

# If you look after someone, we look after you

The quarterly magazine for unpaid carers



Summer 2025



## What's inside:

- Carers Week
- Carers Stories
- Carers Skills Workshops
- News and info
- Health and wellbeing
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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](http://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](http://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](http://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](http://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.

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## 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:

Devon Carers is a service delivered by Westbank Community Health and Care. This service is commissioned by 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.

## If you are no longer a carer

Please use this form to update your details on our database:

<https://forms.office.com/e/btLw9cEyjV>



## Our contact details:

**Helpline:** 03456 434 435

**Email:** [info@devoncarers.org.uk](mailto:info@devoncarers.org.uk)

**Webchat:** [www.devoncarers.org.uk](http://www.devoncarers.org.uk)



# Carers enjoy winter tree planting at Killerton Estate

On a cold, but thankfully dry, February morning an intrepid group of carers from our Peer Support Project gathered in their wellies at National Trust Columbjohn Farm near Killerton.

Under the expert guidance of the National Trust countryside team, they joined in with their project to create three new woodlands. Their task was to plant a variety of native trees; including oak, blackthorn and willows, which will support people and nature for generations to come.

Over the course of the morning, the group incredibly planted over 200 trees! Their hard work was rewarded with homemade vegetable soup in the barn afterwards. They all had an amazing morning and learnt so much about trees and the local area.

One carer told us *"Thank you for organising*



*the tree planting event today. I just wanted to say I enjoyed it so much. I really appreciated being involved with such important conservation work and also spending time in nature with other carers."*

If you would like to be involved in future Peer Support activities such as our upcoming nature walks we have planned at the Killerton Estate, please email [peer.support@devoncarers.org.uk](mailto:peer.support@devoncarers.org.uk)



## A warm welcome in the South Hams

We'd like to say thank you to Libraries Unlimited, who allowed us to use their libraries throughout the South Hams for our recent unpaid carer awareness raising during March.

Carers visited from across the area to chat with us at libraries in Ivybridge, Totnes, Kingsbridge and Dartmouth.

One carer, Kerry who came in to speak to us about caring for her husband Jake commented: *"I didn't really see myself as his carer until we with spoke with you. He's always had mental health issues which we are very open about but as time goes on we need to focus on how my role will evolve while caring for him in the future. I hadn't realised there was so much help available to me, including meeting other carers at Peer Support groups or attending the Carers Skills*



*Workshops. I was so impressed, I signed up today so I can start receiving help now rather than later, thank you Devon Carers!"*

It's simple to register for our services, just click on [www.devoncarers.org.uk/register-for-support/](http://www.devoncarers.org.uk/register-for-support/) Or call our friendly Helpline on: **03456 434 435.**

**Would you like us to visit your town to raise awareness of unpaid carers in your community?**

Please send us an email to [awareness@devoncarers.org.uk](mailto:awareness@devoncarers.org.uk)

Carers Week is an annual campaign to raise awareness of caring, highlight the challenges unpaid carers face and recognise the contribution they make to families and communities throughout the UK. It also helps people who don't think of themselves as having caring responsibilities to identify as carers and access much-needed support.

We also believe it is a time to thank the thousands of unpaid carers across Devon and to celebrate the role they carry out in supporting others.

In recognition of this, we have organised events during Carers Week where unpaid carers registered with us can 'take a break' including enjoying free days out with thanks to the generosity of Devon's many **National Trust** properties and Estates, including; Killerton House, Castle Drogo, Coleton Fishacre, Lydford Gorge, Buckland Abbey, A la Ronde and Arlington Court. You will also be able to enjoy activities at these National Trust venues for Carers Week including; an **archaeology walk, garden tours, taking part in a flower festival, craft-based workshops and an exploration of mosses!** You can even pick up a **free drinks voucher** from one of our awareness stands at these venues to help you enjoy your visit even more.

**Please remember to bring your Carers ID / Passport** along with you for identification and free entry for you and the person you care for!



Castle Drogo garden



Hand crafted Beautiful Blooms at A la Ronde

**Libraries Unlimited**, have also kindly offered their local libraries across Devon, to enable us to run **information days** where you can pop along and chat with us about our free services available to help support you in your caring role.

We are pleased to announce we are running a new **Carers Conference** at Westbank Healthy Living Centre in Exminster, on Tuesday 10<sup>th</sup> June 1pm – 4pm. Please see our article later in the magazine for more information.

