

Gateshead Carer's Guide

If you are providing help and support to a relative or friend who has a disability, a physical or mental illness, is frail, or has alcohol or drug related problems you are a carer.

There is support for you.

Information

About support for Carers in Gateshead

About this Guide

The term 'carer' used throughout this guide refers to you if you look after or provide regular unpaid help to a relative or friend who has a disability, a physical or mental illness, is frail, or has alcohol or drug related problems. The support you provide may be emotional, physical and/or practical.

Many people do not want to be known as a "carer" and certainly don't identify themselves in this way. They are simply getting on looking after their partner, family member or friend and often juggling their caring with employment and other family responsibilities.

In June 2008 the Government published "*Carers at the Heart of the 21st Century Families and Communities*" which sets out a ten year strategy to transform the way that society treats and supports carers.

According to the 2001 census:

- * There are approximately six million carers in the UK
- * One in eight of all adults are carers.
- * There are 175,000 children and young people with caring responsibilities.
- * 1.25 million carers care for more than 50 hours a week.
- * 1.9 million carers care for more than 20 hours a week.
- * If every carer stopped caring it would cost the state £87 billion a year
- * Three out of five people will become a carer at some time in their lives.

In Gateshead there are estimated to be 25,000 carers. Care organisations in Gateshead are committed to working together to promote the needs and rights of local people who have caring responsibilities.

This guide has been written to help you think about the types of help and support you may need as a carer

Each section offers you things to think about and ideas about where to go for help. You can use the guide by yourself or as a basis for discussion between yourself and a worker from the Health and Social Care Services, or Voluntary Agency.

In most cases, the best point of contact for help through social care will be the Care Management Service. This is a service offering information and advice about how to cope with problems, and arranging services for people who need them. Care managers (sometimes called Care Co-ordinators in Mental Health Services) may be Social Workers, Community Nurses or Occupational Therapists.

It can be difficult to know what choices or opportunities are open to the person you care for. A care manager can arrange an assessment of the needs of the person you support, to help him/her find out about all the options available.

You are entitled to have your own needs considered separately, even if the person you care for refuses help. This guide can be used to help you think about the areas of concern you would like to discuss if you ask for a Carer's Needs Assessment.

What is a Carer's Needs Assessment?

Basically, a Carer's Needs Assessment is your opportunity to tell social services about the things that could make caring easier for you. Social Services departments have a duty to inform carers of their right to an assessment.

Carers have the right to ask for an assessment of their own needs to help them to continue to care, irrespective of whether the person they are caring for has had or is having their own needs assessment. The assessment is available to any carer who provides or is intending to provide regular and substantial care

When the assessment is carried out the purpose of it is not only to help you to continue to care, but should also include a discussion of whether you wish to start paid work or to continue to work, and also take into account if you wish to undertake any education, training or leisure pursuits.

To arrange for a Carers Needs Assessment you should contact Adult Social Care Direct at Gateshead Council Tel. 0191 433 7033.

Staff from Gateshead Carers Association or Crossroads Care Gateshead can help support you through the assessment process.

There are two main carers organisations in Gateshead that specialise in giving support and information to carers in Gateshead.

Gateshead Carers Association offers information and longer term carer support to carers in Gateshead. The Association is a good point of initial contact especially for new carers who need general advice and information regarding their caring role, carers whose circumstances have changed or carers who are having difficulty accessing services.

The staff can refer and signpost you to the relevant services in both the statutory and voluntary sector, to ensure that both you and the person you care for access the services that are going to help you in the best way possible. The offices also act as a drop in centre and carers can call in at any time to discuss any problems they have with the staff. Various support groups meet at GCA and a number of classes specifically for carers are held in the building. Home visits can also be arranged.

GCA has a number of **Information Officers** who can advise you on carers issues and rights as well as general advice such as benefits, employment and housing problems.

The Substance Misuse Carers Worker provides comprehensive information, support and advocacy services for carers whose caring role is affected by someone else's substance misuse.

The **Campaign and Development worker** who supports The Gateshead Carer's Action Forum and raises awareness of carers issues with key stakeholders including employers, trade unions and faith communities.

The Advocacy Service is for carers of adults with learning disabilities and who provide support and care to an adult with a learning disability.

Throughout the year a number of social events are held for members and friends. Membership of the Association is free and members receive a regular newsletter which keeps carers updated regarding carers issues at both local and national level. There are also volunteering opportunities for carers who would like to be-

To contact a member of staff please telephone 0191 4900121 or email gcarers@btconnect.com
www.gatesheadcarers.com
Address:
11 Regent Terrace Gateshead
Gateshead NE8 1LU
(Opposite the Civic Centre)

Crossroads Care Gateshead provides practical support, information and advice to carers through a variety of services. Part of the service provides support through trained Carer Support Workers who take over the caring role for a period of time, giving the carer a break. There is support for young carers through their **Young Carers Service**. This service provides support for young people between the ages of 8 and 18. The Young Carers Service offers time out activities, one to one support, youth clubs, help with homework and help to access services. This enables young carers to have time to make friends, have a break, visit new places, talk to someone about the problems they face, receive training and information to help them in their caring role: e.g. first aid, anger management.

The Community Assistance Service provides practical assistance to carers with tasks they are unable to manage because of a lack of time, health problems, work/family commitments, or financial hardship. The service can help with laundry and ironing, general housework, shopping, collecting benefits, transport, dog walking, support with paperwork, phone calls and light gardening.

The Outreach/Primary Care Worker provides support to carers by offering information, emotional support, problem solving or just a listening ear. They can also help in accessing services, equipment or funding and offering support in balancing their caring role with their own health needs or in managing activities such as work, learning and leisure.

Crossroads Care Gateshead also have a specialist **Benefits Advice Worker** who can advise carers on a range of benefits and carry out a benefits check. Assistance is also available in filling out benefit forms and in attending appeals.

The Mental Health Involvement Service provides support to carers of people with mental health needs. This service provides support to carers of people with mental health needs by involving carers and representing their views on key planning groups within local mental health services as well as providing support, information and training for carers so that they can make their voices heard.

The **Carers Take a Break Service** helps carers think and plan how to take a break from the caring role and recharge batteries.

