



Taking Care of You - Let's Talk **You**

Do you look after someone?
A Guide to Self-Care for Carers



South Tyneside Council



living better lives



living better lives



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Introduction

If you give regular unpaid help and support to a family member or friend who has a long term illness, disability, a mental health problem or an addiction and they cannot cope without your support then you are a 'carer'.

The help you provide could be emotional, physical and/or practical and you may or may not live with the person you care for.

Caring can happen at any time and is likely to impact on your life. It's natural to put the cared for person's needs first, but caring for yourself is one of the most important things you can do as a carer. Whilst caring can be very rewarding, it can also be incredibly demanding and exhausting at times, taking a toll on you and your own health and wellbeing.

We understand that you may not ask for help but we want you to be well informed about the information, advice and support that is available to support you in your role so that your health doesn't suffer and you can continue caring for as long as you want to.

The aim of this guide is to provide you with the kind of information and support you may need to help you care safely and effectively. It will also help you to think about your own health and wellbeing and how this can be affected when undertaking a caring role. The guide includes a wellbeing check which is useful to consider.





Who is a carer?

A carer is a person who provides care or support to someone, usually a relative, partner or a friend who has care and support needs and can't manage without help in their day to day life. Carers are not paid for the care they provide. If a carer is in receipt of Carer's Allowance, this is not classed as a payment to care.

Whilst all carers play a valuable role, the support that is available may differ dependent on the type of carer you are. There are four main types of carer:

Adult carers If you are an adult who provides care for another adult who needs care and support, then you are an adult carer. Parents caring for their child who is over the age of 18 are also regarded as adult carers.

Parent carers If you look after your own child or have parental responsibility for a child who has a disability or additional needs and is under the age of 18, then you are a parent carer.

Young carers If you are a young person under the age of 18 who looks after someone with care and support needs, for example, a parent, sibling or other relative, then you are a young carer.

Young adult carers If you are aged 18-24 years and provide unpaid care or support to someone who has care and support needs, then you are a young carer transitioning into adulthood.

Key sources of information, advice and support in South Tyneside

Information can be one of the most valuable resources for a carer. Getting the right information, advice and support at the right time, can be vital in helping you to care. It can make all the difference to your wellbeing and can make your caring role a positive and rewarding experience.

Adult Carer Support - The main support organisation in South Tyneside for adult carers (age 18+) is Connected Caring. They have a team of dedicated and experienced support workers who provide support for adult, young adult and parent carers in South Tyneside. As well as information and guidance they offer the following support:

- Support groups and forums
- Social and wellbeing activities including ten-pin bowling, boxercise, reiki and gardening.
- Parent carer meetings and peer support
- Male carers' group
- Employment support
- Advocacy work on behalf of carers
- Befriending service
- End of Life and Life changes support
- Specialised group sessions incl Dementia friends and substance misuse support.

Connected Caring can also help you complete the wellbeing check throughout this guide and may be able to help resolve some of your issues. They can also talk to you about whether having a carer's conversation with the council would be helpful to you. For more information on this please see page 22.

**For more information contact Connected Caring by email at: info@connectedcaring.org.uk
Tel: 0800 304 7724
Web: www.connectedcaring.org.uk
Facebook: Connected Caring
Address: 29 Beach Road, South Shields**

Young Carers support – If you are a young carer, your caring role could be having an effect on your attendance at school or may cause you to be late for school, it may make it difficult for you to socialise, you might be worried about the person you care for or you may have feelings of anger, frustration or guilt.

South Tyneside Young Carers Service may be able to help you. They can provide support to help reduce the impact of caring responsibilities on Young Carers and Young Adult Carers (up to the age of 18 yrs) that are caring for another person due to illness, disability, mental health condition or addiction problem. They can arrange for you to meet other Young Carers in groups and activities.

If your caring responsibilities are having an impact on you, the Young Carers Service will work with you and your family to find the right support for you. Parents and young carers can self-refer to the service. The service leaves leaflets in all schools for self-referrals.

You can contact the **Young Carers Service by Email: admin.styc@groundwork.org.uk
Web: southtynesideyoungcarers.org
Tel: 0191 4272795
Facebook: /STYoungCarers
Address: South Tyneside Young Carers. The Eco Centre, Windmill Way, Hebburn**

Many other service specific organisations support carers in South Tyneside for example: Everyturn Carers Support Service (mental health), Alzheimer's Society (dementia), Age Concern Tyneside South (older people). Connected Caring can signpost to a range of condition specific or specialist services.

NHS services

All NHS services and practitioners work with and offer support to carers.

A helpful starting point to getting the support you need as a carer is to let your GP know. There are also many services that can support you to look after your own health including occupational therapists, physiotherapists, continence advisers and dieticians which they can direct you to.

Support to help you in your caring role may include:

- Your GP surgery can tell you about health checks, annual flu jabs and screening programmes that are available to carers to help you protect and improve your own health
- Information about health conditions and treatments for the person you care for to help you feel more confident in your caring role.
- Specialist advice from a range of therapist/nurses.

To find out more about NHS Services go to NHS choices website at www.nhs.uk

Advocacy Support

As a carer you may feel you would benefit from support to have your views heard. Advocacy means getting support from another person to help you express your views and wishes, and to help make sure your voice is heard. Someone who helps you in this way is called your advocate.

Situations where you might need Advocacy Support:

- When you are unhappy about a service, or need support to make a professional understand what you or the person you care for needs
- Meetings with health, social care, housing departments etc.

- When you wish to raise concerns or complain about a service
- When you require support to navigate through the safeguarding process
- When there is a conflict between your needs and the needs of the person you care for
- When you are unsure of your rights as a carer
- When you are just too exhausted to stand up for yourself

Your advocate will:

- Listen to your views and concerns
- Give you information to help you make informed decisions
- Help you explore your options and rights
- Ensure that your voice is heard and your needs are considered
- Help you contact relevant people, or contact them on your behalf
- Accompany and support you in meetings or appointments with health and/or social care

They will not:

- Give you their personal opinion
- Solve problems and make decisions for you
- Make judgements about you
- Steer you in a particular direction

For further information on how to access advocacy support, contact Connected Caring by email at info@Connectedcaring.org.uk.