In another new event this year we will be joined by **Teign CVS** on Wednesday 11<sup>th</sup> June with their **Sofa project** which is funded by The National Lottery. Come to St Leonard's Tower in Newton Abbot and find out how we can support you and Teign CVS will be on hand if you have any queries relating to housing, benefits and local community concerns.

Our awareness stands will also take place at **North Devon District Hospital** and the **Royal Devon & Exeter Hospital**, so if you are in the area do come along and see us.

We appreciate that not everyone is able to find time to take a break from their caring role to participate in these face-to-face events. Therefore, we are very pleased to offer our **online Zoom Peer Support** events where you can spend time with other carers in fun, light-hearted groups, enjoying music and games nights from the comfort of your own home. Or you can join a **pre-recorded journaling session**, led by Matt Young (Founder of 'The Journaling Guy'), to discover how this can help support your mental health. If you would like to join us, please email your name / DOB / Carer ID (if known) with the group you would like to attend music night, games night, or journaling session to **peer.support@devoncarers.org.uk**

Please look at our timetable of events and pre-book if it states to do so. To find out how to pre-book, please look on our website [www.devoncarers.org.uk/carersweek](http://www.devoncarers.org.uk/carersweek) or ring our Helpline **03456 434 435**. **Please keep an eye out on our social media and website for updates.**

Date	Where	Time	What
<b>Monday 9<sup>th</sup> June</b>	<b>Barnstaple Library</b>	9.30am – 3.30pm	Information stand
	National Trust – <b>Killerton House</b>	10am – 3.30pm	Free entry for carer & cared for person
	<b>Activity:</b> Community Tapestry Workshop	10.30am start	Drop-in session in the Engine House
	<b>Activity:</b> Columbjohn Chapel Walk	To be confirmed	Pre-booking required
<b>Tuesday 10<sup>th</sup> June</b>	<b>Carer Friendly Conference at Westbank Healthy Living Centre</b> <i>(pre-booking required)</i>	1pm – 4pm	Information event
	<b>North Devon District Hospital</b>	10am – 3.30pm	Information stand
	Peer Support Taster Session Online – <b>Games Night</b> <i>(pre-booking required)</i>	7pm – 8.30pm	Online group for all carers
<b>Wednesday 11<sup>th</sup> June</b>	National Trust – <b>Castle Drogo</b>	10am – 3.30pm	Free entry for carer & cared for person
	<b>Activity:</b> Flower arranging session	11am	Pre-booking required
	National Trust – <b>Coleton Fishacre</b>	10am – 3.30pm	Free entry for carer & cared for person
	<b>Activity:</b> Garden tour	2pm	Pre-booking required
	<b>The Sofa</b> – Newton Abbot	11am – 1pm	Information event
	<b>Journaling Workshop</b> Online	6.30pm – 7.30pm	Pre-booking required
	<b>Carers Cream Tea &amp; Jazz Afternoon</b> <i>(pre-booking required)</i>	2.30pm – 4pm	At Cumberland Grange Care Home
<b>Thursday 12<sup>th</sup> June</b>	<b>Pinhoe Library</b>	10am – 1pm	Information stand
	<b>RD&amp;E Hospital</b>	10am – 3.30pm	Information stand
	National Trust – <b>Lydford Gorge</b>	10am – 3.30pm	Free entry for carer & cared for person
	<b>Activity:</b> Moss-based walk & talk	11am	Pre-booking required
	Peer Support Taster Session Online – <b>Music Night</b> <i>(pre-booking required)</i>	7pm – 8.30pm	Online group for all carers
	<b>Journaling Workshop</b> Online	2pm – 3pm	Pre-booking required
<b>Friday 13<sup>th</sup> June</b>	<b>Ottery St Mary Library</b>	10am – 3.30pm	Information stand
	National Trust – <b>Buckland Abbey</b>	10am – 3.30pm	Free entry for carer & cared for person
	<b>Activity:</b> Quilling	10:30am	Drop-in session
<b>Saturday 14<sup>th</sup> June</b>	<b>Okehampton Library</b>	9am – 1pm	Information stand
	National Trust – <b>A la Ronde</b>	10am – 3.30pm	Free entry for carer & cared for person
	<b>Activity:</b> Pom-pom making	To be confirmed	
<b>Sunday 15<sup>th</sup> June</b>	National Trust – <b>Arlington Court</b>	10am – 3.30pm	Free entry for carer & cared for person
	<b>Activity:</b> Guided history tours	To be confirmed	Pre-booking required



# Join us at our Carers Conference

You are invited to our Carers Conference which takes place during Carers Week on Tuesday 10<sup>th</sup> June 1pm – 4pm.