For further information please contact Crossroads Care Gateshead at:
The Old School
Smailes Lane
Highfield,
Rowlands Gill
Tyne and Wear, NE39 2DB
Tel: 01207 549780 or email: enquiries@gatesheadcrossroads.org.uk
www.gatesheadcrossroads.org.uk

Caring Tasks

No one is born knowing how to be a carer. Most people learn how to look after someone by trial and error and by relying on their common sense. However, advice and training are available from many of the services and organisations that you may come into contact with.

Safety

It is not unusual for carers to worry about the safety of the person they care for. In some circumstances carers could also find themselves in a position in which they are concerned for their own safety or that of others, for example, in having to physically move the cared for person or due to problems related to the cared for person's behaviour. Practical tips, advice and demonstrations on things like safe moving and handling, dealing with aggression, relaxation techniques and helping with treatment and therapy are available.

Equipment and Adaptations

You may also be able to get equipment, such as a walking aid, or minor adaptations, such as handrails, to make life at home easier for you and the person you care for.

To get equipment a health or social care professional will assess the needs of the person you care for and the level of help you need to care.

Equipment is provided through the Gateshead Equipment Service. Adaptations are made through the Council's Occupational Therapy Service Adaptation Team.

If you choose to buy your own equipment you still have the right to ask for an assessment beforehand and you should follow what your health or social care professional has recommended

Adaptations to your home may be recommended following an assessment by an occupational therapist, who will pass on any recommendations to the Council's Adaptations Team.

Additional Help

You may be new to caring, or have been a carer for many years. You may live with the person you care for, they may live elsewhere. You may be juggling a job and caring for someone. There are many ways of getting support for yourself. Carers may feel unable to continue with the demands placed upon them and find it helpful to have the opportunity to talk about additional help or alternatives that may allow them to reduce their caring responsibilities.

Emergency Support for Carers

When carers are asked what worries them most, the common answer is their concern as to what would happen if they were caught up in a situation that meant that they were unable to provide their day to day care.

Both a social care assessment for the cared for and a carers needs assessment should include an emergency plan that could be implemented at some future point.

Since October 2007 councils in England have been given £25 million to provide short term emergency support for carers. In Gateshead the local authority has been working with Gateshead Carers Association and Crossroads Care Gateshead to develop a Carers Emergency Support Scheme.

The Emergency Support Service enables a carer to plan in advance for emergencies. The service would provide emergency support in the home for up to 48 hours. This would be extended to cover a bank holiday period. The support staff will assess the situation and contact other relevant services if care is to be required for a longer period.

The carer will be assisted to draw up an emergency plan of what should happen and who will help to make sure that the person they care for is safe and well in the event of an emergency. A carers emergency card with an identifier number is given to the carer with a contact phone number in case of emergency.

If an emergency situation occurs the 24 hour phone number on the card can be called and the emergency plan is put in place by contacting the identified person(s) on the plan. This could be a friend, relative or neighbour. If there is no one available a service could be provided by Gateshead Council or in certain circumstances an appropriate service or organisation.

The scheme is accessible 24 hours a day 7 days a week.

For further information about the scheme please contact :

Crossroads Care
Gateshead
The Old School
Smailes lane
Highfield
Rowlands Gill
NE39 2DB
Tel 01207 549780

Support from Crossroads Care Gateshead is available to prepare your plan.

The emergency support in your home is provided completely free of charge for up to 48 hours plus bank holidays.

Gateshead Care Call

You may care for someone who lives independently or if you work or have to leave the person for a period of time you worry as to their safety when you are not there.

Gateshead Care Call is based at Civic Centre, Regent Street, Gateshead NE8 1HH.

To find out more or if you would like a free demonstration in your home call Anne Robson at Care Call on 0191 433 2648 or 0191 433 2650

There are a number of other services available from Gateshead Care Call once clients are linked with their telecare equipment.

These include reassurance calls (daily calls any time), prompt calls (reminders for medication, day centre etc) and demonstrations to clients/families.

Living independently at home is as important for elderly, frail and disabled people as it is for anyone else, but there are times when it can be worrying. Accidents, falls and illness can be very alarming not only for the person involved, but for their family and friends. Gateshead Council has launched Gateshead Care Call which enables older, disabled and vulnerable people in Gateshead to live safely and independently in their own home.

Gateshead Care Call provides emergency cover to more than 11,000 households 24 hours a day 365 days a year from trained staff who are available to respond to a variety of situations.

The word Telecare is used to describe any of the equipment used that can improve the independence of people with cognitive, physical or communication difficulties.

The system works by providing the person with a pendant or wristband which when pressed, triggers a phone alarm system that connects directly to Gateshead Care Call. In the event of a fall or sudden illness, trained operators immediately know your name address and other relevant information. They will then call for any help required such as a family member, a doctor, emergency services or the police or send one of the care call assistants.

Gateshead Care Call Manager

Lorinda Russell
Local Services Manager
Tel: 0191 478 7666 or 0191 433 2649
Fax: 0191 477 9438
Email: lorindarussell@gateshead.gov.uk

Ask Yourself

- Do I feel I have all the skills or information I need to carry out my caring tasks?
- Do I think any of my caring tasks could be made easier with the help of equipment or adaptations to my home or the home of the person I care for?
- Do I need training in any aspect of caring especially in relation to my health and safety?

Things to do

- Ask relevant workers for explanations and demonstrations related to any additional equipment, home adaptation or training needs you may have.
- Whoever you buy or loan equipment from must show you how to use it. Ask for a full demonstration involving both the person you care for and yourself.
- Contact Gateshead Council to find out about their training sessions that you may find useful
- Use your carer's needs assessment to discuss help with caring tasks or your concerns about the future.

Looking After Yourself

Looking After Your Health

Despite the fact that caring can be rewarding it can also be very tiring, and places demands on your physical and emotional energy. As a carer you need to be as healthy as possible. It is easy when you are simply coping day to day and responding to the needs of others, to forget your own wellbeing. Many carers neglect to look after themselves when they are busy caring for someone. It's important as a carer to look after yourself both for your own sake but also so that you can carry on with your caring responsibilities.

One in five carers report that their health suffers as a direct result of caring. In many cases carers are prone to back problems if they have not received proper training to learn how to move and lift the person they care for in a safe manner.