Digital Support for Carers

South Tyneside Council has teamed up with Carers UK to offer carers in our area free access to a wide range of online resources to help make caring easier. You will find a wealth of information on topics such as health and wellbeing, financial planning, working and caring and many more.

Digital Resource for Carers can be accessed by visiting www.carersdigital.org, register to create an account and then when asked for your free access code enter the following: DGTL1952.

You can then access the resources as many times as you like.

Mobilise

Mobilise provides free online support to unpaid carers. It helps you connect with other carers in similar situations, explore support options and learn from other carers. It hosts virtual cuppas where carers come together for a chat.

To find out more visit:

www.mobiliseonline.co.uk



Taking care of your health and wellbeing



Emotional health

For many carers the emotional impact of caring can be demanding at times. The high demands on you and your time can result in feeling out of control. This may affect your ability to cope with everyday tasks and your confidence and self-esteem can be affected. Giving all your time and attention to someone else can also leave you feeling socially isolated with no time to consider your own needs and how to meet them.

We know caring can be tough, that's why Self-Care is so important

There are a number of things you can do to ensure you stay well whilst providing the best care you can.

We recognise you may feel too busy to focus on your own health and wellbeing but it is important to stay well, but if you become unwell, who will provide the necessary care then? There are some simple ways to help stay fit and well:

- **Eat well** – Food can have a significant impact on your mood and your energy levels. Eat healthy, regular meals with as much fresh fruit and veg as possible, and drink plenty of water.
- **Rest & Sleep** – Tiredness can lead to low mood and depression. Try to create a regular sleeping pattern; this may need to fit around the care you provide. For example, you may be able to split your sleep around the activity and sleep of the person you care for.
- **Exercise** – Physical activity can help enormously, releasing “feel-good” hormones into your system, assisting your general metabolism and allowing you some head space. Even a regular short walk instead of using the car or the bus can make a difference.

Talking is good - Talking You is even better

Sharing your feelings and your worries can be difficult. You may feel like talking is pointless if it can't change anything, or you may not want to “put upon” others. However, talking to a trusted friend, someone who is experiencing something similar, a counsellor or even a stranger can have a positive impact on how you are feeling.

Talking about something entirely unrelated to your caring role can be uplifting too; taking your mind off your worries. You could join a group or an evening class perhaps. There are also many online resources including forums and social media you could use for support. Your local library can provide the resource to access these and local organisations such as Age Concern Tyneside South can provide support to get online.

There are lots of support groups and organisations available locally that can provide a ‘listening ear’, counselling services, and put you in touch with other Carers to share your experiences. Some of these are listed overleaf.

Wellbeing Check

1. Do you sometimes feel overwhelmed? YES NO
2. Do you have the opportunity to take time away from caring, to do the things you enjoy? YES NO
3. Does caring leave you with enough time and energy to get to the shops and other places where you need to go, and to take part in leisure activities that matter to you? YES NO
4. Are you able to spend enough time on other family responsibilities, eg being with your children, your partner, parents or siblings? YES NO
5. Would you like help or information about meeting other carers for mutual support? YES NO

Connected Caring can tell you about carer groups or link you with other carers and support to help you take a break.
Email: info@connectedcaring.org.uk Tel: 0800 304 7724



Physical Health

Your own physical health is important and help is available to make sure you have your own regular health checks. If you're in the 40-74 age groups without a pre-existing condition, you can receive a free NHS Health Check every five years.

a better u is everyone is South Tyneside working together to improve health and wellbeing. There is lots you can do to feel healthier and happier. To find out what's available to support you to look after your health and make healthier choices go to: <https://campaigns.southtyneside.gov.uk/a-better-u/>

Organising your time

Try to prioritise your time. There are some daily tasks that have to be done at specific times, such as getting children off to school, meals and providing medication. It can help to know what has to be done when and to know when you can be more flexible with your time.

- Create a daily planner with all of the priority tasks timetabled in
- Identify any flexible time slots. These are times when you can address the lower priority but nevertheless important jobs and the unexpected jobs.
- Have important and emergency information such as GP, pharmacy contact, social worker, district nurse details, all in one easy to access place.

Make time for yourself

Don't forget to factor in some regular time for you. Having coffee with a friend or neighbour, enjoying a hobby or going for a walk can give you some time out from your caring responsibilities, leaving you refreshed and re-charged. It can also help prevent you from feeling isolated.

Being able to relax and enjoy the moment is a valuable skill. There are several techniques that you can learn to maximise your relaxation such as yoga, meditation and mindfulness.

Many community centres and local education centres run classes and there are plenty of resources available to help you learn.

There may be times when you need a break away from the caring role even for a few hours, Connected Caring or South Tyneside Council Let's Talk Team can provide advice and guidance on support that may be available to you.

Wellbeing Check

1. Is there anything about your physical health that worries you? YES NO
2. Have you been offered any type of health check or screening in the last year but not taken up the offer? YES NO
3. Have you had a fall or any problems with your balance in the last year? YES NO
4. Do you experience any pain associated with moving or handling the person you care for, or using any equipment? YES NO
5. During the last few months have you often felt down, depressed or hopeless? YES NO
6. Do you worry about your memory getting worse? YES NO

Have you experienced any of the following:

- Increased thirst
- Increased passing of urine or blood in your urine
- Changes in your bowel habits, or blood in your stools
- Changes in your breasts/chest (this also applies to men)
- Chest pain
- Breathlessness
- More tired than usual

If you answer "yes" to any of the questions above you should call your **GP surgery** to make an appointment, if you haven't already done so. Prevention and early intervention is always the best option and in most instances a GP consultation will give you peace of mind and one less thing to worry about.



Where to get help

For more information on where to access the things you are interested in or to find out what choices are available to you locally, visit: www.southtyneside.gov.uk/livingbetterlives

Connected Caring provides a range of practical advice and support to carers.
Email: info@connectedcaring.org.uk
Tel: 0800 304 7724

South Tyneside Lifecycle Primary Care Mental Health Service - provides interventions for a range of mental health difficulties – such as anxiety, depression, trauma, stress, bereavement, low self-esteem and other emotional issues. If you are a full time carer you will be given a priority appointment.

