

Do you look after someone?



Northumberland Family & Friends Carers' Guide

My useful contacts

Adult Care Service (<i>Social Services</i>)	01670 536 400
Emergency Duty Team	0845 600 5252
<i>(Social Services Out of Hours)</i>	
Carers Northumberland	0844 800 7354
Carers Direct	0808 802 0202
Northumberland County Council	0845 600 6400
NHS Direct	0845 46 47
Northern Doctors Urgent Care	0845 60 80 320
<i>(for GP Out of Hours care)</i>	
The Samaritans	0845 790 9090
Northumbria Police For non-emergencies call:	03456 043 043
In an emergency call:	999

My own contacts

Carers Emergency Card

07623 912 340

My reference number:

(Contact Carers Northumberland to get a free card and your own reference number)

My GP surgery

.....

.....

.....

Contents

About this guide	3
Getting informed	6
Caring with confidence	8
Looking after yourself	10
Taking a break	12
Juggling work and care	14
Money and legal matters	16
Having your say	18
Safeguarding adults	20
What to do now	21
Key contacts	22
- Carer support organisations	22
- Drugs & alcohol	23
- Financial & legal	24
- Health & social care	25
- Housing	26
- Listening helplines	27
- Work & learning	28

Please ask if you would like this information in another format such as large print, Braille or tape, or if you would like it translated into another language.

About this guide

The term ‘carer’ refers to you if you look after or provide regular unpaid help to a family member, partner, or friend who has a disability, physical or mental health illness, is frail or has alcohol or drug related problems. The support you provide may be emotional, physical and/or practical.

Many people don't see themselves as carers, they think of themselves as family members or friends. In some families there can be a situation of 'mutual caring' between two people with different needs who also care for one another. As a result people often don't realise there is help and support available for them. This guide has been written to help you think about the types of help and support you may need as a carer.

Each section has things to think about and ideas about where to go for help. You can use the guide by yourself or as a basis for discussion between yourself and a worker from health or social care services, or someone from Carers Northumberland your local carers' organisation.

It can be difficult to know what choices or opportunities are open to the person you care for. In most cases, the best point of contact for help through social care will be Adult Care Services (Social Services), call **01670 536 400**. This is a service offering information and advice about how to cope with problems, and arranging services for people who need them. The way publicly-funded services are provided has changed to a new system called **self-directed support** which involves offering people personal budgets. This new way of working gives people who need social care and support services greater choice and control over their lives, putting the person at the centre of decisions about what they want to achieve in life, how they want to live, and what social care and support they need to do this.

A care manager can arrange an assessment of the needs of the person you support, to help him/her find out about all the options available. Care managers (sometimes called care coordinators in mental health services) may be social workers, community nurses or occupational therapists.

The care manager will arrange to have a full discussion with the person you support and yourself (and anyone else caring with you), if you provide or expect to provide support. Your care manager will also ask to speak to you and the person you care for privately, so that each of you has a chance to raise any issues which you may find it difficult to talk about to the other person.

The discussion with you is called a 'carer's needs assessment' and is important as it can influence the amount of help both you and the person you care for can get. It

is *not* used to test your caring abilities but to give you the opportunity to talk about how your caring role affects you in your day-to-day life and to help you think about the things that could make caring easier for you. The guide has been designed to help you to think about your situation and aid this discussion.

Following these discussions the care manager will complete a Personal Budget Questionnaire to summarise what has been agreed. If the person you care for refuses help you are still entitled to ask for a separate carer's needs assessment which may lead to direct support to you.

At the end of the guide you will find a list of 'Key Contacts'.

The 'Key Contacts' section at the back of this guide which provides a list of people who can give you further information or support is arranged in sections and each section has its own picture.

Carer support organisations



Drugs and alcohol



Financial and legal



Health and social care



Housing



Listening helplines



Work and learning



Look up a picture in key contacts to find out who to contact for further information about that particular 'thing to do'.



These pictures appear throughout the guide next to ideas of 'things to do'.



Throughout the guide you will find references to the two main sources of help and support for carers in Northumberland.

These are:

- The statutory service providers within Northumberland, which includes services provided by your doctor and adult social care as well as community and hospital based services.
- Carers Northumberland, an independent user-led organisation offering a wide range of support and information to carers, including links to other voluntary and community services.

Are you under 18 and helping to look after someone?