Many of the most serious health problems carers suffer from, such as heart disease or mental breakdown, are a direct result of stress. Caring without a break, without proper sleep and without support is extremely stressful. It is important that you recognise this and take it seriously.

Getting the Most from Health Services

Your GP and primary care team can provide you with invaluable support, advice and information. As soon as you begin caring (or if you are already a carer, as soon as you can) tell your GP that you are a carer. This can be recorded on your medical records. Many GPs have a carers register which enables staff to identify carers and those being cared for.

Have regular check-ups

Although your life is very busy and your attention focused on caring, don't ignore your own health needs. Try not to miss medical appointments and attend regular check ups and screenings. If you have not seen your GP for some time, why not arrange a health check? This is likely to involve checking your blood pressure, weight and urine as well as a general discussion about your health. Your pharmacist can also help.

NHS Direct

This 24 hours a day phone line is staffed by nurses and professional advisors. They can advise you on any health-related matter and refer you on to other services and support organisations. They can give you local health information quickly, such as late night pharmacists, out of hours dentists etc.

Tel: 0845 46 47 or visit their website. www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk

Your GP may be able to help you as a carer by:

Providing information and advice on medical conditions of and treatments for the person you care for to help you feel more confident in your caring role.

Carrying out home visits to you or the person you care for if your caring responsibilities make it difficult to attend appointments at the surgery.

Arranging appointments for both you and the person you care for at the same time to avoid having to visit the surgery twice.

Arranging for repeat prescriptions to be delivered to your local pharmacy to save you picking them up.

Putting you in touch with other sources of support and advice. This could include the social work department and local voluntary agencies.

Providing information on services provided by the NHS such as continence services and patient transport to hospital appointments.

Providing supporting letters and information to enable you and the person you care for to access benefits such as Attendance Allowance and Disability Living Allowance or for your local housing department or blue badge scheme.

Ask Yourself

- Do I have health problems?
- Is my health affected by my caring role?
- Does my health affect my ability to care for the person I look after?

Things to do

- Let the doctor know that you are a carer and how it affects your health. Ask for this information to be recorded on your medical record so that your doctor, and other people at your GP practice, can provide help that is relevant to your situation.

Listening Support

Your Doctor's Surgery

If you are feeling depressed or anxious, you should talk to your GP. Many doctors' practices offer counselling services and are a good source of information of other helping agencies.

The Samaritans

www.Samaritans.org.uk
Can help when you're at the end of your tether and you need someone to listen to you.
15 Portland Terrace,
Newcastle Upon Tyne.
NE2 1QQ
Tel: 08457 90 90 90

Relate

www.relate.org.uk
Offers private and confidential counselling on adult relationship problems, stress and bereavement and a wide range of helpful material.
3rd Floor Mea House,
Ellison PI, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE1 8XS
Tel: 0191 232 9109

The Emotional Impact of Caring

Your caring may leave you little time for yourself and your own well-being may be affected. Caring for someone can be stressful and carers often experience a range of conflicting emotions such as anger, isolation, depression and guilt.

Caring may affect your own health. There are helping agencies that can help you lessen your anxiety, stress and isolation with information, for example, about relaxation and support sessions or lifting skills and encouragement to take part in activities.

Most carers find it beneficial to talk to someone who understands. There are a range of support groups throughout Gateshead. Contact one of the Information Officers at Gateshead Carers Association to find out who will be able to advise you on which groups and other agencies would be most helpful for you.

Someone to Talk To

You may want help to continue in your caring role or support to make the choice to change or stop your caring. Talking through what you want may help you to decide what to do next.

There are a number of listening and counselling services that carers can access. Staff from Gateshead Carers Association can offer emotional support and advise you on services provided by specialist services. Most GPs surgeries can refer you to counsellors within the surgery.

North East Counselling Services offers a specialist counselling service to carers in Gateshead. This is a free confidential service for any carer who may feel anxious, depressed or isolated. They can also help carers who have suffered bereavement.

North East Counselling Services can be contacted direct at:
Greensfield Business Centre
Mulgrave Terrace
Gateshead NE8 1PQ
Tel. 0191 4909116.

Ask Yourself

- Do I feel appreciated and valued as a carer?
- Do I feel overwhelmed or controlled by my caring situation?
- Do I need someone to talk to about my feelings?
- Can I talk openly with my family, friends or others about my feelings?

Things to do

- Talk to the person you care for, a family member or a friend about what it is like to be a carer and how they can support you.
- Contact a confidential listening service
- Talk to the care manager or co-ordinator involved with the person you care for, if they have one.
- Find out if there is a Carer Support Worker that you can talk to.
- Join a carer's group to meet other carers in similar circumstances.

Mental Health Matters

6.00 pm – 6.00 am

Tel: 0845 650 7349

Age Concern Bereavement Support Service

Confidential support service in your own home.

Offered to any person who is over the age of 50 and living in Gateshead.

Tel: (0191) 4773599.

Carers Affected by Someone Else's Drug/Alcohol Use

Freephone Helpline – 0800 234 6520.

Gateshead Council – (0191) 433 2344.

Information Specific to Local Drug Treatment Services in Gateshead

Free Helpline – 'The Kick-It Campaign' 0800 328 67 28

Getting Informed

The Carers

Direct helpline on 0808 802 0202 is a national helpline for carers who need help with their caring role and want to talk to someone about what options are available to them. They can also be contacted by using textphone on 0800 988 8657.

The helpline is open from 8am to 9pm Monday to Friday and from 11am to 4pm at weekends. You can also email your questions to: Carersdirect@nhschoices.nhs.uk or send them by post to PO Box 4338, Manchester M61 0BY.

The helpline advisers can give you information to help you make decisions about your personal support needs and the needs of the person you're looking after.

This information includes assessments, benefits, direct payments, individual budgets, time off and maintaining, leaving or going back to work or education.

Information is one of the most valuable resources a carer can have. Many carers feel their situation would be easier if they were given an explanation of any health problems affecting the person they care for. This may include information about diagnosis and treatment and what to expect or about medication and possible side-effects.

As a carer you have the right to information you need to help you to care effectively, however, consent from the person you care for will be needed for some information sharing.

It is also important to know what help is available. After all, if you don't know something exists, you can't ask for it. You need accurate, up-to-date information about who provides the help and how you can get it.