For more information or to self-refer
Tel: 0191 283 2937 or visit: www.southtynesidelifecyclementalhealth.nhs.uk



Everyturn Carers Support Service – provide emotional and practical support to carers supporting someone with mental health needs, helping you to cope with the demands of your role and also be able to 'have a life of your own'. They offer:

- one-to-one telephone and face-to-face support
- education and advice on mental health issues
- information and 'signposting' to community services and resources
- social and 'peer' support
- out-of-hours telephone support line

For more information visit
Everyturn Carer Support Service
Tel: 0191 217 2935
Email: admin.mfst@everyturn.org
Text: 07594 154768
Website: www.everyturn.org

Women's Health in South Tyneside

(WHiST) provides a wide range of services to women over 16 years old including counselling support, support groups, courses and activities, all aimed at improving health and wellbeing.

For more information Tel: **WHIST** on **0191 454 6959** or visit the website at www.whist.org.uk.

Northumberland Tyne and Wear NHS

Foundation Trust have a wide range of mental health self-help guides in different formats available to download. Some of the topics include anxiety, panic, stress, depression and low mood.

For more information go to: www.ntw.nhs.uk/selfhelp

Taking care of your financial wellbeing

Getting information on benefits

It is a good idea to get a benefit check to make sure you and the person you are looking after are claiming all the benefits you are entitled to.

As well as increasing your household income, benefits can sometimes help protect your future State Pension entitlement.

You can get a benefit check online, visit www.entitledto.co.uk/benefits-calculator or www.turn2us.org.uk/find-benefits-grants.

Carer's Allowance

Carer's Allowance is a vital source of independent financial support to those who are caring full-time and unpaid. It also brings essential recognition from the State of the role that carers are playing.

Carer's Allowance is the main benefit for Carers. You must be over 16 to claim, and care for at least 35 hours per week for someone on Disability Living Allowance care component (middle or higher rate), Personal Independence Payment – Daily Living Component. You may still qualify if you are working and your income is below a certain amount. Claiming Carer's Allowance can sometimes affect any means-tested benefits that the person you look after gets. If you are not able to claim Carer's Allowance there may be other benefits you can access or have increased, so please ask for advice.

Attendance Allowance

Attendance Allowance is a benefit for the person with a disability or illness to help with their care needs. It is for people over state pension age. Attendance Allowance can be paid regardless of income, savings or National Insurance contribution record and is a tax free benefit. If you are a carer who has care needs, you can claim Attendance Allowance for yourself and this will not affect your Carer's Allowance.

Getting Attendance Allowance does not reduce other benefits, it may even increase them. If you are a carer and the person you care for claims Attendance Allowance, this may help you to qualify for certain benefits (such as Carers Allowance). Attendance Allowance may also entitle you and/ or the person you care for to further help with council tax.

Carer's Credit

Carer's Credit is a way of protecting your State Pension rights if you are caring for someone but are not paying National Insurance contributions through paid work and are unable to claim Carer's Allowance.

You do not get paid any money if you claim Carer's Credit, but you get a National Insurance contribution credit to help protect your record (which helps to protect your entitlement to a State Pension).

There are certain criteria to claiming Carer's Credit you can check if you are eligible by visiting www.gov.uk/carers-credit.

Where to get help

South Tyneside Welfare Support Service provides debt, benefit and money advice. The service is free, impartial and confidential and available to everyone living in South Tyneside.

The Welfare Support Service can help you if you need:

- Benefit advice and support with applications and appeals
- Debt advice, including bankruptcy and debt relief orders
- Advice on whether you will be better off in work
- Support with budgeting
- Help preparing for Universal Credit
- Help with the impact of the Bedroom Tax
- Help with the impact of the Benefit Cap

If you would like to find out more you can contact the service on

0191 424 6040 or you can make a welfare support enquiry online at: www.southtyneside.gov.uk/article/58730/Make-a-welfare-support-enquiry.

South Tyneside Citizen's Advice Bureau – can also provide free, confidential and impartial advice on debt, Finance, Welfare Benefits, Housing, Employment, Immigration, Consumer, Taxes, Family, Utilities, Education, Health and Community Care matters.

For more information Tel: ST Citizen's Advice on: **0191 455 7958** or visit the website at www.southtynecab.net

Age Concern Tyneside South (ACTS) Information and advice service can also provide information on benefits & income and money management. For more information Tel: **ACTS on 0191 456 6903** or visit the website at www.ac-ts.org.uk

You can also find them on Facebook at Age Concern Tyneside South.



Help with council tax

If you're caring for someone you may be able to get help with your council tax bill.

Council Tax Reduction (sometimes called Council Tax Support) is a benefit to help people who are on a low income or claiming certain benefits to pay some of their Council Tax bill.

You could be eligible if you're on a low income or claim benefits. Your bill could be reduced by up to 100%.

You can apply if you own your home, rent, are unemployed or working.

What you get depends on:

- where you live
- your circumstances (eg income, number of children, benefits, residency status)
- your household income - this includes savings, pensions and your partner's income
- if your children live with you
- if other adults live with you

To claim Council Tax Support, contact **South Tyneside Council Benefits Team on Tel: 0191 424 4333**

You may be able to pay less council tax under the disability reduction scheme if your home has had work carried out on it to help you or someone else living with a disability.

For more information go to **www.southtyneside.gov.uk/article/34015/Council-Tax-discounts** or telephone **South Tyneside Council Tax on 0191 424 4330**

Benefits for the person you are looking after

The person you are looking after may be entitled to disability benefits to help pay for the extra costs of long-term illness or disability.

For more information contact the **Welfare Support Team on 0191 424 6040** or you can make a welfare support enquiry online at **www.southtyneside.gov.uk/article/58730/Make-a-welfare-support-enquiry**

Other financial help

Help with health costs

If you are getting certain benefits you may qualify for help with costs for NHS services. This includes free:

- prescriptions
- dental treatment
- NHS eye tests and vouchers to help pay for glasses/contact lenses
- reimbursement of fares to hospital for treatment for you or your child. You can also claim for the fares of a companion who needs to travel with you for medical reasons.

