

May 2021



# Caring Matters

Charity No: 1069278  
Company No: 3534933

Your local charity  
supporting carers

Our **mission** is to "Improve Carers Lives"  
Our **vision** is to "Create a community where Carers are recognised, valued and supported"



We are  
making  
Caring  
Visible and  
Valued

**Carers Week 7th-13th June 2021**



**Contact us:**  
Darlington Office: Unit 1F, Enterprise House  
Valley Street North, Darlington DL1 1GY

Telephone: 03000 301215 Web: [www.dccarers.org](http://www.dccarers.org)

Email: [admin@darlingtoncarers.org](mailto:admin@darlingtoncarers.org)

[www.facebook.co.uk/darlingtoncarerssupport](https://www.facebook.co.uk/darlingtoncarerssupport)

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

### How Can I Access This Service?

The Supported Living & Affordable Accommodation Service is for people living in, or for individuals who want to live in the Darlington area. It is located centrally in Darlington.

You're also welcome to email or call us via one of the methods below and arrange to come and have a look around.

If you prefer, you can ask your Social Worker, Community Psychiatric Nurse (CPN), GP (General Practitioner) or any other agency worker involved in your care to contact us on your behalf.



**Newly furnished small flats and independent housing available - referrals being taken. Darlington Mind supported living service which offers short and longer term accommodation across Darlington to vulnerable people suffering from mental and emotional health problems.**

**We offering good quality accommodation**

**along with support to develop independent living skills and develop emotional resilience.**

**I'd be delighted to hear from anyone who would like further information or would like to apply please email me at: [simon.davidson@darlingtonmind.com](mailto:simon.davidson@darlingtonmind.com) for further details or call 07946 073659.**

# WITHOUT YOU...



## Telephone **0191 338 5155**

to see how you can join our caring workforce and be part of a team that makes **a real difference to real lives in your area**

Rates of pay up to £8.60 an hour.  
Full training provided.

## Harold might not speak to anyone this week



**Dale Care**  
Care services

[www.dalecare.co.uk](http://www.dalecare.co.uk)

# Help us Make Caring Visible & Valued!

By Jenni Wood, CEO

This year we are celebrating national Carers Week from 7th to 13th June. The theme is "Making Caring Visible and Valued". There never has been a more important time to ensure Carers are recognised and valued for the huge contribution they make and have made over the last year. With services, schools and just about everything shut for much of the last year it has been up to Carers to juggle more than ever. Many people have been working from home whilst supporting the person they care for along with all the other stresses the pandemic has caused.

Please help us to highlight all this amazing effort and how challenging the last year has been by either;

- Putting the front cover of this newsletter in your window to show your support for a very important cause, or
- Take a picture holding up the front cover and send it by email to us at [admin@dccarers.org](mailto:admin@dccarers.org) We will use these to make a collage for our social media pages and show support for Carers Week.

We will be asking other agencies, MPs, County Councillors and individuals to do this and hope to get a lot of awareness across the County.

A huge thank you to all our staff, volunteers and trustees who have continued to work extremely hard to support Carers through a hugely challenging time. We hope to be moving back towards restarting some face-to-face services in the near future for those Carers who most need it. In addition to the virtual peer support sessions, courses, workshops and one to one advice currently available, our Keeping in Touch project has been in contact with 1300 older Carers to ensure they are getting help when they need it, and our amazing volunteer Counsellors have delivered hundreds of hours of counselling to over 350 Carers. We also want to thank all the Carers who have continued to support us and give us fantastic feedback that has kept us going, also all of you who have recommended us to your friends and family, this is still the way over a third of Carers find out about us. Keep up the good work.

## Don't Miss Out!

If you have an email address and haven't shared this with us, you could be missing out. By providing your email address you will not only receive our magazine quicker but also help us save on postage costs which in turn is better for the environment!

Email is the quickest way we can update you on important information and last-minute availability for Carer training and events. Here are some of the emails you may have missed out on over the last 2 months:

- Covid Vaccine and Lateral Flow Testing
- Tea Time Talks
- Caring matters Magazine
- Learning Disability NHS Training for Carers
- Parent Carers Short Breaks & Training
- Changes Programme Training for Carers
- Recharge & Refuel sessions

Make sure you don't miss anymore by emailing

[admin@dccarers.org](mailto:admin@dccarers.org) - and type what you give us permission to send:

1. Caring Matters magazine
2. Information on courses and training
3. General information relating to Carers
4. Fundraising Campaigns

We will not share your email with a third party without asking for permission first, to read our full Privacy Policy please go to our website [www.dccarers.org/privacy-policy](http://www.dccarers.org/privacy-policy)



## Email Address Competition

To celebrate Carers Week, all Carers who have chosen to receive their newsletter by email will be entered into a FREE prize draw to win Afternoon Tea. The winner will be chosen at random and drawn on Friday 11th June 2021. Afternoon Tea will be delivered to your home address.



