

Caring Matters

October 2023



Carers Rights day events

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Christmas Opening Times

Our office opening times during the festive period are as follows:
Friday 22nd December Open 9am – 2pm.
24th, 25th and 26th December office closed.
27th, 28th and 29th December.
Telephone support only from 9am – 5pm
Re open as normal from 9am on Tuesday 2nd January 2024

Useful Contacts If you need urgent support when we are closed, please call Social Care Direct on 01325 406111 or the Emergency Duty Team on 01642 524552

For physical and mental health issues out of hours call NHS 111 or in an emergency 999. For support around your mental health call the Samaritans on 116123

www.dccarers.org

 [durhamcountycarerssupport](https://www.facebook.com/durhamcountycarerssupport)

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



DARLINGTON
Borough Council



Darlington's
Commitment
to Carers



FINANCIAL SUPPORT | HINTS AND TIPS? | TRAINING COURSES AND MUCH MORE INSIDE...

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We would love to hear from you:

If you have any ideas/topics, share your caring story or top tips for future editions of Caring Matters that you would like us to include, please email Alison Donoghue at alison.donoghue@darlingtoncarers.org

How to access our services and refer to us:

- Call or email the office using the details below.
- For Carer Support visit: dccarers.org/sign-up-for-support/
- Ask your GP or social worker to refer you

Contact us

Darlington Office St Teresa's Hospice
91 Woodland Road
Darlington DL3 7UA
admin@darlingtoncarers.org
www.dccarers.org
www.facebook.co.uk/darlingtoncarerssupport

Follow us on Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, TikTok and LinkedIn.

Advertising

If you would like to advertise your business that you think would be of interest to our Carers, please contact Sophie.johnson@dccarers.org for further information.

A day in the life of a

Carer Support Co-ordinator

9am

Check my emails. I have requests for advice and information from Carers. These range from: Concerns about scams and internet fraud. A useful tool for this is *Little Book of Big Scams (Fifth Edition) (nbcc.police.uk)*. Carers wanting to know about any useful free courses to develop their skills. The online ones to do with a cuppa have proved the most popular. Often Carers have issues with online forms, or want to learn more skills like shopping online, or the best Apps or find out how to use Facebook, Snapchat, or WhatsApp. Some of my favourite emails are from Carers who I have supported in the past letting me know how they are doing and 'showing off their new skills', by attaching a document like a short story or poem, or photos, as they have learnt how to attach or upload information and images.

10am

I complete the National Data Bank surveys to inform them how many data sim cards from certain providers I have given to Carers. These can be useful to Carers who are struggling to pay for data and calls.

10.30am – 12pm

I telephone Carers and discuss what their IT needs are. I often arrange home visits, or Carers arrange to meet me where it best suits them. Today a Carer has a new device and would like some support to learn her way around the tablet. Another Carer would like to do Facetime to be able to see and chat to her son who lives abroad, the 3rd call we discuss IT equipment as the Carer is considering doing a course to get back into employment. We have decided she can borrow some equipment (as we do have a small lending library) to see how she gets on. This ensures she will make the right choice. The 4th call the Carer is considering a holiday but would need to have some extra support – this is an easy signpost to the agencies that offer specialist equipment or support when wanting to go away abroad or stay closer to home. So, I agree to email the charities and companies that can offer this, and the Carer thanks me for the quick response meaning they can start planning a getaway, she has never booked a holiday before online and asks if she can call back if she

needs further support or gets stuck.

Then I start a grant on behalf of a Carer who does not have the internet in their home. Sadly, the Universal Credit benefit means you have to update your Journal online. This is proving difficult for this Parent Carer, so I look to gain a grant for a number of items (modem router, and data) to allow internet access into the home.

Quick lunch then finish off the handouts for this afternoon's home visits. The handouts include learn how to 'google it' - the search engine on the internet to find out useful information.

1.00pm – 1.30pm

1st home visit. This Carer struggles with spellings, so its handy having the microphone tool to speak in your request instead of worrying about typing and spelling.

1.45pm – 3.15pm

The next home visit. We will be setting up an email account so the Carer can apply for Council Tax rebate and stay in touch more easily with health and social services professionals. We will also download an app to top up gas and electric easily from the home – without having to go out. If we have some time the Carer has said they would like to join the local library online to be able to get access to audio books (talking books) – as their child enjoys the stories and rhymes meaning the Carer gets a little break and then the carer wants to have eBooks (where you read the pages of a book on your device) to allow the Carer to unwind.

