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Deadline for the Spring edition is:
18th February 2022

SIGNPOSTS FOR CARERS

The newsletter for Torbay Carers

Hello
and
Welcome

To another
jam-packed
edition of
the **Signposts
Newsletter.**



EVERYONE KNOWS A CARER

Read about our celebration event to raise awareness about unpaid Carers.

YOU SAID, WE DID

We listen to you. You told us that you listen to Radio Devon so we hope you heard our mini-series in December about Carer support in Torbay.

VACCINATIONS

Make sure your COVID and Flu vaccinations are up to date.
Contact us if you have any difficulty getting them booked in!

CARERS' EDUCATION

Please see the range of courses in our course brochure enclosed.



Best wishes from everyone at Carers Services

Telephone: 01803 666620 Email: signposts@nhs.net
www.tsdft.uk/carers | [facebook.com/TorbayCarers](https://www.facebook.com/TorbayCarers)

CARERS' CELEBRATION DAY

A GREAT SUCCESS

On the 27th November 2021 we decided to hold a Celebration event to say a socially distanced 'thank you' to all the Carers who had been so stalwart during the pandemic and to raise awareness about who is an unpaid Carer, as many people are still unaware.

Torbay Carers Services and various partners planned a 'mini-festival' with music and food outside Paignton Library and activities inside. The previous two weeks were flat calm, dry and mild, but the team planned for rain, organising multiple gazebos. We hadn't planned for Storm Arwen though, with wind gusting up to 93mph and wind chill making it a freezing minus 1! On the day, thinking the gazebos might end up on Berry Head, we moved everything indoors, sharing space with Paignton Library's Christmas Fair.

We were really pleased that Kerrie Ford, manager of Torbay's Children's With Disability Team, partnered us in the planning. On the day, the team were based upstairs chatting to parent Carers, offering advice and support, and from the photos, they definitely sampled TJ the DJ's disco!

We do need to say a BIG thanks to TJ the DJ for his superb disco, with a range of music catering for everyone – very professionally run, and I'm sure we will be seeing more of this 11-year old! [facebook.com/tjthedj1210](https://www.facebook.com/tjthedj1210) Tissues and Issues (tissuesandissues.org) were also based upstairs offering support to parent Carers, and joining in on the entertainment (here dancing to YMCA!). They provide social support, and access to information and guidance for parents and carers of young people who have a recognised disability, additional need or are awaiting diagnosis.

Alongside Carers Services, the amazing Julie Bose from Imagine Torbay Multi-cultural Group was an essential partner in the planning of the Celebration event, with the result that we had a huge range of activities and entertainment available.

We had a TaiChi class (@[Taichilisakayclasstorquay](https://www.instagram.com/Taichilisakayclasstorquay)), Japanese Arts and crafts, Tote bag making, aromatherapy, hair braiding, henna hand designs, balloon sculptures and Young Carers did 'Caring Rocks'.

Music was provided by Lea (the elf!) and eight-year-old Peter – who ended up being a soloist when the rest of the choir had to self-isolate! Well done Peter.

Mubashera and Beatrice produced a whole range of delicious Afghan and Caribbean food for people to sample, and Café Cosi also did a deal for Carers on hot drinks and snacks.

Two of Paignton's Cafes – Urban Edge and Our Katie's – and Bay Coffee Company in Brixham also kindly offered a hot drink /snack deal for Carers from Thursday to Saturday.

Apart from the fabulous 'team behind the scenes', we also had Georgie and Beatrice our Carer Ambassadors, Sue from Lions Club, Kevin Foster MP and Cllr Darling supporting us on the day. I hope I haven't forgotten anyone, but we are SO grateful to everyone who helped in any way to make it such a successful event, and hope that those of you who attended enjoyed it.

CARERS' CELEBRATION DAY

IN PHOTOS!



Last year Carers' Rights Day was completely on-line, so this year we tried to have a mixture of both face-to-face and on-line support available. Most of the presentations were recorded and will be saved on our webpage, so if you missed them you can just visit tsdft.uk/Carers website and choose the 'Carers Rights' page. There are some for Carers / the people you care for eg keeping healthy, and some as a break from caring eg local history.

