RAISING AWARENESS OF CARERS

Friday 24 November is Carers Rights Day and aims to help carers in their local community get the help and support they are entitled to. Please turn to the centre pages of this newsletter to see what your local Devon Carers team is doing to raise awareness of support and services in your community. In the week leading up to Carers Rights Day, we are also supporting a local campaign to make health, social care and educational staff aware of the needs of young carers and will be encouraging professionals to ‘think young carer’ The Carers Trust annual Young Carers Awareness Day will then take place on Thursday 25 January.

Why not ask your local school what they are planning to do to mark Young Carers Awareness Day? Our Young Carers workers would be very happy to help them arrange something and can be contacted on 03456 434 435.

NEW: ‘FOREST BATHING’ FOR CARERS!

We are trialling ‘forest bathing’ sessions just for carers. This involves a short, guided walk in the forest where you will be encouraged to tune in to your senses using a technique called ‘mindfulness’ which will help you focus on the present moment and concentrate on what is happening around you. Research shows that mindfulness can reduce anxiety and stress and a number of carers have benefitted from an ‘Introduction to Mindfulness’ course previously organised by Devon Carers. Please turn to page 6 for details of how and where you can get involved.
FOCUS ON: YOUR LETTERS AND STORIES

If you have something you want to share in the newsletter, we would love to hear from you. You could tell us your own story or you might have some information or top tips that you think could help someone else.

A carer wanted to share the following poem written by her husband who has dementia. (Upstream runs social and community activities in Mid and East Devon and can be contacted 01363 778 366.)

‘Come Join Us Using Upstream’

Come join us using upstream
It first felt really strange
but after making lots of friends
the upstream really changed
We talked about our problems
and every one was shared
it turned from being lonely
to knowing someone cared
We drink tea or coffee
then have a game to play
and talk about what life’s about
from birth to present day
Don’t talk about tomorrow
It’s just another day
just live your life contented
and happiness will stay
By R

Val who cares for her husband with Parkinson’s wanted to share how exercise helps her manage her caring situation: “On the 2 July I entered the British Nordic Walking challenge series 5 kilometre race at Margam Park in Port Talbot and was the first female across the finish line in a time of 41 minutes 7 seconds. There are no age categories so I was competing with people 40 years younger than me over a course which was hilly with a rough terrain. Training for these races really helps me keep fit both physically and mentally which helps me tremendously in my caring role and race days give me a great day out.”

MONTHLY MENTAL HEALTH PHONE-IN ON BBC RADIO DEVON

Devon Partnership Trust (DPT) now supports a monthly mental health phone-in on BBC Radio Devon. Topics covered so far include depression, anxiety, alcohol misuse and eating disorders. The phone-in takes place on the first Tuesday of every month as part of Janet Kipling’s afternoon show usually starting around 2pm. Further information and factsheets on the topics being discussed can be downloaded from the DPT website at www.dpt.nhs.uk

RECOVERY DEVON TRAINING COURSES

Recovery Devon provides courses for people with lived experience of mental health difficulties, their family and friends. The Autumn/Winter prospectus covering courses up until February 2018 is currently available to be downloaded from www.devonrlc.co.uk (Ask Devon Carers if you don’t have access to the internet and we can download this info for you – 03456 434 435)

WOULD YOU LIKE TO MAKE FRIENDS WITH OTHER CARERS?

“I no longer feel isolated as I can ‘run away’ for an hour or so with like-minded individuals who understand my frustrations.” Jenny

Our Devon Carers ‘Feels like Friendship’ peer support service is now open to all carers. We provide opportunities to meet other carers through groups, buddying, walks and events. Other carers understand the demands that caring places on you and will understand that
sometimes you will need to cancel at short notice or you feel just too worn out to be sociable. If you would be interested in attending one of our social events to get to know other carers please phone the Devon Carers helpline on ☏ 03456 434 435 and ask to be referred for Peer Support.

