

Wellbeing & Mental Health for Carers

A PRACTICAL TOOLKIT FOR UNPAID CARERS

This short document is intended to be a practical toolkit for people who have caring responsibilities, and for Managers who have members of staff who have caring responsibilities, including a range of references and links to key sources of information. It accompanies a series of Wellbeing & Mental Health Offer documents also prepared by NW ADASS, which are intended to provide quick links to some of the wide range of resources available to staff in adult social care, in adult social work, and unpaid carers. The current versions of these resources can be found at <https://www.nwadass.org.uk/workforce-mental-health-wellbeing>

“**MENTAL HEALTH** is defined as a state of well-being in which every individual realises his or her own potential, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to his or her community”

The World Health Organisation

It's OK to not be OK



Who is Considered a Carer?

A carer is anyone, including both children and adults, who looks after a family member, partner or friend who needs help because of their illness, frailty, disability, mental health problem or addiction and cannot cope without their support.

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, many more people have found themselves in a caring role, ranging from helping someone with their food shopping to carrying out tasks such as personal care. Many unpaid carers are struggling without the practical support they would normally rely on to take a break, while others face increased costs accessing food and care products.

Experiencing a pandemic can be very unsettling and have a negative impact on someone's mental health, particularly if they have caring responsibilities. It is recognised that supporting the mental health and wellbeing of carers is now more important than ever, given these additional pressures and responsibilities.

The following information contains nationally available, free resources designed to enhance the wellbeing and support the mental health of unpaid carers.

General Health & Wellbeing

Care Workforce – [This app](#) connects carers to relevant news relating to providing care, as well as updates, latest government guidance, and support offers. The app is accessible by unpaid and paid carers.

Our Frontline – [Our Frontline](#) offers carers round-the-clock support, including a phone line staffed by trained volunteers that can offer confidential, one-on-one advice. This page also offers a collection of resources, tips and ideas that can support the mental health of unpaid and paid carers.

Carers UK Wellbeing – [This page](#) provides information for carers about protecting your mental wellbeing during the pandemic. The tips are designed to support both the carer and the cared-for person.

Mobilise - [Mobilise](#) is an organisation that provides a daily e-support package throughout the Covid-19 crisis. It includes links to key information, updates on how other carers are finding ways of coping, and suggestions for entertainment at home. Mobilise also run regular 'Virtual Cuppas' where carers can come together to share how they're coping and how they deal with any challenges. Mobilise also offer an online **Young Adult Carer Blogging Workshop**.

Sleepio – [Sleepio](#) is a clinically evidenced sleep improvement programme that is fully automated and highly personalised, using cognitive behavioural techniques to help improve poor sleep. The app is free for carers until 31 December 2020.

Stress, Anxiety and Low Mood

Silvercloud Health – [this website](#) provides support for the difficult emotions and situations carers may face during the pandemic. The site can help you deal with worry, sleep issues, bereavement, isolation and work-life balance. To access these resources, please use the PIN: SOC2020.

The Wellness Society – [Click here](#) to download an anxiety workbook specifically designed for use during the coronavirus pandemic.

Daylight – [Daylight](#) is a smartphone-based app that provides help to people experiencing symptoms of worry and anxiety, using evidence-based cognitive behavioural techniques, voice, and animation. The app is free for paid and unpaid carers until 31 December 2020.

The Samaritans Social Care Support Line – provides confidential emotional support for paid and unpaid carers. Call **0300 131 7000** between 7:00am - 11:00pm, seven days a week, to speak to a trained Samaritans volunteer who can help with confidential listening and signposting to specific support you might find helpful.

Grief & Bereavement

The NHS Bereavement Helpline has been introduced by the NHS to support bereaved families during the Coronavirus outbreak. It offers guidance, support and advice to families dealing with loss and grief of a loved one at this difficult time. Call **0800 2600 400**, 8am - 8pm every day

Cruse Bereavement Care have a [site of resources](#) for grief and resources, plus a helpline for those affected – call **0808 808 1677** (see website for opening hours).

Financial

Martin Lewis, Money Savings Expert – [This website](#) has a dedicated Coronavirus help section, with constantly updated guides on a variety of subjects such as help for employees, finance, bills, benefits and scams.

Carers UK Benefits Directory – [This directory](#) has been designed to help you keep track of new changes being introduced to the benefits system as a result of the coronavirus

Other

Learning for Living – [an online learning platform](#) that helps carers recognise the skills they have gained through caring, and helps carers to apply these skills in relevant environments, such as paid work or volunteering.

Eating Well for Carers – [this website](#) contains information about eating a balanced diet, as well as tips for eating well on a budget, and managing weight loss and weight gain.

Carers UK Online Forum – [this forum](#) is a community of carers who know exactly how you feel. You can talk about real issues with people who understand and who can support you through everything caring has to throw at you.

Feedback & Further Information

This toolkit was produced in June 2020 and all links and resources were checked at this time. Should this toolkit be updated further the current version will be available from <https://www.nwadass.org.uk/workforce-mental-health-wellbeing> Feedback regarding the quality and standard of the information contained in this toolkit would be really helpful. Please submit any feedback to nwadass@nwemployers.gov.uk