In Gateshead health and social care professionals work closely together. Many carers feel it is helpful to know who is involved, what they do and when or how they can be contacted if needed.

Carers may find the Internet an additional resource. You can find out almost anything online and e-mail helps you stay in touch with people without having to depend on the post. Throughout this Guide you will find website addresses that will help you to access information and advice.

Even if you do not have a computer many organisations, such as public libraries and the Civic Centre provide access often free of charge. Gateshead Carers Association has a number of computers for the sole use of carers.

Many carers who use the internet feel less isolated and can keep up with the news and information.

Ask Yourself

- Am I sure that I have all the information that I need? Does it help me to understand the impact caring will have on me and is it sufficient to inform my decisions now or for the future?
- Are there any aspects of the illness or condition of the person I care for eg symptoms, treatment, medication, side effects that I do not fully understand?
- Do I know who the professionals involved are, what their job entails and how to contact them if I need advice or help?
- Do I know who to contact in an emergency, or does the person I look after know what to do if something happens to me?

Things to do

- Always ask if you don't understand or need more information.
- Ask for information about the illness or disability of the person you care for. (Note: consent from the person you care for will be needed for some information sharing).
- Information must work two ways. Make sure people are aware of your opinions and wishes especially in relation to your circumstances and ability to provide adequate care and support.
- Contact Gateshead Carers Association and Crossroads Care Gateshead if you want to be kept up to date through newsletters and useful information mailings for carers in Gateshead.
- Make sure you make plans and have contact numbers available in the event of an emergency. Ask for help with this task when necessary.

National Carers Website

The national information helpline and website was launched in 2009.

The Carers Direct Website was launched in 2009 and offers information, advice and support for carers. The website offers a Guide to Caring, information on money and legal matters, carers wellbeing, work and study, young carers issues and a section dedicated to carers lives.

There are links to all the national carers organisations and links to various carers blogs. The site also gives access to current legislation and up to date information on carers issues.

Their website address is: www.nhs.uk/Carersdirect

The national website and telephone help line are good facilities to use especially if you have an enquiry outside of office hours but please remember that your local carers organisations can provide you with specialist local one to one carer advice.

Having Your Say

Local Involvement Networks (LINK)

A LINK is a network of local people, organisations and groups that want to make care services better. LINK will give you the chance to say what you think and to suggest ideas to help improve services. LINK also works with care professionals to make sure your views are heard.

You can contact LINK by phoning: 0191 4784103 or email: gatesheadlink@gvoc.org.uk www.gatesheadlink.org.uk

Gateshead LINK
GVOC
John Haswell House
8/9 Gladstone Tce
Gateshead
NE8 4DY

For more information on the Carers Action Forum telephone Gateshead Carers Association 0191 490 0121.

The Forum website is:
www.carersactionforum.co.uk

Involvement in Decisions

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 to be given the information you need.

Influencing Planning and Services

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. Statutory health and social care services and many local voluntary organisations in Gateshead offer opportunities for carers to influence local planning, policy-making and the way that services are provided.

Carers Action Forum

The Carers Action Forum is run by the Campaign and Development worker at Gateshead Carers Association. The aim of the Carers Action Forum is to give carers the opportunity to have their say on issues around services and policies which can have an impact on themselves as carers, as well as the person they are caring for. It is hoped that as a collective body, carers will have more chance of their voice being heard and, more importantly, *listened to* by decision makers.

Some issues that have/will be addressed include: Carers Allowance and the financial situations of carers, Provision of Care Services, Flexible working, Respite, • Awareness raising with various bodies, including policymakers, the voluntary sector, employers, schools, and faith communities.

Locally the Forum has strong links with the Local Authority and has the facility to feed in concerns to the Carers Partnership. The Forum strives to bring regional and national attention to the difficulties faced by carers, and through campaign work, hopes to be instrumental in bringing about positive change.

At present, the Carers Action Forum meets monthly at Gateshead Carers Association but they are hoping to branch out into the wider community soon, to enable as many carers as possible to be part of the Forum.

Disabled Children's Forum

A chance for parents and carers to meet with workers and discuss services for disabled children.

Tel: 0191 433 5145

PALS Service

The NHS has a Patient Advice and Liaison Services, called PALS, which can also help carers. This is a confidential service offering 'on the spot' help and advice. They can help by::

Providing information and helping you find the best way of resolving any problems

Arranging referral to appropriate agencies or support groups if you wish

Liaising with NHS staff on your behalf

Seeing you at a time and place convenient to you in GP Practices, on the hospital wards/departments or in your home if you have mobility difficulties

Comments and Concerns

While every service welcomes comments and suggestions, there may also be times when you are unhappy with a service and you may wish to make a complaint. It is usually best to voice your concerns immediately by speaking to a member of staff, but if they remain unresolved every service has a special procedure to help you make a complaint. Ask to speak to their complaints manager or speak to one of the workers that you know: they will be able to tell you what to do next.

Social Care Services would like to hear your views, compliments and complaints. They would like to hear from you if you would like to pay a compliment to someone who has helped you or have a suggestion as to how they could do things better. They would also like to hear any comments you have if you are unhappy with the service.

Getting Involved

The Involvement officer at Gateshead Council is always looking for people who want to get involved and give their views. People who use services and their carers either individually or collectively are welcome to help us develop and improve our services.

PALS are available Monday to Friday—9.00 a.m. to 5.00 p.m. An answerphone is available at all times for you to leave a message.

PALS is based at the main entrance of the Queen Elizabeth Hospital in Gateshead and welcome anyone just dropping in to speak to them.

They can also be contacted on free phone 0800 953 0667, direct line 0191 4456129, email pals@ghnt.nhs.uk or by writing to:

PALS
Gateshead Health NHS Foundation Trust
Queen Elizabeth Avenue
Sheriff Hill
Gateshead
Tyne and Wear NE9 6SX.

If you have comments and concerns contact the Social Care Services Team:
Tel: 0191 433 2692
Email enquiries.cbs@gateshead.gov.uk

To get involved please contact
Andi Parker
Involvement Officer
Tel: 0191 433 2346
Email: andiparker@gateshead.gov.uk

Asking for Help

Sometimes, it is hard to ask for help or to give your views. Friends and relatives may be able to help you or you may prefer to get someone to act as your advocate. An advocate is someone who will help you get your points across or speak on your behalf with your permission. There are a number of voluntary organisations who may be able to provide an advocate to help you get your views heard.

