



Torbay and South Devon
NHS Foundation Trust

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Deadline for the Spring edition is:
19th February 2026

SIGNPOSTS FOR CARERS

The newsletter for unpaid Carers in Torbay



In this edition of Signposts

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Getting Out and About (page 5)

Planning for the Future (pull-out – pages 7-10)

Torbay Carers

Telephone: 01803 66 66 20

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Carers' Rights Day

Celebration and Information Event



Katy Heard, Carers Lead with Steve Darling MP and two of the original GP Carer Support Workers, Mary Sweet and Caroline Saunders

Torbay Carers held a celebration and information event on Saturday 22nd November to mark Carers' Rights Day. The event proved to be well-attended and uplifting, with a steady flow of visitors throughout the day. Carers fed back that they appreciated the information available, the range of services on offer, and being part of a wider community.

Steve Darling MP made the opening speech to celebrate 25 years of Carer Support in GP practices in Torbay. He cut the commemorative cake with two of the original Carer Support Workers – Mary Sweet and Caroline Saunders. There were free refreshments and soothing live piano music, which created a calm space for Carers to pause and connect with others. It also enabled many in-depth 1-to-1 conversations, about support available, and Carers' rights at work, at hospital, to assessments, and to breaks.

The event was supported by several partner organisations (some pictured), who provided

information and advice. Carers Services also launched Bridgit – an online platform which helps Carers to find information more easily '(see page 14). Two new domiciliary replacement care services for Carers of adults were publicised too. For more information, contact signposts@nhs.net 01803 66 66 20.

Thank you to everyone involved in making the day a success!

Some feedback received from Carers:

- "Lots of information. I didn't realise - so very helpful. Talked to lots of helpful staff."
- "Access to advice all in one place. Mindful activity with like-minded people – thank you!"
- "So nice to be listened to by understanding people."
- "I didn't realise there was so much support available to Carers! Thank you!"
- "Feeling part of a wider community. Links to other services."



Steve Darling MP cutting the cake to commemorate 25 years of GP Carer Support Workers with Caroline Saunders and Mary Sweet



Carers enjoying coffee and cake



And after ...



Wreath making before...



Dawn Cox provided peaceful piano music setting the scene for the event



Darren Crombie from Bridgit Care with a Carer



Laura Lees (Carer Support Worker from Corner Place) with a Carer



Becky and Teresa from SEND Family Voice (SEND Family Voice supports parents and Carers of children with special educational needs).



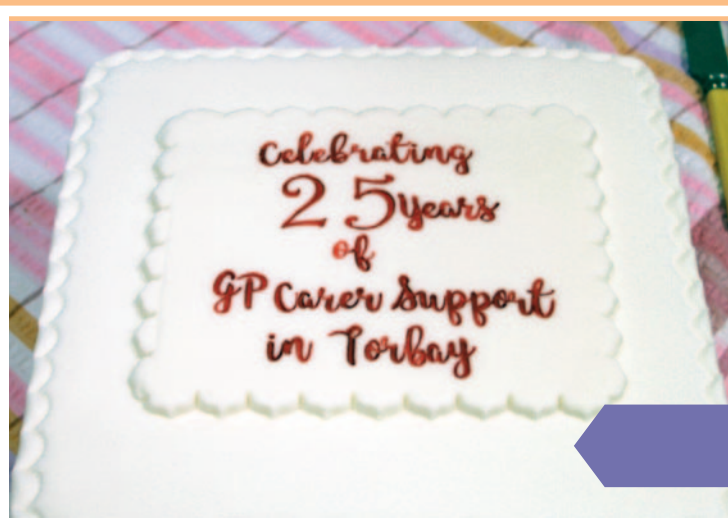
Dave Baker (Young Adult Carer Support Worker) and Luke Taylor



Jackie Ekers from Citizens' Advice Torbay with a Carer



Claire and Martina from the Paignton Hub with a Carer



New Technology Enabled Care Provider

Livity Life is now the new provider of Technology Enabled Care (TEC) services in Torbay, replacing the previous provider (NRS). They are a specialist TEC organisation and also operate an Alarm Receiving Monitoring Centre.

Livity Life offers a range of equipment to help people live safely and independently at home. Their most well-used service is the Pendant Alarm, which connects directly to their own 24/7 UK based monitoring centre.



Contact Livity Life:

- Phone: 01803 303173
- Email: TorbayTEC@livitylife.co.uk
- Website: www.mi-guardian.com

Support with the Digital Switchover for Telecare and pendant alarm users

UK landlines are due to be fully digital by January 2027. Switching to digital will be simple for most people, but if you support someone with additional needs, such as elderly relatives or someone who uses a telecare device or pendant alarm, it may be a concern. BT's Connected Together initiative encourages you to take a few simple steps to support others through the switch. Some reassurance and simple steps should make sure the switchover goes smoothly.

Find out more at: www.bt.com/about/all-ip/connected-together or call 0800 800 150.

Out of Hours Community Nurses

Out of hours Community Nurses are here to help and support Patients and their Carers. Some of the most common things they can help with include: Urinary Catheters, Bowel Care, Dressings, and End-of-Life Patients. However, you can contact them out of office hours, even if just for advice. Out of Hours Community Nursing operates between 19:00 – 07:00 7 days a week. For referrals, call 111 or Devon Doctors on 01392 269475. The palliative care number is 0845 5049113.

Further information is available here: <https://www.torbayandsouthdevon.nhs.uk/uploads/25733.pdf>

Adding Your Cared-For Person to Your NHS App

As a parent, family member or Carer, you may be able to add the person you care for to your NHS App. This is sometimes called having a linked profile or having proxy access. At the moment, you and your cared-for person must be registered at the same GP surgery. With permission from both of you, the GP surgery can set up the access for you.

