

If you look after someone, we look after you

The quarterly magazine for unpaid carers



Winter 2025



What's inside:

- Welcome
- Latest news
- Carers stories
- Carers Skills Workshops
- 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/peersupport> 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/onlinetraining>

Face-to-face workshops:

<https://devoncarers.org.uk/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

Webchat: www.devoncarers.org.uk



Boost your wellbeing this winter by joining our Peer Support activities!

Over Winter, with its poor weather and short days, it's especially important to boost our wellbeing by staying connected with others, so why not do this by trying something new! We have a whole range of indoor, outdoor and online activities to see you through to Spring. All groups and events are FREE for registered carers.

Coastal walks: these are proving to be very popular, so why not join us and other carers on these fantastic walks along the stunning **North Devon** coast, led by the South West Coast Path Association (1-3 miles approx.)



New Peer Support group locations: we are looking forward to enabling more carers to meet and chat with each other at our newly introduced Peer Support groups in **South Molton** and **Torrington**.

Carers Skills Workshops: carers tell us these sessions are very beneficial in supporting them in their caring roles, so we are bringing them direct to our face-to-face Peer Support groups. Join us to learn essential skills in our first aid workshop in **Barnstaple** in November or our manual handling workshop to our **Tavistock** Peer Support group in January. If you are in need of relaxation (and who isn't!) then come along to our relaxation workshop at **Ivybridge** Peer Support group in January.



Guest speakers: would you like speakers to join your Peer Support group to talk about subjects important to your group? Recent speakers have included Talkworks, Citizens Advice, National Energy Action and Social Prescribers. Please get in touch with your suggestions.

Craft workshops: take some time out for yourself by enjoying crafting using a range of different media at the inspiring National Trust A la Ronde 16-sided house in **Exmouth**, over refreshments and conversation with like-minded carers.

Wreath-making workshops: Join us in early December in **Bideford**, **Teignmouth** and **Exeter**, to make gorgeous handmade Christmas wreaths, a fun and festive way to spend time with other carers.



Christmas decorations craft workshop: help us to adorn our Christmas tree at the National Trust Killerton House Chapel this year by making handmade decorations in the craft of your choice in our **Exeter** Craft Café and at A la Ronde, **Exmouth**.



Creative workshops: join the Life on the Edge project in a series of nature-related craft workshops using the local landscape to inspire you and help improve your mental wellbeing in **Modbury**.

If you are interested in attending any of these events please email: peer.support@devoncarers.org.uk



Join us for Carers Rights Day – Thursday 20th November

Did you know that 12,000 people in the UK become unpaid carers for a partner, family member or friend every day?

Many don't see themselves as unpaid carers and are often unaware of their legal rights and what they're entitled to in terms of support and benefits.

Carers Rights Day aims to highlight the invaluable role of unpaid carers and ensure that they are aware of their rights, so that they don't miss out on support designed to reduce some of the pressures caring can bring.

Whether they care 24/7 or juggle care with work and family life, are new to caring or have been for many years, all carers deserve to understand their rights and be supported to use them if they wish.

The theme of this year's campaign is: 'Know your rights, use your rights'.

Join us and other organisations at the venues below for Carers Rights Day!

Location	Address	Time
Barnstaple Library	Tuly Street, EX31 1EL	10am – 3.30pm
Exeter Library	Castle Street, EX4 3PQ	10am – 3.30pm
Royal Devon & Exeter Hospital	Barrack Road, EX2 5DW	10am – 3.30pm
Active Tiverton	Tiverton Leisure Centre, Bolham Road, EX16 6SG	10am – 3.30pm
Tavistock Pannier Market	Butchers Hall, Market Road, PL19 0AL	10am – 3.30pm

Come along and chat with us about the free support and services for you.