# Alzheimers Society Dementia Advice & Support in Darlington



Our Dementia Advice and Support Service are continuing to provide information, advice, support and signposting to our service users via video call, phone, post and email. The Dementia Adviser service provides one-to-one support to people with dementia, carers and family members. It is a drop-in service so we can support at any point in the person's journey from pre-diagnosis to the later stages. We accept all professional and self-referrals. Please call 01904 929444 and leave a voicemail with your name, the area you live and contact details or email [DarlingtonTeesValley@alzheimers.org.uk](mailto:DarlingtonTeesValley@alzheimers.org.uk) to access our Dementia Adviser and Support Service.

All Group services including our St Herbert's café and Singing for the Brain are postponed until further notice due to the current circumstances. However, we are keeping in touch with all our service users who attend our groups in Darlington to check on their welfare and provide support where necessary. We also ran a virtual Activity Group which involved having a cuppa and a quiz, ran by Alzheimer's staff and volunteers- unfortunately, this group is no longer continuing. However, our North Yorkshire colleague Anne Cook is still leading weekly virtual Singing for the Brain sessions- please contact 01904 929444 for more information.

We are also offering Carer Information and Support Programme which is split into two parts: CrISP 1 & CrISP 2. CrISP 1 has been designed specifically for carers, family members and friends of people with a recent diagnosis of a dementia. CrISP 1 consists of four essential sessions:  
Understanding dementia- The physical, psychological and emotional implications that dementia may have on the person with dementia. (26th May 2021, 1pm-3.30pm)  
Providing support and care- Practical information on communication, understanding problems from the perspective of the person with dementia, and where and how to access support. (2nd June 2021, 1pm-3.30pm)  
Legal and money matters- Information on legal and money matters including making decisions now and in the future. (9th June 2021, 1pm-3.30pm)  
Coping day-to-day- The physical, psychological and emotional implications that dementia may have on them as the carer, including relationships, looking after yourself and identification of relevant support and services. (16th June 2021, 1pm-3.30pm)

CrISP 2 which has been designed specifically for carers, family members and friends of people who have been living with dementia for some time. CrISP 2 consists of three essential sessions:

Understanding how dementia progresses- the physical, psychological and emotional changes that may occur as dementia progresses. (5th May 2021, 1pm-3.30pm)  
Living with change as dementia progresses- practical information on communication, exploring problems from the perspective of the person living with dementia and where and how to access support. (12th May 2021, 1pm-3.30pm)  
Living well as dementia progresses, including occupation and activities- recognising the support needs of the person living with dementia and how those needs might be met. (19th May 2021, 1pm-3.30pm)

These sessions will be delivered virtually via the video conferencing service Zoom and will approximately last between two and two and a half hours each. They are completely free to attend and will be delivered by

Alzheimer's Society local services staff members. You can sign up to these sessions if you are a new or existing service user, and we accept referrals from professionals (with consent to do so obtained from person).

To sign up to CrISP 1 or CrISP 2, please call 01904 929444 and leave a voicemail with your name, area you live and reason for call or email [DarlingtonTeesValley@alzheimers.org.uk](mailto:DarlingtonTeesValley@alzheimers.org.uk).

## Dementia Friendly Darlington

Dementia Friendly Darlington is a Dementia Friendly Community led by and working with people affected by dementia, local organisations, businesses, services and people of all ages to make Darlington a place where people with dementia live well, are included, respected and able to contribute to their community, as they choose!

From developing a Dementia Voice for Darlington, to taking part in Dementia Action Week May 17th – 23rd 2021, a national event that sees the UK public taking action to improve the lives of people affected by dementia, Dementia Friendly Darlington is changing the way we think act and talk about Dementia!

Dementia Friendly Darlington is also working alongside Darlington's Dementia Adviser Service to engage GP Surgeries in creating dementia-friendly practices and leading public, online Dementia Friends Information Sessions to inspire us all to understand more about living with dementia.

