



Caring Matters

Charity No: 1069278
Company No: 3534933

Your local charity
supporting carers

A Message from Jenni Wood

On behalf of the Staff, Trustees and Volunteers I want to remind you that Durham County Carers Support and Darlington Carers Support are here for Carers during the Covid 19 crisis. Like most organisations all our staff are home working using the latest technology to answer phones, emails, questions via our web site Live Chat and carry on updating you through Facebook and Twitter. We are constantly gathering the latest information and finding ways to get that to you.

We want you to feel there is someone out there to help and support you at this terribly difficult time. We have pulled together the most up to date information in this short newsletter to give you the basic information you need. This is also about reminding you to contact us to find out the latest or to get help with the regular issues we are always there for like benefits, grants, carer breaks funding and counselling.

Although lots of people resist technology, now is the time to get out of your comfort zone and follow us on Facebook or Twitter as we will be putting out regular updates and link with a wide range of other support organisations. There are national and local support networks available which will be vital to stay in contact with other Carers and not feel you are the only one dealing with everything.

We really want to use our resources in the best way possible. So if you could now access our newsletter via email rather than have the paper copy sent out please email to admin@dccarers.org and we can update your details. This will also allow us to keep you updated between newsletters with information via email.

So stay in contact with us in whatever way you can, and please ring, email or message us on Facebook if you have a question or comment. We are here for you and your families. Take care everyone.



County Durham & Darlington Carers Support

We are continuing to offer support to Carers who are caring for family members or friends who live in County Durham and Darlington. Although we are currently unable to offer face to face support, the following support is still available:-

- Telephone support, information and advice: Durham 0300 005 1213, Darlington 0300 030 1215 (Mon-Fri 9am to 5pm)
- Facebook updates (daily) and direct messaging service: Durham County Carers Support or Darlington Carers Support
- Online chat through website www.dccarers.org
- Telephone counselling service
- Carer break funding available for Carers (currently limited to hobbies/interests within government restrictions)
- Carers Discount and Carer Emergency Cards which are currently being used by Carers for identification purposes.

We are continuing to update information on all services and support available to Carers on a daily basis and our staff team are available and pleased to help.

Contact us:

Head Office: Enterprise House, Enterprise City
Meadowfield Avenue, Spennymoor
Co Durham DL16 6JF

Telephone: 0300 005 1213

Text: 07860 017 632

Email: admin@dccarers.org

Web: www.dccarers.org

www.facebook.co.uk/durhamcountycarerssupport

[@dccarers](https://twitter.com/dccarers)

Volunteer Corner

Hi everyone, hope your all keeping well, safe and sane!!

Whilst the majority of our Volunteer project is on hold with the offices being closed and the support groups being suspended we are still continuing to offer counselling via telephone sessions and we have also taken on an additional 3 temporary counsellors to deal with the increased demand. So I and the rest of the team would like to offer a warm welcome to Nikki, Andrea and Sharon to #teamdcarers we are all working from home and I want to say a MASSIVE THANK YOU for your support and that of all our counsellors. We do have waiting lists but we are making our way through

them to ensure people get the support they need. If you feel you are struggling with your caring role please contact your Carer Support Coordinator to see if we can help, we're a phone call away and you're never alone.

As mentioned our support groups are all on hold for the time being, but we aim to get them back up and running as soon as we can.

Volunteers week celebrations have also been put on hold for the time being but rest assured we will organise something when we can, celebrating the teams successes is something we feel strongly about and we can't thank our Volunteers enough for their contributions, especially in times like this. Stay safe everyone!

Andrea

A Smile for Carers

Gillian Fortune here from Feel Good CIC - Here to make you smile

For those of you who use Facebook I do a funny video every Friday. It's only two minutes and it makes people smile so if you use Facebook check them out at Feel Good CIC.

Since I started doing the videos many people say to me 'Oh it can only happen to you Gillian' and 'So much funny stuff happens to you'.

The truth is – it's NOT funny stuff. It's just stuff. I make it funny, because truthfully I don't much like the alternative. So when something happens I do this:

- First I take a breath
 - Then I get my shoulders back, my head up
 - Then I accept what I cannot change about it
- Those first three are essential in any situation.