Did you know that as an unpaid carer you have the right to:

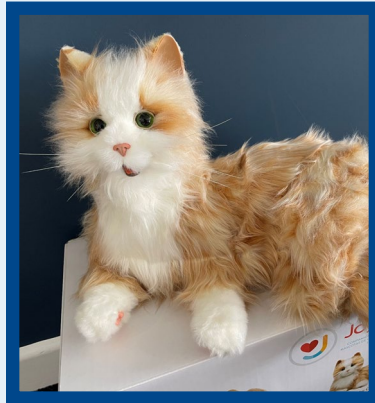
- **Unpaid carers leave:** In 2024, the Carer's Leave Act 2023 became law, giving employees the right to up to five days unpaid leave per annum.
- **Ask your GP practice to identify you as a carer:** Depending on your caring role, this might enable you to access additional support and vaccines such as free flu jabs.
- **Ask for a carers assessment:** This isn't a review of how you care for someone, but of how it affects you and your health and wellbeing. Find out if you need extra support and assistance by asking us for an assessment or review of your caring situation.
- **Being consulted when the person you care for is discharged from hospital:** For handy fact sheets which explain your rights and what you can expect from a hospital discharge and to help take away some of the stress, visit: <https://www.carersuk.org/news-and-campaigns/our-campaigns/carers-rights-day/>
- **Be protected against discrimination or harassment:** The Equality Act 2010 protects you against both of these because of your caring responsibilities. For more information visit: <https://www.carersuk.org/help-and-advice/practical-support/what-are-your-rights-as-a-carer/protection-from-discrimination/>

For event updates, please follow our Facebook page and on our website: <https://www.devoncarers.org.uk/crd>



The purrfect companion!

For many people, pets are important companions, but for those living with dementia, it's not always suitable to have animals at home, which is why we are pleased to be able to offer another option, Robocats!



A Robocat can offer an alternative to a real pet and can give people with dementia and memory loss the opportunity to enjoy the comfort they can bring. Spending time with their Robocat can keep them calm and engaged and may enable their carer to have some quality time to themselves.

A recent review of studies on Robopets for dementia patients suggested that time spent with them lowered levels of agitation and depression*.

One carer, Paul, who fostered a Robocat, was absolutely thrilled with the difference it has made to their lives. He told us:

"My mother, who has Alzheimers, used to love her cats. They became really important companions and she would often sit and chat with them. Unfortunately, she's not capable of looking after real cats now, so when we heard about the Devon Carers Robopet scheme, we knew it would bring her joy again. Now she sits with her Robocat, which is fantastic as the built-in sensors respond to her touch and purrs happily, while she chats fondly to it!"

Why not contact our Helpline to register your interest in fostering a Robocat today. Request online by clicking on 'ask' on www.devoncarers.org.uk, or call **03456 434 435** or email: info@devoncarers.org.uk and supply your full name, date of birth, Carers ID number if you know it and contact details.

*NIHR Applied Research Collaboration South West Peninsula 'What are the effects of robopets on the health and wellbeing of residents of care homes. A systematic review of qualitative and quantitative evidence.'



Carers enjoy hotel break with Carefree

We've teamed up with Carefree Breaks to enable unpaid carers to enjoy a free annual one or two night hotel stay, for an admin fee of £33, to help you refresh and recharge!

Carefree is a charity which is reshaping carer breaks nationwide by working with the hotel industry to donate its excess capacity. Every week there are over one million unsold hotel rooms in the UK and Carefree turn these empty rooms into short breaks for unpaid carers in need of respite.

If you apply through us and are registered as an adult unpaid carer, who is supporting someone 18yrs+, able to provide 30 hours of care a week, we can act as your referrer and validate your carer details quickly and easily to speed up the application process!



Carers who have already booked their break told us: *"Thank you for enabling me to enjoy a few nights away in a lovely hotel. I didn't realise how much I needed the break until I spent some quality 'me time' away. Just playing a round of golf without worrying about rushing home and sitting quietly on a park bench in the sunshine, has made such a difference."* David

"Thanks to Carefree, I enjoyed a real treat with a break in Angel, Islington. I explored Camden Market and visited the London Dungeon. I'm truly grateful and can't wait to book again." Kerry

So, the question is...when will you book yours?