If you are a young carer yourself, or if you feel caring impacts upon someone in your family who is under 18, then the Young Carers Guide will be helpful. For a copy of the guide or information about services that support young carers contact **Carers Northumberland (☎ 0844 800 7354)**.
www.carersnorthumberland.org.uk/youngcarers

Do you care for a child with disabilities?

This guide has been written for adult carers of adults; however, other carers may still find it helpful. Parents of children with disability can contact **Northumberland Family and Children's Trust (☎ 0845 600 6400)** for information about children's services and needs assessments.
www.northumberland.gov.uk

In-Pact provides a single point of contact for advice and support for carers of children with special needs and disabilities. www.in-pact.org.uk
(☎ **01670 857816**) Email: ne-inpact@actionforchildren.org.uk

In the following sections you may find it helpful to tick the boxes that refer to your circumstances for easy reference during further discussion or assessment.

Getting informed

Information is one of the most valuable resources a carer can have. Many carers feel their situation would be easier if they were given an explanation of any health problems affecting the person they care for. This may include information about diagnosis and treatment and what to expect or about medication and possible side effects.

As a carer you should expect to be given sufficient information to help you to provide effective care, however consent from the person you care for will be needed for some information sharing.

It is also important to know what help is available. After all, if you don't know something exists, you can't ask for it. In Northumberland health and social care professionals work closely together. Many carers feel it is helpful to know who is involved, what they do and when or how they can be contacted if needed.

Carers often find the Internet is an excellent resource. You can find almost anything on-line and e-mail helps you stay in touch with people and keep up with news and information. Even if you do not have a computer, many organisations provide access, often free of charge, including all of Northumberland's libraries.

Planning for an emergency

Forward planning for the kinds of emergencies that can happen to anyone can reduce anxiety and stress. It also allows the person cared for to carry on or be involved in planning for alternative arrangements. Making sure everyone has the information they need in an emergency can make all the difference.

The Carers Emergency Card provides a 24 hour, 7 day a week phone number you can access in an emergency or any unexpected situation, to give you peace of mind and make sure your loved one is looked after if you cannot be with him/her. It may also allow you to respond to an unexpected situation by offering British Red Cross volunteer support. If you want a free Carers Emergency Card speak to Carers Northumberland.

Ask yourself



- Am I sure that I have all the information I need? Does it help me to understand the impact caring will have on me and is it sufficient to inform my decisions now or for the future?
- Are there any aspects of the illness or condition of the person I care for e.g. symptoms, treatment, medication, side effects that I don't fully understand?
- Do I know who the professionals involved are, what their job entails and how to contact them if I need advice or help?
- Do I know who to contact in an emergency, or does the person I care for know what to do if something happens to me?

Things to do



- Always ask if you don't understand or need more information.
- Ask for information about the illness or disability of the person you care for. (Note: consent from the person you care for will be needed for some information sharing). Ask for health information *before* you take on the caring role and *before* discharge from hospital.
- Make sure people are aware of your opinions and wishes especially in relation to your circumstances and ability to provide adequate care and support.
- Contact Carers Northumberland if you want to be kept up-to-date through newsletters and useful information mailings for all carers in Northumberland.
- Discuss emergency planning with family, friends and health or social care professionals. Make sure that people know what to do and there is a clear agreement about what should happen. Get a Carers Emergency Card from Carers Northumberland.



Look up pictures above in Key Contacts on page 22 to find out who to ask for further information or support.



Caring with confidence

No one is born knowing how to be a carer. Most people learn how to look after someone by trial and error and by relying on their own knowledge.

However, advice and training are available from many of the services and organisations that you may come into contact with. Carers Northumberland or your Care Manager/Support Planner can also help you to access other training or specialist information provided by other organisations.

Equipment and adaptations

You may be able to get equipment, such as a walking aid, or home adaptations, such as handrails, to make life at home easier for you and the person you care for. A large range of equipment is available on loan to meet both social and health needs to people in Northumberland. To get equipment a health or social care professional will assess the needs of the person you care for and the help you need to support them.

If you choose to buy your own equipment you still have the right to ask for an assessment beforehand so that you can choose equipment with the benefit of skilled professional advice. Adaptations to your home may be recommended following an assessment by an occupational therapist, who will pass on any recommendation to the appropriate organisation which may offer help.

Getting additional help

Most people would rather not have caring responsibilities, but care because they love the person or feel there is no alternative. However, carers can feel unable to continue with the demands placed upon them and find it helpful to talk about additional help or alternatives that are available to the person they care for to allow them to reduce their caring responsibilities. Ask for a carer's needs assessment or review, if you are not coping or your circumstances have changed. Many older carers feel it reduces their stress if they can help to plan for the future when they may not be available to care.