If you, your organisation, business or service are interested in becoming a Dementia Friend, come along to our next Public Online Dementia Friends Information Session on Thursday May 6th 1 – 2pm. Learn more about dementia and the actions you can take to include and support people with dementia to live well in our communities. Please book your place via the Dementia Friends website.

Working with people living with and affected by dementia, businesses and services, together with facilitating local communities across the Borough to become recognised as 'Communities working to become Dementia Friendly' is also a priority. This includes working with Darlington Town Centre Partnership to promote a dementia-friendly environment in shops, cafes, museums and leisure services and with Community Policing Teams and Taxi providers to develop Dementia Friendly Services across the Borough. From Cockerton to Haughton, Whinfield & Springfield and from Middleton St George to Northgate, Dementia Friends Champions are leading online Dementia Friends Information Sessions and working with Darlington's Dementia Friendly Communities Coordinator to use dementia-friendly resources, raise awareness and inspire people with dementia, local volunteers, young people, families, carers and people of all ages to become actively involved in their Dementia Friendly Community.

If you, your organisation, business or local community would like more information about how to become actively involved in Dementia Friendly Darlington, contact: Belinda Williams, Dementia Friendly Communities Coordinator, Darlington  
07483137521 or [belinda.williams@alzheimers.org.uk](mailto:belinda.williams@alzheimers.org.uk)  
[www.facebook.com/dementiafriendlydarlington](http://www.facebook.com/dementiafriendlydarlington)



From the 1st to 7th June 2021 is National Volunteers Week which is a chance for us to celebrate with and Thank all our fabulous Volunteer Team from Trustees to Admin to Parent Carer Support to our KIT team and everything in-between, we simply couldn't do what we do without you!!

Unfortunately for the 2nd year running we will be unable to meet in person so we are planning an online session for everyone to get together and hopefully have some fun, there may even be a prize or 2 involved!! All our Volunteers will receive an invitation so keep an eye on your inbox.

## Volunteer Corner

Another busy but very productive and successful quarter for the Volunteer Team here at DCCS, the KIT team are coming to the end of their first year and we are pleased to say we have managed to reach 1300 Carers and from their feedback we have received a 4.8 out of 5 rating for the calls which is an outstanding achievement with feedback received such as "The volunteer was pleasant and checked that we had all the information and support that we need at the moment. " "She gave information I did not know about plus the name of the person I could contact for help."

"Nice to know someone cares."

"Professional, Caring and interested in all aspects."

Going forward to the next phase of the project this has given us an excellent foundation to continue to contact Carers who may not have been in contact with us for some time giving them support when they need it most.

If you would like to get involved in our worthwhile projects, we currently have 2 vacancies, contact Andrea Emerson for an informal chat or for further information on applying, andrea.emerson@dccarers.org

Both of these roles are home based and come with full training and support, enhanced DBS checks and can be worked on a flexible basis.

### **VACANCIES: KIT TEAM MEMBERS**

Our KIT team are looking for more Volunteers to make the calls to Carers, this comes with full training and ongoing support,

### **VOLUNTEER SUPPORT TEAM MEMBER**

This role is a new one and is about supporting the Volunteer team by contacting Carers after they have been in touch with us to gather feedback on how they found their experiences, it could also involve some other admin tasks as and when necessary.

The Counselling team have also been extremely busy and we have had over 365 Carers referred for sessions, its no wonder we keep having to expand with this very successful and busy project.

If you are struggling with your Caring role and feel you may benefit from our Counselling service, speak to your Carer Support Coordinator.

This is just a snapshot of what our Volunteer Team does week in and week out, we could not be prouder to say they are a vital part of what DCCS does to support our local caring community.

## Council Tax Discounts for People who have a Severe Mental Impairment & Carers

Do you know that council tax bills can be reduced for people who have, or care for a person who is severely mentally impaired? This can include people with illnesses such as Alzheimer's, Multiple Sclerosis, Parkinson's, or other similar conditions and those with severe learning difficulties.

Those living alone don't pay any council tax at all, while those living with another person qualify for a 25% reduction.

You can find out more and make an application at <https://www.darlington.gov.uk/council-tax-and-benefits/council-tax/online-forms/#discounts>

Council Tax discounts are also available for some carers who live with the person they care for. The criteria and how to apply can be found at <https://www.darlington.gov.uk/council-tax-and-benefits/council-tax/online-forms/#discounts>

## Carer Breaks

Having a break or taking regular time to yourself can help you to cope better with your caring role. A break can also allow you to catch up on everyday things like getting some sleep, enjoying some leisure time or visiting friends and family.