Come along and wander around our **information stands** and **chat directly with us** about how we and other local organisations can support you in your caring role.

Whether you have been caring for someone for a long time or you might just be curious about what support is available to you as you start your caring journey, you can chat with us to find out more. You can join in a Peer Support group, learn about our Carers Skills Workshops, discover the benefits of a Carers Assessments to name a few. Or perhaps you would like to learn more about writing your own emergency plan, a simple document to help should you find yourself in a position where you are unable to care. There really is something for everyone!

You can also sign up for our **mini wellbeing activities** including; **breathwork** and **relaxation techniques** or join our **open-to-all Peer Support group**.

**Pre-booking is essential** to attend and to take part in the activities as spaces are limited, please visit:

[www.devoncarers.org.uk/carers-friendly-conference](http://www.devoncarers.org.uk/carers-friendly-conference)



# Carers

## Life as a male carer

Neville is a man who's always liked his sport, especially rugby, cricket, golf, watching and playing, and afterwards enjoying a beer in the club with friends.

Married for 40 years, it was his wife who took on most of their home needs, including the cooking, laundry and cleaning, so it was a big change three years ago for him when his wife was diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease, the most common form of dementia.

*"I've had to learn a lot of things,"* said Neville, who's 67. *"I didn't cook at all. My wife did all the meals. I've learnt a lot. Time saving is key so the air fryer helps, and when organised, the slow cooker. It's not fine cuisine but we eat. You learn as you go along!"*

Figures from Carers UK estimate that 42% of carers are male. Neville is sharing his story because he'd like to encourage more male carers to come forward and utilise the free services offered by Devon Carers.

*"Last year, I requested a Carers Assessment which looked at my needs in my caring role and what support Devon Carers could give me. It helped me a lot, and I appreciated the way in which my inner thoughts were able to be opened up and considered. I was lucky enough to be supported to take a break which enabled me to take some time away to watch four days of cricket. It was much needed, appreciated and enjoyed. Our sons helped enable it."*



## We will be at Exeter Respect!

7<sup>th</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> June / Belmont Park

Come and say hello to us at this **free festival in Exeter**.

# Stories

*“Devon Carers also recommended that I join one of their Peer Support groups, which I did! When you are a carer and you join one of their groups you realise everyone being cared for is uniquely different, and as carers we’re all doing our best. It’s sad because you wish you didn’t have to be a carer and at times I feel frustrated, but it’s not my wife, it’s her condition and just showing her love and care gets us through the tough times.”*

***“To all the male carers reading this, I’d recommend they try one of the Peer Support groups.”***

*“As men we think we can do it all ourselves, but being part of a group doesn’t change what needs to be done, but the support and understanding does help take the pressure off. The group is so helpful, it’s an opportunity to chat with others who have the same issues, worries and concerns, we share and support each other.”*

*“The biggest, and hardest, and most significant step for me when I became a carer was that I accepted the situation as it was and realised that I need help too.”*



*“I’m not able to participate in sport as much as I would like to, but I still try to meet with my friends socially at least once a week. None of them are carers and they’re not*

*able to provide the kind of understanding and support I get from the group, but I enjoy being able to play a half round of golf, or pop to the club to meet them. They’re understanding but in a different way, we have a drink, and we talk about cricket or whatever, then they say Neville ‘it’s time you went home’ and I do, back to being a carer.”*

Neville was interviewed by fellow carer Jo Earlam.

If you would like to know more about our Peer Support groups or would like to book a Carers Assessment contact our Helpline who will give you more information. Click on ‘ask’ on [www.devoncarers.org.uk](http://www.devoncarers.org.uk) or call: **03456 434 435.**



## **Do you need a short break from your caring role?**

We have teamed up with Carefree Breaks to enable full-time carers to book a break away from their caring role.

- At the one-off cost of £33 (admin fee) you can get a 1-2 night hotel stay
- The break is for you (the carer) only, you can take a companion with you but this can’t be the person you care for
- You must be able to cover any additional expenses such as food, travel and respite cover
- To be eligible, you must be 18+ and available to care for 30+ hours a week

### **For more information visit:**

[www.devoncarers.org.uk/support/carefree-breaks/](http://www.devoncarers.org.uk/support/carefree-breaks/)

### **To be referred, please contact us:**

[info@devoncarers.org.uk](mailto:info@devoncarers.org.uk)  
[www.devoncarers.org.uk](http://www.devoncarers.org.uk)  
03456 434 435



# 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](mailto: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.**

## Relaxation in nature

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

In this live, real-time Zoom 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



Wednesday 21<sup>st</sup> May

10am to 11.30am

Online on Zoom

## Navigating health issues

Seeking a diagnosis, waiting for test or scan results or waiting to see a consultant?