The next ones follow on if it is appropriate:

- I force a smile
- Then I think about what is funny in this situation
- And then I start to laugh about it
- And finally I make a video about it.

So this photograph is one of me on the day I made my healthy smoothie. I shook it and the lid flew off. Smoothie went everywhere – as you can see! Big deep breath. Shoulders back, head up, force a smile. Can't change the fact that smoothie is everywhere. Find the funny. Actually it's flipping hilarious!

I hope that made you smile
Gillian



A Poem by Gillian Fortune

No-nonsense Stress-Buster! "I'm Fine".

How are you doing? Stay safe they say
It's becoming trite like 'Have a nice day'
I say I'm fine pretending I mean it
Truth is I'm not – they just haven't seen it

I say it because what's the alternative
To saying 'fine' in the affirmative
To say 'not so good' requires explaining
I don't want to sound like I'm complaining

I can't be fuffed with the 'oh poor you'
Cos they don't want to hear, do you?
So I say it a lot and then feel flat
I'm really not fine – fancy that!

I don't feel like smiling not even a forced one
But I'll give it a go – there you got one
It wasn't real but it did make me smile
Forced or not, it lingered a while

So the next time you ask how I am
Shoulders back and head up's my plan
I'll smile broadly and say 'fine' with wit
If I say it enough I might even believe it

Follow us on Facebook
by simply searching either
darlingtoncarerssupport
or
durhamcountycarerssupport

Getting the help you need from the NHS and Local Authorities

Get coronavirus support from the NHS as a clinically extremely vulnerable person across County Durham and Darlington.

If the person you care for has a medical condition which makes them extremely vulnerable to coronavirus (COVID-19) you or the person you care for should have received a letter. You must still register on the government website and let them know whether or not they need support. As a Carer, you can input their information on their behalf. We understand you will receive support with food and other issues.

www.gov.uk/coronavirus-extremely-vulnerable or ring 08000 288 327

Community Hubs have been set up to support those self-isolating or supporting someone they cannot leave due to illness or vulnerability.

County Durham

Help can be accessed by filling in the Coronavirus help form on www.durham.gov.uk/covid19help or calling 03000 260 260

Hours: 9.00am to 5.00pm Monday to Friday, 10.00am to 3.00pm Weekends

Email: communityhub@durham.gov.uk

or go to: www.durham.gov.uk/covid19help

Durham Community Together has an online support directory, they can help with food supplies and deliveries, they can post mail and pick up medication. They can also offer chat/befriending.

Darlington Support HUB

Darlington Borough Council support HUB for residents who are worst affected by the Coronavirus outbreak. If you are self-isolating and cant get help from family or friends. Tel 01325 405000.

Hours: 8.30am to 5.00pm on a weekday
9.00am to 1.00pm on weekends.

Emergency support across County Durham and Darlington.

If you are become unwell and feel you are no longer able to look after the person you care for and you are unable to get help from relatives or friends, please call 03000 267979 (for Durham) or 01325 406111 (for Darlington).

You will talk to a Duty Officer who will ask you for a few details such as your name and address and information on the person you care for. The Duty Officer will assess the situation and if necessary, arrange a Care Assistant to support the person you care for. The initial help will be free but if the support is ongoing it will be in line with the Council's charging policy. If you want a Carers Emergency Card with the information on it to hand to someone in the event you are unable to phone yourself, please contact us and we will send you one out on 0300 005 1213.

Examples of support available from other local charities

Alzheimer's Society Support

If you or someone you care for are worried about coronavirus and need support and advice;

- Durham, Dementia Connect Support 0333 150 3456
- Darlington, 0333 150 3456

Age UK North Yorkshire and Darlington

Introducing a hot meal referral service for self-isolating over 70s and vulnerable groups aged over 50. £5 including delivery. Orders can be made by calling 01325 741492 by 11 am on the day needed or emailing catering@ageuknyd.org.uk.

Also a temporary free volunteer shopping service using volunteers.

Age UK County Durham

Are offering a basic shopping and medical deliver service alongside a telephone welfare service offering daily or weekly calls to those who are self-isolating to check they are well and managing in their own homes. An Information and Advice service is still operating on 0191 374 6367

Darlington Citizens Advice

The Benefit Entitlement Action Team (BEAT) line can be contacted on 0800 048 7023. Crisis Support (Darlington) Support to people struggling with electricity or gas costs and other essential items call 01325 736 991 for help. Debt Support - For people who have fallen into debt CAB are operating a money hub – Tel 01325 734994.