Safety

Carers frequently worry about the safety of the person they care for. In some circumstances carers also find themselves put in a position in which they are concerned for their own safety or the safety of others, for example in having to move the person cared for or due to problems with a person's behaviour. Practical tips, advice and demonstrations on things like safe moving and handling, dealing with aggression, relaxation techniques and helping with treatment and therapy are available (see also Safeguarding adults, page 20).

Ask yourself



- What information or skills do I need to feel confident in carrying out my caring tasks?
- Do I think any of my caring tasks could be made easier with the help of equipment or adaptations to my home or the home of the person I care for?
- Do I need training in any aspect of caring especially in relation to my health and safety?

Things to do



- Talk to a worker from health or social care services about any equipment, home adaptation or training needs you have.
- Use your carer's needs assessment to discuss help with caring tasks or your concerns about the future. If you support someone with drug or alcohol problems speak to Escape Family Support about an assessment.
- Whoever you buy or loan equipment from must show you how to use it. Ask for a full demonstration involving both the person you care for and yourself.
- Contact Carers Northumberland to find out about their training sessions for carers that you may find useful.
- Contact Carers Northumberland for information about any Alarm Call System in your area.
- Contact Age UK to find out about their free LifeBook to help you keep track of the million and one things that can be easy to mislay such as important documents and information.



Look up pictures above in Key Contacts on page 22 to find out who to ask for further information or support.



Looking after yourself

When you care for someone else, it's very easy to forget about your own health and well-being. However, it is important to look after yourself so that your health doesn't suffer and you can continue caring for as long as you want to.

The emotional impact of caring

Many carers feel that the emotional impact of caring can sometimes be overwhelming. Carers often feel stress, anxiety and depression. This can also lead to physical symptoms, feelings of being run down and low energy. It is not unusual for carers at times to have feelings of guilt, anger, feeling trapped or grief and loss. However, carers can also feel very positive about caring. Overcoming your strong sense of duty isn't easy but you will be a better carer if you make sure you have time to be yourself. Many carers also have health problems that are affected by their caring responsibilities but are not a result of caring.

Someone to talk to

You may think that talking doesn't solve things, but many carers find that having someone to talk to is one of the most important kinds of help they have. Carers Northumberland can tell you about the range of carer groups operating across the county or link you with other carers. If you are feeling depressed or anxious, make an appointment to see your GP. Talking to someone you trust may help you find ways of changing how you feel. Many doctors' practices offer counselling services.

When caring ends

Looking after someone is a huge part of a person's life and many carers find it difficult to adjust when the person cared for moves into residential or nursing care, or dies. Whatever the situation, it is important to realise that you are not alone. The community hospices in Northumberland help to support carers through end of life care as do our palliative care services, including access to bereavement support. Carers Northumberland can also offer information and support to carers through this difficult time and beyond.

Ask yourself



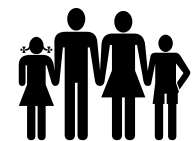
- Do I have any health problems?
- Is my health affected by my caring role?
- Does my health affect my ability to care for the person I look after?

- Do I feel appreciated and valued as a carer?
- Do I feel helpless, overwhelmed or controlled by my caring situation?
- Do I need someone to talk to about my feelings?
- q Can I talk openly with my family, friends or others about my feelings?

Things to do



- Let your doctor know that you are a carer and how it affects your health. Ask for this information to be recorded on your medical record so that your doctor, and other people at your GP Practice, can provide help that is relevant to your situation.



- Talk to the care manager/coordinator involved with the person you care for, if they have one.

- Talk to the person you care for, a family member or a friend about what it is like to be a carer and how they can support you.



- Contact a confidential listening service or

- Find out if there is a Carer Support Worker that you can talk to.

- Contact Carers Northumberland who will introduce you to a carers' group to meet other carers in similar circumstances.

- If you support someone with a drug or alcohol problems contact Escape Family Support.



- Make sure you eat healthily and get regular exercise.

- Look after yourself – it's not selfish, it's sensible.

Look up pictures above in “Key Contacts” in page 22 to Find out who to ask for further information or support.



Taking a break

Caring can be rewarding, but it can also bring stresses and strains, and many carers welcome the opportunity to have a break.