I must apologise to those people who joined remotely on the day, because although we paid an organisation to manage the technology, the quality was very disappointing. The Royal Trust Collection's morning on-line presentation was apparently fantastic, but they too had technical issues for their evening presentation. If you are interested, they have regular virtual tours, just search 'RTC virtual tours'.



Jordan | TEC Project
Equipment for Carers

Page 15 covers the presentations about supporting Carers in their rights to work (if you wish to) and the right to be supported if you are juggling work and caring.

We had Amanda from Citizen's Advice Torbay offering brief **finance and benefits** advice, which was very much appreciated by all who attended. If you need advice, contact them on **0808 2787859** (Freephone), Monday – Friday 09:30am – 12:30pm or Bay Benefits (for Carers) on **07530 790354** and they will call you back.

Jonathan from Atlas Care, a local provider of **dementia** services, talked passionately about dementia, including his 5 top tips for 'beating' dementia. I particularly liked Tip 2 – 'you can't do this alone' encouraging you to make the most of community support that is available. The people who attended in person really valued this talk.

Jordan who leads the Technology Enabled Care (TEC) Service for the Trust, talked about our Carers' TEC project, where Carers can have short-term **free loan of certain equipment** to support their caring role. If it proves to be useful, then we will work together to see how it can be funded long-term. We are finding that the most valued items are the ones that give Carers peace of mind, such as alert systems. There is a huge variety available, which is why the project is partnered with NRS equipment service to help make sure that we find the best solution for you. If you are interested, ask for more details from the Carer Support Worker at your doctor's surgery or specialist team.

Sharon from Step One Charity did a great workshop on stress management, and they do a whole range of wellbeing support for carers and for people with mental health needs and autism spectrum conditions.

Web: steponecharity.co.uk

Phone: **(01803) 321248**

A huge thank you to all the partners who gave their time to support Carers.

TIP TWO YOU CAN'T DO THIS ALONE!

Although we know socializing and keeping someone's mind active works it is vital get others to help. Make use of clubs, specialists, communities, memory or mind coaches

Tip 2 from Jonathan of Atlas Care

TEMPORARY BREAKS FROM CARING AND CARER'S ALLOWANCE

Real life and bureaucracy make uneasy bedfellows - so how flexible are the rules for Carers Allowance (CA) when it comes to taking a break? The law stipulates that care must be provided for at least 35 hours a week. So, in a typical week it should be possible to meet the 35-hour rule, but still fit in a short break without infringing the regulations, assuming that replacement care is actually available. There is flexibility for extended breaks too. Here the law allows a maximum of 4 weeks off in any 26-week period, without suspension of CA. However, care must have previously been provided for at least 35 hours a week during 22 of the preceding 26 weeks. Up to 8 of those weeks can include a stay in hospital (either for you or the person you care for), but the person you care for must have been receiving a *qualifying benefit throughout those 22 weeks.



Universal Credit rules are similar to CA - payment of the monthly Carer addition (£163.73) is only suspended if extended breaks exceed 4 weeks in any 6-month period.

**Qualifying benefits are: Disability Living Allowance (middle or higher care rate); Attendance Allowance; Constant Attendance Allowance; Personal Independence Payment (either rate of daily living component); Armed Forces Independence Payment.*

BREAKS CAUSED BY HOSPITAL ADMISSIONS

CA will normally run on for 12 weeks if a Carer has to go into †hospital but may stop sooner if there has been a break in care during the previous 26 weeks.

If you care for an adult who is admitted to hospital for 28 days or more, their qualifying benefit will be suspended as will your CA, because payment of CA is reliant on continuation (payment) of a qualifying benefit. Children and young people are treated differently though. When a child or young person aged under 18 enters hospital they retain their qualifying benefit and continue to do so until they are discharged - enabling CA to run on for up to 12 weeks. Confusingly, spells in hospital of less than 28 days are 'linked' together and treated as a single inpatient episode. This can therefore cause CA to be suspended sooner than expected.

†Hospital or similar institution funded by the NHS.