Advocacy services in Gateshead

Gateshead Carers Association
11 Regent Terrace Gateshead NE8 1LU
Tel: 0191 4900121
Email: paul.foster@gatesheadcarers.com
www.gatesheadcarers.com
Advocacy Service for carers of adults with learning disabilities

Age Concern
341-343 High Street, Gateshead NE8 1EQ
Tel: 0191 477 3559
Fax: 0191 478 5307
E-mail: advocacy@ageconcerngateshead.org.uk
www.ageconcerngateshead.org.uk
Supports people in residential homes

Alzheimer's Society
2nd floor, Computer House, High Street, Gateshead NE8 1ET
Tel: 0191 477 7490
Fax: 0191 478 3131
E-mail: julie.mcalpine@alzheimers.org.uk
www.alzheimers.co.uk
Supports people with different forms of dementia

Gateshead Access Panel
Unit K38, The Avenues, 11th Avenue North, Team Valley, Gateshead NE11 0NJ
Tel: 0191 443 0058 E-mail: admin@access-gateshead.org.uk
www.access.gateshead.dsl.pipex.com
Supports people who have issues with the Disability Discrimination Act, and access to aids and adaptations

Gateshead People
Swinburne House, Swinburne Street, Gateshead NE8 1AN
Tel/Fax: 0191 478 6472
E-mail: gatesheadpeople@yvc.org.uk
Supports people with learning difficulties

North Regional Association for Sensory Support (NRASS)
Tel: 0191 490 9166
Fax: 0191 490 9167
E-mail: office@northregions.org.uk
For people (including young people) with sensory loss

Your Voice Counts
The Old Bank, Swinburne Street, Gateshead, NE8 1AX
Tel: 0191 478 6472
Fax: 0191 477 8559
E-mail: mail@yvc.org.uk
www.yvc.org.uk
Supports people with learning difficulties

Pathways
7a Villa Place, Bensham, Gateshead NE8 1RYTel: 0191 477 7380E-
mail: pathwaysadvocacy@btconnect.com
www.mentalhealthmatters.com/?atk=131
Supports people with mental health problems

Ask Yourself

- Am I involved in decisions that have an impact upon my life?
- How would I like to be involved?
- Am I happy with the services and support I receive?
- Do I feel confident in making my views known?

Things to do

- You will need to agree with professionals and the person you care for as to how you could be involved and the information you will need to help you be involved.
- Help others to help you by telling them what services/support works and does not work for you.
- Ask someone close to you to help you get your views heard or to speak on your behalf.
- Register with your local carer service to ensure a stronger carer voice in the borough.

Juggling Work and Care

Talking to Your Employer

Many people find themselves needing to juggle work and caring. If you are thinking of leaving work, consider whether or not you really want to and what alternative there could be. First consider carefully what you may be giving up such as will you manage with less money, will you lose social contacts and independence and will you lose any pension you may be entitled to.

Over three million people continue to work and care. Paid work can provide a break from caring, positive self esteem and financial independence.

It is up to you whether or not you tell your employer about your caring responsibilities. You have statutory rights as an employee but your employer may also be able to offer additional support. Find out what support your employer has before you make any decisions.

There are things that you can do to help you cope with the pressures of work and care. As a working carer you are likely to need a range of support in the workplace, and often different levels of support at different times.

Your legal rights

You may find that the best or only way to manage your work and caring responsibilities is to change your work arrangements. Carers now have more statutory rights at work to help balance these responsibilities. Employers may also be able to offer additional flexibility through their own policies and procedures.

The right to request flexible working

The Work and Families Act 2006 (The Work and Families (Northern Ireland) Order 2006 in Northern Ireland) gives carers, as well as parents, the right to request flexible working such as changing hours or working from home.

Flexible working could include; flexi-time, home working, annualised hours, compressed hours, shift swapping, self-rostering, staggered hours, job sharing, term-time working, part time working, flexible holidays and career breaks and could mean that you can balance work and your caring commitments.

If you have worked for your employer for at least 26 weeks you can apply to make a permanent change to your terms and conditions. Only one request is allowed in a year. Your employer can refuse a request, but must give you good reasons and you can appeal against this decision.

The Act defines a carer as someone who cares for, or expects to care for, a spouse or partner, a relative such as a child, uncle, sister, parent-in-law, son-in-law or grandparent, or someone who falls into neither category but lives at the same address as the carer. Evidence shows that most employers are also open to requests from those not eligible under the new law, such as those that care for, say, an elderly neighbour.

A right to time off in emergencies and parental leave

The Employment Rights Act 1996, as amended by the Employment Relations Act 1999, gives carers rights to help them manage work and their caring responsibilities.

The right to time off in emergencies

All employees have the right to take 'reasonable time off' to deal with an emergency involving a dependant. Whether the time off is paid or not is at the discretion of your employer. To use this right to time off, you must inform your employer as soon as possible after the emergency has happened. This right can also give you some protection from victimisation and dismissal. If you think you have been treated unfavourably because of using this right, seek further advice from your union or a legal adviser.

A dependant could be a mother, father, son, daughter, partner or anyone who lives with the employee and is solely dependent on them.

Parental leave

If you have at least one year's continuous service with your employer and are responsible for a child aged under 5, or under 18 if the child is disabled, you are entitled to:

- * 13 weeks (unpaid) parental leave per child to look after your child, or
- * 18 weeks (unpaid) parental leave per child to look after your disabled child.

Leave can be taken in blocks of 1 week up to a maximum of 4 weeks leave in a year (for each child); or in one day, or multiples of a day if the leave is to care for a disabled child, again to a maximum of 4 weeks in a year.

You may take leave at any time up to a child's fifth birthday; but for the parents of a disabled child, leave may be taken any time up to the child's eighteenth birthday. For parents who have adopted a child, the leave must be taken during the 5 years from the date of placement or before the child's eighteenth birthday, whichever is the sooner.

You must give at least 21 days notice in order to take parental leave and this can be postponed if taking leave at the time requested would cause particular disruption to the organisation, e.g. during a seasonal peak in work or if multiple requests for parental leave are made at the same time. If leave is postponed, your employer must inform you within 7 days of the request for leave being made, and the leave must be granted within 6 months.

