



North Tyneside Carers' Centre

Professionals News August 2021



Returning to face to face

Plans for group activities

Restrictions easing

Carers concerns

Become a carers champion

Supporting you to advocate for carers

Aspirational

Empathetic



Approachable

Empowering



Responsive



Welcome to the Professionals Newsletter

Supporting you to support carers



Welcome to this edition of the professionals newsletter, supporting you to support carers and bringing news, events and stories from North Tyneside Carers' Centre.

As we are now moving through a different phase of the pandemic, carers concerns and worries have increased, as they navigate this next stage. We are pleased to have remained open throughout the pandemic, and are now beginning to reintroduce face to face groups for carers. In this edition we share with you the concerns carers have about the next few months, and ways you can support carers to continue navigating challenging times they experience.


We want to continue to tell carers stories, celebrate achievements and ensure that both adult and young

carers are supported as we emerge from this pandemic and beyond.

In our bi-monthly newsletters you will find information about events for professionals at the Carers' Centre, alongside advice about how you can support carers you work with.

If you need to get in touch for advice on supporting a carer or referring a carer to us you can phone the advice line on; (0191) 643 2298 or by emailing enquiries@ntcarers.co.uk.

Young carers from the age of 5 - 18 can access support from the Carers' Centre following the completion a Young Carers Needs Assessment by a council professional (usually school or a social worker).

We hope you enjoy this newsletter, and as always, take care and stay safe! 

Carers Concerns: Covid Restrictions Easing

The covid-19 pandemic has been a challenging time for carers, and since restrictions have begun to ease, adjusting to the “new normal” has been tough for many carers we work with. Adult and young carers experience different and similar concerns as we emerge from life beyond the pandemic. Supporting carers you work with to address and understand these worries will be vital over the next few months, as we begin to tackle the isolation and loneliness many carers have felt, alongside the continuing fears about keeping their loved ones safe. Many carers have expressed an impact on their social and emotional wellbeing, alongside also reporting an increase in their caring responsibilities due to the pandemic. We asked carers in North Tyneside about their concerns, worries and fears about the next few months. They highlighted the following;

Vaccinations: that even if you are vaccinated you can still catch and pass on Covid

Carers told us that they are worried about how affective the vaccine is, especially if the person they care for is vulnerable to the virus. There seems to be many unanswered questions. Many carers told us they are worried about other people not being vaccinated, from care staff who provide care for their loved ones to the general public, as more of society begins to open it's doors once more. Many carers desperately want to tackle the isolation and loneliness they experienced

during the pandemic, but this is often accompanied by fear. The unknown. Carers have told us they are worried the pandemic will not end, and we will experience future lockdowns.

New variants and rising R rates

Alongside the worries about who is and isn't vaccinated, carers expressed concerns about the rising R rates, as the North East has been documented as an area where they are particularly high. They are worried that the new variants will continue to mutate, and as one carer put it “that the pandemic will go on forever.” Before Covid-19 many carers, both adult and young carers were able to have a break from their caring roles, either by attending groups at the Carers' Centre or accessing respite care or day centre services for loved ones. Rising R rates have made many carers cautious about accessing these services again.

Returning to the office full time

Carers also juggle employment alongside caring responsibilities and as working from home became a norm for many, making increasing caring roles easier to manage. Now many employers are encouraging the workforce to return to the office, carers are having to choose their caring responsibilities over paid work. One carer told us they are considering leaving employment because of the increase in caring responsibilities. Carers who have spent the last year and a half ensuring that their loved

ones are safe and that Covid remains out of the home, are not ready to return to a busy office. Anxiety increases, and many who previously haven't experienced anxiety or mental health problems, are now reporting feelings of anxiety as they adjust to more change and uncertainty.

Finances


As with many people up and down the country, carers in North Tyneside have expressed concerns over their finances and supporting the person they care for. Caring roles increasing has meant carers are faced with the choice of leaving work or reducing hours. Relying on furlough pay has also added to the pressure and stress on families, as many jobs, especially in the hospitality and retail sector have become uncertain. Throughout the pandemic, North Tyneside Carers' Centre has supported more and more families struggling, delivering emergency food parcels where needed and ensuring families are able to heat their homes, with the added strain on children and young people being at home and using devices for home schooling. During the early days of the pandemic, many families were digitally excluded, with no laptops or computers at home, or if at all, one to share between several children. This made it impossible for many families to access their education when schools closed their doors. We were able to provide laptops and dongles to ensure families were able to have access their education and to participate in groups and activities facilitated by the carers' centre. Online sessions have become a

lifeline for both young and adult carers. As we move into the next few months, and for many the unknown, ensuring carers don't experience financial hardship or fall into debt will be vital as professionals who work with them.