If you are a full-time unpaid carer who is 18 years plus and caring for an adult, we can refer you to Carefree Breaks.

For more information visit: <https://devoncarers.org.uk/carefree>



Carers stories

Graham's journey with Shared Lives

For Graham, caring has always come naturally. *"Illnesses have had a big impact on our family time," Graham reflects. "Since 2007, all I've done is care for people."*

Graham worked in customer services in Manchester, but when his dad became ill, his mum struggled to cope, so he made the difficult decision to leave his job and move to Devon. He helped care for his dad and support his mum through this challenging time until his dad passed away in 2014.

Not long after, his mum was diagnosed with Alzheimer's, and Graham became her primary carer.



While caring for his mum, a chance encounter set Graham on a new path to work with Shared Lives South West (SLSW) as a paid carer from home.

"I met a taxi driver who was also a Shared Lives Carer," he recalled. "He told me what it was all about, and I thought, maybe this is something I could do too."

After reaching out to Shared Lives South West, Graham began the process of becoming a paid carer. His mum sadly passed away in

2024, but he made the decision to carry on and work with Shared Lives, which is when he first met Gary.

"When he first moved in, he was really quiet and unsure," Graham remembers.

"He'd lived with his previous carers for 19 years before they retired, so it was a big change for him. My Shared Lives Coordinator kept telling me to stick with it, and then one day, it just clicked. He suddenly felt at home."

Today, the two share a comfortable rhythm. Graham supports Gary with personal care, helps him get dressed, and cooks meals for him. More importantly, he offers companionship and stability.

"It's rewarding to see him happy and enthusiastic in the mornings," said Graham.

"The skills I learnt caring for Mum have helped me. And now I get to see the difference I can make in someone else's life."

Looking back, Graham feels grateful for the new direction his life has taken.

"If you're thinking about it, contact Shared Lives and see if it's right for you. It's been a good decision for me," he said.

For more than 20 years, Shared Lives South West has been matching adults with learning disabilities, autism, and other needs with trained carers who welcome them into their homes. Sometimes described as adult fostering, it's a way of helping people live as independently as possible – whether for a short break or long-term support.



Be prepared for winter with our top tips!

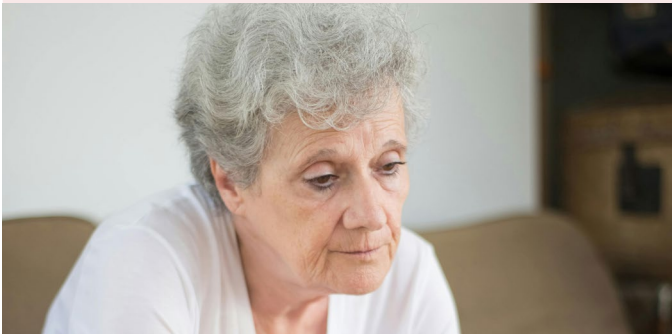
With more than 280 SLSW carers across Devon, Cornwall and Somerset, many in the SLSW network started their journey as unpaid carers. Their life experience, empathy and commitment make them ideal for the role.

To become a Shared Lives Carer, you need relevant life experience and a spare room. Carers receive full training, regular support from a dedicated coordinator, and advice from an in-house benefits team.

Carers can earn up to £692 per week, benefit from tax relief and council tax discounts, and earn £121 per night for short breaks. Find out more: www.sharedlivessw.org.uk

Cassie cares for her sister

She is lonely and misses being able to meet up with her friends...



Could you spare an hour to call her and brighten up her day?

You don't need to dedicate a lot of time to volunteer with us.