KEEP A DIARY AND NOTIFY THE DEPARTMENT FOR WORK AND PENSIONS (DWP)

If your caring routine is punctuated by hospital admissions or extended periods away, it is important to keep a diary and notify dates to the appropriate section of the DWP (see <https://bit.ly/2ZrfYvv>). The same requirement also applies to the qualifying benefit of the person you care for. Call the contact number shown on the award letter if they are admitted to hospital. Timely notification will prevent accidental overpayments and avoids the unnecessary worry of overpayment recovery action.

CA changes can be reported online (see <https://bit.ly/3atz5qW>) or by calling **0800 731 0297**. Changes affecting Universal Credit are reported via the online journal for your account.

TORBAY COMMUNITY HELPLINE



Just short of 20 months ago, our lives changed in ways that we could not have envisaged and not in a good way for the vast majority.

But some good things have come out of the Coronavirus Crisis, not least thousands of new volunteers coming forward to help their friends, neighbours and even strangers and a resurgence in some areas of good neighbourliness.

Food banks came together to form the Torbay Food Alliance, which set about feeding thousands of people across the Bay who suddenly found they could no longer put food on the family table.

Doors closed in homes across the Bay as people shielded and the first of three lockdowns began meaning many couldn't get out to shop, collect prescriptions and were in danger of becoming isolated.

But a week before lockdown one in March 2020, a small team from the Torbay Community Development Trust met to discuss how they could best support people in the pending pandemic, little knowing what was to come.

The Torbay Community Coronavirus Helpline was launched using the number **(01803) 446022** and staff from the TCDT took home phones and waited to see what would happen.

Within hours of going live, the phones started ringing and it very soon became clear that what was needed was a team of prescription collectors and shoppers to join queues that were snaking around the block outside pharmacies and supermarkets.

As the crisis continued, people also needed advice, information and the sound of a friendly voice to reassure them that whilst they were by themselves, they were not alone. There were many others in the same position and so we put them together on the phone as befrienders and many of those relationships continue today.

At the height of the crisis, we were taking just short of 400 calls a day, every one of which needed support in one form or another and it was clear that the staff of the charities that TCDT had brought together to form the Helpline, AgeUk Torbay, Healthwatch Torbay, Brixham Does Care, and Citizens Advice Torbay, could not do it by themselves.

We appealed for volunteers to come forward to help with the mammoth task of ensuring sometimes life-saving prescriptions were collected and delivered, food was shopped for, and the Helpline was staffed with caring voices.

We were overwhelmed with offers of help – more than 1,800 people signed up to do whatever they could to support people in their communities when they needed it the most. And they made a huge difference.



TORBAY COMMUNITY HELPLINE

coronavirus from the title, sticking instead with the more aptly named Torbay Community Helpline. Given how effective it had proved to be, a decision was taken to keep it going indefinitely.

We added access to many new services, including a mental health triage service, including volunteer trained specialist befrienders and a financial support triage service, housing, domestic abuse and adult social care to name but a few.

We also found lots of new volunteers needed to marshal people arriving at the vaccination centres at the Riviera Centre in Torquay and latterly, the Scala Hall in Brixham, without whom the successful vaccination rollout could not have gone so smoothly.



We like to think of the Helpline, with its strapline One Call, That's All, is the ultimate one-stop for all your questions about anything to do with services in the Bay and if we don't know the answer, we will find it for you.

Since we started, we have dealt with more than 28,000 calls and supported more than 7,000 individuals and their families, which is no mean feat and one that we should all be very proud of.

The Coronavirus Crisis has not been easy for anyone. Still, all things considered, given the resilience and strength of our communities in the Bay there would have been far worse places to have experienced it.

If you need help or want to offer help – ring the Community Helpline on: **(01803) 446022** or go to: www.bit.ly/torbayhelpline



SUPPORT FOR CARERS IN TORBAY

HOW CAN WE HELP?

As a registered Carer you will know about much of what we do, but please take a moment to read through the summary below to find out if we can do more to support you in your caring role.

