WELCOME TO

CARING IN DEVON

Caring in Devon

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IF YOU LOOK AFTER SOMEONE WHO WOULD STRUGGLE TO MANAGE WITHOUT YOU, THEN YOU MAY BE A CARER AND THERE IS SUPPORT AVAILABLE TO HELP YOU.

This booklet has been created to help you understand what support, services and resources are available for carers in Devon. Whether you are new to caring or have been supporting someone for many years, it brings together information, advice and local opportunities that can help make your caring role a little easier.

CATHERINE STJOHN
CARERS SERVICE MANAGER



"For five years, I have had the privilege of overseeing support for carers on behalf of Devon County Council. As we begin this new chapter, with some services coming into the Council and new partnerships with fantastic organisations including Age UK Devon and Citizens Advice, I am excited about the opportunities this brings. While some things are changing, much remains the same. Many of the people who supported carers through the previous service, including myself, will continue to work alongside you, bringing the same commitment, experience and passion for improving carers' lives."

YOU CAN USE THIS BOOKLET TO:

- ☑ Learn about the support available to carers in Devon
- ☑ Find information, advice and guidance about your caring role
- ☑ Discover services that can support your health and wellbeing
- ☑ Connect with local groups, activities and resources
- ☑ Understand your rights as a carer and how to access a Carer's Assessment
- ☑ Find specialist support and practical help from partner organisations
- ☑ Plan ahead and feel more confident about the future

Caring in Devon is the new service for adult unpaid carers, replacing Devon Carers. Working in partnership with Devon County Council, NHS Devon, Age UK Devon, Citizens Advice and local community organisations, we help carers access the information, advice and support they need.

Our support is free and confidential. You won't need a financial assessment to access it.

STARTING THE CONVERSATION

You don't have to wait until you're struggling to ask for support. A conversation with our skilled and knowledgeable team can help you identify what is working well, what challenges you may be facing, and the support that could make a difference.

OUT-OF-HOURS VIRTUAL GUIDANCE AND SIGNPOSTING:

03456 434 435

When you contact our Caring in Devon Helpline, you may find it helpful to have a Carer Support Conversation. This is an opportunity to talk about your caring role in more detail and explore how it affects different areas of your life, including:

- ☑ **Your physical, mental and emotional wellbeing**
- ☑ **Your work, studies or volunteering**
- ☑ **Your relationships and family life**
- ☑ **Time for hobbies, interests and social activities**
- ☑ **Taking breaks from caring**
- ☑ **Planning for the future**

Together, we'll discuss what matters most to you, identify any areas where you may need support, and explore the services, information and advice available to help you.

CARERS ASSESSMENTS AND REVIEWS:

As a carer, you have the right to a Carer's Assessment. This is an opportunity to talk about how caring affects your life and to explore what help and support may be available to you.

A Carer's Assessment is not a test and does not judge how well you care. Instead, it focuses on your wellbeing, your circumstances, and the impact that caring has on your day-to-day life. It can help identify support that may make your caring role more manageable and enable you to maintain your own health, wellbeing, work, education, family life and personal interests.



If your circumstances change, you can also request a review to ensure your support continues to meet your needs.

Carer's Assessments and reviews are carried out by Devon County Council's dedicated Caring in Devon Support Team. The team will work with you to understand your situation, discuss what is important to you, identify any support needs you may have, and consider whether you are eligible for additional support.

Together, you'll explore practical solutions, sources of support and ways to help you achieve the outcomes that matter most to you, both as a carer and as an individual.

ONGOING CARER SUPPORT:

After your conversation or assessment, we'll help you find the support that best meets your needs.

THIS COULD INCLUDE:

- Information, advice and guidance
- Community groups and peer support
- Opportunities to improve your health and wellbeing
- Support with planning ahead and preparing for changes
- Introductions and referrals to specialist services
- Local resources that help you continue caring
- Support to access benefits and other financial information
- Short breaks or respite options, where appropriate
- Support planning and, where eligible, access to direct payments or other forms of funded support

Caring can change over time, and the support you need may change too. Whether you're new to caring or have been caring for many years, we're here to help you find the right support at the right time.

EMERGENCY PLANNING

A Carer's Emergency Plan helps make sure that the person you care for can continue to receive the support they need if you are suddenly unavailable due to an unexpected situation.

Emergency Planning forms are included with this booklet. Once completed and returned, we will issue you with an Emergency Alert Card. Carrying this card helps others quickly identify that you are a carer and take steps to ensure the person you care for receives appropriate support.

- If you have already completed an Emergency Plan with Devon Carers, we already hold your information and there is no need to complete a new plan.
- If you already have an Emergency Alert Card, it remains valid and does not need to be replaced.
- If you need an Emergency Planning form, please contact the Caring in Devon Helpline and we will send one to you.
- If you would like support completing your plan, our Helpline team can guide you through the process and help you create a plan that works for you.

BLUE PAGE

Record important information about the person you care for, what should happen if you are unable to provide care, and who should be contacted. Please print and place the completed page in a jar and store it in your fridge.

GREEN PAGE

Record your emergency contact details. Once we receive it, we will register your **Emergency Plan** and send you an **Alert Card**.

YOUR CARER ID CARD AND ALERT CARD

YOUR CARER ID CARD

Your Alert Card also serves as your **Caring in Devon Carer ID Card**, recognising you as an unpaid carer registered with our service.

