- Look at loneliness within a relationship
- Plan for an uncertain future and going forward

This workshop will be informative and fun, with no requirement to share personal stories, in a safe and supportive environment.

Monday 17th March (part 1)

10am to 12pm

Online on Zoom

Monday 24th March (part 2)

10am to 12pm

Online on Zoom

Dementia - when the bathroom becomes a battlefield

If you care for someone with dementia, personal care can become a challenge.

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

- Look at the environment factors
- Chat about which clothes are easier to get dressed in
- Discuss pain and discomfort those with dementia may feel
- Talk about the importance of language and routine
- Look at easier ways to clean teeth and shave
- Talk about Agnosia - not recognising faces
- Discuss why people with dementia maybe fearful

Monday 31st March

1.30pm to 3pm

Online on Zoom

Bank Holiday Helpline closures

Our Helpline will be closed on the following bank holidays:

- Friday 18th April
- Monday 5th May
- Monday 21st April
- Monday 26th May

If you are concerned about the person you care for during our closures, please contact:

- Adult Social Care: 03451 551 007
- Adult Social Care (emergency out of hours): 03456 000 388

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 live, real-time Zoom 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 10th April

1.30pm to 3.30pm

Online on Zoom

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 session we will:

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

Tuesday 15th April

10am to 12pm

Online on Zoom

Managing challenging behaviour for carers dealing with mood disorders

For many carers dealing with the mental and emotional changes in their cared for can be the most challenging aspect of their caring.

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

- Give you the opportunity to meet with others experiencing similar issues
- Discuss ways of coping
- Look at how your own wellbeing can be supported or improved

Tuesday 6th May

1pm to 3pm

Online on Zoom

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

Tuesday 13th May

10am to 11.30am

Online on Zoom

If you face an emergency, who will care for the person you look after?

Give yourself peace of mind by putting plans in place if you are unable to care due to an emergency or unexpected hospital visit. Download our Emergency Plan to instruct others what actions should be taken:

www.devoncarers.org.uk/support/emergencyplanning/ or contact us to request the emergency plan forms be sent to you.



Citizens Advice Exeter explains Carers Allowance

The Government has announced an independent review into Carer's Allowance overpayments, after some carers have been asked to pay back substantial amounts causing immense financial distress. We spoke to Caroline Harris of Citizens Advice Exeter to explain Carer's Allowance in more detail.

She said: "Currently Carers Allowance is £81.90 per week and can also lead to: national insurance credits; more pension credit; Universal Credit and/or help with council tax and rent payments, so it can be really worthwhile claiming."

The conditions for Carers Allowance are:

- You need to be at least 16 years old and not in full-time education
- Must be caring for someone at least 35 hours a week
- Not receiving a State Retirement Pension of more than £81.90 a week
- The person you care for must be receiving a qualifying benefit: typically, any rate of Attendance Allowance (AA); standard rate of the daily living Personal Independence Payments (PIP) or middle rate care component of Disability Living Allowance (DLA).
- You must not earn more than the weekly earnings limit - currently £151 a week net, rising to £196 a week net from April 2025

She continued: "The main things counted as earnings are: self-employment; employment and property rental income. Work pension income is ignored and it doesn't matter what capital you have or what other income is coming into your household, which is good news!"

She added "If your earnings are close to the limit then have a chat with us at Citizens Advice because there are legitimate deductions like 50% of any work pension contributions and 50% of sitting or care costs for the cared for person while you work."

"It is also really important to tell the DWP when earnings go over the limit otherwise there could be an overpayment which will have to be paid back. If you do find yourself in this situation and don't have the scope to repay all in one go, then speak to us to find out more about ways to sort it out, and we can also offer a full benefit check."



If you have questions about claiming Carer's Allowance then contact Devon Carers who will refer you to Citizens Advice Exeter who can talk you through the process and any concerns you may have. Call our Helpline on: **03456 434 435** or chat online by clicking on 'ask' on www.devoncarers.org.uk



Home fire safety checks

Every year we refer carers to the Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Service for FREE Home Fire Safety Checks. We were recently contacted by a carer who had received the service to say a very big thank you! She was woken at 3am by their carbon monoxide alarm, which was provided free by the service, as the person she cares for had left the gas hob on. She phoned 999 and was told to evacuate and the fire service attended to make their home safe again.