If the help you need is not listed here please contact us at Carer Support and we will do our best to find you the help you need.



Money Matters

Carers Allowance Update – Self Isolation.

For any Carers unable to visit the person that they care for, the government has confirmed that providing emotional support counts towards the Carer's Allowance threshold of 35 hours of care. So, using Facetime or Skype to see the person whilst keeping a safe distance is fine. Carers Allowance Unit is operating on reduced hours 9.30am to 3.30pm weekdays and can be contacted on 0800 731 0297 for calls, but has long wait times, and 0800 731 0317 for Textphone.

Help for Families During School Closures

Families with children who would be entitled to free school meals may receive food vouchers for additional costs during the pandemic worth £15. Shops taking part include Sainsbury's, Tesco, Asda, Morrisons, Waitrose and M&S so far. Schools will contact parents directly.

DWP Financial Support for people affected by Covid-19

If you are self-isolating or caring for someone self isolating, you can now claim Statutory Sick Pay (SSP) at a rate of £94.25 per week. It's paid by your employer for up to 28 weeks. Talk to your employer to check sick pay entitlement. You will need to obtain an "isolation note" by contacting NHS 111, if possible the online service.

If you are not eligible for SSP you can now more easily make a claim for Universal Credit (UC) or 'New Style' Employment and Support Allowance.

Universal Credit is an online benefit

Anyone struggling to manage an online claim can speak to an adviser on the UC Helpline 0800 328 5644 for calls and 0800 328 1344 for the Textphone service from 8.00am to 6.00pm weekdays.

'New Style' Employment & Support Allowance

If you are ill or have a health condition or disability that limits your ability to work, you may be able to get 'New Style' Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) which can be claimed on its own or at the same time as Universal Credit (UC). This is a contributory benefit based on your National Insurance contributions. You will need a "fit note" via NHS 111 please use the online NHS 111 service where possible.

Calls for this are to the UC Helpline 0800 328



5644 (choose option 2, then option 3) for calls and 0800 328 1344 for the Textphone service (choose option 2, then option 3) from 8.00am to 6.00pm weekdays.

Face to Face assessments suspended

Face to face appointments have been suspended and existing benefits awards will be extended by 3 months during the current situation. Claimants will be contacted to discuss the next steps

If you have a benefit renewal form and you usually complete and return it without support, we have been advised that you can do this.

Support with Benefit Applications

Durham County Carer Support will continue to support you with your benefit applications in whatever way they can, apart from having face to face contact. Continue to contact us for support, advice and all the changes that are happening. For Carers registered with Darlington Carers Support, please contact us and we will signpost you to the relevant agencies if we cant help.

Volunteer vacancies

Now we have our specialist Parent Carer Workers in place we are looking to expand our support to Parent Carers needing DLA forms filled in. We are looking for volunteers across the County to help with this and make a difference.

A package of full training and ongoing support is offered and there is lots of flexibility for times and days for this role. To find out more about making a difference, please contact Donna Wright.

Donna.wright@dccarers.org or 0191 500 6017.

Parent Carers of Children up to the age of 18

Parent Carers are dealing with huge stresses at the moment with children confused, out of routine and anxious. Not being able to purchase the one food your child will eat or dealing with extreme behaviour as they cannot go out or having any break from the caring role will be exhausting. As well as dealing with the isolation, financial worries and staying safe.

The good news is we recently secured funding from Durham County Council for one year to provide some specialist advice. Please bear in mind our workers are all home working and all have little ones themselves so there may be some background noise or disruption. To contact the Parent Carer Team phone the 0300 005 1213 and ask for the duty Parent Carer Worker who will be either Charlene, Donna or Joanne.

Feel free to get in touch with us, even if you just need a chat, we are here to listen! We also have a Parent Carer Support (County Durham) Facebook page. Please like us and get all the latest information from our service as well as lots of great ideas from other Parents.