Protection from discrimination

Up until now carers have not been directly or explicitly protected from discrimination in the workplace. This situation changed on 1st October 2010 with the introduction of the Equality Act.

This new piece of legislation will radically change carers rights by giving them protection from discrimination in the workplace, in the same way we have protection from discrimination now on the grounds of age, disability, gender, race, sexual orientation, and religion or belief.

Discrimination against carers by association with disabled people will now be unlawful. The Bill will also make it unlawful to discriminate against carers in the workplace. It will no longer be possible for a carer to be told that they lack commitment or are turned down for a job or promotion simply because of their caring role.

As well as employment rights, there will be new rights for carers in the provision of goods and services. This will mean that when someone is selling something or providing a service they will have to take care not to discriminate against carers. This provision will cover the private, public and voluntary sectors

How will this change benefit carers?

The new legislation will apply to the public, private and voluntary sector and will mean that employers and service providers must not treat carers differently to people who do not have caring responsibilities.

They will need to think about how they will ensure that employees or customers who are carers will be given equal access to jobs or services. This means having an understanding of who carers are and how they might be affected by their policies. Carers who feel they have been discriminated against will be able to complain to an employment tribunal, or to the County Court if they have been discriminated against by a service provider.

Returning to Work

Jobcentre Plus can help any carer who is out of work and would like to combine work with their caring role. They have advisers trained to understand carers' needs who can talk to carers about things such as looking for work, training, voluntary work and self employment as well as performing a personalised "Better Off Calculation" to see what extra financial help is available.

Jobcentre Plus can also offer help with replacement care costs while carers are participating in approved activities such as interviews and training to help them get a job.

If you are a carer and are not working or working less than 16 hours per week and you would like to find out more about how Jobcentre Plus can help contact your local Jobcentre

Learning Something New

Some carers want to learn something new. Learning can be just about time for you or about moving on to something else, like volunteering or paid work. It can be hard to think about what is right for you when you might not have thought about yourself or your needs for a long time.

Gateshead Carers Association runs a number of courses for carers including art, digital photography and computer skills.

For details of other adult courses in Gateshead please contact Adult and Community Education who work in partnership with different organisations to create and develop Adult and Community Education for all residents of the borough.

Lifelong Learning, Dryden Professional Development Centre, Evistones Road, Gateshead, NE9 5UR, Phone 0191 433 8646 or email adultlearning@gateshead.gov.uk

For public services all in one place go to **www.direct.gov**.

Contact your Jobcentre on 0845 604 3719

Learn Direct Advice www.learndirect.co.uk

For a great way to get learning and careers information, call to speak to an adviser between 8.00 am and 10.00 pm, seven days a week.

Tel: 0800 101 901

Ask Yourself

- What would help me to continue or return to work?
- What changes at work might I suggest to help me balance work with caring?
- What opportunities for learning are there that I might like to do?

Things to do

- Find out what help is available before giving up work to care.
- Find out if your employer has a policy to support carers by talking to your personnel officer, union representative or colleagues. There may be existing support you are not aware of.
- Think carefully about your options if you are thinking of leaving work
- Consider the financial implications of giving up work and seek advice.
- Seek careers advice if you wish to return to work when caring ends.
- Find out about learning opportunities

Money and Legal Matters

Caring for someone can be an expensive business. You may have given up work to be a carer or the person you care for may have been the main breadwinner in the past. You may find yourself with less money to spend but more to pay out, for example, on heating bills, equipment or prescriptions, visitor's car-parking charges in hospital grounds and in some cases you may be able to recoup some of these charges.

It is important to find out if you are entitled to any benefits. Many people are put off claiming and as a result lose out on money they have a right to.

Information Officers at Gateshead Carers Association can also offer benefit advice to carers. Contact them on 0191 4900121

Gateshead Citizens Advice Bureau have a team of benefit advice workers who can also advise you on all benefits and carry out a benefits check to make sure that you are claiming everything that you are entitled to. They will help you to maximise your income. Contact them on 0191 477 1392.

Carer's Allowance

Carers Allowance is the main benefit for carers. To be eligible for Carers Allowance you must be over 16, care for at least 35 hours each week for someone on Attendance Allowance or receiving the middle or higher rate care component of Disability Living Allowance or some rates of Constant Attendance Allowance.

You cannot get Carers Allowance if you are in full time education with 21 hours or more a week of supervised study or earn more than £100 a week (current at January 2011) after certain deductions have been made such as Income tax.

Warning! In some cases, getting Carers Allowance can mean that the person you care for loses some of their benefit. Always get advice before claiming Carers Allowance.

Even if you have made an unsuccessful benefits claim in the past, it is worthwhile trying again as the benefits system is always changing.

Gateshead Crossroads Care has a specialist benefits adviser who can offer advice to carers to ensure that they and the person they care for are receiving all the benefits they are entitled to.

Full benefits checks are carried out and representation can be made on behalf of the claimant to tribunal and appeal level.
Tel: 01207 549780 for further details or to book an appointment.

You cannot claim carers Allowance if you are claiming from one of a list of other benefits, for instance State Retirement pension, but it may still be worth claiming as you may qualify for Income Support, Housing or Council Tax benefit through what is called a Carers premium. You may also be able to build up a second state pension.

The benefits system is complicated and it is worth finding out if you are eligible and seeking advice from one of the agencies named in this Guide

Housing and Council Tax Benefit

The Council's benefits teams can help you check that you are claiming your full Housing and Council Tax benefits. Benefits can normally only be paid from the date of first contact . You can apply in person or request claim forms by telephone.

Contact Gateshead Council
Civic Centre
Regent Street
Gateshead NE8 1HH

Tel 0191 433 4646 or email
benefitenquiries@gateshead.gov.uk

Debt Advice

Carers often experience financial crisis often as a result of giving up work coupled with the extra costs that are often incurred in the caring situation. If you are experiencing financial hardship and find that you are getting into debt it is imperative that you seek advice as soon as you can and that you do not ignore the situation.

Gateshead Council has a Debt Advice Team based in the Civic Centre Regent Street, Gateshead, NE8 1HH. They can be contacted on 0191 433 3994 or 0191 433 2642 and by fax on 0191 477 8373 or email:
HousingAdvice@gateshead.gov.uk

Gateshead Citizens Advice Bureau also has a number of debt advisers who can advise you on any debt problem you have. Tel: 0191 477 1392 for further details.

