

Caring Matters

February 2019 - The newsletter of Carers Northumberland

What's on February 2019

Listed below are all of our groups and activities for February 2019.

Carers are welcome to attend **any** activity in **any** area. If you haven't been to a group before why not come along to one and see for yourself how welcoming and supportive they are? For more information or to book an event please call our Information Line on **01670 320025** or email

info@carersnorthumberland.org.uk

Feb 2019	Groups / Activity	Time
7th	AMBLE SUPPORT GROUP: The Dry Water Arts Centre, Amble	10.30am—12noon
7th	PONTELAND SUPPORT GROUP: Merton Hall, Ponteland	10:30am—12noon
13th	BERWICK CRAFT GROUP: William Elder Building, Berwick Activity—Wire Wrapped Trees BOOKING ESSENTIAL A £2 donation for materials would be appreciated	10am—12noon
13th	MORPETH SUPPORT GROUP: NCBA Building, Morpeth	10:30am—12noon
19th	ASHINGTON SUPPORT GROUP: Age UK, Ashington	10:30am—12noon
20th	BEDLINGTON SUPPORT GROUP: Salvation Army, Bedlington	1pm—2:30pm
21st	BLYTH SUPPORT GROUP: Buffalo Community Centre, Blyth	10am—11:30am
25th	ALNWICK SUPPORT GROUP: St Pauls Court, Alnwick	1:30pm—3pm
27th	BERWICK SUPPORT GROUP: William Elder Building, Berwick	11am—12:30pm
27th	HEXHAM SUPPORT GROUP: Adapt Building, Hexham	1:30pm—3pm
28th	CRAMLINGTON SUPPORT GROUP: Community Room, Concordia Leisure Centre, Cramlington	1pm—2:30pm

Please note activities and talks may be subject to change without notice.

New Support Groups:

From **February 2019** we have two new groups starting in **Ashington** and **Amble**. For details of where the meetings will be held and the times please see our What's On Guide.

Our **Felton support group** is changing. The meeting will now take place on alternative months, the next one being held in **March 2019**. Details will be in our next newsletter.

A Huge Thank You!

Thank you so much to everyone who took the time and trouble to complete the recent Year 2 survey, either online or on paper. It's a tribute to you all that so many of you have helped and I've received over 150 responses!

It's your views, your comments, and your feedback that are so important to Carers Northumberland. I know that some of you filled in a survey last year so have helped twice, despite family commitments and your caring role. So again, thank you.

Everyone who filled in the survey was placed in the prize draw names have been drawn and those lucky winners have received emails to organising receiving their prizes. I'm extremely grateful for your help and so have added another 2 raffle prizes - so there are now 5 raffle prizes for the lucky winners.

Warmest wishes.

Carol Meredith, External Evaluator



Meet the Team..

Chief Executive

Debra Blakey

Information & Engagement

Coordinator

Lisa Mordue
01670 320018

Information & Development Team

Anne-Marie Johnstone &
Sarah Long
01670 320025

Training Coordinator

Kate Whitehead
01668 932008

Volunteer Coordinator

Gail Purvis
01670 320024

Key Worker Team

Pauline Appleby
01434 267002

Lorraine Burley
01670 320026

Information Line

01670 320025

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Avoiding Overpayments

We often see carers dealing with letters from DWP about overpayment of benefit, this tends to happen at stressful times when the person they care for is in hospital or has died. Navigating the benefit system is never easy, but here are some basic rules regarding changes of circumstances:

- If the person you care for is in hospital, their disability benefit (attendance allowance, PIP or DLA) is only payable for 28 days. So, if their hospital visit extends beyond this four-week period, you must inform DWP so that it can be put on hold. The payments can be re started when they return home
- The same rule applies for carers allowance, your benefit ends when theirs does. So, if they are in hospital for more than four weeks you must inform DWP and your carers allowance will be put on hold as well. If you do not inform the DWP you will be overpaid the benefit and will get a letter asking you to repay this money.
- If you (the carer) are in hospital your carers allowance can continue to be paid for 12 weeks, after 12 weeks you cannot be paid carers allowance and must inform DWP, so it can be put on hold.
- If the person you care for passes away, you will normally be paid carers allowance for a further eight weeks. You must inform the DWP that the person you care for has passed away.
- You can use the "Tell us once" service if the person you care for passes away. This service will inform all relevant government departments and stop all payments, rather than you having to make multiple phone calls.

Useful Contacts:

Carers Allowance
0800 731 0297

You can also report a change of circumstance online at: <https://www.gov.uk/carers-allowance-report-change>

Personal Independence Payment
0800 121 4433

Disability Living Allowance (Born before 1948)/ Attendance Allowance
0800 731 0122

Disability Living Allowance (Born after 1948)
0800 121 4600

Pension Credit
0800 731 0469

Tell Us Once Service
<https://www.gov.uk/after-a-death/organisations-you-need-to-contact-and-tell-us-once>

Carer Offers

CEA Cinema Card

The Card enables a disabled cinema guest to receive a complimentary ticket for someone to go with them when they visit a participating cinema. An annual card costs £6 and is accepted at 90% of UK cinemas.