3.30pm - 4pm

Computer dropped off at a Carer's as arranged – one of our great volunteers has been able to get a faulty device back up and running - after an anti-virus had slowed the system up, and the device was not working properly.

4.30pm

Quick cuppa as I join an online webinar to keep myself updated and informed about services, and support in the area.

If you would like any support contact me on 01325 524613 ruth.sykes@darlingtoncarers.org

Carers Week Event

Carers Week™

*This year's theme for Carers' Week 2023 was
Recognising and supporting Carers in the community*

Our event was held within the Wellbeing Hub at St. Teresa's Hospice, 43 Carers attended the event together with 9 stall holders. There was a great atmosphere. Carers accessed lots of information and support, whilst professionals were able to network and find out about other services.

We received very positive feedback and appreciation from both Carers and professionals for the event, along with appreciation for the free gifts, including pens, tote bags, water bottles and not forgetting the gorgeous cupcakes.



Notice of Durham County Carers Support

Annual General Meeting

Wednesday 4th October 2023 at 11am

Venue: Bishop Auckland Football Club, Heritage Park,
Stadium Way, Bishop Auckland, Co Durham, DL14 9AE

Our AGM will include:

- Annual Report presentation
- Election of Trustees
- Presentation of financial accounts
- Celebration of achievements and future plans
- Refreshments



If you would like to attend, please scan the QR code opposite and complete your details online, alternatively contact Sophie Johnson on 0191 500 6035 or email: sophie.johnson@dccarers.org



Durham County
carers support

Carers

Support Group

We usually meet on the **first Wednesday of the month from 1-2.30pm at the King William Street Housing Association Hall, Darlington. (Postcode DL1 4YS)**

New members are always very welcome. A friendly environment. Experiences can be shared confidentially, and you will receive support from us and others who are experiencing similar difficulties to you own.

For more details contact a member of our team on **03000 301215** or email us at admin@darlingtoncarers.org

4th October - Wellbeing session – relaxation and coping with stress.

The 'breath' can be used to calm and relax our body and mind, giving us a welcome mental break. The session will show how to use the breath to manage stress, stay healthy and give you techniques to use in your everyday life as a Carer.

1st November - Information about staying safe online.

Watch out for scams.

6th December - Christmas social.

Join us for a few nibbles, a Christmas quiz and a chance to unwind.

3rd January - Cuppa and social.

Please join us for a chance to catch up, meet other Carers and get support.

NEW

Evening Online Carer Support Group on Zoom

Join us for a cuppa and a chat with other Carers.

When: first Monday of the Month, 7pm – 8pm

Contact: Sharon Bell to request the joining link sharon.bell@dccarers.org or call 0191 500 6016



Money Matters

Carers' Rights Day is organised by Carers UK. It aims to help:

- Ensure Carers are aware of their rights.
- Let Carers know where to get help and support.
- Raise awareness of the needs of Carers.



Our event this year will be on Wednesday 22nd November 2023, from 10am – 12pm at Darlington Connect Shop, 6 Northgate, Darlington, DL1 1NR

Pop along for coffee and meet our team of Carer Support Coordinators, along with other Organisations supporting unpaid Carers in Darlington.

The current cost of living crisis is a challenging time for everyone, but we know that many unpaid Carers are already struggling to keep their heads above water. That is why we are focussing our resources on ways to support you. We can help you access grants, bursaries, and vouchers for a range of items to help you through this period. If you are worried about money and how to get through the colder months, please pop along or contact us to see if we can help on 0300 005 1215. Alternatively, visit our website at www.dccarers.org.

Our team, along with other organisations, will be available to chat to you about your caring role and see if there is any support we can offer, such as:

- Help claiming the welfare benefits and discounts you may be entitled to
- Accessing Carer Breaks
- Free counselling
- Form filling
- Carers Discount Card
- Grants and Bursaries
- And much more.
- IT support

Whether you are a new Carer, or have been caring for someone for a while, we believe that it's important that you understand your rights and are able to access the support that is available to you as soon as you need it. Many people are taking on more caring responsibilities for their relatives and friends who are disabled, ill or older and who need support – *we are here to help.*



Share and learn

**Tuesday the 21st of November between 10- 2pm.
By the Joseph Pease statue 43 High Row, Darlington, DL37QW**

Darlington Carers Support along with Barclays, the Regional Organised Crime Unit, and other organisations.

