



Carer Support Wiltshire



Newsletter

Autumn/Winter 2020

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A Network Partner of
**CARERS
TRUST**

Hello from our Chief Executive, Judy Walker

Dear Carer,

There are moments when it's possible to forget the world has a problem. Moments when the sun is shining, friends are chatting outside cafés and you see children walking to school. But still a sense of unease about the future remains and we continue to live in times of high uncertainty that is very challenging for carers. Questions remain – can I visit my loved one at their care home and will that cause them more distress than happiness? Can I visit someone in hospital, and how many people can I see face-to-face and where?

We are doing our best to provide up-to-date information for carers. The easiest way to find this is through our website, so if you have IT access do visit our site and, in particular, our FAQ page at carersupportwiltshire.co.uk/news/coronavirus-faq-for-carers. Otherwise you can always call our helpline on 0800 181 4118 during office hours if you have a query. If it would help, we can call you back.

This newsletter includes details of our virtual cafés where you can log on and chat to other carers, and also to carer support staff and volunteers. Do give one a go if you haven't already – our volunteers will make you feel welcome and we can talk you through how to join the session if you need technical support. We continue to work on how we can be together face-to-face again, but guidance is still changing regularly. We will be in touch as soon as plans are confirmed (as much as they can be).

A final couple of things. Please don't forget to book your flu jab this winter – carers are entitled to a free vaccination and we all need all the help we can get to make it through the winter months in the best possible health.

You will also see information enclosed about a survey we would really like carers to complete on our services; information from which will guide our strategy for the coming years and the support we focus on for carers. I know that there are surveys everywhere at the moment, but I really would be grateful if you're able to take the time to complete this one too. A carer can be anyone – young or old, working or not working, caring for a child, a parent or another loved one – and the challenges you all face are just as unique. We need to hear from as many of you as possible to ensure we are really doing the best we can for all carers.

With best wishes -
Judy



Befriending service to continue into the autumn

Carers have been left feeling isolated and alone as a result of the pandemic, separated from family and friends and unable to attend their regular support groups and cafés.

It was for this reason that, in June, we vastly expanded our Talk and Support service, where volunteers call carers regularly, to check in on them, offer support or just have a chat. Since then, the number of volunteers involved has more than tripled to nearly 50 and over 170 carers have received regular and vitally important calls.

In addition to this, the 'Connecting Carers' project is a three month funded project to extend and expand Talk and Support to include a virtual 'face-to-face' offering. Many carers have responded positively to the service, saying it has been helpful at a particularly difficult time and has helped them feel less isolated and given them a space to be sociable.

Carer Julie Weymouth from Bradford-on-Avon (pictured) cares for her husband Paul following his stroke in 2013. She has been receiving the calls and said: "I have felt very alone and lockdown has not been easy. One day the phone rang and it was Sam. She saved my sanity then and helped me with a problem that I had been worrying about. Her phone call was perfect timing."

To register for the phone or face-to-face calls, please call us on 0800 181 4118 and ask to be referred to the service.





Services available to carers during the Covid-19 emergency

During the Covid-19 emergency the service that Carer Support Wiltshire can offer has had to change. We've put together the following support for carers with the help of our staff and volunteers, who are committed to continuing to help carers at this time.

Telephone helpline

Open for advice and support (Monday-Thursday 0930 – 1630 and Friday 0930 – 1600). Please call us on 0800 181 4118 or email admin@carersupportwiltshire.co.uk if you need us. Please feel you can call us about any difficulty you are having – if we are unable to help, we will be able to signpost you to services or organisations that may be able to.

Virtual cafés

Our face-to-face carer cafés have moved online. With the support of staff and volunteers we are running regular virtual meet-ups for carers who would like to connect with other carers – to

discuss issues, share tips or just have a chat and a break. Trained volunteers will be available to talk to in virtual 'break-out rooms' should you have a personal issue you'd like to discuss or a request for specific support. You can find details of the virtual cafés in this newsletter. To view the most up-to-date list – as other events may be added – please check the What's On section of our website.

Enewsletter

You can keep in touch with us via our monthly emails – subscribe on our website. You can also follow us on social media and we have a closed Carer

Support Wiltshire Facebook group – simply search to find it and request to join – just for carers.