“It’s a marvellous service; being able to exchange experiences and frustrations is all part of the survival kit as a carer” Bill

**MONEY MATTERS**

Please remember if you are unable to access any of the useful online information below, you can contact our Devon Carers helpline on ☏ 03456 434 435 and they will be very happy to look this up for you:

**VEHICLE TAX REDUCTION AND EXEMPTIONS**

Did you know that if you are receiving certain benefits you can apply for a reduction or exemption from vehicle tax? See ☝️ [www.gov.uk/financial-help-disabled/vehicles-and-transport](http://www.gov.uk/financial-help-disabled/vehicles-and-transport) for more information.

**COUNCIL TAX REDUCTION AND DISCOUNTS**

If you are on a low income you may be eligible for a Council Tax Reduction. There are also particular groups of people who may be ‘disregarded’ for the purposes of Council Tax which could lead to a discount. This includes people who are deemed to be ‘severely mentally impaired’ and in some circumstances, carers. The factsheet ‘Help with Council Tax’ can be downloaded from the help and advice section of the Carers UK website at ☝️ [www.carersuk.org.uk](http://www.carersuk.org.uk).

**WINTER FUEL PAYMENT**

If you were born on or before 5 August 1953, then regardless of income, you can receive a one-off, tax-free winter fuel payment of between £100 and £300 from the Government. As it gets colder you might also want to check whether your energy company offers a special tariff for vulnerable customers. Lots of useful info on home and energy grants here: ☝️ [www.moneysavingexpert.com/family/grant-grabbing](http://www.moneysavingexpert.com/family/grant-grabbing).

**COMPANION BUS PASS**

Devon County Council can provide a Companion Bus Pass to people of secondary school age or above who have a severe disability and are only able to access local bus services with the assistance of a travelling companion. This provides free travel for one person travelling with the disabled person when they are using their national bus pass in the Devon County Council area. It is not limited to a specific person so could be used by different companions at different times. Details are available from the Devon County Council website at: ☝️ [www.traveldevon.info/devon-companion-bus-pass](http://www.traveldevon.info/devon-companion-bus-pass) or you can call ☏ 01392 383 688 for more information.

**NEW TEXT REMINDER SERVICE FOR TRAINING COURSES**

We are aware of how difficult it can be to remember everything while juggling the demands of caring and so we are going to be trialling a text reminder service for our Devon Carers training courses. This will be a simple reminder message which will hopefully save you time and effort searching for mislaid letters. This service is going to be tested out within the next few months and if successful will be rolled out sometime next year.
NORTH DEVON & TORRIDGE

STAFF CONTACT DETAILS:
Local Development Manager: Jo Morgan
Countywide Lead Practitioner - Learning Disabilities: Jan Howe
Countywide Lead Practitioner - Older People’s Mental Health: Mary Austin
Countywide Lead Practitioner - Parent Carers: Janet Maunder
Peer Support Officer: Ellie Taylor
Lead Practitioner - Young Carers: Marion Welch
Young Carers Support Worker: Jim Harvey and Zoe Stewart

Welcome to the pages of the newsletter covering events in Northern Devon. If you have any questions about anything on these pages, or you would like to submit copy for the next newsletter, please contact Simon, Marion or one of your Carers Support Officers at Devon Carers. These pages can be used for local information and forthcoming events relating to caring. Call 03456 434 435 or email joanne.morgan@devoncarers.org.uk to reach us by Monday 1st January 2018.

CARERS RIGHTS DAY
To celebrate Carers Rights Day our Northern Devon Team will have an information stand on Wednesday 22 November, 10:00am-1:00pm at Atlantic Village near Bideford.
Come along to meet local Carer Support Officers and pick up useful information on help available to support you in your caring role.
We are also planning another local awareness-raising event, please contact us for details.

GET CREATIVE AT ROSEMOOR
Age UK is running FREE creative sessions at Rosemoor for people living with dementia and their carers.
• 4 December - Create a Christmas Card to send to family.
• 12 December - Make your own Christmas wreath to hang on your door.
For more information please call 0333 241 2340, email s.webb@ageukdevon.co.uk or visit www.ageukdevon.co.uk.

STAFFING CHANGES AT DEVON CARERS
Simon Rapsey who many of you will know was the local development manager for our Northern Team for the last four years has recently moved into a new countywide role with Devon Carers and we are pleased to announce that Jo Morgan, one of our Carer Support Officers, has been appointed to replace him as an interim manager for the team.