Stay safe online - with your shopping and personal information!

Speak to the experts and learn more about

Scams

Cyber security,

online training and face to face courses for everyone.

Free Data SIMS cards for phones and routers,

Equipment loan,

How to be more confident at talking photos with your devices, or manage your emails more confidently,

What is social media?

Get information on Apps. – and how they may support you with your Caring role.

One to one IT support for unpaid carers.

Is your equipment working properly – worried about a virus or 'glitch' ? or has something changed when you updated your device ? find out what you can do?

Come and find out what else we have to offer.



 **BARCLAYS** | Digital Wings

North East
ROCU
Regional Organised Crime Unit Network

Are you thinking of looking for work?

Here are some top tips for getting back into work

Not all Carers are in a position to work but if you are considering working then we know it can feel like a massive step. Here are some tips we hope might help you if you are thinking about looking for work.

Think about what type of job you might want based around the skills and interests you have and any paid work that you have done such as:

- volunteering work
- your role as a Carer

Examples of some skills you might have gained from your caring responsibilities:

- Prioritising and organising
- Time management
- Managing a budget
- Managing a schedule
- Negotiating with professionals
- Communication skills
- Learning new skills quickly and efficiently (i.e., if you needed to learn how to move and handle someone, use certain equipment or administer medication)

When thinking about your interests, consider:

- what you enjoy doing
- how you would like to use your skills
- things you miss doing that you once did, e.g. from previous work or volunteering

If you feel you might need some training before getting in to work, then there are lots of free training courses out there that could help. Carers UK have some e-learning courses www.carersuk.org/for-professionals/digital-products-and-services/digital-resource-for-carers and the National Careers Service nationalcareers.service.gov.uk/explore-your-education-and-training-choices/get-a-job can help support and identify training for you. You might also be entitled to some funding to help pay the costs of training and we have access to a number of grants and bursaries that support Carers with learning new skills.

If you are claiming benefits, working or studying might impact these benefits so it would be a good idea to have a benefits check before you make any decisions.

Contact your Carer Support Coordinator for support with any of these issues.

Supporting Carers in the Workplace

Durham County Carers Support are working with employers to help them support Carers in the workplace. We have developed guides and policies that can offer organisations the opportunity to put supportive measures in place to help their employees who have caring responsibilities.

We are encouraging as many employers as possible to sign up to our 'Carer Friendly Employer' course which will show their current and future workforce that they have a sound understanding of the issues Carers face and the support they need.

We have developed a new training portal on our website which has lots of resources and a simple assessment to complete. Employers will then receive a 'Carer Friendly Employer' certificate and ongoing support they need to help them support Carers in the workplace. For more information, please contact Sharon Bell on 0191 500 6016 or visit our website.

Link to employer page:
training.dccarers.org



Benefits



Employees wellbeing

An inclusive, diverse workplace culture fosters a sense of belonging, safety and purpose for employees.



Staff retention

It will help you retain talented and experienced staff and is likely to reduce stress and sickness levels.



Productivity

Creating a sense of belonging in the workplace results in greater on-the-job effort and higher employee performance.



Recruitment

It will help you attract new talent, investing in employees will help you become an employer of choice.



Promotion

Your business will be seen as inclusive and progressive and you will be able to use the kitemark throughout your business.



Futureproof

Prepare your organisation for the future – the number of Carers in the UK is predicted to increase by 60% by 2030.

Darlington Carers Support

Afternoon Tea



We were delighted that 20 Carers were able to join us recently at the Bannatyne Hotel in Darlington for our Carers' Afternoon Tea event.

For one Carer, the afternoon was a real trip down memory lane since the Hotel was once the location of their former school.

It has been so lovely to hear from our Carers how much they appreciated this well-earned opportunity to take a break from their caring roles and to have some vital 'me time'. Here is some of the feedback which they gave: -

"It was lovely to be given the opportunity to experience a touch of the luxurious life. Every moment was savoured and warmly appreciated!"

"I enjoyed doing something different, meeting some other lovely Carers. The food was lovely and it was nice not to think of anyone but myself today."

"This has been a very relaxing and fun time – let's have many more."

"It was so nice to meet new people, people who understand what you are going through."