All of these can bring about feelings of anxiety, dread or worry. We will explore these and look at techniques and strategies to manage your feelings, ways to support your cared for and how to get the best out of the system.

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

- Look at how to manage your feelings whilst waiting for tests/results/appointments
- Discuss ways to support your cared for in these situations
- Talk about things you and your cared for can do to feel more in control
- Give you tips and tricks from other carers



Wednesday 28<sup>th</sup> May

10am to 12pm

Online on Zoom



### **Dementia & food**

If you care for someone with dementia, food and eating can sometimes be a challenge.

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

- Discuss and learn why people with dementia can have issues around eating
- Look at strategies to try and make eating easier, and healthier



Monday 2<sup>nd</sup> June

1.30pm to 3pm

Online on Zoom

### **Hoarding (limited to 5 spaces)**

Do you or the person you care for have hoarding tendencies? There are reasons for hoarding, and this workshop aims to explain the reasons of what causes hoarding and how to deal with it.

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

- Discuss what hoarding is (and isn't)
- Chat about how it can affect your life
- Find out where to get support
- Look at ways someone can help themselves
- Talk about how you can help someone you're worried about



Tuesday 3<sup>rd</sup> June

10am to 12pm

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



Monday 9<sup>th</sup> June

10am to 12pm

Online on Zoom

### **Unpaid carers & 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 live, real-time Zoom 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 11<sup>th</sup> June

10am to 12pm

Online on Zoom

### Looking at the challenges of caring for a parent with dementia

Are you experiencing difficulties caring for a parent with dementia?

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

- Give you time to identify the issues you are personally facing.
- 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

Monday 16<sup>th</sup> June

11am to 1pm

Online on Zoom

### Assertiveness with healthcare professionals

Good communication is an important part of good health care. Carers can find themselves in a difficult situation as they are often not the professional's first concern.

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

- Look at improving our communication skills and help all concerned better understand each other's needs and concerns
- Learn some simple ideas and techniques to improve your ability to work with the healthcare professionals you come into contact with

Wednesday 25<sup>th</sup> June

1.30pm to 3.30pm

Online on Zoom

### How to cope as a carer

Would you like to learn some hints, tips and strategies on 'How to cope as a carer'?

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

- **Part 1** – Look at self-care which will cover eating, exercise, sleep, alcohol and smoking
- Give advice on being organised, rewarding yourself, taking time for yourself (and why not to feel guilty about it)
- Advise about getting the best out of the NHS and other sources of practical help
- **Part 2** – We will discuss coping mentally and emotionally, looking at feelings of guilt, resentment, anger, negativity, loneliness, loss (of the person they were before and the future you thought you were going to have)
- Look at accepting help and advice on managing unhelpful suggestions when you are busy contending with a caring role

Monday 30<sup>th</sup> June (part 1)

1.30pm to 3pm

Online on Zoom

Monday 7<sup>th</sup> July (part 2)

1.30pm to 3pm

Online on Zoom



## Do you attend a Carers Support Group?

From managing stress to first aid and looking at your thoughts, feelings and challenges of being a carer, we have workshops which can help support you in your caring role. If you would like to discuss us attending your group, email:

[workshops@devoncarers.org.uk](mailto:workshops@devoncarers.org.uk)

## Sleep workshop

Do you have trouble sleeping? This workshop will enable you to look at improving the quality of your sleep patterns and 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 8<sup>th</sup> July

11am to 1pm

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 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 you are feeling overly stressed and where to get further support and advice
- Set boundaries without confrontation or guilt

Tuesday 15<sup>th</sup> July

10am to 12pm

Online on Zoom



# Planning for a hospital stay

Do you, or the person you care for have a planned hospital stay coming up? We understand that this can be a difficult time for you both but with the help of our new booklets we hope that they can ease your concerns by guiding you through what to expect before, during and after your stay.

Helpful topics in our **Planning for a hospital stay** booklet include;

- **Getting ready for staying in hospital:** including; pre-admission assessment, what to pack and who will care for the person I look after whilst in hospital.
- **Staying in hospital:** including; helpful hospital information, talking to hospital staff and planning for an emergency.
- **Planning hospital discharge:** What if they aren't ready to go home or I can't care for them and frequently asked questions.