In October we were also excited to welcome a new Carers Support Officer, Anete Guzik-Davies and she is looking forward to working with carers in Northern Devon.

NORTH DEVON HOSPICE OPENS NEW FURNITURE STORE
North Devon Hospice have opened a brand new furniture store in Barnstaple, As well as furniture, the new store on Two Rivers Industrial Estate also offers homeware, white
goods and other electricals, with all proceeds helping the hospice to care for patients and families in North Devon.

The site at Two Rivers Industrial Estate is an improvement on the hospice’s previous premises with more room on the shop floor as well as ample parking and space to collect donations.

North Devon Hospice’s new Furniture Store can be found on Braunton Road, Barnstaple, between ‘Glow Maternity’ and ‘Ireland’s Motorcycles’. The shop is open 9:00am-4:30pm, Monday-Saturday.

MEN’S SHED IN SOUTH MOLTON
The Men’s Shed in South Molton has been settling into its new home at the Scout Hut in South Molton. It offers men the chance to meet up, share skills and work on individual or community projects. The group meets every Wednesday 10:00am-12:00pm at 1st South Molton Scout Hut, Southley Road.

Cost £3 per session. For more information contact Sonya Webb, 0333 241 2340, Email: southmoltonmensshed@outlook.com

NORTH DEVON SPECIAL OLYMPICS
Special Olympics North Devon is a local club to help encourage young people with learning disabilities to learn through active sports and participation. The aim is to help nurture them in a variety of sports and physical activities where they can make new friends, build the team spirit and develop their commitment to fitness. Sessions take place every Saturday 1:00pm – 3:00pm at Tarka Tennis, Seven Brethren, Barnstaple. Every session includes Boccia, Table Tennis and Tennis.

For more information contact 07969 211595 or look for their Facebook page.

INFORMATION SESSION FOR PARENT CARERS
The Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Team will be holding an information session for parents at the Liberty Centre, Petroc College, 2:00-3:30pm on Monday 20 November.

The session aims to answer the following questions:
- What support is there for children with SEND?
- What is ‘assess, plan, do, and review’?
- What do all the recent changes mean for me and my family?
- What is the SEND Local Offer?

For more information, call 01392 383000 and ask for SEND Local Offer or e-mail sendlocaloffer@devon.gov.uk.

KEEPING IN TOUCH WITH US
Our Devon Carers helpline 03456 434435 is staffed 8am-6pm Monday-Friday and 9am-1pm on Saturdays. (Please make sure you have our up-to-date phone number in your contact list as our old number which started 0845 is more expensive for you to call) If you are ever concerned about the costs of calling us, tell us and the person who answers the phone will happily call you back.

If you currently receive this newsletter through the post and would be willing to get it e-mailed to you instead please let us know as this will not only help save costs but will be more environmentally friendly too. Just e-mail carers.plus@westbankfriends.org with a short message.
ADAPTING TO CARING FOR SOMEONE WITH DEMENTIA

Caring for someone with dementia requires a lot of resilience. You have to learn how to adapt to manage changes in your relationship, in your routines, and in your approach. There is plenty of information and advice available but what to choose?

Maybe some general information on the particular dementia and what to expect might be useful to start with but think about how much you need to know at this point. Just finding out about the specific issues you face is likely to be more useful than researching everything that might happen. For example, if the person you are supporting is now reluctant to wash, researching what might be the problem, ways to overcome this and whether you should be too concerned will be useful.

- The Alzheimer’s Society have practical advice and factsheets clearly listed in topics: [www.alzheimers.org.uk/info/20001/get_support](http://www.alzheimers.org.uk/info/20001/get_support)
- Social Care Institute for Excellence have advice and e-learning programmes: [www.scie.org.uk/dementia/](http://www.scie.org.uk/dementia/)

Devon Libraries loan books about dementia and Devon Carers have a range as well - you can find out about these by calling our helpline [03456 434 435](tel:03456%20434%20435) and asking to speak to Mary.

Remember, everyone’s experience is unique and when you are reading or hearing about other people’s experience, this might not be not the same as yours.