1. WE ARE HERE TO SUPPORT YOU

We support family and friends of any age who are in a caring role. Children can also be Carers. You could be in a mutual caring role where you look after someone, and they look after you. You could be caring for a number of people, or a number of people could be caring for one person. If you are unpaid for your caring role (you can still receive benefits) and not undertaking the role officially as a volunteer, we can help.

7. DO YOU KNOW SOMEONE WHO IS A CARER PLEASE LET THEM KNOW ABOUT US

There are many more Carers in Torbay than we have been able to identify, and many would benefit from our support. If you know a Carer please ask if they are receiving the support they are entitled to and if they haven't spoken to us, please give them our contact details:

Telephone: **(01803) 666620**

Email: signposts@nhs.net

Website: www.tsdfit.uk/carers

Facebook: www.facebook.com/TorbayCarers

6. SPEAKING UP FOR CARERS

We are always looking for Carers and former Carers to get involved in our service. This can be paid or unpaid, through:

- Attending the quarterly Carers Strategy Steering Group which steers Carers Services
- Volunteering time to promote or support our work, such as staffing stands or the phone line
- Joining our reference group to give your opinion on things like our leaflets or logos
- Evaluating services that affect Carers
- Joining our working parties e.g. employment, replacement care, peer support

If you are interested in volunteering or working for us please contact Signposts for Carers on:

(01803) 666620 or email signposts@nhs.net

5. YOUNG CARERS AND YOUNG ADULT CARERS

People often start caring when they are children or young adults and there are specific services available to support these young people in their caring role.

- Torbay Young Carers offers a service to children aged under 18. They take a whole family approach to ensuring Carers are supported and develop an action plan to help meet any needs they have. Contact them on **(01803) 895299** or info@torbayyouthtrust.org.uk
- Torbay Young Adult Carers support young people aged 16-25, providing 1:1 sessions, drop-ins and time out for young people with a caring role. Contact them on **(01803) 208455** or torbayyac@nhs.net



SUPPORT FOR CARERS IN TORBAY

HOW CAN WE HELP?

If you know a Carer please ask if they are receiving the support they are entitled to and if they haven't spoken to us, please give them our contact details or tear these centre pages out and pass them on. Tel. **(01803) 66 66 20**, email signposts@nhs.net or view our website at www.tsdfc.uk/carers

2. WHAT DO TORBAY CARERS SERVICES OFFER?

If you are in a caring role, we are here to support you!

Signposts - Advice and information service for unpaid Carers: Contact **(01803) 666620** or signposts@nhs.net

Carers' Centres - Torquay, Paignton and Brixham. Please contact us to arrange an appointment.

By joining Torbay Carers you can have:

- Carers' Emergency Card in case you have an emergency and a 'passport' to various discounts such as free parking for Carers at hospitals (when supporting the person you care for)
- Quarterly Signposts Carers Newsletter
- Carers Education Courses
- And much more!

3. CONVERSATIONS - HOW CAN WE HELP?

- Carer Support Workers based in your GP Surgeries and Carers' Aid Torbay can help with advice and support in your caring role, and can arrange a Carer's Health and Wellbeing Check with you. Just call your GP surgery and ask to speak to the Carer Support Worker or call Signposts for Carers on **(01803) 666620** / email signposts@nhs.net or if you prefer to contact Carers Aid Torbay you can call them on **(01803) 323510**
- Specialist Carer Support Workers offer support to Carers of people with mental health conditions, Carers of adults with learning disabilities, Carers of adults with substance misuse issues and for Carers of people in hospital
- There are Carers Groups, Activities and Peer support for Carers, in person and on-line

4. OTHER SUPPORT

- Carers advocacy (supporting you to be heard) Carers Aid Torbay (see back page)
- Benefits Advice by Bay Benefits
- Links to support for Carers such as Alzheimer's Society, Dementia Advisors etc.
- Carers Telephone Line volunteer led planned calls to isolated Carers
- Support for Carers in Employment A range of services
 - o to support people to manage working and caring
 - o for Carers who are looking for work
- Buddying (linking people together for mutual support)
- Support for Carers to get on line, stay on line and improve on line skills
- Help to find equipment to support your caring role
- Safely Home scheme to help identify the person you care for if they become lost or confused