Here are a few ideas of activities to do at home at the moment:

Keeping active:

Dance group Diversity have made all their dance tutorials free until 1st May 20, www.20dv.co.uk
Dance with Oti Mabuse live on her Facebook page at 11.30am each day. You can see previous sessions too. She also does a class for adults in the evening.
Dance with Darcey Bussell on twitter twitter.com/diversedancemix

And of course, there is Joe Wicks' PE lesson (far too energetic for me!) 9.00am on his YouTube Channel

Stories:

David Walliams Elevenses is proving very popular. Daily story at 11.00am - www.worldofdavidwalliams.com
Download the Epic app for a free trial. It is full of audio books – fact and fiction for the children to listen too. It's very popular in our house!

Science:

Science with Maddie Moate, she is live at 11.00am each day, but you can watch previous episodes. With things to make and do we have found it a great resource.
Steve Backshall is live at 9.30am daily answering questions about wildlife, biology, conservation and geography. Find him on his Facebook page

Maths:

Free access to Carol Vorderman's website (there is usually a subscription) www.mathsfactor.com

Music

with Mylene Klass on her YouTube Channel twice a week. You can watch previous episodes.

Cooking:

with Jamie Oliver at www.jamieoliver.com/features/catagory/get-kids-cooking
Home economics with Theo Michaels (Mon, Wed and Friday) www.instagram.com/theocooks

History:

with Dan Snow, free 30 days subscription at www.historyhit.com

Drama:

at www.filmedonstage.com they have a programme of plays and musicals that they are showing for free.

There are also some Facebook groups that are a good source of information ... try searching for; Family Lockdown Tips and Ideas; Support Group for Parents through Covid; Family Explorers North East. Don't forget to make a rainbow for your window #frommywindow

Free School meals provision

Schools are expected to continue to provide support to pupils eligible for benefit related free school meals. Either through vouchers or food parcels in term time weeks www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-free-school-meals-guidance/covid-19-free-school-meals-guidance-for-schools

If you think you have now become eligible for benefit related free school meals contact the Council or the school directly to apply and check eligibility. Further information can be found at www.gov.uk/apply-free-school-meals

Coronavirus (COVID-19):

Guidance on vulnerable children and young people can be found on the following link:

www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-on-vulnerable-children-and-young-people/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-on-vulnerable-children-and-young-people

The gov.uk website have published guidance for parents and carers on supporting children and young people's mental health and wellbeing during the coronavirus outbreak this document covers a huge range including helping children cope with stress, support for children on the Autistic Spectrum and where to go for support.

If your child or young person would like to speak to someone anonymously, they could try calling a helpline or visiting websites such as ChildLine and The Mix.
www.giveusashout.org www.childline.org.uk
www.themix.org.uk www.kooth.com

If you are a Parent Carer in Darlington call our team and they will support you with information, advice and support about what is available on 0300 030 1215

COMFORT IN CRISIS

Pets and Coronavirus (COVID-19)

25.3.20



Here are some top tips from the UK's best loved national pet charities and experts.

Pets and Coronavirus PROTECTING EACH OTHER

- 1 There is no evidence that pets can get sick from COVID-19.
- 2 Just like human hands, pet fur could carry the virus from one person to another.
- 3 Wash hands well with soap after touching any pets or their belongings and avoid pet kisses – them and you!
- 4 If your pet is sick or injured, call your vet before going to the surgery.



Pets provide invaluable companionship, let's take care of them too

Pets and Coronavirus PRACTISE SOCIAL DISTANCING

- 1 Each person in the household can walk your dog once a day, but...
- 2 Keep you and your dog **at least two metres** from others.
- 3 Avoid contact with other people's pets.
- 4 Ensure you have your pet's normal supplies for 14 days; make only essential trips to the pet shop.



Wash your hands, follow the latest Government guidance and play your part to protect others

Pets and Coronavirus IF YOU ARE SELF ISOLATING

- 1 Think about how you can provide for your pet's needs.
- 2 Dogs can be let out into your garden, or just outside your home to toilet, but keep your distance from others and minimise time outside.*
- 3 Can anyone else care for your pet if you are sick or in hospital?
- 4 If your cat is used to staying in then keep them inside and clean their litter tray regularly. If an outdoor cat, try and minimise interactions with them.*



If you are sick, restrict close contact with your pets

Pets and Coronavirus HELPING EACH OTHER

- 1 Can you safely help a vulnerable person in your community with their pet?
- 2 Can you offer remote help to your local animal charity?
- 3 Could you donate pet food to your local food bank?
- 4 All animal charities will be impacted by this crisis – please consider donating to support their work.