If you are aged 60 and over, you can get free prescriptions and NHS eye tests regardless of your income. If you aren't getting benefits which entitle you to help with NHS health costs, but you have a low income, you may be able to get help with health costs through the NHS Low Income Scheme. Prepayment certificates for prescriptions can also reduce costs if you regularly pay for medication.

Help with travel costs

If you or the person you care for have trouble getting around out and about then it's worth considering a Blue Badge. The Blue Badge (Disabled Persons' Parking) is a national scheme for disabled people with severe mobility problems. It allows people to park closer to their destination to access services more easily.

You can find out how to apply by visiting South Tyneside Council website at www.southtyneside.gov.uk and search for Blue Badge parking permit or call the **Let's Talk Blue Badge Team on 0191 424 6000**

Healthcare Travel Costs Scheme

If you're referred to hospital or other NHS premises for specialist NHS treatment or diagnostic tests by your doctor, dentist or another health professional, you may be able to claim a refund of reasonable travel costs. For further information visit the NHS website and search for Health Care Travel Costs Scheme or contact the Patient Transport Bureau (PTB) on **0300 111 21 31**

There is also information available on the South Tyneside Council website at **www.southtyneside.gov.uk** under Transport information for carers.

Taking care of your career

Working Carers

You may feel as though you are juggling two jobs when holding down a paid job and caring for someone, but work can be important for your wellbeing, income and for maintaining social contacts. For some people they see no option other than to leave paid employment because they are unaware of other options to consider. You should think carefully and perhaps talk to someone before giving up work to care. Your work will provide you with financial security, time away and a sense of identity which is separate from your role as a carer.

Think about talking to your employer so that they know about your caring role before difficulties arise. Your employer may have a Carers' Policy or be open to exploring new ways to support you. Many employers operate flexible working schemes. It is advisable to find out about your rights and about any support that is available.

All employees have the right to take a reasonable amount of unpaid time off to deal with emergencies involving someone who depends on them and to make necessary arrangements.

Starting work or returning to work

Ask about support available from Jobcentre Plus for learning opportunities, training courses and careers advice if you are not in work. They can also advise on funding for alternative care to allow you to take part in training.

The National Careers Service has advisers who can provide advice, information and guidance on skills and learning. You can get help to search for your first job, get back into work or change career direction.

If you need any help with the cost of any courses then you could contact South Tyneside Adult Carers Service who can help you search for any local grants. You could also run a more general grants search with a charity called Turn2Us who have a database of lots of different grant giving organisations.

Timewise Jobs is a jobs board specialising in part-time jobs and roles that are open to flexibility, for people with skills and experience. They now have a dedicated hub for carers where you can get ideas and guidance on how to find work to fit with your caring responsibilities, as well as access to flexible jobs and employers

Where to get help

Connected Caring can offer support and advice to working carers and to carers who would like to return to work.

Email: info@connectedcaring.org.uk
or Tel: 0800 304 7724

Job Centre Plus Tel: 0800 169 0190

South Shields Jobcentre Plus
Chapter Row, Market Place
South Shields, Tyne & Wear
NE33 4BZ

Jarrow Jobcentre Plus
56-64 Ellison Street
Jarrow, Tyne and Wear NE32 3BX

National Careers Service website:
www.nationalcareersservice.direct.gov.uk or speak to an adviser on
Tel: 0800 100 900

Turn2Us website: www.turn2us.org.uk

Timewise Jobs website:
www.timewisejobs.co.uk

Carers UK website at www.carersuk.org is also a good place for information and advice.

The Digital Resource for Carers is also a good place to find information about working and caring. Go to carersdigital.org, set up an account and then enter the free access code: DGTL1952



Taking care of your future

Creating an emergency plan

It is advisable for carers to create an emergency plan for you and all those you look after.

Having a plan in place for personal emergencies can provide peace of mind for you, the person you're caring for and other family or friends. It also allows the person cared for to be involved in planning arrangements so everyone knows what to do and there is clear agreement about what should happen for example who can be contacted.

Some of the things you should include in your emergency plan are:

- details of the person you look after
- who you and the person you look after would like to be contacted in an emergency – this might include friends, family or professionals
- details of any medication the person you look after is taking and where it is stored
- details of any ongoing treatment they need
- details of any allergies
- details of their GP and pharmacy

For more information on creating an emergency plan visit: Carers UK website

Carers' Emergency Support Service

The Carers' Emergency Support Service can provide replacement care when a carer is unavailable for short periods.

The person you care for will be looked after in your absence at any time of day or night if there is an emergency in your life.

Examples include:

- a carer's admission to hospital
- GP or hospital appointment at short notice
- family emergency or crisis which takes you away from your caring role such as a close relative being taken ill and needing help/ support

- risk to the carer's employment on a particular occasion

If you need to use this support for an emergency please contact the Let's Talk Team on Tel: **0191 424 6000** or if out of office hours Tel: **0191 456 2093**

Legal matters

The Mental Capacity Act, (2005), is a law that governs when someone lacks the ability to make decisions. It covers anyone over the age of 16 and sets out who can make decisions in which situations and how they should go about it. For further information visit Mind website at www.mind.org.uk

Lasting Power of Attorney (LPA), is a legal tool that allows a person to appoint someone to make certain decisions on their behalf if there comes a time when the person cannot make decisions for themselves. There are two types that you can arrange - a property and affairs LPA or health and welfare LPA.

You can apply yourself to make a LPA as the forms are easy to complete and available on the Office of the Public Guardian web pages. However, if your affairs are complicated, it may be a good idea to seek advice from a solicitor.

It costs £82 to register an LPA unless you get a reduction or exemption. For further information go to www.gov.uk/power-of-attorney

Appointee for someone claiming benefits: You can apply for the right to deal with the benefits of someone who can't manage their own affairs because they're mentally incapable or severely disabled. It is free to apply to become an appointee for someone. Who you phone to apply to depends on the benefit. You can check online at www.gov.uk, or contact **South Tyneside Welfare Support Service** for assistance on **0191 424 6040**.