"I actually had a conversation today. Events are such a good idea as it gets you out from your normal caring role. Thank you to Ruth, Andrew and Sue for all your efforts to make our lives better."

"Thank you very much it was fabulous."

If you were unable to join us this time, look out for further opportunities to take a break from your caring role, which we hope to bring to you in the future.



Connecting Carers IT Project



**carers
RIGHTS DAY**

Events we have an online scam awareness course – right before you start your online festive shopping. Get updated and stay protected!

Thursday the 23rd of November 10.15am -11.30am

This will be via Zoom

Please complete the form to register. For more information please contact Ruth Sykes on 01325 524613

Ruth.sykes@darlingtoncarers.org

forms.office.com/e/YvqFmYK07C

Online Scam Awareness



Darlington Connect

Darlington Connect is a partnership of organisations who have come together to help the people of Darlington.

We provide help such as:

- Access into health and well being services
- Referrals into a range of specialist support agencies
- Cost of living support and advice
- Community engagement

If you are struggling at the moment with any problem, you are not alone. Coordinated support is available for any difficulty you are experiencing.

Call in for further details



Opening times
Mon to Fri
9am - 3.30pm
6, Northgate,
(next to Costa
Coffee)

Good News Story

Fundraising

I first contacted Darlington Carers Support in December 2021, having heard of them through Social Services. At the time, my mother's health had deteriorated to such an extent that my family and I were needing to access help for mum and support for us in our caring roles.

The advice, signposting and support we received from Darlington Carers Support in the period leading up to mum going into care was exceptional. On a personal level, I was grateful for the regular contact I had with the team during this difficult period. For all of these reasons, when our fundraising team at work (Department for



Education) were considering which local charities to raise funds for in 2022/23, I had no hesitation in putting Darlington Carers Support forward as one of three charities. My nomination was successful and through various fundraising efforts (e.g., bake sales, raffles, tombola's, book and plant sales to name but a few) we raised an incredible £2460, which was shared equally between our 3 charities.



Free Cooking



on a budget course for Carers

This is a Free 4 session course over a number of weeks to support you to cook healthy and on a budget. We have partnered with 'Learning & Skills' who will be providing the training for us.

There are four sessions to this course. Please check the dates and venues before requesting a place.

Week 1 - Wed 11th of Oct 2023 1.30- 3.30pm at King William street housing association hall DL1 3YS

Week 2 - Wed 18th of Oct 2023 1.30- 3.30pm at King William street housing association hall DL1 3YS

Week 3 - Wed 26th of Oct 2023 1.30- 3.30pm at King William street housing association hall DL1 3YS

Week 4 - Changes to note - Wed. 8th of Nov 2023 1.30 - 3.30pm at Wesley Street housing association hall DL1 1HN - 5 min walk from King William street.

To book your place and get further information contact learning and Skills
01325 405601 07932 869325 l&s@darlington.gov.uk

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Football FANcy a break?

Join us to watch Darlington FC v Rushall Olympic

Football Season gives Carers an ideal opportunity to have some time out from their caring role and spend time with other people who share a common interest.

We would like to invite you to join us to watch Darlington Football Club take on Rushall Olympic at Blackwell Meadows on **Saturday 25th November 2023, kick-off at 3pm.**

If you would like to join us, please complete the Forms link forms.office.com/e/m5YfbSaVFb or scan this QR Code.

Alternatively, contact Andrew West on **0191 917 4709** or email andrew.west@darlingtoncarers.org.



Did you know that we may be able to pay for match tickets or help financially towards a Season Ticket so you can support your favourite team?

Please check your club website to get an idea of prices so you know what you would like to apply for.

Get in touch with your Carer Support Coordinator to see how you can be in the stands next season!

Darlington FC, Bishop Auckland FC and Consett FC have joined the Carer Discount Card scheme; check out their ticket offers here: Days Out Archives - Durham County Carers Support (dcarers.org).

If your club hasn't joined the scheme, ask them to visit our website for more information.

Volunteer Corner

Volunteers Week 2023



For Volunteers Week this year we merged our Carers and Volunteer celebrations and what a wonderful week we had! Over 250 Carers and Volunteers celebrated with Afternoon Tea and Tours at either Ushaw College, Shotton Hall, Lumley Castle or Raby Castle. It was the perfect setting to say thank you to our fantastic team of Volunteers who have collectively donated over 6000 hours in the last year. We couldn't do what we do with out you all so thank you again for all your support.