Talk & Support

Our befriending services can put you in touch with one of our volunteers, many of whom have been carers themselves, for regular phone calls or video chats. Feedback from carers receiving this service has been really positive, with carers saying it has been very helpful to have someone who isn't a friend or family member checking in on how they're doing, and just being there to listen. Call or email us to register for this service.

Time for Carers appeal update

We are pleased that our Time for Carers Appeal has got off to a fantastic start, despite the current climate, and has raised £4,243 to date. This money will be used to fund breaks for carers who are under pressure, helping to ease the physical and emotional strain of caring and enabling them to continue caring for their loved one.

Studies show that 40% of carers haven't had a single day off from their caring

responsibilities for over a year. Lakshmi is a parent carer who has received funding from the appeal. She said: "With the funding I booked a week away at a meditation retreat at the Barn, The Sharpham Trust. For me, this is not just a holiday but healing 'me time' that is desperately needed from my busy daily life caring for my two disabled children."

We are off to a good start but want to raise much more. If you would like to donate to the appeal or fundraise for it – or you have friends, family or are part of an organisation who would like to – please visit carersupportwiltshire.co.uk/timeforcarers or call us on 0800 181 4118.



78% of young carers more worried about the future since coronavirus

Carers Trust has conducted a survey of young carers (aged 12 to 17) and young adult carers (aged 18 to 25) to find out how they have been affected by coronavirus.

The results are concerning and show significant increases in the amount of time young people are spending on caring for family members or friends. The survey also shows increases in stress, and a steep decline in mental health among younger carers.

Some of the headline findings are:

- 40% of young carers and 59% of young adult carers say their mental health is worse since coronavirus.
- 67% of young carers and 78% of young adult carers are more worried about the future since coronavirus.
- 69% of both young carers and young adult carers are feeling less connected to others since coronavirus.
- 11% of young carers and 20% of young adult carers report an increase of 30 hours or more in the amount of time they spend caring per week.

If you have a family member who is a young or young adult carer, Carer Support Wiltshire can offer advice on the support that may be available to them. Call us on 0800 181 4118.



Young adult carers attending a Carer Support Wiltshire carer café.

Young people returning to education

If there is a young person in your family who has returned to education this month, it will likely have caused a range of emotions, from worry to relief. Some of us will be understandably very concerned about the safety of our child and family, while others will feel relieved to have the extra support and respite that school can bring, and that their young person is returning to a predictable routine.

Wiltshire Council has advice for parents and carers about the return to education on its website – wiltshire.gov.uk/schools-learning-coronavirus. It is also funding a new telephone support service for children, young people and parents/carers called On Your Mind, which is available 7 days a week and can help with a range of issues. The number to call is 01865 903777 (if between the hours of 9am-5pm) or 01865 901000 (between 5pm-11pm).



Free training for carers

Training is important for carers - knowing the proper way to lift someone, or care for someone with a specific condition for example, can be empowering. But there are many other skills that can help with the caring role too, such as IT support and first aid.

We are still able to recommend a number of online courses, all of which are provided free to carers. You'll find details of them at carersupportwiltshire.co.uk/resource-centre-training-and-education. If you're not online or you have any questions or specific training requirements, please contact Kerry Watts, Carer Training Officer on 0800 181 4118 or email kerryw@carersupportwiltshire.co.uk.



Liaising with hospitals when your loved one is an inpatient

As winter draws closer it is a sad inevitability that many of us may be making more frequent hospital visits with our loved ones or even be faced with a loved one being admitted.

Even if you are already caring for someone, their needs may change or increase considerably after a hospital stay. It's important that you are fully informed and feel confident and empowered when your loved one is discharged from hospital.

A number of steps should take place before the person you care for comes out of hospital, including carrying out a discharge assessment to see if they need support once discharged and a written care and support plan, which outlines the support required and how this will be provided. If a meeting is suggested on discharge planning, don't be afraid to ask for a face-to-face meeting rather than a virtual one if needed. All hospitals will have their own discharge policy, which you can check their website for or request a copy of from the ward manager or Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) department of the hospital.

Carers UK have a very useful factsheet called 'Coming out of hospital' – it can be found at carersuk.org/images/factsheets/2020-21_factsheets/coming_out_of_hospital_england_april_2020-21.pdf



Join the carers Fantasy Football league

We've created a Carer Support Wiltshire Carers League and we'd love you to join us! To join in, download the Premier League app and set up your team. Pick players from all the Premier League teams with a fixed budget and get points based on their real life performance. Search 'how to play fantasy premier league' online for more information and guidance.