For peace of mind, you may need someone else to be with the person you care for so that you can have a break. Some carers make arrangements with other members of their family, neighbours or friends so that they can have time off. It will help if you are specific about the help required and how long it will take and make sure the friend or relative is fully aware of what will be required.

A break may be about taking time out for yourself at some point in the day to having a longer break to recharge your batteries. Some carers feel having a break from the routine of caring includes help to plan more social activities they can enjoy with the person they look after, especially if they care for their spouse.

Consider developing a space in your house where you feel comfortable and relaxed, so you can spend time there when you want to; going for a walk, swim or any kind of activity which takes you out of the house – all of these things will help you feel you're having time off.

A care manager may be able to arrange support for the person you care for to help you to have a break. This could be a sitting service at home, somewhere to go during the day or a short stay in an appropriate setting. As resources may be limited it is necessary to cater to individual needs. This means that a needs assessment has to be carried out for the person you care for and for you as their carer.

Ask yourself

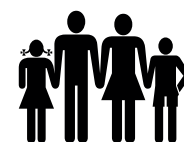


- Do I get any time off from my caring role?
- Do I have any other commitments or responsibilities and does being a carer affect my ability to do them?
- If I had time to myself what would I like to do that would help me unwind and enjoy the break?
- Do I wish that I had the time to have a job or attend a course or other activity?
- Do we allow ourselves time to think about and nurture our relationship outside caring?

Things to do



- Don't keep things to yourself, talk to family or friends about things they could do to help you take a break. Perhaps those around you do want to help but are worried it might seem like interfering – so do ask!
- Ask for help from social care services to help you look after the person you care for and enable you to take a break, a carer's needs assessment will be useful.
- Talk to Carers Northumberland to find out what activities may be going on in your area. You may be able to access a carer support fund to pay for hobby equipment or membership fees etc.
- Once in a while pamper yourself with a relaxing therapy, for example aromatherapy or Indian head massage, contact Carers Northumberland for information. You may be able to access a carer support fund to pay for a therapy.
- Recognise the times when you feel stressed and develop coping strategies like spending a moment or two in the garden or playing some favourite music.
- Consider ways of renewing your relationship outside caring, you may find a carer's needs assessment helpful.
- Find out about activities you can do together.



Look up pictures above in “Key Contacts” on page 22 to find out who to ask for further information or support.



Juggling work and care ¹

Talking to your employer

Many people find themselves needing to juggle work and caring. If your caring responsibilities are getting you down and you feel unable to cope with both work and caring, think about talking to your employer. Many employers operate flexible working schemes and many more would do so on an individual basis, but first they need to know if there's a problem. Carers have a right to time off in emergencies and to request changes to their working patterns to better manage caring responsibilities. As soon as you are aware of any problems that might affect your work life, let your employer know.

Remember that employers value skilled, experienced and committed members of staff and are keen to keep them. Your employer may be able to help in ways you have not considered. Talk to them about your situation, directly or through your HR/personnel officer or union or staff association representative. If you have an idea about how you could solve the problem, tell your employer, for example, you may be able to use leave arrangements, paid or unpaid, at the discretion of your employer to cover intensive periods of care.

Think very carefully before deciding to give up work to care, your work will provide you with financial security and a break from caring. Carers often feel it also provides increased self-esteem and a valuable sense of identity separate from their role as a carer. Taking a career break (sabbatical) or reducing hours will keep your options open.

Returning to Work

Many carers who have not worked for some time wish to return to work when caring responsibilities have ended or changed. Jobcentre Advisors are now receiving training to help them understand carers' circumstances and the issues they face. They can offer help with finding a job, training and help with replacement care costs while you are participating in approved activities to help you get a job.

Always seek benefits advice if your circumstances change.

¹ Informed by Carers UK

Ask yourself



- What would help me to continue or return to work?
- What changes at work might I suggest to help me balance work with caring?
- What opportunities for learning are there that I might like to do?

Things to do



- Find out what help is available before giving up work to care.
- Find out if your employer has a policy to support carers by talking to your HR/personnel officer, union representative or colleagues. There may be existing support you are not aware of.
- Think carefully about your options if you are thinking of leaving work, including the financial implications.
- Carers Northumberland or your care manager can offer you information about your rights and discuss your individual situation.
- Seek careers advice if you wish to return to work when caring ends. If you have been caring a long time remember you will have valuable transferrable skills and experience.
- Find out about learning opportunities in your area including training courses supported by Jobcentre Plus who can fund alternative care to allow you to take part.