There is funding available from the NHS to allow eligible Carers' to take a break. This funding could be for a training course, spa break, tickets for the theatre, a visit to a leisure facility, activities.

For more information contact Darlington Carers support 0300 005 1215  
email: [admin@darlingtoncarers.org](mailto:admin@darlingtoncarers.org)



# Carers in Employment Project

On average 1 in 7 employees also have a caring role.

Many of us know someone who is in employment who also provides unpaid care, for a friend or family member who, due to illness or frailty, could not cope without their support.

Durham County Carers Support (DCCS) has supported 'unpaid Carers' for over 25 years and currently provides financial, practical and emotional support to over 20,000 Carers across Durham and Darlington. This year has been extremely busy with Carers needing support due to the pandemic, particularly those Carers who are struggling to manage employment alongside their caring role.

The importance of supporting working Carers is evident; employers retain skilled and experienced staff and save on recruitment and training costs; staff, who are also caring, benefit from retaining a salary and access to the social and emotional aspects of employment. Consequently, DCCS has received funding from Darlington Borough Council to increase awareness, within the SME business community, of the needs of 'Working Carers'.

Jenni Wood (CEO) said, "This is a great opportunity for businesses to look at simple and cost-effective ways to support valuable staff who also have caring responsibilities; it's a win-win situation". The project is free, flexible and virtual.

For further information about the project and how we can tailor it to your business requirements, please send an email to [diane.williams@darlingtoncarers.org](mailto:diane.williams@darlingtoncarers.org) or call on 0191 917 4709



## Good News Story

One of our Carers contacted Darlington Carers support service after their circumstances had drastically changed. The Carer lived in a 2nd floor flat, and their health was deteriorating. A change was required. Thankfully the Carer was able to move into a bungalow. This Carer had no savings and sadly lacked the finances to be able to purchase some of the required items they needed. The Carer came to Darlington Support services, where one of the Carer support workers was able to apply for some grants on their behalf. An application through turn2us Response fund was submitted. It was fantastic news to find this was successful, and the couple received £1,000 to help pay for essential goods.

The Carer was delighted, and shared her thoughts with us: "Thanks to the Carer support service and the staff I can now get the things for the bungalow that will improve the health of my partner, you are all stars."

If you would like support within a possible funding application, please do not hesitate to contact us on 03000301215 or email us on [admin@darlingtoncarers.org](mailto:admin@darlingtoncarers.org)

## Meals at Home:

Providing a hot, nutritious two course hot lunch 7 days a week, our meals at home service provides a great value service with free delivery for only £6.50 per meal. With flexible booking and meals delivered ready to eat, this service can support you or your loved ones to eat well and enjoy a delicious "home cooked" traditional meal in your own home. Call our meals team on 01325 741492 for more information or to place your order.

Day Opportunities Reopening and new MCST program:

Our Bradbury House Wellbeing Centre has reopened for bookings, providing respite day care for older people and for people with mild to moderate dementia. Our service has received funding to run Maintenance Cognitive Stimulation Therapy sessions to support those with Dementia. Cognitive Stimulation is the only non-drug treatment recommended to improve cognition, independence and well-being by the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE). Participants take part in meaningful and stimulating activities, proven to help maintain memory and mental functioning. The 2017/18 pilot found that MCST sessions contributed to the maintenance of group members' wellbeing, related to their feelings, memory and everyday life. These would usually be expected to decrease over time for people with dementia who don't attend sessions.

Group members, carers and staff all stated the following benefits:

- Enjoyment, having fun and increasing levels of happiness.
- A sense of belonging and making new friendships.
- Increased confidence in ability and to try other new things.
- Improvements in communication, including reading and writing.
- Improvements in memory and mental ability.
- Having more energy.
- Increased levels of physical activity.

For more information, please call our team at Bradbury House on 01325 362832 or email: [care@ageuknyd.org.uk](mailto:care@ageuknyd.org.uk)



# VIRTUAL CARERS GROUPS

**Making sense of Caring event along with free afternoon tea**  
**Join us for our Making Sense of Caring session on Zoom, Tuesday 8th June at 2pm.**

We are hosting an information session for any new Carers who feel they need more information about what support is available to them in their caring role. Existing Carers are also welcome to attend.