Our current volunteering roles include:

- Phone Support Volunteer
- Carer Ambassador
- Time for You Sitter
- Group Supporter

For an informal chat email: volunteering@devoncarers.org.uk or call us on **03456 434 435**

Winter can bring many challenges, and as carers, it can be even more difficult, as we might be more restricted as to when we can venture outside, with or without the person we care for. As the days become colder and the nights draw in, make sure you are prepared for the winter months with these top tips!



Prepare yourself: batch cook meals and freeze staple foods such as bread, milk, vegetables and fruit, in case of bad weather, when you might not be able to get out and about quite so easily.



Ensure you have sufficient medication: don't get caught out by the bad weather and the festive season's bank holidays, make sure you have enough medication for you and the person you care for.



Check your heating system: ensure your heating is working before the cold weather sets in. Book a service to make sure yours is working efficiently. Invest in draught excluders and/or thermal curtains/blinds.



Winter Fuel Payment: check to see if you are eligible for these payments of between £100-£300 (due to be paid November/December 25) by visiting: <https://www.gov.uk/winter-fuel-payment> or call **03459 15 15 15**.



Emergencies happen! Download our Emergency Plan to let others know what to do and how to help the person you look after in case you're not able to due to an accident or unexpected hospital stay. Visit: <https://devoncarers.org.uk/emergency-plan>



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/onlinetraining>



For face-to-face sessions:
<https://www.devoncarers.org.uk/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.**

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 those you care 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.



Tuesday 11 th November (part 1)	10am to 12pm	Online on Zoom
Tuesday 25 th November (part 2)	10am to 12pm	Online on Zoom



Save paper – receive the magazine digitally!

Did you know that you can receive our magazine by email? If you would like to change your preference to digital please send us an email to: newsletter@devoncarers.org.uk

Carer burnout

Unpaid carers carry out an invaluable role, but there can be a point where they reach the end of their physical and emotional reserves.

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

- Look at signs and symptoms of stress
- Discuss what carers can do if they recognise signs and symptoms of carer burnout

Wednesday 12th November

10.30am to 12.30pm

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 18th November

10am to 11.30am

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:

- Enable 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 14th January

6.30pm to 8.30pm

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 20th January

10am to 12pm

Online on Zoom



Hoarding (limited to 5 spaces)

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

Thursday 29th January

11am to 1pm

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

Friday 30th January (part 1)

10am to 11.30am

Online on Zoom

Friday 6th February (part 2)

10am to 11.30am

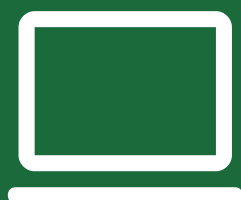
Online on Zoom



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

Free access to Carers UK Digital Resources



You can access the Carers UK Digital Resource platform which is packed with guides to help you manage your caring responsibilities. Set up your account today on the link below and enter the free access code funded by Devon County Council **DGTL8827** when requested: <https://carersdigital.org/login/index.php>



The benefits of attending Carers Skills Workshops

We understand that being an unpaid carer is a demanding and often undervalued role. Whether you are supporting a family member, friend, or neighbour, the responsibilities can be physically and emotionally exhausting. You may be juggling medications, appointments, meals, and emotional support, to name just a few, which can all feel quite overwhelming.

That's why attending one of our Carers Skills Workshops can be a real help. They offer practical advice that helps you care smarter, not harder. From learning basic first aid, to understanding specific conditions and managing stress, our workshops can boost your confidence and improve your own health and wellbeing.

"The first aid course I attended in Barnstaple was excellent. An added bonus was that I was able to meet fellow carers."



Sometimes, finding time for a workshop can feel impossible. Between caring, work, and general life chaos, when exactly are you supposed to fit it in? Time constraints, caring duties, financial concerns, and travel difficulties are some of the most common challenges.

Our workshops run at different times of the day and are delivered by facilitators either **online** or **face-to-face**. For some carers, being able to attend a workshop online at home is more convenient, not needing to leave the person they care for. For others, going to a venue and having a change of scenery is an added benefit of the workshop.