Look up pictures above in “Key Contacts” on page 22 to find out who to ask for further information or support.



Money and legal matters

Caring for someone can be an expensive business. Many carers do not claim the benefits and tax credits that they are entitled to.

Carer's Allowance is the main benefit for carers. To get Carer's Allowance you must be over 16, care for at least 35 hours per week for someone on Attendance Allowance or receiving the middle or higher rate care component of Disability Living Allowance or some rates of Constant Attendance Allowance. You may still qualify if you are working and any income you receive is below a certain amount. You can't get Carer's Allowance if you are claiming from one of a list of other benefits that is worth more, for example state retirement pension, but it may still be worth claiming as you could get an increase in some other benefits such as Pensions Credit, Housing Benefit or Council Tax Benefit even though you aren't actually paid Carers Allowance.

Carer's Credit is a National Insurance credit which helps carers build up qualifying years for the basic State Pension and additional State Pension. This means that there will be no gaps in your National Insurance record if you have to take on caring responsibilities. You may be able to get Carer's Credit if you provide care for one or more disabled person(s) for 20 hours or more each week and you are not already getting Carer's Allowance. If you are not working or do not earn enough to pay National Insurance contributions because you are caring for someone, you may still be able to build up an entitlement to additional State Pension.

The benefits system is complicated and it is worth finding out if you are eligible and seeking advice from one of the agencies listed in 'Key contacts' before you make a claim. Even if you have made an unsuccessful benefits claim in the past, it is worthwhile trying again as the benefit system is always changing. Be aware that sometimes claiming Carer's Allowance can mean that the person you look after loses some of their benefit.

Legal matters

Many carers feel it helpful to prepare for the future and need advice about managing someone else's affairs or making a will. The person you care for can, for instance, arrange a lasting power of attorney. This means they can appoint someone or more than one person to take over the management of their affairs, including health, welfare and financial decisions, when they choose or should they later lose capacity. The person who wishes to make any legal arrangements should book an early consultation with a solicitor as arranging affairs after a person has lost capacity can be costly and time consuming.

Ask yourself



- Am I confident that I'm getting all the benefits I'm entitled to?
- Am I entitled to a Council Tax discount and, if I am, am I getting it?
- If I already get benefits, has my situation changed since I started claiming them?
- Would it be helpful to consider a lasting power of attorney?

Things to do



- Get a benefit check.
- Find out about funds that may be available for one-off costs.
- Contact Northumberland County Council to find out if you can get a Council Tax discount.
- Ask for legal advice in good time. Age UK has produced a series of fact sheets including 'Arranging for others to make decisions about your finances or welfare'. Mencap provide specialist advice for people with learning disabilities through their Wills and Trusts Team.



Look up pictures above in "Key Contacts" on page 22 to find out who to ask for further information or support.



Having your say

Involvement in decisions

Many carers want to be involved in decisions about the care and treatment of the person they support. You know the person you care for and their needs, and your involvement in decisions about treatment and care is valuable. Unless the person you care for says otherwise, you can expect to be involved in these decisions and to be given the information you need.

Influencing planning and services

As someone who uses services, you have valuable experience of how they work. You may have questions, concerns or suggestions about how to improve services. Statutory health and social care services and many local voluntary organisations in Northumberland offer opportunities for carers to influence local planning, policy-making and the way that services are provided. Members of Carers Northumberland work with public services to improve support for carers; they can also put you in touch with other useful forums.

Comments and concerns

While every service welcomes comments and suggestions, there may also be times when you are unhappy with a service and you may wish to make a complaint, it is usually best to voice your concerns immediately by speaking to a member of staff, but if they remain unresolved every service has a special procedure to help you make a complaint. Ask to speak to their complaints manager or speak to one of the workers that you know, they will be able to tell you what to do next.

Asking for help

Sometimes, it is hard to ask for help or to give your views. Friends and relatives may be able to help you or you may prefer to get someone to act as your advocate. An advocate is someone who will help you get your points across or speak on your behalf with your permission. There are a number of voluntary organisations who may be able to provide an advocate to help you get your views heard.

Ask yourself

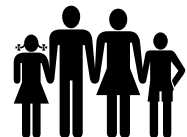
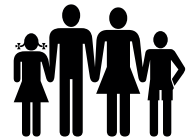


- Am I involved in decisions that have an impact upon my life?
- How would I like to be involved?
- Am I happy with the services and support I receive?
- Do I feel confident in making my views known?
- Am I interested in sharing my experiences and views to help other carers?

