

# Caring Matters

April / May 2021 - The newsletter of Carers Northumberland



Welcome to our  
Caring Matters Newsletter  
*April / May Edition*


We've been busy over the past few months supporting carers to inform their GP that they have a caring role so they can be included in the priority Covid-19 vaccination programme. As a result of this, we have registered lots of new carers who will be receiving the newsletter for the first time this month – welcome to Carers Northumberland and I hope you will find lots of interesting information in this edition.

The team at Carers Northumberland are keen to start getting back out into the community to meet with and support carers and we will be monitoring the information coming from national government over the next few weeks to make plans for emerging from lockdown once the restrictions are eased. We're particularly excited for Carers Week in June, where we hope to be able to make plans to meet with small groups of carers out in the fresh air for a walk and maybe a socially distanced cuppa at the end.

Our new look website is also up and running, I'm particularly proud of Lisa and the team for the work they have done to put this together. Initial feedback is that it is more modern and easier to navigate and we're looking forward to being able to showcase articles, writing, photographs and videos from carers, our staff team, volunteers, trustees and other trusted partners on our blog page – please get in touch if you have something to share.

Finally, do have a go at making Naomi's Easter cheesecakes, they are delicious – if you do, take a photo and send it to us!

Debra Blakey, Chief Executive



In this issue you'll  
find

- Out about the Carers Support Fund
- An Easy Easter Treat Recipe
- Details about booking your COVID 19 vaccine
- Dates for your diary
- Our plans for Carers Week  
and much more



## Spotlight on...

### *Carers Support Fund*

The Carer Support Fund is a small grant to enable carers to take short breaks from their caring responsibilities. Now we understand that not everyone can physically leave the person they are caring for, that is why the fund can be used to help you pursue a hobby, create a tranquil space for yourself in your home or help you to connect with friends.

The fund is not means tested and the amount received depends upon individual carer circumstances. It must be spent on the carer, but can be used in whatever way offers the best break.

Some of our carers have used the fund to access:

Gym membership

Hobby equipment

Trips away

Beauty/Spa treatments

Technology to reconnect with friends and access our support groups.

The fund is only available to adult carers of someone 18 or over, and is administered by Carers Northumberland on behalf of Northumberland County Council and Northumberland Clinical Commissioning Group.

Only one application can be made in a 12 month period and carers will need to inform us of how they have used the fund as well as providing proof of their purchases.

This is what one of our carer had to say about the fund:

*"If you haven't done this before, apply now! Over the years I've been able to buy gardening equipment to make life easier. I've also tried massage and flotation therapy, put money towards walking boots, camera equipment, golf season ticket, snooker membership.*

*It is for YOU to give YOU a break from your caring role"*

Want to know more? Contact our information line on:

**01670 320025**

If you do not qualify for the Carers Support Fund, but would like to know if you would be eligible for any other charitable funds please contact our information line.



# easy Peasy Easter Cheesecakes

These Easter treats are easy to make and really tasty.

All you need to make them is:

- 2x 233g Easter Egg Packs
- 250g Shortbread Biscuits
- 100g Unsalted butter
- 600g Full Fat Cream Cheese
- 284ml Double Cream
- 100g Icing Sugar
- Vanilla Extract

## Step One

Gently separate the eggs into halves.

If you find this difficult try warming a sharp knife in some hot water, then gently cut around the join on the egg. Being careful not to cut yourself.

## Step Two

Crush your shortbread biscuits into breadcrumbs.

Melt your butter and add this to your biscuit crumbs and mix well.

Once combined add equal amount of the biscuit mixture to the bottom of your Easter egg halves. Leave these to set in a fridge for 2 hours.

## Step Three

In a bowl add your cream cheese, icing sugar and two teaspoons of vanilla extract and whip together until firm.

## Step Four

In a separate bowl whip up the double cream to form soft peaks.

Then fold this into the cream cheese and icing mixture trying not to over mix it

## Step Five

Then share the mixture equally between you egg halves, making sure not to leave any are bubbles.