Legal Matters

If for any reason, someone becomes incapable of making decisions for themselves, a **Lasting Power of Attorney (LPA)** gives another person or persons the right to make decisions on their behalf.

Until 1st October 2007, an Enduring Power of Attorney (EPA) gave financial responsibilities to another person should someone become incapable of managing one's own affairs. However, since this date, the EPA has been replaced with a Lasting Power of Attorney (LPA) which covers responsibility for healthcare decisions as well as financial affairs.

For example, your loved one may wish you to become responsible for management of their financial affairs and make decisions on which medical treatments should be administered in the case of them no longer being able to make those decisions for themselves. Alternatively, your loved one may wish one person to look after financial decisions and another to manage healthcare issues.

The only necessary condition when drawing up a LPA is that the person concerned is in full charge of their mental faculties and able to make the decision themselves. The person you care for can give you precise instructions with regard to any future health treatment; under which circumstances they would wish to be treated.

Many people prefer to employ the services of a solicitor to draw up legal documents although this is not mandatory.

Gateshead Advice Centre (Gateshead Citizens Advice Bureau and Gateshead Community Legal Advice Centre) offer free, independent and confidential advice to people who live or work in Gateshead.

They offer a range of services on a wide range of issues including debt, benefit advice and form filling, employment, family law and community care.

They also hold advice sessions throughout the borough of Gateshead at:

- * Gateshead Housing Company, Felling
- * St Albans Medical Group, Felling Health Centre
- * Birtley Hub
- * Blaydon Library
- * Fell Dyke School
- * Dunston Activity Centre
- * Chopwell Community Centre
- * Blaydon/Winlaton Sure Start
- * Bede Health Clinic

Benefit Enquiry line

The Benefit Enquiry Line provides advice and information for disabled people and carers on the range of benefits available. The person taking your call will not have your personal papers but will be able to give you general advice.

Contact: Benefit Enquiry Line
Tel: 0800 88 22 00.

Staff at Gateshead Advice Centre can be contacted on 019 478 5100.

Home visits can also be booked on this number.

The Centre is open Monday—Friday 9.00am—5.00pm and until 8.00pm every Thursday.

There is also extended opening every Saturday 9.00—12.00pm

You can phone a dedicated Advice Line on 0191 477 1392 or TEXT 07786 206006 and the centre will call you back.

You can also email your enquiry to: Gateshead@communitylegaladvice.org.uk

More information is available on their website: www.gatesheadcab.org.uk

Ask Yourself

- Am I getting any benefits?
- Am I confident that I'm getting all the benefits I'm entitled to?
- Am I entitled to Council Tax rebate and, if I am, am I getting it?
- Would it be helpful to consider an enduring power of attorney?

Things to do

- Get a benefit check.
- Contact your local Housing Office to find out if you can get a Council Tax discount
- Find out about funds that may be available for one-off costs.
- Ask for legal advice in good time.

Taking a Break

Caring can be rewarding, but it can also bring stresses and strains, and many carers welcome the opportunity to have a break

For peace of mind, you may need someone else to be with the person you care for so that you can have a break. Some carers make arrangements with other members of their family, neighbours or friends so that they can have time off. It will help if you are specific about the help required and how long it will take and make sure the friend or relative is fully aware of what will be required.

A break may be something as short as taking time out for yourself during the day or something much longer to give you time to recharge your batteries. Some carers feel having a break from the routine of caring includes help to plan more social activities they can enjoy with the person they look after especially if they care for their spouse.

A care manager may be able to arrange support for the person you care for to help you to have a break. This could be a sitting service at home, somewhere to go during the day or a short stay in an appropriate setting.

As resources may be limited it is necessary to cater for individual needs. This means that a needs assessment has to be carried out for the person you care for and for you as their carer.

There is no charge for having an assessment but you, or the person you care for, may have to pay a charge for the services you are offered as a result of an assessment. This depends on your income and the services you get. Social Services can give you further information about this.

Contact Adult Social Care Direct on 0191 433 7033

The **Take a Break Co-ordinator** is based at Crossroads Care Gateshead. The Carers Take a Break Service can provide breaks designed to support carers in achieving a fulfilling life outside of the caring role. The break could entail joining a course, going to the theatre or simply having some time to yourself..

The aim of this service is to enable carers to design their own break to suit their own lifestyle. The co-ordinator can carry out home visits to discuss the service and guide you through the process.

Ask Yourself

- Do I get time off from my caring role?
- Do I wish I had more time for myself or for a social life?
- Do I have any other commitments or responsibilities outside of my caring role? Does my caring role allow for those additional responsibilities such as employment or childcare?
- Do I wish that I had the time to have a job or attend a course or other activity?
- Do I allow myself time to think about relationships with others apart from the cared for?

Things to do

- Talk to the person you care for. Don't keep things to yourself, talk to family or friends about things they could do to help you to take a break. Perhaps those around you want to help but are worried it might seem like interfering – so do ask!
- Talk to the key workers involved with the person you care for, for example a social worker, doctor, specialist workers, community nurse or district nurse
- Once in a while pamper yourself with a relaxing therapy, for example aromatherapy or Indian head massage. Contact your local carers service for information on what is available.
- Find out how to get a direct payment to make your own care arrangements.
- Consider ways of renewing your relationships outside of your caring role. You may find a carers needs assessment enables you to identify your needs and plan your time to enjoy other relationships.

Key Contacts

Below is a selection of key contacts in Gateshead who can provide carers with information, advice, support or services.

Crossroads Care Gateshead

Tel: 01207 549780

email: enquiries@gatesheadcrossroads.org.uk

www.gatesheadcrossroads.org.uk

Gateshead Carers Association

Tel: 0191 4900121

Email: gcarers@btconnect.com

www.gatesheadcarers.com

Adult Social Care Direct

If you think you or some other adult you know needs help, your first point of contact should be Adult Social Care Direct. The staff are fully trained to help you. Your enquiry will be listened to and dealt with as efficiently as possible.

Adult Social Care Direct staff are able to signpost you to other organisations who can help or pass on information about any difficulties you may be having to your local social work office for an assessment of need.