We will be discussing jargon around services and explaining who can help and where to go for support when needed. All attendees will be delivered an afternoon tea, so we can chat about any issues around your caring role while enjoying your afternoon treat. If you are interested in joining or would like more information about this, please contact Alison Donoghue 01325524616 or email: [alison.donoghue@darlingtoncarers.org](mailto:alison.donoghue@darlingtoncarers.org)



## Carers Zoom Meetings

Carers group online. If you have access to a mobile phone, tablet, or laptop it's easy to join in give us a ring and we can offer support with this. Do not worry if you struggle with this feel free to contact us and we can talk you through this step by step! The Carers group enables you to have the opportunity to share your concerns and experiences with others in a similar situation to yourself. Peer support can make all the difference and help you to feel you are not alone in your caring situation. Please contact us on the numbers emails below and we will send a link out to anyone interested in joining. Both groups are open to all registered Carers within our service.

## Mental Health Carers Group

Do you care for someone with mental ill health? Would you like to join people who have similar experiences as you? We run a Mental Health Carers Group on the last Tuesday of every month between 1-2pm. We invite relevant guest speakers so you can gain information and ask them questions.

**Tuesday 29th June** between 1-2pm we have a Gillian Fortune from Feelgood: who will help you relieve your anxieties and stress with her session on how to relax and feel better about yourself? Other meetings are as follows:

**Tuesday 27th July** between 1-2pm

**Tuesday 31 August** between 1-2pm

**Tuesday 28th September** between 1-2pm

**Tuesday 26th October** between 1-2pm

Join us for a coffee and a chat with others in a similar situation to yourself. If you would like to join this group, please call Sona Peskin on 01325 524614 or email [sona.peskin@darlingtoncarers.org](mailto:sona.peskin@darlingtoncarers.org)

## Main Carers Support Group

We are re developing our main Carers support group, we have had a successful meeting in April, where many thoughts and ideas were shared. Going forward we are very keen to hear your thoughts, ideas, and feedback. We are looking positively to the future and we are booking speakers from health watch, a feel-good session for Carers and we are looking at getting some advice on how to support loved ones through the grieving process. (these dates are to be confirmed.) We would love to hear your thoughts and ideas for what you would like for the future. We totally understand that no one can attend every session, but we hope that we will be able to provide information and support for you when you require it. This is an informal and friendly group. Please feel free to ring me on 01325 524613 or drop me an email with your thoughts or for further information. [ruthsykes@darlingtoncarers.org](mailto:ruthsykes@darlingtoncarers.org)

Dates for your diary

**Wednesday 5th May** between 1-2pm

**Wednesday 2nd June** between 1-2pm

**Wednesday 7th July** between 1-2pm

**Wednesday 4th August** between 1-2pm

**Wednesday 1st September** between 1-2pm

**Wednesday 6th October** between 1-2pm

Speakers will be promoted on our Facebook page nearer the time. Facebook Check out our Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/darlingtoncarerssupport> for all up-to-date information - why not give us a like while you are there?

# Covid 19 Vaccine for Unpaid Carers

Carers who are 'eligible for a carer's allowance, or who are the sole or primary carer of an elderly or disabled person who is at increased risk of COVID-19 mortality and therefore clinically vulnerable' are able to access a Covid 19 vaccine based on their caring role rather than their own age.

If you haven't already been called and believe you are eligible for a vaccine, please register as a carer at your local GP practice.

If you need further advice, please contact Darlington Carers Support on 0300 030 1215 or via email [admin@darlingtoncarers.org](mailto:admin@darlingtoncarers.org)

# Carers in Darlington are now able to access the Carers UK Digital Resource for Carers

Caring for a loved one who is ill, disabled or older can be valuable and rewarding, but without the right support caring can have an impact on your health, your job, your finances and your social life.