Things to do



- Agree with professionals and the person you care for how you would like to be involved and the information you need to care effectively.
- Help others to help you by telling them how well services and support are working for you.
- Ask someone close to you to help you get your views heard or to speak on your behalf.
- Find out if there is anyone who can be your advocate.
- Register with Carers Northumberland to ensure a stronger carer voice in the county.
- Don't keep concerns to yourself.
- Influence services directly by joining an involvement forum run by statutory services.



Look up pictures above in “Key Contacts” on page 22 to find out who to ask for further information or support.



Safeguarding adults

Caring for someone can be very isolating and the nature of illness or changes in relationships, as a result of dependency, can make a **carer vulnerable** to abuse. Equally, some adults who require assistance with care are often less able to protect themselves from others and may have difficulties making their feelings and wishes known. This makes the **cared for vulnerable** to abuse.

People who are vulnerable can be physically or sexually abused or have their money taken from them or used in ways to which they don't agree. They may not be treated with care or they may be bullied, humiliated, neglected or denied contact with others. People who have been abused may or may not have physical injuries.

All forms of abuse are serious. All people have the right to live their lives free from fear, harm and intimidation. All people have the right to be protected from harm and exploitation. Abuse can be the result of a single act or people can experience abuse over months or years. People may abuse accidentally or because the pressure of caring is too much or too isolating.

Anyone is capable of abuse; neighbours, friends, strangers, relatives, partners or people paid to care or provide services. Abuse can occur anywhere, in a person's own home, in residential or nursing home, day centre, places of work, college, hospital or any public place.

There are a number of ways we can protect ourselves and those we care for from those who scam - scheming, malicious, aggressive people who want to con people out of their cash. Consumer Direct have some free leaflets to help you recognise scams and protect yourself and others. (See page 24).

- ❑ If you have worries about either yourself or suspect another vulnerable adult is being abused, neglected or financially exploited call Adult Services (*Social Services*) **01670 536 400**, or if it is after office hours the Emergency Duty Team on **0845 600 5252**. Your concerns will be taken seriously.
- ❑ If you have thoughts about harming yourself or someone else, possibly due to overwhelming caring responsibilities, you need to talk to someone about more support. Call Adult Services (*Social Services*) **01670 536 400**, or if it is after office hours the Emergency Duty Team on **0845 600 5252**.
- ❑ **If you are in immediate physical danger or in an emergency call 999.**

What to do now

This Carers Guide will have helped you to think about yourself and your needs. If the caring you provide has a major impact upon your life then you may find it helpful to talk things over with one of the key people involved with you or the person you care for. This may be a care manager or someone else, they will be able to advise how best to assess your needs and access available services.

If you do not already have support, or your circumstances have changed, call **01670 536 400** and request help for the person you care for and yourself (see page 3). You can ask to speak to the person who visits you away from the person you care for, and you can have someone else with you during this discussion if you choose.

You can have a carer's needs assessment even if the person you care for refuses an assessment of his or her own needs. There is no charge for having an assessment but you, or the person you care for, may have to pay a contribution to the overall support plan you agree as a result of an assessment. This depends on your income and the services you get. Using self-directed support and personal budgets you and the person you care for can choose to organise your own social care services.

Even if you do not want to discuss your needs separately you should always ensure that any professional working with the person you provide care for is aware of your caring role. You should expect professionals to work with you as a partner in care, while recognising your own needs and the impact caring has upon your life.

Carers Northumberland is a county-wide organisation aiming to improve the lives of carers in the county. Registering with Carers Northumberland is free and offers access to a range of support and services to help you in your caring role. Becoming a member of Carers Northumberland also enables you to help determine the organisation's focus and priorities, making sure that carer interests remain at the centre of planning and delivery.

Key contacts



Carers Direct

www.nhs.uk/carersdirect

Provides information, advice and support for carers 7 days a week.

☎ **0808 802 02 02.**

Caring for someone

www.direct.gov.uk/en/CaringForSomeone

For public services information in one place

Northumberland Life website has up to date information on over 1000 Groups, Clubs, Events, Jobs and things to do in Northumberland.

www.northumberlandlife.org

Carer support organisations



Carers Northumberland

www.carersnorthumberland.org.uk

Carers Northumberland is a support service for carers in Northumberland. It works in partnership with other agencies across the county to offer a one-stop information service to carers through regular mailings, web information, telephone contact and group activities. Support delivered by Carers Northumberland includes:

- ◆ individual and group support
- ◆ someone to talk to
- ◆ carer training
- ◆ Carers Emergency Card
- ◆ Carer Support Fund
- ◆ information leaflets covering different aspects of caring
- ◆ post-caring support
- ◆ young carers information
- ◆ help to access other services and support
- ◆ a strong carer voice and involvement opportunities to influence services
- ◆ service development in response to carer need.