With your permission, other people can ask for help on your behalf – this might be a relative or a friend. It might also be a professional who knows you well; for example, your GP district nurse or housing officer.

It will be helpful if the person contacting them can give as much information as possible about why you may require the services.

You can contact Adult Social Care Direct at

adultsocialcaredirect@gateshead.gov.uk or telephone 0191 433 7033.

For Parent and Carers of Children with Disabilities.

This team offers social work advice and assessment for any child in need living in Gateshead. Tel: 0191 433 2515.

The **Emergency Duty Team** is Gateshead Councils out of hours social work service for people experiencing difficulties at night, weekend and bank holidays.

They can be contacted on 0191 477 0844 weekdays 5.00pm – 8.45am.

Weekends Friday 4.30pm – Monday 8.45am and bank holidays twenty four hour cover.

Parents in Power

A group of parents and carers supporting other parents and carers who have children with special educational needs and/or learning difficulties and disabilities. The group supports parents to participate in the planning of services and in local and national consultations which can affect their child's and their family's life. Contact Parents In Power at 21 Liddell Terrace, Bensham, Gateshead, NE8 1YN. Tel: 0191 4901032

Home Improvement Agency

Home Improvement Agencies (HIAs) are not-for-profit organisations that can help you repair, improve, maintain or adapt your home.

In Gateshead **Anchor Staying Put** can offer advice and services to home owners and private sector tenants. They can offer specialist advice to people with disabilities.. The service is specially targeted at people on lower incomes.

Tel: 0191 495 6177 or email newgatstayingput@anchor.org.uk

Metropolitan House, Longrigg Road, Swalwell,
Gateshead, Tyne & Wear NE16 3AS

Age Concern Gateshead

Give information and advice, day centres, exercise classes, home visiting/ befriending, bereavement support, advocacy, charity shop, volunteering opportunities and benefits advice. Age 50+

Tel: (0191) 477 3559

Alzheimer's Society Gateshead

Have a Carer Support Service providing emotional support, advice and information. Carer support groups. The sitting Service provides a respite service for carers.

Tel: (0191) 477 7490

Barnardos Gateshead Family Resource Centre

Provides a variety of services for disabled children, young people and their carers. The project supports parents and carers to help children develop and grow towards their full potential.

Tel: (0191) 478 4667

Gateshead Carers Partnership

Made up of carers, key staff in health agencies, social care staff and the voluntary sector. The Partnership aims to give carers a strong strategic voice. It also ensures that the issues affecting carers are heard, acknowledged and most important of all, responded to and acted upon. Contact Maria Newman at Gateshead Council:

Tel: 0191 433 3000.

Gateshead Access Panel

Gives advice to people with disabilities and their carers on all access issues such as improvements to buildings, signs and leaflets. Also provides advocacy support.

Tel: 0191 443 0058

Carers Support Fund

The Carers Support Fund supports carers experiencing difficulties in an emergency or with no other financial help available to them. The fund can cover the costs of supporting a carer, for example, household equipment, short breaks or trips to see a terminally ill relative. It is available to carers who live in Gateshead and whose cared for person lives in Gateshead.

Contact Gateshead Carers Association on 0191 4900121 for further details.

Gateshead Walk-in Centre

Contact: Bensham Hospital, Saltwell Road, Gateshead. NE8 4YL.

Tel: (0191) 445 5454. Opening hours: 7.00 am to 10.00 pm every day of the year.

Jewish Family Service

Providing a specialist service to Jewish families and their carers.

Tel: (0191) 477 5677

Mencap

Offers support and activities to children and adults with learning disabilities and their carers.

Tel: (0191) 487 8537

Mind in Gateshead

Service for people with mental health problems/those suffering mental distress and their carers. Support and drop-ins. Tel: (0191) 414 0325.

Pre-School Learning Alliance Inclusion Project

Provide support workers in pre-school settings to enable children with disabilities/ additional needs to attend their local pre-school. Also offers support to parents/ carers as well as the pre-school group. Volunteers are involved in the project.

Tel: (0191) 477 6614

Safer Families Project

Works in partnership with other statutory and voluntary agencies to provide a range of specialist services for women and children who have witnessed or experienced domestic violence.

The core aim of the project is to increase the safety of women and children and to help them to regain control of their lives and to make the best and safest choices possible.

The project also has a separate service for men who perpetrate violence against partners/ex-partners. The men's service aims to help men take responsibility for their abusive behaviour and to work towards change.

Contact: Safer Families Project, Units 5 - 6, Enterprise House, Kingsway, Team Valley Trading Estate, Gateshead. NE11 0SR. Tel: (0191) 433 5600

Sight Service

Offers advice, information, home visits, leisure activities and counselling to people with visual impairments and their carers.

Tel: (0191) 478 5959

Disability North

Provides free, confidential, independent advice about all aspects of independent living for disabled people of all ages. A wide range of equipment and adaptations can be viewed on site along with advice and demonstrations.

Tel: 0191 284 0480, Monday to Friday 9.00 am to 5.00 pm.

Email: reception@disabilitynorth.org.uk

The Stroke Association

Offers information, advice and emotional support to families affected by stroke.

Tel: 0191 487 9988.

Gateshead Older Peoples Assembly

The group meet on a regular basis to look at the issues affecting older people in Gateshead.

Contact: Gateshead Older People's Assembly

65 High Street Felling Gateshead Tyne and Wear

Tel: 0191 438 1721

Visible Ethnic Minority Support

Group meets every Wednesday at Bensham Grove Community Centre, provides support and advice to families from minority communities and their carers.

Tel: 0191 487 3059

If you, a friend or relative need help with drug and alcohol related projects there are two agencies that can help:

24/7 is an integrated health and social care team. They assess individuals needs and co-ordinate the provision of services. There is a specialist team for adults and one for young people. Anyone can refer to this team including parents or carers, young people, GPs etc. Tel: 0191 443 3688 (Monday to Friday 9.00am - 5.00pm) or 0800 328 6728 (24 hours)

NECA provides services to meet particular needs of adults, women and young people with drug and alcohol related problems. They also work to support the carers of drug users. The team can also arrange appointments out of hours to suit individuals. Tel: 0191 490 1045 (Monday to Friday 9.00am - 5.00pm) or 0800 776600 (24 hours)