Then using the confectionary that was included in the box with the easter egg you can decorate you easter cheesecake.

Once complete leave the cheesecake to set in the fridge for at least 4 hours

Why not share your pictures of your Easter egg cheesecakes with us on our Facebook page or email.

## **SPRING SPRITZ**

As move into Spring there is nothing better than saying good by to the miserable winter than to have a good Spring clean.

However if you, or the person you care for suffer from allergies or have asthma the thought of pulling out the duster and cleaning chemicals can fill you with dread.

Fear not, we have found some DIY cleaning products you could try .

Firstly the one job we all hate, cleaning the oven!

Now this is a job you can put off until the next morning, but first sprinkle baking soda over the bottom of the oven, then spray or pour vinegar over it. Leave overnight then simply wipe clean and ta da – a beautiful clean oven ready to use.

Sponges, now we often use one sponge for almost anything in the kitchen– which is not good when it comes to hygiene. There is a very easy way to remedy this. Microwave a wet sponge on a high setting for a minute or two and this will kill most of the bacteria lying in the sponge. Remember you should be buying a new one every month or so.

Now for the loo!

If you'd rather not use toilet bleach, you can clean it using that trusty combination of baking soda and vinegar (together they're effective at removing hard-water marks, and rust stains). Another weird trick? You can pour Coca Cola down the toilet – it's believed to work well at removing rust rings.

Worried about that smell of vinegar in the bathroom, why not drop a few drops of essential oil on your toilet roll, this will leave your bathroom smelling lovely.

Dust!

Now that the sun is out its a lot easier to spot dust lying on surfaces, a great alternative spray cleaners is the trusty damp cloth or if you're worried about water marks why not try a micro fibre cloth, they collect all the dust and can be washed in your washing machine.



## Do You Use a Post Office Card Account to Receive Your Benefits?

Please be aware from November 2021, the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) and HM Revenue & Customs (HMRC) will stop making payments, including Universal Credit, other benefits, tax credits or your state pension, into Post Office card accounts.

Your benefits or state pension payments will not stop, you will still get your payment but will have to use a different bank account to draw out your money. You will no longer be able to use a Post Office card account to draw out your money.

You should receive a letter in the coming months explaining your next steps.

You have until November 2021 to open a new bank account, If you are not sure what bank account is best for you, you can call DWP on 0800 085 7133 (for Typetalk call 0800 085 7146) or the Money Advice Line on 0800 138 777 (English) or 0800 138 0555 (Welsh). For Typetalk dial 18001 0800 915 4622

To find out more visit:

<https://www.postoffice.co.uk/post-office-card-account>, and select the grey tab marked 'POca conversion'. You can also contact the Post Office contact centre on 0345 722 3344 (or 0345 722 3355 for Typetalk), 8:15am-6pm, Mon-Fri, 8:30am-7:15pm, Sat, closed Sun or ask in your local Post Office branch.



## Could you be entitled to a COVID-19 vaccination?

If you are over 18 and the primary carer of someone who is clinically vulnerable and haven't received your vaccination or received an invitation to book your vaccination, you can use the National Booking Service at [www.nhs.uk/covid-vaccination](http://www.nhs.uk/covid-vaccination) or call 119.

You will need to provide your name, date of birth and your NHS number if you know it. There are a few questions to answer to see if you are eligible

These appointments are for major vaccination centres, such as the centre for life.

If you would prefer to be vaccinated locally you should wait for your GP to contact you.

If you are a young carer aged 16 or 17 you should contact your GP to book your vaccination.

## Personal Protective Equipment for Carers



The Department for Health and Social care are rolling out an offer of free PPE for COVID-19 needs to unpaid carers who do not live with the person or people they care for. This will be available until the end of June 2021 and will be available from your local authority.

If you live with the person or people you care for, it is not currently recommended that you wear PPE unless advised to do so by a healthcare professional, like a GP or nurse.