If you would like us to refer you for a FREE Home Fire Safety Check please call our Helpline: 03456 434 435 or chat online by clicking on 'ask' on our website.



Peer Support snippets!

We are very thankful to Otter Nurseries for their kind donation of gardening supplies and the National Trust Killerton Estate for their foraged greenery, which alongside the donations carers also provided, enabled them to make beautifully festive wreaths in time for Christmas!



Craft workshops were held across Devon in Exeter, Totnes and Barnstaple, and our carers were very pleased with their results. They commented:

"It's my first time making a wreath and I'm so proud of myself seeing how it turned out and I really enjoyed it!"

"It was lovely, thank you, so important to get out and be around like-minded people and I look forward to attending lots more groups."

"I loved being amongst the other carers making a hand-crafted wreath. For those two hours, it was a complete break from being a carer and I felt like me. Thank you."



Beautiful blooms

Following the success of The Quilt project, the National Trust – A la Ronde offered our carers a new craft workshop, utilising different techniques to create stunning hand-crafted flowers inspired by the Estate's flora and fauna, artefacts and art on display within the house.



These workshops enable carers to connect with others and they really appreciated the chance to take time away from their caring roles. They commented:

"Really fantastic to be with the lovely Devon Carers craft group. It's great that Karen & Aaron from the National Trust gave advice and a helping hand. It's such a wonderful group and attending makes life much more fun and interesting!"

"It was good to chat with other carers and the Peer Support team from Devon Carers. I look forward to attending next time!"

The beautiful blooms will go on public display when the house reopens in **March 2025** after the winter closedown.



Get active this spring with Westbank!

With the days becoming a little brighter, spring is often a time we start to think about improving our health and wellbeing, but sometimes it is difficult to know where to start! That's where our parent organisation, Westbank Community Health and Care, a leading health and wellbeing charity can help.

Westbank provides a wide range of programmes and activities across Devon to improve the health and wellbeing of people of all ages and empower them to maintain their fitness and independence for longer. This includes GymClusive, a transformative new initiative based in Exminster, to enable people of all abilities to exercise safely and improve their health and fitness, including disabled people, those with long-term health conditions, injuries and reduced mobility. To find out more visit: <https://www.westbank.org.uk/gymclusive>

Or if you prefer to be outdoors, why not try one of Westbank's Health Walks - a chance to stroll on locations across the county - with an experienced walk leader, make friends and socialise? With different walk levels from 30-minute strolls on firm surfaces to slightly more strenuous ones on uneven ground taking 60-90 minutes, there will be a walk for you! To find out more visit: <https://www.westbank.org.uk/healthwalks>

Before starting any new physical activities, be aware of your limits and ensure you start gently and increase exercise slowly, so you don't cause yourself any injuries. If you have any health concerns, check with your GP about the type of activities they recommend first.

For more information, please visit: <https://www.westbank.org.uk/>



Last year we supported 32,000 unpaid carers across Devon.

As a Charity, we rely on donations and grants to help us run our services.

There are many ways you can support us: donate, volunteer, or leave a gift in your will.



www.westbank.org.uk

@westbankdevon @westbankdevonuk @westbankdevon

Westbank, Farm House Rise, Exminster, EX6 8AT | 01392 824752

Reg Charity:1119541 | Company No: 06243811



DEVON CARERS AT WESTBANK



What is Peer Support?

Peer Support gives carers the chance to meet other carers and provide each other with mutual support and understanding. It's also a chance to share tips and find out about local services and events. Our team of Peer Support Officers keep gatherings informal and relaxed, supporting you in getting to know some of the other carers in your area. We often add new groups to our schedule so please do get in touch if you have a request for a group or would like to suggest a different time or date for you. We will do our best to accommodate our carers' availability and preferences where capacity allows.

How do I join?

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 look out for our latest updates on social media, email and letters, or get in touch for our latest schedules.