As an appointee you are responsible for making and maintaining any benefit claims and spending the benefit, (which is paid directly to you), in the claimant's best interests.

Making a will: It is important for you to make a will to ensure that your money and possessions are distributed according to your wishes. There is no need for a will to be drawn up or witnessed by a solicitor. If you wish to make a will yourself, you can do so. However, you should only consider doing this if the will is going to be straightforward.

It is generally advisable to use a solicitor or to have a solicitor check a will you have drawn up to make sure it will have the effect you want.

Where to get help

To make a LPA go to: **Office of the Public Guardian**

Citizens Advice provides free information about making a will visit their website at www.citizensadvice.org.uk or
Tel: 0191 455 7958

Age Concern Tyneside South can give you information and advice on arranging a lasting power of attorney or wills; they also have a range of fact sheets. For more information and to find out their fees

Tel: 0191 456 6903

Mencap provides specialist advice in regards to legal matters for people with learning disabilities.

Tel: 0808 808 1111 or visit the website at www.mencap.org.uk

Wellbeing Check

- Do you want to plan for the future for yourself or the person you care for?

YES NO

Get information on making wills and lasting power of attorney online, you don't have to incur expensive legal fees.

Taking care of the person you are caring for

Being involved

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 be given the information you need.

Make sure people are aware of your opinions and wishes about your ability to provide care and support and don't be afraid to ask for detailed information about the person's condition and needs including at time of discharge from hospital.

Carer Passports in hospitals

A Carer Passport in a hospital is a simple tool which identifies you as being in a caring role for one of the hospital's patients, involving you more fully in the patient's care, and connecting you with further support.

If you are the main carer for someone in hospital ask the ward if they have a carer passport scheme, sometimes this enables you to visit outside of normal visiting times and allows you to continue providing care and support e.g. assisting with meals etc.

South Tyneside and Sunderland Foundation Trust hospitals are now operating the carer passport scheme, you can ask a member of staff about this and they will provide you with an information pack and identity card.

Help from local and national organisations

There are lots of organisations and national charities for every major condition that can help you understand the condition of the person you care for and provide support to you to help you care well. Here is a list of some local organisations. You will also find some contact details for national support helplines and websites:

NHS Choices is a good place to start for information and advice on NHS services, healthy living and health conditions visit the website at www.nhs.uk or ask at your GP surgery.

Alzheimer's Society – provide information and support to people with dementia, carers and families e.g. dementia café, peer support groups, carers' meetings, training, 'singing for the brain', Dementia Support Workers and day support services.

For more information Tel: 0191 4275443 or National Dementia Helpline on Tel: 0300 222 11 22. You can also visit the website at www.alzheimers.org.uk

Talking Point is a helpful online community where anyone who is affected by dementia can receive valuable support. It's free, open day or night and can be accessed online at www.forum.alzheimers.org.uk

Stroke Association Whether you have experienced a stroke, are a carer or family member, Stroke Association has a range of support services and groups in your local area to help you. They also have an online stroke support tool and a dedicated helpline for anyone affected by stroke.

For further information telephone the Stroke Helpline on 0303 3033 100 or email helpline@stroke.org.uk

My Stroke Guide gives you free access to trusted information about different types of stroke, risk factors and secondary conditions, as well as advice on prevention and improving your own health.

Cancer Connections is a local charity dedicated to helping individuals and families going through cancer. As well as information and advice, they provide enjoyable events, counselling support and complementary therapies.

For further information Tel: 0191 4565081 or visit the website: www.cancerconnections.org

Diabetes UK South Tyneside

- provide support, companionship and help educate people living with diabetes, as well as their family and friends.

For further information Tel: 0191 427 7953 or 0191 536 9698 or visit the website: www.southtyneside.diabetesukgroup.org



Mencap is a UK charity for people with a learning disability. They support their families and carers, too. The services they provide range from round-the-clock care to helping someone join in with local leisure activities, providing advice and information on things like employment and education, helping someone to live independently for the first time, and even things like reporting a crime to the police.

For more information and to find out about local support visit the website www.mencap.org.uk or Tel the helpline on 0808 808 1111

Parkinson's UK offers support and information to people affected by Parkinson's, their families and carers.

For more information and to find out about local support visit the website: www.parkinsons.org.uk or Tel the helpline on 0808 800 0303.

South Tyneside Adult Recovery Service - offer ways for local people with drug and alcohol problems to become free from their dependence. The service can also offer information, advice and support to carers of people with substance misuse.

For more information visit the website on www.stadultrecoveryservice.co.uk or Tel: 0191 917 1160

You can also visit the recovery centre base at Cookson House, South Shields, NE33 1TL

Mind can provide you with information about a mental health condition, treatment options, where to get help in your local area or advice about practical issues. Mind offers two confidential mental health information services, the Mind Infoline where you can get help and information on types of mental health problems, medication and alternative treatments and advocacy and The Legal Line where you can get advice on mental health related law.

For further information contact the Mind Infoline on Tel: 0300 123 3393 or Legal Line on Tel: 0300 466 6463

Equipment and technology to support at home

Different types of equipment, adaptations and technology could make your home safer, your life easier and provide independence for the person you are caring for.

Assistive technology often referred to as Telecare and Telehealth can help people to live independently in their own homes and give you, the carer, peace of mind.

Telecare consists of a range of unobtrusive monitoring devices which can be linked through to community alarm systems, so that you can get help quickly should you need it. Here are some examples of what is available:

- Smoke detectors, flood detectors, fall detector, carbon monoxide detector, natural gas detector, bed/chair occupancy sensor, property exit sensor

with voice alert, medication reminder/dispenser, epilepsy monitoring equipment, GPS tracker for outdoor monitoring, bogus caller support.

- Just Checking – An activity monitoring system often used with people with dementia or learning disabilities.

Telehealth is a way of monitoring a person's health remotely, through equipment they have in their home. It can monitor conditions such as asthma, heart failure, diabetes, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), stroke and hypertension.