If you would like to find out more about any of the services above please contact Signposts for Carers on **(01803) 666620** or signposts@nhs.net



SAILING IN SEPTEMBER

The end of September came with another opportunity from the Tallship Trust, who once again gave a group of our young adult carers a chance to sail from Portsmouth along the coast to Brixham. The weather was amazing but with little wind to push us along, we were under engine power for two days. As a result, everyone had time to enjoy the sun, chat, make friends and learn the workings of the boat. We did however manage a full sail across Lyme Bay, finishing in Brixham. A big thank you goes out to the Tallships Trust for their continued support.



CHRISTMAS

December provided us with the opportunity to run one (socially distanced and fully masked as appropriate!) activity as a build up to Christmas. This was a shopping trip to Bristol at St Nicholas shopping Centre. The following week we had hoped to have a Christmas buffet drop-in but this has now been postponed. We wish all our Young Adult Carers a happy New Year as we move into 2022.



Dave Baker
Young Adult Carer Development Worker

Integrated Carers Services

Phone: **(01803) 208455/852421**

Mobile: **07825 027664**

Please Note: days of work Wednesday-Friday.

TAKOTA

PEER-LED SOCIAL GROUP FOR CARERS AGED 25-35

Here at Takota we are still going strong. With recent events we have mainly been using online platforms, but we are hoping to be able to get back together in person again in 2022. We are hoping we will be able to meet on Saturday 29th January for lunch at the Inn On The Quay at 12pm, and then going forwards to meet on the last Saturday of every month after that.

If you feel Takota is a group for you or for someone you know, then please come along and join us and get to know some of our operational team.

Check out our Takota Facebook page for future events activities and times or you can email us on:

Tsdft.takota@nhs.net

HIYA, HOLLY HERE!

2021 in all of its uncertainty brought us some new creative and exciting projects– Mindful Mammals and Space Zone were born to support the mental health and emotional wellbeing of all young carers who access our service, albeit in different ways!



Share your journey
with furry friends

Throughout 2021 we led activities that included Nature and Animals such as: our 6 weeks Horsemanship for Health Course, Lucky Clucks Smallholding visit as well as the regular trips to Orchard Forest School – with these experiences, and the ever-growing comments of “I love animals” we knew that we needed to expand into this area to better reach & support young people entering our services. The benefits of interacting with animals are widely known, and mixing this in with our existing relationships with Young Carers and their families, and the close contact work we provide – it is a recipe for enjoyment, happiness, and comfort.

The Torbay Youth Trust in November acquired 2 guinea pigs that are our first step into offering Animal Assisted Activities, with the room to grow this area into tailored and targeted Animal Assisted Therapy through ongoing staff development and training. Let's just say, I am VERY excited and our little piggies – Ben & Jerry (successfully named via our Facebook Group) are settling in fabulously.



Wellbeing support
revolving around you

Space Zone has been created to support young carers' emotional wellbeing and mental health. It is a new venture and an exciting one. Teresa and Emma took part in a European study looking at an adapted model of ACT (Acceptance Commitment Therapy) called the DNAv model which was focusing on young people. It helps young people work through various emotional wellbeing journeys by looking at and taking in our surroundings, behaviours and acknowledging that emotions and feelings are normal in the form of discussions and activities. Sometimes it is about finding strategies that work to help us cope, accept and be OK. We will be looking at starting a new group with 10-13yr olds in the new year using some of our knowledge gained through this training and incorporating some fun, exciting activities alongside the sessions.

So as you can see, we are squirrelling away on continually developing the services we offer to meet the needs of the young carers & families we support. Happy New Year from all of us at Torbay Young Carers.

Best Wishes,
Holly D'Alessandro (She/Her)
Young Carers Project Leader

Contact us at:
Torbay Young Carers Service
(01803) 895299 (answerphone)
Email: admin@torbayyouthtrust.org.uk
Website: www.torbayyouthtrust.org.uk



WHAT IS THE COMMUNITY MENTAL HEALTH FRAMEWORK?