Social distancing and masks easing: other people not being as cautious

As social distancing and wearing masks in supermarkets and other public spaces became voluntary, carers have told us they worry about other people "not caring". One carer said "people think that the world is opened up now, but I still don't feel safe". The wearing of masks and social distancing has offered a safety net, and adjusting to the change towards some people choosing not to abide by the former government guidance increases anxiety.

Socialising with friends and family again

Carers often talk about missing social contact and wanting to meet friends and family again, months of isolation has made something that was once the norm difficult for carers. "Will they be as Covid conscious as me?" "Will I put the person I care for at risk?" are some of the many worries. Supporting carers to do things in their own time, and to take steps that are comfortable for them will be important over the next few months. Carers wellbeing matters, and encouraging carers to look after themselves, so they can better support others, is one of the most powerful things professionals can do. 

Are you interested in becoming a Carers Champion?



As we have just highlighted the pandemic has had a significant impact on unpaid carers of all ages. Therefore we are calling on professionals to help us to support carers.


Carers' Champions are people with a desire to improve the quality of life of carers. They are willing to use their influence to stand up for the interests of carers. They help us to ensure carers have a voice and have access to information about services and support that is available.

Did you know there is a network of professionals across North Tyneside who have made a commitment to be a Carers' Champion? Do you have a Carers' Champion in your organisation,

or, would you be prepared to take on this responsibility?

We are looking to further grow this network as we realise we are able to reach and support more carers in North Tyneside by working together with professionals across all sectors.

You would need to be able to commit to attending two Carers' Champion Forums per year. The next one is Tuesday 28th September 2021 (10am – 12pm). Forums will be planned on a quarterly basis.

If you would like to know more about this role you can contact Anna Dorward for the role description and arrange an informal discussion anna.dorward@ntcarers.co.uk 

Restarting Face to Face Group Sessions

We understand that many carers are anxious or worried about returning to face to face sessions, after months attending groups online or accessing support over the phone. It is a big step to begin meeting face to face again.

We also recognise that some carers want to get together face to face, as online sessions are sometimes difficult to access and meeting up in person is important to support any carers who are feeling isolated.

To ensure that our sessions remain inclusive of all carers needs, we will continue to facilitate a combination of online and face to face group sessions, whilst ensuring that any in person groups remain Covid secure to keep carers safe. We encourage any carers you support to take things at their own pace, an online option will still be there if attending a face to face group feels daunting. 🍷



Covid procedures for face to face

- Masks to be worn by all carers and staff until seated
- All carers and staff will be required to take a lateral flow test before the session
- Anyone who has Covid symptoms or tests positive must not attend
- Hand sanitiser and wipes will be available to keep everyone safe
- Two metres social distancing will be adhered to at all times



Training for professionals

Professionals play a vital role in the early identification of carers and signposting them to the Carers' Centre.

One of the ways we support carers and professionals is through our series of face to face and virtual training and information sessions.

We have the following sessions planned for professionals:

- Identifying and Supporting Carers – 27th September (2pm – 3.30pm)
- Dementia Friends – 14th October (10am – 11am)

"The explanations have given me a greater understanding of the symptoms and actions they can take to support the person to live well with Dementia", commented one attendee following the Dementia Friends session facilitated by the Alzheimer's society.

If you would like to join us at our next sessions you can access our training prospectus for professionals and carers via our website <https://www.northtynesidecarers.org.uk/training-prospectuses/>

Please help us to support carers by sharing the Carers Training Prospectus with any carers you are supporting.

If you would like more information or to sign up for any of the sessions please email anna.dorward@ntcarers.co.uk 🍷



North Tyneside Carers Partnership Board Update

North Tyneside Carers Partnership Board meets bi-monthly and is responsible for raising awareness of carers issues and improving health and social care services in North Tyneside for carers. The board's membership is made up decision makers from NHS providers, North Tyneside Council and local carers and voluntary sector organisations; this includes North Tyneside Carers' Centre, Healthwatch North Tyneside and the Parent Carer Forum.

The board's workplan was reviewed in April and work is progressing to deliver the plan. The Carers' Centre's Chief Executive, Claire Easton, is a member of the board and throughout the pandemic has shared the challenges, experiences and feedback from young carers, parent carers and adult carers. This has resulted in additional support being commissioned by North Tyneside Council and the Clinical Commissioning Group e.g. therapeutic support for young carers.


A recent survey by the Carers' Centre and Healthwatch, undertaken on behalf of the Carers Partnership Board, was to further understand the impact of the pandemic on carers and

consider support needed in the future. The results will be presented to the board at their next meeting in August and shared in our next edition of the Professionals Newsletter. Please look out for this and share at your next team meeting, as this may influence how your service supports carers in the future.