Everyday technology such as the internet or your mobile phone can take the stress out of a whole host of tasks such as shopping, banking and coordinating care for the person you care for such as managing prescriptions and making GP appointments.

Making changes to your home

Making changes or adaptations to your home can also support the person you care for in performing everyday tasks safely. For instance, installing a handrail could make getting in and out of the bath or shower much safer, or getting a specially designed stool to help take the weight off their feet while they do the washing up or prepare a meal could be a simple way for them to carry on cooking.

Many people find these minor changes to be a big help in overcoming the effects of increasing frailty or ill-health so they can continue to rely on themselves like before. If you are supporting someone in everyday living, adaptations can also make it simpler for you.

Advice on daily living equipment

Sometimes equipment alone might not be enough to meet the needs of the person you care for, or the equipment they do need is quite substantial. An Occupational Therapist can organise minor or major alterations to your home and will explain who funds and organises the work before making recommendations for the alterations to the relevant team.

A Disabled Facilities Grant is a grant from South Tyneside Council to help towards the cost of adapting your home to enable you to continue to live there. A grant is paid when the Council considers that changes are necessary to meet your needs, and that the work is reasonable and practical.

The amount paid is usually based on a financial assessment (a 'means test') of your average weekly income, and takes into account any savings, capital, investments etc. However when the adaptation is for a disabled child under 19, the means test is not required.

For more information go to South Tyneside Council website at: www.southtyneside.gov.uk and search **Disabled Facilities Grant**.

Housing options

If you both decide that a move is more appropriate, then the main housing options are:

- Housing built specifically for older people such as retirement or sheltered housing

- Specialist housing with 24 hour on-site care such as extra care housing or an assisted living apartment
- A care or nursing home

The Housing Plus Service brings you options for independent living, they can offer a range of modern, safe and friendly bungalows and apartments across South Tyneside for older people which are linked to a 24 hour warden call service. For more information visit the website at www.southtynesidehomes.org.uk and search for **Housing Plus** or call **Housing Plus** on Tel: **0300 123 6633**.

For more information on any of the above you can also contact the Let's Talk Team by email at LetsTalk@southtyneside.gov.uk or Tel: 0191 424 6000.

Where to get help

AskSARA - is an online self-help guide providing expert advice and information on products and equipment to help with physical and mental health, carrying out tasks around the home and getting out and about for older and disabled adults and children.

AskSARA also provides information on obtaining funding and assistance in purchasing equipment and carrying out home adaptations.

For more information visit the AskSARA website at www.asksara.dlf.org.uk

The Living Better Lives Resource Centre has a demonstration area where you can see equipment in use by prior arrangement. **Tel: 0191 423 0200.**

South Tyneside Council Let's Talk Team will help you to find support to help maximise the independence of the person you care for and achieve the things that matter to both of you.

This could include connecting you to facilities and resources that are available in your community, finding care support services that you can arrange yourself, or accessing care support from Adult Social Care for the person you care for if eligible.

Contact the Let's Talk Team by email at LetsTalk@southtyneside.gov.uk or Tel: 0191 424 6000 or in writing by completing the form at the end of this pack or you can email them at LetsTalk@southtyneside.gov.uk

Wellbeing Check

- 1 Do you need help with managing home repairs, safety and security? YES NO
- 2 Do you feel you need advice or assistance in adapting the home to make life easier due to disability? YES NO
- 3 Do you worry about leaving the person you care for when you go out or perhaps when you are out together? YES NO

Age Concern Tyneside South can provide home support, a handy person and advice on falls prevention. Tel: 0191 456 6903

Safeguarding people

Carers, family members, relatives, friends and neighbours all have an important part to play in keeping adults with care and support needs safe from any potential abuse and neglect.

If you are worried or concerned about someone, please don't keep it to yourself, report your concerns.

People may be at risk of physical abuse, sexual abuse, have money taken from them or money used in ways they don't agree with. They may not be treated with care, bullied, humiliated, neglected or denied contact with others. All abuse is serious.

Sometimes you the carer may also be at risk of harm by the person you are caring for, this could be intentional or unintentional but can fall into the category of abuse. The risk of abuse is more likely where you are isolated and not getting any practical and/or emotional support from your family, friends, professionals or paid care givers. Abuse can occur where the person supported:

- has health and care needs that exceed your ability to meet them;
- does not consider your needs or need of other family members;
- treats you with a lack of respect or courtesy;
- rejects help and support from outside; including breaks;
- refuses to be left alone by day or by night;
- has control over financial resources, property and living arrangements;

- engages in abusive, aggressive or frightening behaviours;
- has a history of substance misuse, unusual or offensive behaviours;
- does not understand their actions and their impact on you;
- is angry about their situation and seeks to punish others for it;
- has sought help or support but did not meet thresholds for this; and

**If you have worries about yourself or you need to talk to someone about more support please contact:
South Tyneside Council Let's Talk Team by email at LetsTalk@southtyneside.gov.uk or Tel: 0191 424 6000**

Equally, caring for someone can be very demanding and stretch the most placid person to the limits of their patience. Often, you will be trying your best but you may not have the information you need. You may not know what is or is not the right way to do things [e.g. safely supporting someone to move around]. You may feel what you are doing is all-right if it keeps the person safe [e.g. restraint or no independent travel]. It may involve a reluctance to change or to listen to the case for change. The need for change may be seen as criticism or as a lack of real understanding about your situation.



The risk of abuse can be greater where you:

- have unmet or unrecognised needs of your own
- have little insight or understanding of the person's condition or needs
- have unwillingly had to change your lifestyle
- are not receiving practical and/or emotional support from other family members
- are feeling emotionally and socially isolated, undervalued or stigmatised
- have other responsibilities such as family or work
- have no personal or private space or life outside the caring environment
- have frequently requested help but problems have not been solved
- are being abused by the person
- feel unappreciated or taken advantage of by the person, relatives or services

If you are having difficulties in your caring role it is important to recognise this and seek advice and support. Being well informed and feeling supported can be critical in preventing yourself and others from significant harm in the first place.