Pets are family – let's look out for each other

To find out more visit: www.cfsg.org.uk/coronavirus

*Advice on these specific points may be subject to change so please regularly check Government guidance.



Hospital Passport for Covid 19 Admission

Additional information for medical professionals
During this pandemic some members of our families may have to be hospitalised and you may not be able to accompany the person you care for. It may be helpful for Carers and their families to write down useful information that the hospital may need to know about you or the person you care for.

The following are suggestions of useful information, not everything will be relevant to you.

Personal details – What you like to be known by, your next of Kin or representative and provide contact details

Communication difficulties - How do you communicate? sign language? Can you answer yes or no? Do you wear hearing aids? Can you understand information? This may refer to someone who has Dementia, a brain injury or a Learning Disability. Can you normally make medical decisions? What happens when in pain and how this is expressed.

Medical Conditions - Do you have any respiratory issues? Pre – existing medical conditions: Are you seeing another medical professional at this time? Their names and contact details would be useful. What Medication do you take? Your repeat prescription list would be useful

Dietary requirements/support - Do you have a special diet? Do you have problems swallowing food or medication? Is your food mashed up, liquidised, cut up small? Do you have problems drinking? Do you use a special cup?

Mobility/Additional assistance required - Walking aids used? Do you have any continence issues? Do you have any Allergies? Is there a special place on your body where you would normally have blood taken from, do you need reassurance or sedation?

Please add any additional relevant information that a medical professional needs to know

For any further support or information about this please contact Susan Garrett on 0191 500 6030.



Currently due to the Corona Virus many Carers are having to completely self-isolate to keep their Cared for safe. The effects of this are far reaching and has resulted in an unprecedented number of Carers facing immediate and significant hardship.

Please if you can help by donating to our COVID-19 Crisis Fund it gives us the chance to meet the needs of the most desperate.

To donate please go to:

<https://uk.virginmoneygiving.com>

and search for Durham County Carers Support or send a cheque to:

Durham County Carers Support, Enterprise House, Meadowfield Avenue, Spennymoor, DL16 6JF.

Thank you so much for your support.

NHS Carer Break Fund

Available for Carers registered with Durham & Darlington Carer Support.

We would love to help alleviate your stress by providing you with a Carer Break from the NHS Carer Break Fund, getting out and about may be difficult so here are a few ideas that the funding could be used for:

Jigsaws

Gardening equipment

Gaming items

Toys for the kids

Board games

Craft items

Kindles

Baking equipment

Books

Pamper items

If you live in Darlington and wish to apply to the fund please ring 0300 030 1215 or email: admin@dccarers.org

If you live in County Durham and wish to apply please ring 0300 005 1213 or email: admin@dccarers.org





We need your support now, more than ever, please join

Support our **FREE** counselling service for Carers and grab yourself a chance to Win a Cash Prize!

Visit our website www.dccarers.org or fill in the form below and return it along with a cheque made payable to Durham County Carers Support For **ONLY £12** per year your number will be entered into the 12 monthly draws.

Each month you will have a fantastic chance of winning:

1st Prize £100, 2nd Prize £70, 3rd Prize £35

Please note prize money varies each month depending on how many people are playing.



Our lucky winners from the last 3 draws were:

	February 2020	March 2020	April 2020
1st	Mrs M Reed	Joe Pugh	Mary Brown
2nd	Mrs J Cooper	Marian Harris	KJ Dawson
3rd	Pauline Hambly	Mr M Clark	Mr R Clark

Each chance to win costs £1 per month and you can have as many numbers as you like! The more numbers you have, the greater your chances of winning and the greater the prize fund.

You can join by either visiting our website: www.dccarers.org or by returning this slip along with a cheque made payable to: Durham County Carers Support.

Name:

Address:

.....Postcode:

Telephone:Email:

I would like to buy numbers at £12.00 per number, please return this form along with your cheque payment to:

**Durham County Carers Support,
Enterprise House, Meadowfield Avenue, Spennymoor, DL16 6JF.**

Lottery Registration Number LOT142 Charity Number 1069278



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