You can also read practical advice and information in our **Coming home from hospital** booklet which includes;

- Getting prepared to come home
- The day of discharge
- Practical support
- Looking after yourself

To download your copy of these booklets visit: [www.devoncarers.org.uk/support/hospital-planning](http://www.devoncarers.org.uk/support/hospital-planning) or if you need a printed version, contact our Helpline by clicking on 'ask' and chat online: [www.devoncarers.org.uk](http://www.devoncarers.org.uk) or call: **03456 434 435**.





# Dementia Action Week

## 19<sup>th</sup> – 25<sup>th</sup> May

It is thought that nearly a million people are living with dementia in the UK today and early predictions estimate this number will rise to 1.4 million by 2040\*.

Dementia Action Week is an awareness raising campaign which aims to highlight this staggering increase and is supported by The Alzheimer's Society. The charity works tirelessly with individuals and organisations across the UK to encourage people to act on dementia.

This year Dementia Action Week is taking place from 19<sup>th</sup> – 25<sup>th</sup> May, and the theme is the importance of a timely and accurate diagnosis for people affected by dementia.

With many of our registered carers caring for a person with dementia, we thought it would be an opportune time to feature the various ways we can support you:

- **Dementia related Carers Skills Workshops:** these workshops will help you navigate some of the challenges you may experience including: 'Dementia and food' and 'Looking at the challenges of caring for a parent with dementia'.
- **General Carers Skills Workshops:** may also help including; 'Managing stress' and 'Thoughts, feelings and challenges'.



- **Peer Support groups:** offer fantastic mutual support for those caring for people living with dementia with both face-to-face and online Zoom sessions available.

- **Emergency and Contingency planning:** Our template emergency plans enable you to write down contact names/numbers of people who you trust to help the cared-for person if you're unable to and let them know the type of care and medication they normally receive, plus so much more!
- **Robopets:** you can foster a Robopet dog or cat to keep the person you care for company, to give you some much needed time.



- **Carers Assessment/Review:** a conversation to look at how caring affects your life and covers many areas including physical and mental wellbeing. It also looks at your ability to access work and recreation as well as any change in circumstances.
- **Helpline and website:** Contact us on our Helpline or visit our website for signposting to dementia-related organisations.

Contact our friendly Helpline to discuss how we can help support you while you care for someone living with dementia. Chat online by clicking on 'ask' on [www.devoncarers.org.uk](http://www.devoncarers.org.uk) or call: **03456 434 435**. For more information about The Alzheimer's Society visit: <https://www.alzheimers.org.uk/>

\* <https://www.alzheimers.org.uk/>



# Volunteers Week 2<sup>nd</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> June

Volunteers Week is an annual UK-wide campaign held from Monday 2<sup>nd</sup> to Sunday 8<sup>th</sup> June, to celebrate and recognise the amazing contributions of volunteers. It is also an opportunity for us to thank our volunteers who dedicate themselves to selflessly supporting our unpaid carers and our service.

Our volunteers make such a difference to our carers. Just spending time chatting about every day things and enjoying spending time together, gives our carers a break away from their caring role.

## Would you have time to volunteer with us?

We are always looking for more people to join our fantastic team. You can offer as little or as much time as you can spare.

You could simply like and share our social media posts to help us reach more carers. Or you could help at one of our Peer Support groups or if volunteering from home is more convenient, you could spend time chatting over the phone with carers. Or if you can spare more time, you could join us as a Carer Ambassador to help shape the future of carers services. The choice is yours!

If you would like to know more about volunteering and the various roles available, email: [volunteering@devoncarers.org.uk](mailto:volunteering@devoncarers.org.uk) to arrange an informal chat with our Volunteering team.

## In the last financial year;

Our volunteers supported: **285 carers**

Our volunteers have given: **2,988 hours**



## Top tips

Whether you are new to caring or have been one for a long time, advice from other carers can provide a lifeline to help you negotiate your journey while supporting others.

From self-care, keeping active, looking after your mental health and other practical tips, our carers have a top tip for you!

### Include self-care activities into your daily routine:



this will reduce stress, enhance your emotional wellbeing and build resilience. Start with small steps with activities that bring you happiness and plan them regularly, such as reading a book or listening to a podcast or music.

### Keeping active:



improves your physical health and mental wellbeing, helping you cope with the challenges of caring. Choose one you will maintain; walking the dog or swimming with friends. Or try it in short bursts; a ten-minute workout, or a quick power walk around the block!