To create an account and get free access to all the products and support resources click on the link [carersdigital.org](http://carersdigital.org) and create a new account by using your free access code DGTL1931

## What's included?

The Digital Resource for Carers includes e-Learning modules, factsheets, interactive guides, personalised support, and information covering the following areas:

- Health and wellbeing: including resources around nutrition and breaks
- Support for Caring: including our 5 'About Me' e-Learning courses on building emotional resilience and finding support, and our Upfront guide to caring which gives tailored advice to carers depending on their situation
- Technology and Caring: includes guides on how to use technology in care
- Financial Planning: includes a resource made with the Money Advice Service called 'Thinking Ahead'; a questionnaire style tool to help people think about the costs of caring
- Working and Caring: includes guides to rights at work and seeking support at work
- Access to all to our care co-ordination App, Jointly.
- Young Adult Carers; an e-Learning resource for young adult carers now in adult services including, for example, advice and information for making choices about caring, and support in and about education and work
- Information about other support for carers in Darlington

## Keep us Updated

Have your details changed, would you like to be removed from our database or would you be happy to receive the newsletter by email? Please let us know here

Current address details and preferences

Name .....

Address .....

.....

.....

Postcode .....

Telephone .....

I would like to receive my newsletter by email:

Please remove me from the database:

Previous address

Name .....

Address .....

.....

.....

Postcode .....

Telephone .....

Email .....

**Darlington Office**  
**Unit 1F, Enterprise House**  
**Valley Street North, Darlington DL1 1GY**

# Carer Training and Events - We would like to hear from you

To enable us to provide the service you need we would really like to hear from you. We would like to know what you might find helpful, interesting, and beneficial to sustain you in your caring role. Please could you spare a few moments to answer a few simple questions?

This survey can also be completed digitally by using this QR code:



## 1. Health and wellbeing

What classes would you like us to offer in future?  
(previous classes have included physical exercise classes, combating stress, relaxation and mindfulness)

.....

## 2. Special interest events

What events you would like us to offer in future?  
(previous events include craft sessions, computer skills and gardening)

.....

## 3. Support

What support would you like us to offer in future?  
(previous sessions include: coffee mornings, support groups with invited speakers and events covering specific illnesses or disabilities)

.....

## 4. Practical information

What type of training you would like us to provide in future?  
(previous training includes, Moving and Assisting, Managing Medication, Understanding Challenging Behaviour and End of life planning)

.....

We will hopefully be able to resume face to face training and classes in the coming months but may continue to use virtual sessions from time to time.

## 5. Would you be able to travel to attend a course or event? Please tick appropriate box

- Yes
- No

## 6. Would you prefer to continue accessing courses and events digitally on the internet?

Please tick appropriate box

- Yes
- No
- I would need help with this.

## 7. If you were to attend an event or course what time would suit you best?

Please tick appropriate box

- Monday to Friday between 9 am and 5 pm
- Evenings
- Weekends

Thank you for taking the time to respond.

Please return using the FREE post address to Jo Crawford, Free Post RTXT-BYUC-BZKB, Darlington Carers Support, Unit 1F, Enterprise House, Valley Street North, Darlington DL1 1GY

# Breathing Space Legislation

“Breathing Space” legislation comes into effect on 4th May which can help anyone struggling with debts and bills.

## **What is breathing space?**

Households who are struggling to keep up with bills will be able pause their payments for 60 days and will give those who are struggling to cope time to seek professional debt advice and look at manageable payment plans while their debt outgoings are placed on hold. Debts that may be included in a breathing space are credit cards, store cards, personal loans, pay day loans, overdrafts, utility bill arrears and mortgage or rent arrears. Government debts like tax and benefits debts are unlikely to qualify but tell your debt advisor about these so they have a full picture. Joint debts can be taken into a breathing space even if only one person applies the whole debt will be covered under the rules.

A breathing space can only be started by an authorised debt advice provider or a local authority that provides debt advice to residents.

Entering a breathing space will effectively pause enforcement action from creditors and freeze charges, fees, and certain interest on qualifying debts for up to two months.

## **Mental Health Crisis breathing space.**

Those affected by mental ill health will also receive extended support for as long as they are receiving medical help, plus a further 30-days on top. A mental health crisis breathing space is only available to someone who is receiving mental health crisis treatment.

## **Not all debts can be included in a breathing space.**

Secured debts arrears such as a mortgage, hire purchase or conditional sale agreement can only include arrears that exist at the date of an application. Any new secured debts that occur after a breathing space application are not protected. Fines imposed by a court, fixed penalties, Universal Credit advances and student loans are other types of debt that may be excluded but should be discussed with the debt advisor.