Your Carer ID Card is part of a nationally recognised scheme and can help you identify yourself as a carer when accessing services, support and opportunities. It may also provide access to a range of local and national discounts, concessions and hospitality offers available to unpaid carers.

YOUR ALERT CARD

Once you have completed your Emergency Plan, you will receive a **Caring in Devon Alert Card**. This card provides peace of mind that, if you are unexpectedly unable to continue your caring role because of an accident, illness or other emergency, there is a dedicated emergency helpline that can be contacted to help ensure the person you care for is not left without support.

The Alert Card contains the emergency contact details needed to initiate your Emergency Plan and help put appropriate support in place until longer-term arrangements can be made.

TIP ASK YOUR GP TO NOTE ON YOUR RECORDS THAT YOU HAVE AN EMERGENCY PLAN

CITIZENS ADVICE:
CARERS FINANCE SERVICE

Caring for someone can seriously affect your finances, whether you're reducing your hours, managing on a lower income, or trying to understand your entitlements. The benefits system can feel overwhelming. We know many carers in Devon are under growing financial pressure, with more than half reporting some difficulty. That's why we've commissioned Citizens Advice to deliver the Carers Finance Service, giving carers trusted advice to understand their rights, maximise their income and access the support available.

THEY CAN HELP WITH THINGS SUCH AS:

- ☑ Benefits checks for carers and the people they care for
- ☑ Advice on benefits such as Universal Credit, Pension Credit and Carer's Allowance
- ☑ Help to maximise income and improve financial stability
- ☑ Better-off calculations to help you understand the impact of working, changing hours or returning to work
- ☑ Support with completing benefit applications and claim forms
- ☑ Advice and support if you need to challenge a benefits decision
- ☑ Representation at Social Security Tribunals where appropriate
- ☑ Help to navigate wider services and support available to carers

THE SERVICE IS AVAILABLE TO ADULT CARERS OF ALL AGES WITH BOTH TELEPHONE AND FACE-TO-FACE SUPPORT AVAILABLE.

For a referral to this service, please call the Caring In Devon Helpline on:

03456 434 435

CAROLINE HARRIS
SPECIALIST CASEWORKER



Caroline has over twenty years' experience delivering Welfare Rights advice and has been working on this service since the beginning.

"I am really looking forward to being part of the new chapter of carers' support in Devon"

PEER SUPPORT: CONNECTING CARERS ACROSS DEVON

Caring for someone can be rewarding, but it can also feel lonely. Many carers tell us that one of the hardest parts of their caring role is feeling isolated or disconnected from other people who understand what they're going through.

That's why peer support is such an important part of Devon's support offer for carers. Delivered by our **Caring in Devon partner, Age UK Devon**, this preventative service helps carers build connections, share experiences and access support before challenges have a greater impact on their wellbeing.

Peer support is based on something simple but powerful: talking to people who understand. Whether through local groups, social activities, wellbeing sessions, online opportunities or one-to-one support, peer support helps carers feel less alone and more connected to their community.

The service is available to **carers over the age of 18** and aims to ensure that no carer feels alone in their caring journey.

FOR INFORMATION ABOUT LOCAL PEER SUPPORT OPPORTUNITIES, CONTACT CARING IN DEVON OR VISIT OUR WEBSITE: WWW.CARINGINDEVON.ORG.UK

CARER AMBASSADORS: HELPING SHAPE SERVICES IN DEVON

Carers are experts by experience. Their insights, knowledge and lived experience are invaluable in helping us understand what matters most to carers and how services can better support them.

That's why carers in Devon are a key partner in shaping the support available across health, social care and the voluntary sector. Through our **Carer Ambassador Engagement Assembly**, carers work alongside organisations and decision-makers to help design, develop and improve services, ensuring that carers' voices are heard and reflected in the support provided across Devon.



Carer Ambassadors are current or former carers who volunteer their time to share their experiences and represent the views of carers in their communities. They help us understand what's working well, where improvements are needed and what will make the biggest difference to carers and the people they support.

AS A CARER AMBASSADOR, YOU COULD:

- ☑ Share your experiences to help improve services
- ☑ Contribute to the design and development of new support
- ☑ Take part in meetings, consultations and engagement activities
- ☑ Help raise awareness of carers and the challenges they face
- ☑ Ensure carers' voices are heard in local and strategic decision-making
- ☑ Help create positive change for carers across Devon

By working together, we can make sure services are designed with carers, not just for carers. Every experience, perspective and voice helps us build a stronger, more responsive support system for carers across Devon.



IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO FIND OUT MORE ABOUT BECOMING A CARER AMBASSADOR, CONTACT CARING IN DEVON OR VISIT OUR WEBSITE: WWW.CARINGINDEVON.ORG.UK

USEFUL NUMBERS

Organisation	Contact
Caring in Devon	03456 434 435
Devon County Council Adult Social Care	0345 155 1007 www.devon.gov.uk/adult-social-care
Adult Social Care emergency out-of-hours	0345 600 0388
Carers UK Helpline	0808 808 7777 (Mon–Fri, 9am–6pm) www.carersuk.org
Department for Work and Pensions: Carer's Allowance	0800 731 0297 (Mon–Fri, 8am–6pm) www.gov.uk/carers-allowance
Department for Work and Pensions: Carer's Allowance	0800 731 0297 (Mon–Fri, 8am–6pm) www.gov.uk/carers-allowance
Independent Living Centre (equipment and ideas to help you stay safe, independent and active at home; visits by appointment)	01392 380181 www.independentlivingcentre.org