### Look after your mental health:



The stress of caring can take its toll. Create your own caring toolkit: keep useful contact details for mental health organisations in one easily accessible place, so you don't panic when you need to contact them for help.

### Request a Carers Assessment:



It is not an assessment of your ability to care but to look at your situation and how your caring role impacts you and to identify what support you can access. Contact the Devon Carers Helpline by chatting online: click on 'ask' on: [www.devoncarers.org.uk](http://www.devoncarers.org.uk) or call: **03456 434 435**.



# We are Westbank

Did you know that Devon Carers and Devon Young Carers, which together support more than 30,000 unpaid carers across the county, are both services delivered by Devon's foremost health and wellbeing charity **Westbank Community Health and Care**?

Westbank provides a broad range of programmes, initiatives and activities across Devon to improve the health and wellbeing of individuals and bring communities together.

Our **Community Cookery School** at Westbank's Healthy Living Centre in Exminster is a fantastic resource that's open to all. We have recently launched free Cook and Lunch sessions and are currently taking bookings for summer dates.

During each group session, participants cook up a delicious meal in our bespoke teaching kitchen, then stay to enjoy the food they've made in our newly refurbished Community Hub. Any surplus can be taken home! The 90-minute cooking sessions start at 10.30am, followed by a communal lunch at midday.

Westbank's community Cook and Lunch sessions are suitable for those experiencing loneliness and isolation, people with caring responsibilities, families with young children, young people aged 14 – 18 years old, or those finding the cost of living challenging. If you or anyone you know would like to come along, booking is via our website [www.westbank.org.uk/cook-and-lunch-sessions](http://www.westbank.org.uk/cook-and-lunch-sessions). Alternatively, contact Westbank's Community Cookery School Lead, on **01392 824752** or email [ccs@westbank.org.uk](mailto:ccs@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](http://www.westbank.org.uk)

[@westbankdevon](https://www.instagram.com/westbankdevon) [@westbankdevonuk](https://www.facebook.com/westbankdevonuk) [@westbankdevon](https://www.twitter.com/westbankdevon)

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

Reg Charity:1119541 | Company No: 06243811



## 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, 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.

**May:** Barnstaple / Bideford / Bovey Tracey / Exeter Central & Wonford / Exeter Pinhoe Craft Café / Ivybridge / Killerton / Newton Abbot / Okehampton / Ottery St Mary / Tavistock / Teignmouth & Dawlish / Totnes

**June:** Barnstaple / Bideford / Bovey Tracey / Exeter Central & Wonford / Exmouth / Ivybridge / Kingsbridge / Newton Abbot / Okehampton / Tavistock / Tiverton / Totnes

**July:** Barnstaple / Bideford / Bovey Tracey / Budleigh Salterton / Cullompton / Exeter Central & Wonford / Ivybridge / Newton Abbot / Okehampton / Tavistock / Teignmouth & Dawlish / Totnes

**August:** Bideford / Exeter / Exmouth / Killerton / Newton Abbot / Tavistock  
**Keep an eye on our social media for location updates**

## What we've been up to!

We've been enjoying **Carers Active April** and busy planning new events such as **Crafty Coffee Mornings** and **Forest School for carers**. We're always open to your suggestions for locations for face-to-face groups as well as any ideas for new online groups you think we should run. Please get in touch with us by emailing: **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**

22/05, 26/06, 24/07, 28/08

## 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**

08/05, 10/07, 14/08

## 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.

**Fridays 10.30am – 11.30am**

09/05, 06/06, 01/08

## 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**

07/05, 04/06, 02/07, 06/08

## Mental health evening group

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

**Tuesdays at 7pm – 8.30pm**

13/05, 03/06, 08/07, 12/08

## Mental health group

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

**Wednesdays at 12pm – 1pm**

28/05, 25/06, 23/07, 27/08

## Dementia group

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

**Mondays at 10.30am – 12pm**

12/05, 02/06, 14/07, 11/08

## 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**

15/05, 19/06, 17/07, 21/08

## Games night

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

**Tuesdays at 7pm – 8.30pm**

06/05, 20/05, 10/06, 17/06, 01/07, 15/07, 05/08, 19/08

## Music night

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

**Thursdays at 7pm – 8.30pm**

12/06, 07/08

## Hobbies & wellbeing

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

**Tuesdays at 7pm – 8.30pm**

27/05, 24/06, 22/07, 26/08

## Craft group

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

**Thursdays at 11am – 12pm**

08/05, 10/07, 14/08

## 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**

03/07