Where to get help

South Tyneside Council Let's Talk Team can support you to identify and make informed choices about how to manage potential risk of significant harm either to yourself or someone else. If you would like to talk to one of our advisers, please contact:

South Tyneside Council Let's Talk Team by email at LetsTalk@southtyneside.gov.uk or Tel: 0191 424 6000

Children's Social Care: 0191 424 5010

For out of office hours contact Emergency Duty Team: 0191 456 2093



Wellbeing Check

- | | | | |
|---|--|------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1 | Do you have concerns about the way the person you care about is treated by any other individual they rely on for support? | YES <input type="checkbox"/> | NO <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2 | Do you ever feel unsafe due to the condition or behaviour of the person you support? | YES <input type="checkbox"/> | NO <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3 | Do you worry about losing your patience with the person you support? | YES <input type="checkbox"/> | NO <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 4 | Do you ever feel unsafe in your caring role (e.g. by nuisance phone calls, doorstep traders, loan sharks, anti-social neighbours etc.) | YES <input type="checkbox"/> | NO <input type="checkbox"/> |

When your caring role comes to an end

Looking after someone may be a large part of your life, but it is inevitable that your caring role will change over time. This may be because the person you cared for has recovered and no longer needs care, they can no longer be cared for at home, or because they have passed away.

Whatever your situation, it is important to realise that you are not alone. It will be difficult, but you can find help and support.

If the person you look after is no longer able to look after themselves safely and you are unable to provide the care they need, for whatever reason, tell the council as soon as possible. There are other options which can be put in place to help reduce or take over your caring role.

To talk about your options please contact South Tyneside Council Let's Talk Team by email at LetsTalk@southtyneside.gov.uk or Tel: 0191 424 6000

End of life planning

When someone is nearing the end of life they may want to consider and plan how they will be looked after at this time. You can find out more about end of life care on www.nhs.uk/conditions/end-of-life-care

Bereavement

Losing someone close to you is devastating. If you have been caring for that person, the loss can seem even greater. How you cope with the death of the person you cared for is a very personal thing.

There is no right or wrong way to feel following a death. Immediately after a death there are a lot of practical things to do, like registering the death and arranging the funeral, and family and friends tend to be around a lot more. It may be that only when all the practicalities are dealt with, and the people around you get back to their everyday lives, that you really start to grieve.





The best help and support often comes from the people you know best – and who know you best. Talking about what has happened, and about the person who has passed away, can help you to come to terms with their death, and to cope with the feelings you have.

Where to get help

There are organisations that can help too such as:

Your GP can put you in touch with a local bereavement counsellor if you'd like more formal one-to-one counselling. Or you can self refer to **South Tyneside Lifecycle Primary Care Mental Health Service**.
Tel: 0191 283 2937

Additional support

Tyneside Mind
Tel: 0191 477 4545
Email: admin@tynesidemind.org.uk
Website: www.tynesidemind.org.uk

Samaritans
24-hour telephone helpline offering emotional support to people experiencing distress or despair.
Telephone: 08457 90 90 90
Email: jo@samaritans.org
Website: www.samaritans.org

You may also be able to access counselling support via your employers occupational health service.

Cruse Bereavement Care, can offer bereavement support to children and young people. **Tel: 0191 276 5533**
Email: tyneside@cruse.org.uk website at **www.cruse.org.uk**.

Kooth.com is an award winning online counselling and support service which is available to all young people across South Tyneside aged between 11-25 years.

Qwell.io is a free, safe and anonymous mental health and wellbeing service for adults in South Tyneside aged 26+. Qwell encourages peer to peer support and self help and offers access to online counselling from qualified counsellors.

Escape Intervention Services Ltd offers counselling support to young people aged 4-25 years, and their parents/carers.
For more information
Tel: 01914276353 or 07599307481 or
Email: info@escapeintervention.org.uk
uk. They are also on **Facebook**.

Life after your caring role

The end of your caring role may take some time to adjust to. Having more time to yourself may give you the opportunity for a much needed rest, but it can also leave you feeling that you have a lot of time to fill.

Taking time for yourself

Resting and letting yourself have a break now your caring role has ended, is just as important as taking on a new endeavour. You could take some time for yourself just to do things you enjoy, such as reading, going for a walk, or seeing family/friends.

Access support from other former carers

You may feel isolated after many years of caring, and you might want to see if there is any support you can get from others in a similar position. You could find out what support your local carer's organisation offers to former carers. If you are used to always having things to do, it can be hard to stop and think about what you would like to do now. The following suggestions may be helpful for you if and when you feel the time is right:

- Taking time for yourself
- Access support from other former carers
- Learn something new
- Volunteering
- Starting (or returning to) paid employment

Connected Caring can provide you with more information on any of the above. Email: info@connectedcaring.org.uk or Tel: 0800 304 7724

Carer's assessment

If you regularly provide a substantial amount of care and support for someone you are entitled to a carer's assessment. In South Tyneside we call these 'conversations'. Your conversation will look at your caring role and how it affects your life and wellbeing, it will also look at your strengths, available resources, local assets and support. There is a national eligibility threshold which is used to work out whether you qualify for support from the council.

A carer's conversation is an opportunity to discuss with a worker what support you need. We will look at how caring affects your life, including your physical, mental and emotional needs and whether you are able or willing to carry on caring. The conversation will help to direct you to the support that you need.

Following the conversation the council will consider how to support you and determine if you require formal support. This can be provided either to you, or to the person you are looking after to reduce the impact of caring on you. You can download a fact sheet on carer's assessments at www.carersuk.org, this gives you information on how to prepare for a carers assessment (conversation).

Adult carer assessment

If you are over 18 years old and looking after another adult over 18 years old who is disabled, ill or elderly you can have a carer's conversation regardless of the

amount or type of care you provide, your financial means or your level of need for support. You don't necessarily have to live with the person you are looking after or be caring full-time. You may be juggling work and care and this is having a big impact on your life. You may have a conversation with us regardless of whether or not the person you are looking after has been assessed by the Council or if they have decided they are not eligible for support. If you and the person you are looking after agree, a combined conversation of both your needs can be undertaken at the same time.