Use Carers Northumberland when you have questions but don't know who to ask or when you need to find out what support is available in your area.

☎ **0844 800 7354**

Email: info@carersnorthumberland.org.uk

Age UK Northumberland

www.ageconcernnorthumberland.org.uk

Offer services for people over 50 and their families and carers including:

Information & Advice Line (Monday to Thursday 10.00am – 1.00pm):

☎ **0845 0 950 150**

Friendship Line, offering a regular telephone call to isolated or lonely people.

☎ **01665 511 571**

Advocacy Service to support older people and carers express their views and speak up for themselves:

☎ **01665 511 571**

To request a copy or electronic version Age UK LifeBook.

☎ **0845 685 1061**

Voluntary and community support

There are a wide range of voluntary organisations and groups in Northumberland who support carers. Together they provide a variety of support, for example, information, advice, social activities, listening support. To find out more about different organisation that could help you contact Carers Northumberland (see page 22).

Drugs & alcohol



Escape Family Support

www.escapefamilysupport.co.uk

Confidential support, advice and information to anyone affected by drugs, solvents or alcohol.

☎ **Carers 01670 352700** (Monday to Friday 9.00am – 5.00pm)

24 hour helpline: 07702 833 944

Email: admin@escapefamilysupport.co.uk

FRANK

Confidential help and advice on drugs.

www.talktofrank.com

☎ **0800 776600** (24hrs a day, 365 days a year)

Text 82111 to ask FRANK a question

SORTED (Substance Misuse Service)

www.sortednorth.co.uk

Information, advice, treatment and care for young people (under 18) who are experiencing difficulties because of substance misuse.

☎ **0800 633 5872**

Text: 07788496793

Email: info@sortednorth.co.uk



Blyth Valley Disabled Forum for advice and form filling (home visits considered).
☎ **01670 364657**

Citizens Advice Bureau

www.citizensadvice.org.uk

Can offer you a benefit check and provide help to fill out forms. Many offices also offer legal advice.

Ashington, 89-91 Station Road

Blyth, Eric Tolhurst Centre, 3-13 Quay Street

Morpeth, Tower Buildings, Oldgate

Berwick, 5 Tweed St

Hexham, Community Centre, Gilesgate

Alnwick, First Floor, Valuation Office, Wagonway Rd

Northumberland Adviceline

0844 4111309

01289 330 222

01434 605 254

01665 604 135

Community Legal Service Direct

www.clsdirect.org.uk

If you need help or information on a civil legal issue you can call for information or to find an adviser in your area.

☎ **0845 345 43 45**

Consumer Direct

www.consumerdirect.gov.uk

Consumer Direct provide clear, practical, impartial advice to help you sort out problems and disagreements you may be having with suppliers of goods or services.

☎ **0845 404 05 06**

Debt Advice Within Northumberland (DAWN)

www.dawnadvice.org.uk

This is a free, confidential service for families and individuals with debt problems. Contact initially by phone (they can call you back to save costs).

☎ **01670 785 500**

Department of Work and Pensions

For public services all in one place www.direct.gov.uk/en/caringforsomeone

Confidential telephone service for people with disabilities and their carers.

☎ **0800 88 22 00**. (Textphone 0800 24 33 55).

Carers Allowance Unit:

☎ **0845 608 4321** (Textphone: 0845 604 5312)

Claim forms can be obtained from any Jobcentre, pension centre or online.

Housing Benefit

www.northumberland.gov.uk

If you are on a low income, whether you're working or not, and need financial help to pay all or part of your rent, you may be able to get Housing Benefit. Contact the Benefits Section at Northumberland County Council for further information.

☎ **0845 600 6400**

Jobcentre Plus Benefits

www.jobcentreplus.gov.uk

To make a new claim for a Jobcentre Plus benefit e.g. Jobseekers Allowance, Income Support, Employment and Support Allowance:

☎ **0845 604 3719**

Mencap Wills and Trust Team

www.mencap.org.uk/willsandtrusts

For information and support on setting up wills and trusts for the benefit of someone with a learning disability.