For support with problem debt call Citizens Advice Debt Helpline 0800 240 4420 or their National Advice line 0800 144 8848 or Citizens Advice via Relay UK - if you cannot hear or speak on the phone, you can type what you want to say: 18001 then 0800 144 8884. For more information on where to find debt advice visit:

[www.moneyadviceservice.org.uk/en/tools/debt-advice-locator](http://www.moneyadviceservice.org.uk/en/tools/debt-advice-locator)

# Free Online Activity Club

Unpaid Carers over 65 offered free access to online activity club - claim your unique access code. The Joy Club - an online activity club for people over 65 - has made membership free for unpaid Carers for life. The Joy Club provides members with access to a host of free, discounted and money-making activities, so that a limited budget and lockdown-restrictions don't get in the way of an active lifestyle. New activities are added every week, so there's always something new to enjoy.

With a free membership to The Joy Club, you can enjoy access to...

## **Free activities, such as:**

- The Joy Choir, where you'll join other members in learning songs via Zoom;
- Creative writing masterclasses that help you to hone your writing talents;
- Mindful and relaxing Tai Chi and Qigong classes designed for all ability levels.

## **Discounted products and activities, including:**

- Virtual art lessons from Brush Party, you can unleash your inner Van Gogh while socialising with other painters online;
- Home-friendly fitness classes, such as Pilates and yoga;
- Live, online baking classes with former Great British Bake Off stars.

## **Money-making opportunities, such as:**

- Freelancing for a charity through Blume;
- Teaching keen cooks your finest recipes with Diaspo;
- Writing blogs for The Joy Club and sharing your stories.

## **...and much more.**

Membership normally costs £5 a month, but you can enjoy free membership to The Joy Club for life when you sign up using your unique access code. To claim your unique access code, simply email: [sophie.johnson@dccarers.org](mailto:sophie.johnson@dccarers.org) You can redeem your free lifetime membership by going to [www.thejoyclub.com](http://www.thejoyclub.com), clicking the 'sign up' button and entering your code when prompted.

# How The Spring Budget Affects You

National Minimum Wage is increasing from April. For those aged over 23, this will increase from £8.72 to £8.91.

The Universal Credit standard allowance uplift of £20 a week is being extended until September.

Working Tax Credit recipients will receive a one-off £500 payment.

The Furlough Scheme has been extended until September.

The tax-free personal allowance of £12,750 has been frozen until 2026.

The Self-Employment Income Support Scheme has been extended to 600,000 more people.



# Carers' Monthly Lottery

Don't miss the chance to win one of 3 great cash prizes every month! Proceeds in aid of Carers Counselling Service



Simply fill in and return the slip below or join online by visiting [www.dccarers.org](http://www.dccarers.org) Winners will be notified by post.

**Carers' 50:50 Club Membership** Please complete in BLOCK CAPITALS

Name ..... Telephone Number .....

Address .....

Postcode ..... Email .....

We would prefer payment by standing order but are happy to accept cash (in person) or cheque.  
Please note that if you pay by cash or cheque you must join for a minimum of 1 year (£12)

**Monthly or Annual Standing order**

Your Bank Name ..... Bank Address .....

..... Bank Postcode .....

Account Number ..... Sort Code .....

Please debit my account and pay: Durham County Carers Support the sum of £.....

on the (start date) ..... and then on the same day (please circle): Monthly or Annually

Signed ..... Dated.....

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

## 50:50 Club Winners:

- January 2021**
- 1st Janet Hughes £107
  - 2nd Mr & Mrs Davies £71
  - 3rd V Featherstone £36

- February 2021**
- 1st Stephen Black £109
  - 2nd Mary Hunter £73
  - 3rd Marilyn Sadler £36

- March 2021**
- 1st Frances Westray £110
  - 2nd Marilyn Sadler £73
  - 3rd Mr Whelan £37



## GP Learning Disability Register

If the person you support/care for has a learning disability, they can get extra support when visiting the doctor. To access support, they need to join the Learning Disability Register at their GP Practice. By joining the register, they will be able to have a free Annual Health Check and receive their coronavirus vaccination.

MENCAP have produced a letter for you to take to the GP. When handing in the letter you may need to speak to the LD Practice Lead, Practice Manager or your GP. To download the letter please follow this link [GP Access needs letter Final.pdf \(mencap.org.uk\)](#) or go to the MENCAP website and look under Health Section.

If you need further information, please contact Sona Peskin Carer support worker on 01325524614 email: [sona.peskin@darlingtoncarers.org](mailto:sona.peskin@darlingtoncarers.org)



**Contact:**  
0300 005 1213  
[www.dccarers.org](http://www.dccarers.org)



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