Email [northumberlandppe@northumberland.gov.uk](mailto:northumberlandppe@northumberland.gov.uk)  
to request your PPE

### Do you support someone living with Dementia?



This booklet is packed with information and resources to support you in your caring role.

This resource pack has been created specially to support carers during the current COVID 19 pandemic.

If you would like further information about this booklet or would like to request a copy, please call us on 01670 320025 or email [info@carersnorthumberland.org.uk](mailto:info@carersnorthumberland.org.uk)



Caring for someone with dementia at home  
A resource pack for carers



### THE CARENTS ROOM

#### Are you caring for elderly parents?

The Carents Room is building an active support network that shares their valuable information and relevant experiences to help you with your own parenting needs. They are able to provide you with the information and connections you need to ensure your parents get the best possible care.

For more information please visit their website <https://thecarentsroom.com/>

# HOW TO SAY NO

You have a legal right to say 'NO'  
Do you feel confident to do this?  
Find out how !



Join our session on Thursday  
22nd April 11am -12noon  
using zoom.

We will talk about:

- Standing up for yourself as a carer
- Different ways of saying no
- When no is the right word to use

Call us on 01670 320025 to  
reserve your place & get the  
zoom link



## BUILDING RESILIENCE AND WHAT IT MEANS

We shall be exploring the idea of what the word resilience means and why it is so important mentally and physically for carers, irrespective of who you are looking after. This workshop will run on Thursday 20th May at 11am on Zoom.

To Book Your space call 01670 320025 or Book Online Here:  
<https://carersnorthumberland.org.uk/news-and-events>



7 - 13 June 2021

Preparations are underway for this years annual Carers Week, this years message is 'Make Caring Visible and Valued'

Again due to the COVID 19 pandemic we will be celebrating Carers Week a little differently, but never the less we plan to spread the message far and wide, below are just a few of the events we have planned for this Carers Week, look out for dates on our Facebook page and next newsletter.



## *Join Carers Northumberland Creative Writing Group*

If you feel like waxing lyrical in poetry, prose or even a haiku or a limerick or two, then this could be your chance to shine. No experience necessary.



## **LETS GO OUTSIDE!**

We will be meeting at a various local beauty spots for a short walk. This is a great chance to meet other carers, volunteers and staff.

Restrictions permitting



## **SPREAD THE WORD!**

Join in one of our Carers Groups, Workshops or Facebook Live Q&As.

Share your experiences and feel empowered!

Want to find out more about Carers Week?

Visit: <https://www.carersweek.org/about-us>



## Carers Northumberland Website



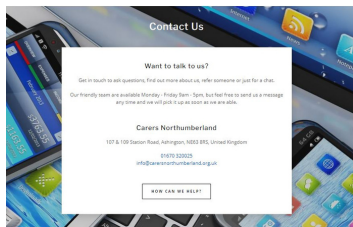
Carers Northumberland have updated and improved our website.

Some of you have already visited our website and notice a few changes, hopefully you liked what you saw.

New features on our website include an option to view and book onto our workshops and carers groups, read our Blog and live chat with our information team.

We would love our carers to get involved with the Carers Northumberland Blog, this could be something as simple as sharing photos of how you have used your Carer Support Fund to maybe writing an article or short story.

If you have something to share please contact us on 01670 320025 or email [info@carersnorthumberland.org.uk](mailto:info@carersnorthumberland.org.uk)



If you would like to explore our website you can do so here:  
<https://carersnorthumberland.org.uk/>