NATIONAL DEVELOPMENTS

Devon Partnership Trust and Livewell Southwest are part of a national improvement programme called the **Community Mental Health Framework**. Over the next five years, £1 billion will be spent across the country to expand and improve community mental health services to meet people's needs more fully, and in Devon, we have successfully bid for our share of this funding.

IMPROVING DEVON'S COMMUNITY MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

Many of Devon's mental health services are very good, and we have worked hard over recent years to improve people's experience. One area that has lacked particular focus and investment, is the provision of community mental health services for adults with severe mental health needs.

Through the Framework, we are planning to tackle these issues and to work with people with lived experience of our services, carers and other organisations to deliver more consistent, joined-up support. We will focus on meeting both individual and local community needs.

The new way of working will include:

- Services that support people's whole-life needs - not just their mental health needs.
- Services as close to home as possible which meet the needs of local communities.
- A one-team approach - removing organisational boundaries to ensure joined-up care.
- Support in navigating the system.
- Developing services in partnership with people with lived experience and Carers.
- Far closer partnership working with the voluntary sector to meet local needs.

HOW?

- We will provide community mental health services linked to your doctor's surgery, by creating Multi-Agency Teams, which will bring together other organisations so they can take a person-centred approach. These will have a particular focus on transition of young people to adult services, needs of younger adults (18–25-year-olds), needs of older adults, and physical health of people with mental health needs.
- Peer navigators (people with experience of mental health services) will walk alongside people so they get help when and where it is needed.
- We will further develop services that support people with eating disorders, personality disorders, and who require mental health rehabilitation.
- A formal arrangement has been agreed to enhance the voluntary, community and social enterprise sector (VCSE) to ensure fair and equal provision of support across the county.

WHAT'S HAPPENING NOW?

We're having conversations with people who have lived experience of mental health issues, staff, and other stakeholders to ensure their feedback shapes the project from the beginning.

WHAT WILL HAPPEN NEXT?

We are working through the detail of the new model and how it will work most effectively.

We would like to understand local needs by speaking to people who use our services and family and friends who support them. We will have these conversations in Torbay in early 2022.

HOW DO I FIND OUT MORE OR GET INVOLVED?

If you have any queries or would like to receive updates about the programme as it moves forward, please email dpn-tr.communications@nhs.net. or go to: <https://www.icsdevon.co.uk/priorities/mental-health/>

CARERS' NOTICEBOARD

'Have your say'

The 2 new Carers' Reps on the Learning Disability Partnership Board, Michelle and Pam, would like to hear from carers of people with Learning Disabilities, about any issues, hot topics or what is working well. Whilst the Reps cannot solve individual problems, they will be able to collect the information people send and then raise the issues at the LD Partnership board.

The Carers' Reps can be reached on this email address: **LD.carersrepresentatives@torbay.gov.uk** and copy in: **Leanne.Rafferty@torbay.gov.uk**

Also, following the short report by Healthwatch which focussed on issues raised at the Mencap Family Carers group, there will a wider survey for all carers of people with Learning Disabilities so that more carers have an opportunity to give their opinions, views and experiences. The Carers' Reps will be helping to develop this and are hoping to arrange an informal coffee morning where carers can come along and also share their views and comments. We are hoping this will be rolled out in the New Year.

The Accessible Information Service

Have you tried to access Health or Social Care information during the Covid 19 Pandemic?

The Accessible Information Service would like to hear how easy it was for you to find the Health or Social Care information that you needed.

Some of the information that we would like to know is:

- Have you tried to access the Torbay and South Devon NHS Foundation Trust public website?
- Was the information accessible to you?

To take part in the questionnaire and leave feedback please use the link below to an e-form where you can complete the questionnaire online <https://bit.ly/3lCUWCK>

If you would prefer a paper copy to complete, please telephone the Accessible Information service on:

0300 456 8373

Or email us : tsdft.accessibleinfo@nhs.net and we can put a questionnaire in the post to you.

Your feedback is greatly appreciated.

Torbay Family Carers

Do you care for an adult with a learning disability?

We help to support unpaid carers of adults with a learning disability in Torbay.