"The workshops are an invaluable resource and for me a major tool of support that Devon Carers facilitates."



We also deliver our workshops to carers groups across the county, so if you are part of a group and would like us to attend, please get in touch.

Whichever way works best for you, you will also benefit from connecting with other carers during the workshops. Sharing experiences can reduce feelings of isolation and offer a much-needed sense of community and support.

Our workshops are not about questioning your ability, they are about empowering you to feel more confident, less tired and isolated, and better prepared to face the challenges of your caring role.

To find out more visit:
www.devoncarers.org.uk/workshops
or email workshops@devoncarers.org.uk



Is mouth care really that important?

Mouth care can easily slip down our priority list, sometimes because we don't realise how important it really is, and sometimes because there are barriers to overcome, especially if you are caring for someone else's dental hygiene.

The **Oral Health Improvement Team** from the Royal Devon University Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust chat to us about the importance of healthy mouth care.

"The condition of the mouth impacts so many things in someone's life, such as comfort, eating well, communication, dignity, self-confidence, and relationships."

"Did you know that poor oral hygiene affects the whole body?"

"The mouth is the entrance to the rest of the body. If the 'entrance' has high levels of bacteria due to poor oral hygiene, the bacteria can not only cause pain and infection in the mouth, but can also travel in the blood system and be inhaled into the lungs."

"There are links with health conditions such as Aspiration Pneumonia, Diabetes, Stroke, Heart Disease and ongoing studies are discovering more and more links, so healthy mouth care is essential."

Here are their top tips for reducing the risks:

- **Brush teeth twice a day.** Before bed is most important and then one other time.
- **Using a fluoride toothpaste** will give extra protection to teeth. Do not rinse after brushing.
- **Brush dentures at least once a day** and leave them out at night.
- If no natural teeth, still **clean the mouth with a soft brush.**



For more information on helpful mouth care products, overcoming barriers, diet, local services and resources, please join their **FREE upcoming webinar**:

Oral Health for Older People:

Wednesday 10th December

2pm – 4pm



Book your online place here:
<https://forms.office.com/e/BZ52bMr7yA>

You can also visit:

www.royaldevon.nhs.uk/dental

For more information email the Oral Health Improvement Team:
rduh.ohesds@nhs.net



Heating your home safely



Sign up to the Priority Services Register

With energy prices rising, the fire service knows you, or the person you care for, may need some help staying warm.

Consider these tips to stay warm this winter:

- **Heat only a small area of your home:** a portable heater is more efficient and cost-effective. The fire service recommends an electric oil-filled radiator rather than any other type of heater.
- **Heaters can be a serious fire hazard:** always place heaters (at least one metre) away from curtains, bedding and upholstery and ensure to switch off and unplug them before you go out or go to bed.
- **Don't use candles:** They are not a safe or efficient way to heat your home.
- **Heating your home with open fires and wood burners:** Have your chimney swept before the first fire and then sweep it at least once a year (and every three months if you're burning wood). Only burn seasoned wood. Other wood may have moisture, which can create tar in the chimney. This is highly flammable and can lead to chimney fires.
- **Other ways to keep warm:** Electric blankets are a great way to keep warm, but they need to be used with care. Check them for wear and tear and always replace after 10 years. Never use wheat bags in a bed.

Would you like to book a FREE home fire safety visit? Call **0800 0502 999** or refer online at www.dsfire.gov.uk/safety/home/home-safety-visits

Please quote **Devon Carers and partner code 035** when you call or request a visit online.



As the cold weather approaches, take action to ensure the person you care for is protected, should their water supply or energy services fail this winter.

If you care for someone who is elderly, very ill, physically or mentally disabled or relies on power for their medical equipment, who would be affected if their electricity and water supply were interrupted, you can apply to be added to their energy or network supplier's free support Priority Services Register.