A GP Award Scheme has been developed to support practices to identify and support carers. A working group is currently working on:

- A resource pack to help practices achieve a bronze, silver or gold award
- Clear guidance to improve the coding of carers on GP systems
- Developing annual wellbeing checks for carers.

The Clinical Commissioning Group has funded the GP Award Scheme, which will be rolled out by the end of the year.

If you have any queries about the work of the Carers Partnership Board, or wish to share your experiences with us, please email enquiries@ntcarers.co.uk or contact us on 643 2298. 



Support for Mental Health Carers




Do you know that we have two workers who can provide specialist one to one support to carers caring for someone with a mental health illness?

The workers can provide carers with:

- A safe space to discuss the impact of their caring responsibilities.
- Support to understand how mental health services work and issues in relation to mental capacity and common-sense confidentiality.
- Information and advice about their rights as a carer.
- Coping strategies, setting boundaries and ways to look after their own health and wellbeing – including developing a WRAP plan for the carer.
- Advocacy support to help carers express their views and wishes.
- Information and advice about: benefits and entitlements; the condition of the person they care for; support that is available for carers and the people they care for; planning for an emergency; support to gain or maintain employment, training or education.
- Support to access a life outside of caring.

Additionally, we also deliver:

- A monthly mental health peer support group.
- A wellbeing programme – including a respite at Minsteracres Retreat Day, walks along the beach and trips to the theatre.
- Specific training and information sessions for mental health carers including: Understanding Anxiety and Depression and Understand Personality Disorder. For further information about our training and information sessions for carers please visit <https://www.northtynesidecarers.org.uk/training-prospectuses/>

To make a referral or for further information, please contact our advice line on 643 2298. 

Making carers

VISIBLE?

An update from Carers Week

This year has been particularly challenging for carers, as responsibilities and caring roles have increased and new carers have been identified. According to Carers UK 4.5 million people became unpaid carers as a result of the coronavirus pandemic. More people taking on caring roles or having their usual caring responsibilities increase, demonstrates a real need to ensure that carers voices heard, that they are not forgotten and that the work they do is valued.

This year the theme for Carers Week was Making Carers Visible, and we at North Tyneside Carers' Centre set out to do just that, to ensure that unpaid carers, both adult and

young carers, were able to come together, support each other and celebrate simply just getting through the year. North Tyneside has a great community of carers, who we are proud

"It's so nice to see everyone together again"

to work with. We hope this community continues to come together and share experiences, as we come through this pandemic and beyond.

Throughout the week adult carers enjoyed craft sessions, online music nights and a trip to segedunum. They were able to meet other carers, take part in activities and have a break from their caring role. We understood the anxiety and worry of attending face to

face sessions for the first time in over a year, so ensured there was always online options available. Carers week was supported by volunteers and a local celebrity; Dave from Lindisfarne, who all gave up their time to run activities for carers. Feedback tells us that everyone involved really enjoyed the week!

One carer who attended the Segedunum tour said: "It was a really enjoyable few hours. Really enjoyed wandering around the museum. It was great to meet people in person too!"

Another carer told us; "A big thank you to everyone at the Carers' Centre involved in yesterday's Lindisfarne session. It was brilliant."



Feedback following sessions is important to us because carers voices matter and are at the heart of everything we do here at the Carers' Centre.

The fun didn't stop there, as over the weekend to bring Carers Week to a close, young carers enjoyed a full weekend of outdoor activities at Powburn Activity Centre, supported by a team of Scout Volunteers. They took part in crate stacking, campfire cooking, archery, crafts and an

assault course, for many young carers it was the first time they had been out of North Tyneside since the pandemic begun. A truly memorable weekend for all. "That was so fun", one young person said, grinning from ear to ear. "Oh it's so nice to see people again, I'm so happy," another commented as everyone disembarked from the coach to start the days activities.

We are proud of the young carers in North Tyneside, who have juggled a pandemic,

school work and their caring roles, that have often increased. For one week we made carers visible, the activities were about carers, young carers were able to have a break and adult carers were able to have some time to meet up with others who really do understand what caring means.

As a Carers' Centre we know that carers need to be visible, not just for one week in the calendar, but for every day of the year.





North Tyneside Carers' Centre

We hope you have enjoyed this edition of the Professionals Newsletter; as always you can get in touch with the Carers' Centre for advice & support on a variety of carers issues.

You can call us on: (0191) 643 2298 or email: enquiries@ntcarers.co.uk.

If you do not wish to receive this newsletter or have received this in error please contact us on the number above and we will take you off our mailing list.