Parent carer assessment

If you are a parent carer you are entitled to an assessment of your needs. Your child does not need to have a social worker for you to receive an assessment, however the council must be satisfied that the child and their family come within the scope of the Children's Act, i.e. that the child is a child in need.

A parent carer is also entitled to an assessment where it is likely that they will require support after the child turns 18. This is regardless of whether the child or adult has had any support before this point. The assessment must take into account adult care and support arrangements.



Young carer assessment

If you are a young carer, you probably look after one of your parents or care for a brother or sister. You may do extra jobs in and around the home, such as cooking, cleaning, shopping or helping someone get dressed and move around. If someone in your family needs to be looked after, you may really want to help them, but as a young carer, it is important to ensure you aren't doing tasks that adults should be doing.

A Young carer assessment will look at why you are caring, whether you want to be a carer and what needs to change in order to prevent you from undertaking excessive or inappropriate caring responsibilities which could impact on your welfare, education, or social development. It'll decide what kind of help you and your family might need.

You can request an assessment, or an assessment can be requested on your behalf, for example by your school. If you have an assessment you must be involved as well as your parents and anybody else you request in the process. The assessment will be carried out by South Tyneside Young Carers Service.

Where to get help

Connected Caring can help you complete the wellbeing check throughout this guide and help you to consider what might help you in your caring role, they can also talk to you about whether having a carer's conversation through the council would be helpful to you.

For more information contact Connected Caring by email at info@connectedcaring.org.uk or by Tel on 0800 304 7724

South Tyneside Council Let's Talk Team advisers can arrange for you to have a carer's conversation. A member of the team will support you to think about how caring affects your life and to consider if you are able or willing to carry on caring. **Email at LetsTalk@southtyneside.gov.uk or Tel: 0191 424 6000.** For more information on parent carer assessments you can contact **Children's Social Care** on Tel: **0191 424 5010.** They can also signpost or refer to other support.

SEND Local Offer website has information about the support and services available in South Tyneside.

It is designed to help you find the best support for children and young people aged 0-25 who have Special Education Needs and Disabilities (SEND). You will find information on everything to do with education, support and care, health and wellbeing, preparing for adulthood and how to get involved through the South Tyneside Parent Carer Forum which you can find on Facebook as well as online at www.stpcf.org.

For more information on the South Tyneside Local Offer go to: www.southtyneside.gov.uk/article/37862/Special-Educational-Needs-and-Disabilities

South Tyneside Council Short Breaks Statement provides information on short breaks for carers of children with special educational needs or disabilities. It gives you information about services and the eligibility criteria for accessing them.

This is to help support you to continue to care for your child at home and to allow you to do so more effectively. For more information go to: www.southtyneside.gov.uk/article/35723/Short-breaks-statement

South Tyneside Young Carers Service can provide information, advice, support and activities to young carers, they can also carry out a young carer's assessment where your caring responsibilities are having a negative impact on you.

For more information on support, or to request a young carer's assessment you can contact **South Tyneside Young Carers Service on Tel: 0191 4272795.** They are also on Facebook: [/STYoungCarers](https://www.facebook.com/STYoungCarers)

Find out more about carers assessments and key tips on preparing for an assessment at: www.carersuk.org



Having Your Say

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. Local Health, Social Care services and many voluntary organisations in South Tyneside offer opportunities for people to influence local planning and decisions about the way services are provided. We can put you in touch with useful forums where your views will be heard and South Tyneside Council's website has a 'Have Your Say' page where you can get more information about consultation you may be interested in, visit: www.southtyneside.gov.uk and search '**Have your say**' for more information.

Sometimes it is hard to ask for help or give your views. You may be able to ask a friend or relative for help, or get someone to act as your advocate.

How to make comments, compliments and complaints

There may be times when you are unhappy with a service and wish to make a complaint. It is usually best to voice your concerns immediately by speaking to a member of staff or their manager to get your concern resolved quickly. Every service has a procedure to help you make a complaint. Ask to speak to someone who can tell you what to do next.

We value and respect all views and comments about services. We want to know when things go well and not so well.

We always aim to improve the quality of our services. Our procedures make sure we deal with your compliments, comments and complaints in the right way. If you would like to discuss anything, please speak to the person you receive the service from, their manager, or contact our Customer Advocacy Team on **0191 424 6028 / 6029** or email complaints@southtyneside.gov.uk



What to do next

Make a note below of the things you would like to discuss further. For example things you want to change, what is important to you and what would help.

How my caring role affects my life...	My life would be better if...

Use the contacts we have given you to ask for help or to find out about any specific or further information you need.

Remember Connected Caring is here to help you. Email: info@connectedcaring.org.uk or Tel: 0800 304 7724 or if you are a young carer get in touch with South Tyneside Young Carers Service. Email: admin.styc@groundwork.org.uk or Tel: 0191 4272795

If you need help from the council you can submit this information together with the form overleaf to South Tyneside Council Let's Talk Team or you can contact the team for a further discussion by emailing LetsTalk@southtyneside.gov.uk or Tel on: 0191 424 6000.



Let's Talk You

- Let's talk about you and your caring role

The information below can help us guide you to the right support for yourself as a carer.
This information is confidential and will not be shared with anyone without your agreement.

Your Name:	
Date of Birth:	
Address:	
Telephone Numbers:	
Your GP's name:	
GP's Practice Surgery:	
Name of the person you care for:	
Date of birth:	
Their GP's name:	
GP's Practice Surgery:	
Relationship or connection to you:	
What is the nature of their illness or disability	
Does the person you care for receive services arranged by Social Care YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/>	
If yes please provide details	

Thank you for completing this form. Please post it to:

**South Shields Town Hall,
Westoe Road
South Shields
NE33 2RL**

Someone will contact you to discuss your situation further and help find the right support for you.

If you need to speak to someone urgently please contact the Let's Talk Team by email at Let'sTalk@southtyneside.gov.uk or Tel: 0191 424 6000 or if out of office hours telephone 0191 456 2093.



If you would like a copy of this information in large print, another language, audio tape or other format, please call 0191 427 1717

Find out more about a wide range of support for adults.

www.southtyneside.gov.uk/betterlives