Carers groups or 1:1 time with a Devon Carers Support Officer or with the Lead Practitioner for Dementia can be opportunities to talk about what you are experiencing, what you have heard, seen or read and ask advice before trying something. Please contact us for more information [03456 434 435](tel:03456%20434%20435).

By Mary Austin. Lead Practitioner for dementia and older people’s mental health.

YOUNG PEOPLE WITH LEARNING DISABILITIES DEVELOP A NEW ARTS FESTIVAL

Branchline is a project to support young people with learning disabilities to lead, participate and progress in the arts. They are currently developing an Arts Festival ‘Ordinary Art’ which will take place at Dartington in South Devon on 16 and 17 February 2018. To find out more or to get involved, please contact Sarah-JaneLowson@lifeworks-uk.org or 01803 861060.

NEW: ‘FOREST BATHING’ FOR CARERS!

We are planning six short forest bathing walks for carers (see front page of the newsletter for more information) and the first of these will take place on the following dates:

- Saturday 18 November, 10:30am - 1:30pm at Heywood, Eggesford Forest, Eggesford
- Friday 1 December, 10:30am - 1:30pm at Haldon Forest Park near Exeter

Other walks are being organised for the New Year and more information will be available soon. For enquiries and bookings please contact Susie Plunkett on [03456 434 435](tel:03456%20434%20435) or email susie.plunkett@devoncarers.org.uk
WHERE TO GET SUPPORT WHEN SOMEONE DIES

Dealing with the death of someone close to you can be one of the most difficult times in your life. There is no ‘right’ way to grieve and everyone experiences a mixture of emotions and challenges as they try to work out how they can continue to face the world.

PRACTICAL HELP

In the early days after someone dies there can be lots of practical issues to sort out including registering the death, arranging a funeral and financial arrangements to be dealt with. Several official government departments will need to be notified and the registrar should be able to talk you through this when you register the death.

Whatever age you are, it can be a good idea to seek advice on your financial situation if the death of someone close to you will have an effect on your income. There is useful advice here www.moneyadvicecentre.org.uk and from your local Citizens Advice Bureau - CAB. (Contact our Devon Carers helpline on 0345 6 434 435 for details of your CAB office) If you are on a low income, it may be possible to claim for a funeral payment to help cover the cost of a funeral.

If you are between the age of 45 and state pension age and have lost your husband, wife or civil partner since 6 April 2017, you could be eligible for a Bereavement Support Payment.

Although you may understandably not feel like doing this, it needs to be claimed within 3 months of the death to get the full amount and could provide a bit of extra support for you and your family for up to 18 months.

EMOTIONAL SUPPORT

The grieving process can take a very long time and for some people it can be helpful to talk to someone outside their network of friends and family. There are a range of voluntary organisations that can help:

- **CRUSE** - Cruse offers free confidential support for adults and children and this can be by telephone, email or face-to-face 0300 330 5466 or devon@cruse.org.uk

- **Survivors of Bereavement by Suicide** (SOBS) - SOBS provides support to people over 18 who have been bereaved by suicide. National helpline 0300 111 5065 (9am-9pm every day) Monthly support group in Exeter

- **Families in Grief** (North Devon) - 01237 479027 07722 811913, familiesingrief.org

- **Balloons** (Working with pre- and post-bereaved children, young people and their families in Exeter and East & Mid Devon) - 01392 826064, balloonscharity.co.uk

- **Children & Families in Grief** (South Devon) - 01803 393917, childrenandfamiliesingrief.co.uk

- **Samaritans** – offers a safe place to talk at any time, in your own way. Freephone 116 123.
CARER SUPPORT GROUPS

**BARNSTAPLE**  Alex Link Centre (for carers of someone who has a mental health problem)  
Mon 20/11, 04/12 (12 for 12:30pm Meal at Barum Gate) 15/01, 19/02  
11:00am - 1:00pm  
Carolyn Hill 03456 434 435

**BRAUNTON**  SQs Braunton  
(Dec venue and date TBC) Thu 18/01, 15/02  
10:30am - 12:30pm  
Mary Austin 03456 434 435

**CARERS OF PEOPLE WITH DEMENTIA**  Litchdon Medical Centre, Newport Road, Barnstaple  
Mon 20/11, 18/12  
Please contact for times  
Carolyn Hill 03456 434 435