Find out more at <https://www.ceacard.co.uk/>

Vue Cinemas Super Monday



Create an account with Vue and your ticket will be discounted for showings on a Monday. Use your promo code when booking tickets to receive the discount. Your CEA card should still be accepted with this deal.

Find out more at <https://www.myvue.com/offers/super-mondays>

National Trust Essential Companion Card



The Essential Companion card makes it simple to bring one or two carers or companions with you, free of charge. Just show the card when you arrive, and your carer(s) or companion(s) won't need to pay an entry fee.

It's in your name so you can bring whomever you like, but even if you don't have an Essential Companion card, you can still bring carers or companions free – the card just makes it quicker and simpler for you.

Find out more at <https://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/features/access-for-everyone>

Theatre Tickets

Many theatres offer a free ticket for the carer of a disabled person. In Northumberland Whitley Bay Playhouse and Queens Hall Arts Centre (Hexham) offer a free ticket for carers. The Theatre Royal in Newcastle also offers this service.

<https://www.playhousewhitleybay.co.uk/venue-information/accessibility/>

<https://www.queenshall.co.uk/access>

<https://www.theatreroyal.co.uk/visit/concessions>

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Carer Workshop Sessions

Do you know what a Carers Assessment is? It is a series of questions that you could be asked by someone from Adult Social Services to find out what you might need to support you in your caring role. It is not necessarily about sums of money but more about thinking as flexibly as possible around what you might need to help you carry on caring, currently and into the future.

Did you know that as an unpaid carer you are entitled to ask for a Carers Assessment in your own right even if the person you care for does not have any Social Services involvement or a Care plan? A Carers Assessment will identify all the things that you do and how comfortable or otherwise you are with your caring role. It is in your interest as well as the person/s you care for to look after your own health and wellbeing. Nothing can happen or change if you stay silent!

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Carers Northumberland has been working closely with staff from Social Services over the past couple of months to highlight just what an important job the unpaid carers in our county do and to offer an insight into how carers might feel about their role. The training sessions with Care Managers and Social Workers have proved very popular—so much so that there will be more sessions offered soon. We now need YOU to be more open about what you need in order to continue caring and make sure that you request your Carer's Assessment to follow up on the training .

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NEW!

Starting in February there will be 6 x monthly sessions running at **Benmar House in Morpeth for carers looking after someone with MS**. The sessions, called 'Caring & Sharing—Let's talk about...', are between 1-2.30pm. Each one will have a different focus :

The February session is entitled ' Good Day, Bad Day, talking about ups & downs'.

Contact either Deborah at Benmar House or our info line on 01670 320025 to find out more.

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If you like the sound of these but do not care for someone with MS, let us know.

We may be able to run the sessions for other carers too.

VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT SUPPORT GROUP FACILITATOR



Many carers benefit from attending a support group where they make friends with others in similar circumstances and have an informal chat over a cuppa.

For some, this is the only time they have for themselves, so they look forward to the friendly face of their regular support group facilitator. These groups take place all around Northumberland from January to November, and some of the groups have a facilitator and 'helpers' as they can be quite large. It is a rewarding volunteer role and plays an important part in offering peer support to carers.



Some of the carers with the volunteer at Berwick support group

As one of our longstanding support group volunteers says

"The most satisfying thing about being a Support Group Facilitator is seeing the benefits people get from spending time together in a 'Safe Space'. They get to know one another, relax, laugh, and exchange advice. Knowing you are not alone in your caring role can make all the difference."

Could YOU commit 2 hours a month to welcome carers, make sure they are comfortable and have a chance to share their thoughts?

Ring Gail on 015670 320024 and have a chat about it, or email gailpurvis@carersnorthumberland.org.uk

Groups Run By Our Partners

Carers Northumberland do not manage these groups

Groups / Activity	Details
Berwick Mental Health Carers Support Group , Northern Spirit	01289 305 002
Hexham Mental Health Carers Support Group , Scout Hut (behind Marks & Spencer's), Hexham	21st Feb 1.30pm—3.30pm
New Beginnings Group , ring for details	01670 320 025
Wooler Carers Group , Terrace Café, Wooler	20th Feb 10am –12 noon
Bellingham Carers Group , Bellingham Practice	21st Feb 1.30pm—3pm
Mental Health Forum , Wooler	Contact Jane Pannell on 01289 388321 or email jane.pannell51@btinternet.com

**If you no longer wish to receive this newsletter
please contact 01670 320025**

How to join our online forum:

- Visit our website www.carersnorthumberland.org.uk
- Then you will find the register button at top of the page
- Select the Carers Forum Button at the top the top of the page
- Complete the registration process as prompted
- Don't forget to read the **forum guidelines and conditions**
- Once registered you can post and view other discussions
- Enjoy!