### Useful phone numbers

- **Northumbria Healthcare Patient Helpline:** 0191 293 4306
- **Maternity Helpline:** 07823 907484
- **Onecall:** 01670 536400
- **Northumberland Communities Together:** 01670 620015
- **Citizens Advice Northumberland:** 03444 111 444
- **Northumbria Police:** Call 101 to report a non-emergency incident. Call 999 in an emergency.
- **Northumberland Early Help:** 01670 620 461
- **AgeUK Northumberland:** 01670 784 800.
- **West Northumberland Foodbank:** 01434 700 068
- **Northumberland Domestic Abuse Services (NDAS):** 01434 608 030
- **Talking Matters Northumberland:** 0300 3030 700
- **Carers Northumberland:** 01670 320 025
- **Northumberland Recovery Partnership:** 01670 798 200





*Caring, Sharing, Refreshing*

## THE HAVEN

is ready to welcome you

Providing low cost breaks away in rural Northumberland.  
A self contained, self catering holiday accommodation on 2 floors. It comprises a fully equipped kitchen, comfortable sitting room, shower room and 2 bedrooms upstairs.  
Short breaks start from £100



The Haven is available to everyone, irrespective of personal belief, who would benefit from time away from daily life. A reference from a professional (such as Carers Northumberland) is required to book.

To find out more visit: [www.ryehillcommunityventures.org.uk](http://www.ryehillcommunityventures.org.uk)

## CAN YOU HELP?

A team of researchers and expert clinicians are looking to test out a new approach to learning and development for staff who provide care and support to those aged 65 and over,

**Would you be interested in supporting a piece of work that is focused on improving care for older people?**

The “Enhanced Care for Older People Competency Framework” outlines the knowledge, skills and behaviours that all staff should demonstrate, to ensure older people, their families and carers feel valued, respected and well cared for.

To test this framework in practice, we have developed an ‘assessment toolkit’, which can be used by staff and organisations to identify what they do well and where they need to improve. We are seeking the views of willing volunteers, who may be service users and/ or carers to provide feedback and suggestions on the content of this toolkit based on what is important to them. We are hoping to run a virtual on-line event in either May or June this year and would greatly welcome your attendance.

If you are interested in joining this event, please register your interest here: [encop@ahsn-nenc.org.uk](mailto:encop@ahsn-nenc.org.uk) by the 10th May 2021

Helen Kleiser (Strategic Workforce Lead, Ageing Well Network)



# Caring Matters - April / May 2021

## April

Date	Group/Activity	Time
Every Tuesday	General Carers Group–Via Zoom	2.00pm
Thursday 1st April	Ponteland Carers Group–Via Zoom	10.30am
Wednesday 21st April	Morpeth/Bedlington/Blyth Carers Group–Via Zoom	2.00pm
Thursday 22nd April	How to Say NO! Workshop held via Zoom	11.00am-12pm
Monday 26th April	Alnwick/Amble Carers Group–via Zoom	1.30pm
Wednesday 28th April	Berwick Carers Group–Via Zoom	11.00am
Thursday 29th April	Cramlington Support Group–Via Zoom	1.00pm

## May

Date	Group/Activity	Time
Every Tuesday	General Carers Group–Via Zoom	2.00pm
Thursday 6th May	Ponteland Carers Group–Via Zoom	10.30am
Wednesday 19th May	Morpeth/Bedlington/Blyth Carers Group–Via Zoom	2.00pm
Thursday 20th May	Building Resilience and What It Means Workshop held via Zoom	11.00am-12pm
Monday 24th May	Alnwick/Amble Carers Group–via Zoom	1.30pm
Wednesday 26th May	Berwick Carers Group–Via Zoom	11.00am
Thursday 27th May	Cramlington Support Group–Via Zoom	1.00pm

# BRAIN TEASER

Don't let the monotony of the pandemic get you down, here's some Easter brain teasers that should keep you busy for a little while.



Can you find the hidden Easter egg in the image above?  
We will let you know its whereabouts in our next CN newsletter.

3		1	2	8	
		6		4	
	5				
		8			7
9					2 8
	6		3	1	
	9	2			
	4		6		7
5	8			6	



## Easter Nostalgia

Did you ever dye boiled eggs with onion skins?

They were a fun thing to do as a family, a lovely gift to give and much more forgiving on the waist line.