**HALWILL CARERS GROUP**  Halwill Baptist Church Hall  
Monthly on a Thursday - contact for details  
Barbara Dalton 01409 221328

**HATHERLEY CARERS GROUP**  Hatherleigh Community Centre  
Please contact Beverly Dore for details  
Beverly Dore 03456 434 435

**HOLSWORTHY CARERS GROUP**  Holsworthy Hospital  
Please contact Bryony Maycock for details  
Bryony Maycock 03456 434 435

**NORTHERN DEVON FAMILY CARERS GROUP** (For Carers of someone with a Learning Difficulty)  
Mon 15/01, 10:30am-12:30pm. Arrive at 10:00am for tea/coffee. Venue to be confirmed. Contact Ann for details.  
Ann Deadman 01237 441604

**PARKINSONS UK CARERS SUPPORT GROUP**  Torridge Branch  
Ethelwynne Brown House  
Quarterly meetings on a Wednesday. Please contact Keith Hughes for details.  
Keith Hughes 01237 475168

**SPACE 4 U**  Holy Trinity Church Hall, Barbican Terrace, Barnstaple EX32 9HQ  
Every Wednesday  
1:00pm - 3:00pm  
Sarah Milton 03456 434 435

OTHER SUPPORT GROUPS AND INFORMATION

**BARNSTAPLE MEMORY CAFE**  The Castle Centre, Castle Street  
Fri 01/12, 05/01, 02/02  
10:00am - 12:00noon  
Anne McKiernan  memory.cafe@northdevoncab.org.uk

**BARNSTAPLE MEMORY CAFE**  Pilton House  
Fortnightly Wednesday - contact for details  
2:00pm - 4:00pm  
Louise or Sue 01271 342188

**BIDEFORD REMINISCENCE SESSIONS FOR OVER 60S**  Bideford Library  
Wed 13/12, 10/01, 14/02  
2:00pm - 3:30pm  
Bideford Library 01237 476075 Sophie Evans TTVS 01237 459337

**MUSICAL MEMORIES. THE VISION CENTRE, SLADE ILFRACOMBE**  
Fortnightly Tuesday – please contact for details  
2:00pm – 4:00pm  
Margaret 01271 882927 or Hazel 01271 863 944

**NORTHAM MEMORY CAFE**  Northam Hall  
Fri 15/12, 19/01, 16/02  
10:00am - 12:00noon  
Sophie Evans 01237 459337

**SEE HEAR CENTRE**  19A Alexandria Road, Barnstaple  
All day drop-in every Tuesday, 9:00am - 4:30pm. Contact 01271 373236  
See Hear on Wheels monthly visits to Hartland, Bideford, Braunton, Ilfracombe, Winkleigh, South Molton

**SOUTH MOLTON MEMORY CAFE**  The Amory Centre  
Thu 14/12, 11/01, 08/02  
10:30am - 12:30pm  
Anne McKiernan at memory.cafe@northdevoncab.org.uk

**TORRINGTEN MEMORY CAFE**  Methodist Church  
Once or twice a month on Thursday – please contact for details  
10:30am - 12:30pm  
Pauline Page 01805 625969

**THE AFTER CARING PROJECT**  is for Carers aged 50+ who live in North Devon or Torridge who have cared for someone who is moving into residential care or who has passed away. After Caring can provide one-to-one support, guidance and information. For more information, please contact Mendie on 01237 420134 or email aftercaring@torridgecvs.org.uk

**TorrAGE**  runs social and activity groups for older people in Torridge and South Molton. Please contact TorrAGE on 01805 622666 or see their website at www.torrage.org.uk for more details.

The copy deadline for the next issue of the newsletter is Monday 1st January 2018.

Please call 03456 434 435 or email northern@devoncarers.org.uk for more information.

This newsletter is made from FSC certified paper and printed using vegetable inks. Published on behalf of Carers+ by Westbank: Registered Charity No 1119541 Company limited by guarantee Registered in England No 6243811. Devon Carers, Westbank, Healthy Living and Community Care Centre, Farm House Rise, Exminster, Exeter, EX6 8AT.