We offer:

- Information
- Support
- Health and wellbeing checks
- Carer groups
- Informal get-togethers
- Social opportunities

The person you care for does not have to be known to social care for you to access our support.

Contact us for more information or to be added to our mailing list:



Emma Young 07852 546530
emmajane.young@mencap.org.uk



Caroline Saunders 07939 880092
caroline.saunders@mencap.org.uk

Torbay Bipolar UK Support Group

Our support group meetings take place on the first Thursday of every month

Between 7pm and 9pm
At Central Church, Torhill Road, Torquay, TQ2 5RF

We also hold a weekly Resource Centre at the above venue on Tuesday mornings
Between 9.30am and 1pm

For appointments please call: **07490 183404**
(Please note this is not a crisis number for information on crisis support please see below)

Torbay Crisis Response Team - Urgent Mental Health
Helpline: **0300 555 5000**

Torbay Emergency Duty Team (out of hours):
0300 456 4876

Support is also available through the Samaritans on
116 123 or: Jo@samaritans.org

THE PLEASURE OF AUDIO BOOKS

I would like to share with Carers the pleasure I get from Audio Books. My membership costs £7.99 per month for one book. There is a vast selection which caters for all tastes. You also receive free of charge deals, and two for one sales. If you do not want to pay a monthly fee, there are free of charge sites available online. I have three audio books on the go - one for easy listening, one serious novel, one lecture study. I alternate these three depending on how I feel mentally. This is a part of my coping strategy, which I find very beneficial.

Audio books are very flexible, you can listen on your device while working and cooking etc. I do use headphones. My wife and myself find being Carers can be very rewarding, however it can become stressful and at times difficult. I'm sure that this is especially so for those Carers who have to cope on their own.

When you are feeling low, and with the responsibility of caring which can cause anxiety, listening to an audio book is rather like having a new friend reading to you - it brings great comfort and clarity of mind. I appreciate that audio books are not everyone's cup of tea, however, I hope this article will be of interest to some Carers, who might become inspired and give it a go.

From a Carer

LISTENING TO STORIES ON YOUR KINDLE

If you have a Kindle, some books support "Text to Speech".

If you're in doubt, or not sure how to use this function, then:

- Open your book and go to the top of the page toolbar.
- Click on the 3 bar menu icon, on the right hand side and if "Text to speech" is supported you can switch it on from here.
- You may need to use headphones. The voice is somewhat robotic but this may be an advantage if you are trying to go to sleep.

IF YOU'D LIKE HELP GETTING TO SLEEP

A white noise machine may help with drifting off to sleep. There are many available to buy with a varied price range from £10 up. You can choose how long you wish to listen for and set to your preference.

Smart Speakers such as Alexa have a range of sleep sounds that are free if you have an account. Just say Alexa play Sleep Sounds and you will be given a list to choose from. You may be asked if you wish to upgrade but this can be refused. Google Dot has a similar facility, as do other brands too.

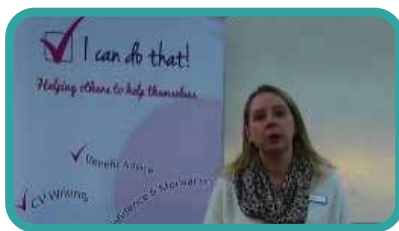
Chris Evans, Carer Evaluator

CARERS & EMPLOYMENT

ARE YOU, OR THE PERSON YOU CARE FOR, THINKING OF EMPLOYMENT, EITHER NOW OR IN FUTURE?

While employers are struggling to recruit staff across Torbay, this is a great time for you or the person you care for to 'dip your toe' into the employment market. More employers are considering people who can only work flexible hours, or employing people who have a learning disability or may have mental health needs.

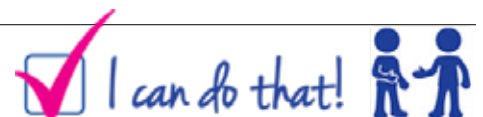
There is individually-tailored support available, some of which continues after employment. The following organisations presented at our Carers' Rights Day, and their videos are on www.tsdfit.uk/Carers on the "Carers' Rights" page.