Face-to-face groups

Every month we hold different face-to-face groups all over Devon (excluding Plymouth & Torbay). These sessions are informal and offer the chance to chat with other carers and make connections over a cup of tea or coffee. Check the schedule below to find out when we'll be meeting near you.

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 as they may be subject to change.

February: Barnstaple & Bideford / Bovey Tracey / Exeter (City Centre and Wonford) / Exmouth / Ivybridge / Killerton / Kingsbridge / Newton Abbot / Okehampton / Tavistock / Totnes / Yelverton

March: Barnstaple & Bideford / Bovey Tracey / Exeter (City Centre and Wonford) / Ivybridge / Killerton / Newton Abbot / Okehampton / Ottery St Mary / Tavistock / Teignmouth & Dawlish / Tiverton / Totnes

April: Barnstaple & Bideford / Bovey Tracey / Cullompton / Exeter (Central & Wonford) / Exmouth / Ivybridge / Kingsbridge / Newton Abbot / Okehampton / Tavistock / Totnes

May: Barnstaple & Bideford / Bovey Tracey / Exeter (Central & Wonford) / Ivybridge / Newton Abbot / Okehampton / Ottery St Mary / Tavistock / Teignmouth & Dawlish / Totnes

What we've been up to!

We've been apple picking and pressing at National Trust Killerton and making Christmas wreaths in Barnstaple, Totnes and Exeter. We are also currently crafting Beautiful Blooms at our National Trust A la Ronde craft group in Exmouth. We're planning lots of different activities across Devon, if you are interested in finding out more please email peer.support@devoncarers.org.uk



Online Groups

Our online groups are held over Zoom. We keep group numbers lower so everyone has a chance to join in. There's always a Peer Support Officer facilitating to keep the discussion flowing and handle any technical issues. All you need is a device with a camera and a microphone.

Open to all

An 'open' group for all carers, regardless of the condition of the person they care for. This is an ideal first step into accessing further peer support groups!

Thursdays at 10.30am – 12pm

27/02, 27/03, 24/04, 22/05

Carers of people with neurological conditions

An evening group for carers looking after someone who has a neurological condition such as Multiple Sclerosis, Huntington's, Parkinson's and Motor Neurone Disease.

Thursdays at 7pm – 8.30pm

13/02, 13/03, 10/04, 09/05

Male carers

Over 40% of unpaid carers are men and our online Male Carers Group is a space for men to share their experiences and get the advice they need.

Quarterly

Wednesday 12th March from 2pm – 3pm

Caring for an autistic person

This is aimed at carers who are caring for an autistic person. They may or may not have a formal diagnosis.

Wednesdays at 10.30am – 12pm

05/02, 05/03, 02/04, 07/05

Mental health evening group

This group is aimed at carers of people who experience mental health conditions.

Tuesdays at 7pm – 8.30pm

11/02, 11/03, 08/04, 13/05

Mental health group

This group is aimed at carers of people who experience mental health conditions.

Wednesdays at 12pm – 1pm

26/02, 26/03, 23/04, 28/05

Dementia group

This group is for carers that look after someone with any form of dementia.

Mondays at 10.30am – 12pm

10/02, 10/03, 14/04

Caring for a parent with dementia

This group is for carers that look after a parent with any form of dementia.

Thursdays at 7pm – 8.30pm

20/02, 20/03, 17/04, 15/05

Games night

A fun light-hearted group to mix with other carers while playing games.

Tuesdays at 7pm – 8.30pm

04/02, 18/02, 04/03, 18/03, 01/04, 15/04, 06/05, 20/05

Music night

A fun light-hearted group to mix with other carers while enjoying music.

Thursdays at 7pm – 8.30pm

06/02, 03/04

Hobbies & wellbeing

A fun light-hearted group to mix with other carers while doing your own hobby.

Tuesdays at 7pm – 8.30pm

25/02, 25/03, 22/04, 26/05

Craft group

A fun light-hearted group to mix with other carers while being crafty.

Thursdays at 11am – 12pm

13/02, 13/03, 10/04, 08/05

LGBTQ+ Carers

A group specifically for any carer that identifies as LGBTQ+ to provide a safe space for discussion and mutual support.

Thursdays at 7pm – 8.30pm

06/03