Once your team has been set up, click 'join FPL League' and quote the code **Twoems** to join.

Winter flu jab

As a carer you will be entitled to a flu jab for free this winter. Many GP surgeries and pharmacies are booking

appointments now – so it's worth checking to see if yours is. This winter, preventing hospitalisation with flu is going to be more important than ever and getting the jab will reduce the chance of you passing flu onto the person you care for. Do book in for yours when you're able – if you're not registered as a carer with your surgery, make sure you let them know.



Raise funds for Carer Support while you spend

Carer Support Wiltshire is registered with AmazonSmile, which means we can receive money from your Amazon purchases if you choose to support us (at no extra cost to you). AmazonSmile is now available through the Amazon app (make sure you have the latest version downloaded to use it) as well as on the website, which makes it effortless to donate every time you spend.

What's On

While our face-to-face meet-ups are on hold (more in Judy's hello on the first page about these), we continue to hold a range of online meet-ups. Some are location specific, some are open to carers living in any part of Wiltshire and we also have meet-ups just for parent carers. To book onto any of these meet-ups and receive the details on how to log in, please call us on 0800 181 4118 or email admin@carersupportwiltshire.co.uk.

Salisbury/Amesbury and Durrington/ South Wiltshire

Thursday, 2-3pm, every other week
Dates: 24/9, 8/10, 22/10, 5/11, 19/11, 3/12, 17/12

Wiltshire wide

Thursday, 2-3pm, every other week
Dates: 1/10, 15/10, 29/10, 12/11, 26/11, 10/12

Trowbridge/Melksham/Warminster/ Westbury/South West Wiltshire

Tuesday, 11am-12pm, every other week
Dates: 29/9, 13/10, 27/10, 10/11, 24/11, 8/12, 22/12

Bradford-on-Avon/Chippenham/ Corsham

Tuesday, 11am-12pm, monthly
Dates: 13/10, 10/11, 8/12

Wiltshire wide – for parent carers

Wednesday, 11am-12pm, monthly
Dates: 21/10, 18/11, 16/12

Marlborough/Pewsey/Devizes/ Royal Wootton Bassett & Cricklade/

Malmesbury/Calne

Tuesday, 11am – 12pm, monthly
Dates: 27/10, 24/11

Other events

Virtual 'Performing arts' workshop for LGBT+ carers

Sun, 11th Oct, 10.30am – 1pm

An acting workshop you can access from the comfort of your own home. It will be led by Jack and Sophie who, having recently completed an Extended Diploma in Performing Arts, are passionate about sharing their knowledge and experience about the performing arts. You do not need to have any experience in the performing arts, just turn up and enjoy! Thanks to Carers Trust for funding this event.

Virtual quiz for male carers

Wed, 14th Oct, 2-4pm

This virtual quiz is just for male carers and will be hosted by our resident quiz expert Andrew (he takes his quizzes very seriously!). It's open to all male carers who would like to join us for a cerebral workout and some laughs. Call or email us to put your name down and we'll send you details of how to join. Thanks to Carers Trust for funding this event.



Keep In Touch

Find out more at www.carersupportwiltshire.co.uk
www.carersupportwiltshire.co.uk/young-carers
www.workingforcarers.co.uk www.yacbook.co.uk

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@working4carers
@YACbook



www.facebook.com/carerswiltshire
www.facebook.com/YACwiltshire
(our young adult carers Facebook page)



You can find Carer Support Wiltshire and YACbook on Instagram

If you require large print or audio format simply contact us
on 0800 181 4118 or send a quick email to
admin@carersupportwiltshire.co.uk

Contact Us

If you are a carer you can contact us on Freephone: 0800 181 4118
For all other enquiries: 01380 871690
Social Care out of hours emergency duty number: 0300 456 0100
Email: admin@carersupportwiltshire.co.uk

With kind thanks to our principal funders....

Working in partnership with
Wiltshire Council



NHS
Bath and North East Somerset,
Swindon and Wiltshire
Clinical Commissioning Group



Carer Support Wiltshire, Independent Living Centre, St George's Road, Semington,
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