☎ **020 7696 6925**

Health & social care



Arranging adult social care services (Social Services)

www.northumberland.gov.uk/sds

There is now a single contact number to call should you wish to access support for yourself or the person you care for.

☎ **01670 536 400**

If you need urgent help with social care issues after 5.00pm or during weekends or bank holidays call

Emergency Duty Team on: ☎ 0845 600 52 52

Arranging support for a child with disabilities. (Social Services)

www.northumberland.gov.uk

For information about children's services and needs assessments.

☎ **0845 600 6400**

Health support, advice and information

Speak to your doctor, pharmacist or other health service worker, for example, a nurse from your doctor's practice.

NHS Direct

www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk

This 24 hour a day phone line is staffed by nurses and professional advisors. They can advise you on any health-related matters and refer you on to other services and support organisations. They can give you local health information quickly, such as late night pharmacists, out-of-hours dentists, etc.

☎ **0845 46 47**

Northern Doctors Urgent Care

www.northern-doctors.org

Operating between the hours of 6.30pm to 8.00am on weekdays and around the clock at weekends and bank holidays, Northern Doctors Urgent Care offers a GP service for people who need to see a doctor outside standard surgery hours.

☎ **0845 60 80 320**

PALS (Patient Advice and Liaison Service)

www.pals.nhs.uk

This service provides confidential advice and support for patients, carers and relatives who have questions or concerns about NHS services.

☎ **0800 032 02 02**

Independent Complaints and Advisory Service (ICAS)

This service provides advocacy for health service complaints (until 2013)

☎ **0300 4568348**

www.carersfederation.co.uk

Housing



Disability North

www.disabilitynorth.org.uk

Provides free, confidential, independent information and advice about every aspect of independent living for disabled people of all ages. A wide range of equipment and adaptations can be viewed on-site along with advice and demonstrations (appointment advised).

☎ **0191 284 0480**, Fax: 0191 213 0910, Text direct 1800101912840480

Email: reception@disabilitynorth.org.uk

Housing offices

www.northumberland.gov.uk

You can get information about Housing, Council Tax benefits and discounts, as well as claim forms, from your local housing office. Call Northumberland County Council to find the location of your local housing office or information point.

☎ **0845 600 6400**

Listening helplines



Escape Family Support

www.escapefamilysupport.co.uk

Offers a confidential helpline for anyone affected by drugs, solvents or alcohol.

☎ **07702 833944** (24 hours a day)

NHS stressline

www.nhs.uk/conditions/stress

☎ **0300 123 2000**

www.nhs.uk/conditions/depression

Relate

www.relate-nt.org.uk

Offers private and confidential counselling on adult relationship problems, stress and bereavement and a wide range of helpful material.

☎ **0191 232 91 09**

St. John Ambulance Listening Service

Offers a confidential listening-ear and information to anyone with a long term health problem and their carers.

☎ **0191 256 70 70** (Monday to Thursday, 10.00am to 3.00pm)

Samaritans

www.samaritans.org.uk

Can help when you're at the end of your tether and you need someone to listen to you. The service is available 24 hours a day.

☎ **0845 790 90 90**

SANEline

www.sane.org.uk

Practical information, crisis care and emotional support to anybody affected by mental health problems.

☎ **0845 767 80 00** (Every day, 6.00pm to 11.00pm)

Your doctor's surgery

If you are feeling depressed or anxious, you should talk to your GP. Many doctors' practices offer counselling services.

Work & learning



Careers Advice Service

www.direct.gov.uk/en/CaringForSomeone/CarersAndEmployment

Carers Northumberland

www.carersnorthumberland.org

Your local carer support service, can also provide help and advice when you are ready to return to work or support when caring ends.

☎ **0844 800 73 54**

Carers UK Advice Line

www.carersuk.org

For more information or advice about your statutory employment rights call Carers UK between 10.00am - 12.00pm and 2.00pm - 4.00pm on Wednesdays and Thursdays.

☎ **0808 808 7777**

Job Centre Plus

www.jobcentreplus.gov.uk

For jobs available and useful links, training opportunities including carer support while training.

Learn Direct Advice

www.learndirect.co.uk

For a great way to get learning and careers information, call to speak to an adviser between 7.00am and 11.00pm, seven days a week.

☎ **0800 101 901**

Next Step (Careers Advice)

www.nextstep.direct.gov.uk

To get learning and careers information, call to speak to an adviser between 8.00am and 10.00pm, seven days a week.

☎ **0800 100 900**

Notes