If, for example, a water main bursts, or a pylon comes down due to a storm which resulted in no longer receiving water or electricity, they can receive priority support from their utility company. You don't have to be the bill payer to register, as their carer you can contact them on their behalf.



For water: contact South West Water on **0344 346 1010** or visit: <https://www.southwestwater.co.uk/household/help-support/priority-services>

For electricity: contact the National Grid. For general enquiries, call: **0800 096 3080** or for power cuts or emergencies, call **0800 678 3105** or **105**. For more information visit: <https://www.nationalgrid.co.uk/customers-and-community/priority-services>

For general information about the Priority Services Register, visit Ofgem: <https://www.ofgem.gov.uk/energy-advice-households/join-your-suppliers-priority-services-register>

We are Westbank



Did you know that Devon Carers and Devon Young Carers, which together support more than 34,000 unpaid carers, are both services delivered by Devon's foremost health and wellbeing charity Westbank Community Health and Care?

Devon Young Carers at Westbank has recently launched a new initiative to support young people who care for family members called the Young Carers Movement Group. It gives young carers a platform to share their views on the support service Westbank provides, as well as suggest improvements, and highlight additional support they would like to see in the future. The new group also provides a safe space to talk openly about the challenges and experiences of growing up as a young carer.

Paddy Agnew, Service Manager for Devon Young Carers, says, *"The Young Carers Movement Group is about young carers feeling heard and empowered. With a mix of online meetings and a yearly activity to bond further, have fun, grow their confidence and enhance their teamwork and other life skills. Together, we make change happen."*

The first face-to-face activity for the group went with a splash when six young carers were taken to Exeter's Haven Banks for a morning of raft building, followed by a visit to Exeter's Escape Room. Over lunch, representatives from the Devon County Council Post 16 Learning Participation Team introduced their new service dedicated to carers' support for young carers. **If you have a young person in your home that also helps care, please get in touch with us on 03456 434 435 or email us at info@devoncarers.org.uk**



Last year we supported **34,000** 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

Westbank, The Healthy Living Centre, 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. We will do our best to accommodate our carers' availability and preferences where capacity allows.

How do I join?

To express your interest in attending any of these groups call our Helpline on **03456 434 435** or 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

These groups are open to any carer and are informal gatherings where you can support each other. At some of our meetings, we host guest speakers or hold Carer Skills Workshops. All groups are hosted by a Peer Support Officer who facilitates the meetings and can signpost carers to other support available via Devon Carers or in the local area. We meet regularly for Peer Support groups in the towns shown on the map:



Peer Support online groups

No matter the weather, there will always be a warm welcome at our online Peer Support groups and all have space for new carers. 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

27/11, 22/01, 26/02

Hobbies, crafts & wellbeing

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

Tuesdays at 7pm – 8.30pm

25/11, 27/01, 24/02

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 at 10.30am – 11.30am

07/11, 05/12, 09/01, 06/02

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

05/11, 03/12, 07/01, 04/02

Mental health evening group

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

Tuesdays at 7pm – 8.30pm

11/11, 09/12, 13/01, 10/02

Mental health group

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

Wednesdays at 12pm – 1pm

26/11, 28/01, 25/02

Dementia group

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

Mondays at 10.30am – 12pm

10/11, 08/12, 12/01, 09/02

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

20/11, 15/01, 19/02

Games night

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

Tuesdays at 7pm – 8.30pm

04/11, 18/11, 02/12, 06/01, 20/01, 03/02, 17/02

Music night

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

7pm – 8.30pm

Tuesday 16/12

7pm – 8.30pm

Thursday 05/02

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

13/11, 11/12, 08/01, 12/02

Caring for someone with a pain or fatigue condition

This group aims to provide a friendly and understanding space for carers of someone with a chronic condition causing pain and/or fatigue.

Thursdays at 11am – 12pm

13/11, 11/12, 08/01, 12/02