New and exciting Volunteer Vacancies

Volunteer Parent Carer Champion

We have recently expanded our Volunteer Parent Carer team to include a champion role, this is a brilliant opportunity for our team to go to events and professional meetings to promote the support we can offer to Parent Carers. An enhanced DBS and full training will be offered as well as ongoing support, this can also incorporate training to assist in completing DLA forms if you are interested which again comes with full training and is flexible so could fit in with other commitments. The role would suit someone who is happy to go into public and/or professional settings.

Online Support Group Volunteer

As an online support group volunteer, you will provide remote help with the online elements of supporting DCCS's evening online Carers support group. The role is designed to offer Carers a chance to meet up with other Carers, some of whom may be working, parent or adult Carers and make them feel at ease so people skills are a must. If you enjoy getting to know your community, working with others and making a real difference then this is the role for you. To do this role you will be someone who has their own computer and Wi-Fi connection and are happy to support remotely, we offer a DBS, training and ongoing support.

If these sound like something you might be interested in then please feel free to contact Jessica.howarth@dccarers.org.

50:50 Club Monthly Lottery

You could win 1 of 3 great cash prizes every month. As the name suggests, 50% of the money supports our Carers Wellbeing Fund and 50% is paid out in cash prizes. Club members pay £12.00 per year to be entered into 12 monthly draws. Winners are notified by post, announced on our Facebook page and in this newsletter.

To enter fill in and return the slip below or join online www.dccarers.org

Name:

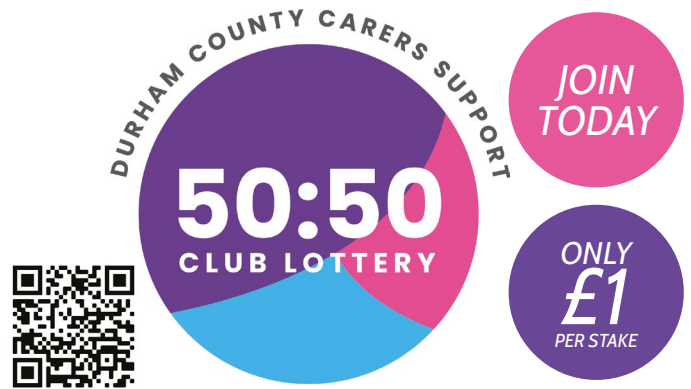
Telephone Number:

Address:

.....

Postcode:

Email:



I would like _____ numbers at £12.00 per year and enclose a cheque made payable to: Durham County Carers Support.

I would like _____ numbers and would like to pay by Standing Order (we will send you a form to complete).

Please cut out and send this completed form to: Durham County Carers Support, Enterprise House, Meadowfield Avenue, Spennymoor, DL16 6JF.

50:50 CLUB WINNERS

May 2023	June 2023	AVE 2nd PRIZE £75	AVE 1st PRIZE £113	AVE 3rd PRIZE £37
1st – Ms M A Jones	1st Mr D Whelan			
2nd – Ann Ross	2nd Ray Hambly			
3rd – Susan Emms	3rd Karen MacNair			

Fundraising for our Counselling Service



Over the next 12 months our fundraising and donations will be used to support the DCCS Counselling Service for Carers living in County Durham and Darlington.

We are off to a great start, a huge well done and thank you goes to our very own Helen Olney for completing the 'Great North Swim' in 42 minutes and raising £333.



Great North Run 2023

The next event is the Great North Run, we have 15 runners taking on the challenge which is set to take place on Sunday 10th September 2023, each runner is hoping to raise £250 towards a collective total of 3,750, you can show your support by donating online via the QR code or click [here](#) (use GNR23 as the reference).




Are all Carers in your household registered with us?

Did you know Carers can sign up for information only support and still get a Carers Discount Card! This is a pressure free way for you or someone else in your household, who is not yet registered to access our support and have help on hand when you need it! To register online, please visit dccarers.org/sign-up-for-support

WHO IS AN UNPAID CARER?

PARENT CARER



"I always just classed myself as a parent, my wife was registered with DCCS and she said I should too, I was so surprised to find we could both register!"

CARES FOR WIFE

"really we care for each other these days so we are both registered with DCCS"



WORKING CARER



"when I'm not at work, I'm getting the shopping for my Dad or taking him to his hospital appointments"

WHO IS AN UNPAID CARER?