I CAN DO THAT!

I Can Do That! Is a small team of friendly Mentors/Advisors. We can help you with mental health issues, increase your confidence/motivation, choose a career direction, train you in employability skills and even plan daily routines and nutrition to help you achieve your goals. We offer 1:1 tailored appointments to suit individual needs. All staff are fully trained and qualified, receiving ongoing training to ensure you get the best service possible.

- Amanda



EAT THAT FROG

Eat That Frog C.I.C was established in January 2011, by like-minded people coming together to set up a social enterprise based around People, Values and Quality. The Directors continue with this mission, enabling people to identify and overcome their barriers to live a more fulfilled life. Our bespoke educational provision for young people with special educational needs (autism, Asperger's, mental ill-health etc.) has also been recognised, and we now have direct contract status with the Education & Skills Funding Agency, which enables us to offer further opportunities.



DWP

Job Centres have job coaches aiming to find the right work place for you. Disability Employment Advisors advise the coaches on supporting people with additional needs into work. They are experts on Universal Credit and can advise what options make the best financial sense for you. DWP are particularly keen to support Carers, so if you need advice please contact the Jobcentre on **0800 169 0190**.



WORKING IN CARE

As a Carer you will have SO many transferable skills, and the Care Market needs people like you, who understand what it feels like 'on the receiving end'. This sector is offering enhanced pay rates and more flexible working than in the past. There is a huge 'Proud to Care' campaign to attract new people into caring, and 'accelerator' courses at South Devon college. Just watch the videos on www.tsdfit.uk/Carers on the "Carers' Rights" page or ring Debi Porter on **07880 136859**.

HELLO FROM ALL AT CARERS AID TORBAY

Carers Aid Torbay have had an extraordinary year supporting on average 150 Carers per month, on a one-to-one basis, by phone, Zoom or face-to-face. Although all of the team have been home working, each contact has been vital to the many people relying on their support. "I honestly don't think I could have got through this year without you" extolled one Carer.

As well as offering Carers assessments the team have been able to support Carers with advocacy (attending Zoom meetings with and on behalf of Carers) and provide moments of lightness with a Carers break of lunch out or a frothy coffee on the sea front. Simon has facilitated 2 fishing days and more are planned in the next few months.

Pennie and the book club are happy to share good reads, Julie facilitates the Men Matters group and is happy to start up the Natter Group again when it is safe for all to do so. Currently Steph is answering most of the online and phone queries coming into the service and is happy to signpost Carers to their named workers. Please ring: **(01803) 323510** for Carers Aid Torbay.

Bay Benefits support on average 30 people a month with benefit and entitlement paperwork and provide advocacy around benefits and entitlements to a further 60 people a month. Bay Benefits operates on a Tuesday and Thursday and is by appointment only, between the hours of 9.30am and 3.30pm - Kyla and John will be pleased to hear from you on: **07530 790354**, and will get back to you on their next working day.

Carers Aid Torbay are pleased to be able to offer day's out and treats for Carers again. Trips to Clarks Village, Sidmouth Folk Festival are in the pipeline ... watch this space.

We have not been able to finalise the events below for 2022, however, if you would like to express an interest, please call us on: **(01803) 323510** and we will pop your name down and contact you once the dates and further details have been confirmed. **Please note all the trips and events have limited capacity so please call early to secure a place.**

PAMPER SESSION AT THE INSPIRATIONS SALON – DATE TBC

Allow yourself a few hours to be pampered. Carers will be treated to two treatments on the day. The date and treatments available are yet to be confirmed.

SHORE FISHING - DATE TBC

We will be offering two shore fishing sessions this year. Again, we are not able to confirm dates and times as shore fishing is tide and weather dependent.

Coming in the next edition:

Carers Week 2022 • Update on our Carers Strategy 21-24

Do you know a Carer who would benefit from our services?

- FREE parking at local hospitals • Discounts in local shops • A Carer's Emergency card

This document can be made available in other formats.

For details please contact: (01803) 666620, or email: signposts@nhs.net | www.tsdfit.uk/carers