For more information on how to do this. Please visit <https://www.nhs.uk/nhs-app/nhs-app-help-and-support/linked-profiles-in-the-nhs-app/> or contact your GP surgery. There is also a video guide: <https://youtu.be/lzMBwLrP2I>

Healthcare Travel Costs Scheme

If you're referred to a hospital or other NHS premises for specialist NHS treatment or diagnostic tests by a doctor, dentist, or another primary care health professional, you may be able to claim a refund of reasonable travel costs under the Healthcare Travel Costs Scheme.

This page explains who's eligible for the scheme and how to make a claim:

<https://www.nhs.uk/nhs-services/help-with-health-costs/healthcare-travel-costs-scheme-htcs/>

Carer Support Workers

Welcome to Aleigha Walker

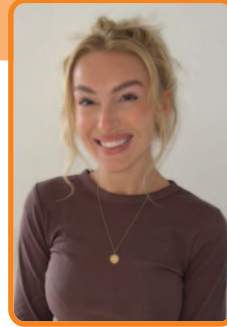
Welcome to our new Carer Support Worker for Compass House – Aleigha Walker

'Hi, I'm Aleigha (pronounced Ah-lee-ah), the new Carer Support Worker at Compass House Medical Centres.

I've previously worked here as a Senior Care Coordinator, and I'm excited to step into this new role supporting our Carers and their families.

As a Carer myself, I understand first-hand the challenges, emotions and responsibilities that come with looking after a loved one. This is why I'm passionate about creating a safe, supportive space for Carers – offering understanding, practical guidance, and someone who genuinely "gets it".

My aim is to help Carers feel heard, valued, and empowered. Please feel free to reach out, I'm always here to help. *Contact Aleigha on 07919 301355 or email d-icb.compasshousecarersupport@nhs.net*



Tribute to a wonderful gentleman and Carer Ambassador

Kevin Helmore



We don't normally include tributes to people in this magazine, but Kevin Helmore was special. He passed away unexpectedly in October after a short period of illness. Katy Heard, Carers' Lead, says, "Since before I joined Carers Services in 2009, Kevin has always been actively involved in improving services for unpaid Carers, even receiving a Blue Shield Award from Princess Anne in 2007. Alongside caring for their two sons with learning disabilities, he and his wife Janet have devoted much of their time to ensuring Carers' views were represented. As well as attending many meetings, he also was Carer Ambassador for the Learning Disability Partnership Board. Kevin earned respect and built constructive relationships by speaking calmly and respectfully, even while giving difficult messages. He was instrumental in co-designing the 'Triangle of Care' Carer Awareness training for Torbay & South Devon NHS Foundation Trust staff. We are so grateful to Kevin for all that he did, and for his legacy to Carers, so it is very fitting that the Carer of the Year Award organised by Torbay Communities now bears his name.

Getting Out and About / Staying Active

Spending time outdoors, meeting others, or taking part in something you enjoy can boost your energy and improve your mood. Even a short walk, a chat, or a swim can make a real difference to your wellbeing. Below are some suggestions on how to stay active during the winter months:

Torbay Leisure Card is free to Carers who have a Carers' Passport card. Torbay residents on low incomes, and those who have been informed they are eligible, can get cheaper entry to many sport and leisure activities. Visit <https://bit.ly/3Lq8KAd> or call Signposts on (01803) 66 66 20 for more information.

Bay Walks offers regular led walks in Torquay, Paignton, and Brixham. Socialise as you discover interesting and beautiful parts of the Bay. Enjoy the view, and improve your health alongside others. Walks are free, open to everyone, and led by trained volunteers. Visit <http://bit.ly/3YNSxYz> or call Signposts on (01803) 66 66 20.

Community Gardens Cricketfield Community Garden (Torquay) is a space for people to come together to grow fruit and vegetables or just relax in the fresh air. Visit <https://bit.ly/3YU64he> or call Signposts on (01803) 66 66 20 for more information.

Devon Connect – is a community hub for Torbay. Here you can find out what's on in your community, access volunteer opportunities, and exchange skills in the timebank. Visit <https://bit.ly/3No5nu4> for more information. You can also speak to your Community Builder or call Signposts on (01803) 66 66 20.

Replacement Care

You Said

You Said: Carers often tell us that they need a break, but can't leave the person that they care for.

We Did

We Did: We're really pleased that Adult Social Care has got funding to pilot some 'replacement care'. Some of this will be free, to help you when you need it most. A summary of the replacement care offers are below.

Time for you Torbay -

Companionship service by Torbay Communities

- Mon-Fri 9am-5pm for 1-3 hrs at a time (01803 446 022) – Companionship only – no personal care, no specialist needs / dementia
- **Free** for up to 18 hours, with a trained volunteer matched with you both- After 18 hours, you can continue by paying £10ph or, if the person that you care for meets Social Care eligibility, their charge will also be assessed*
- You need a recent Carer's Assessment and score as 'basic' need for a break
- This is a pilot, so we need good numbers, and details may change in future.

'Enhanced' Sitting Service –

if you need specialist, dementia, or personal care

- Co-ordinated through Adult Social Care-co-ordinated through Adult Social Care – call (01803) 219 700.
- Hopefully available evenings and weekends too, but not overnight
- The worker can occupy the person and provide personal care as agreed.
- **Free** for up to 18 hours (Needs explicit agreement if more than 3 hrs session needed)
- After 18 hours, you can continue by paying up to £26ph or, if the person that you care for meets Social Care eligibility, their charge will also be assessed
- You need a recent Carer's Assessment and score as 'basic' need for a break
- This is a pilot, so must be a new need or a new Carer, not to replace / add to an existing sitting service.

Urgent 72-hour domiciliary

care – to avoid Carer breakdown / if Carer unable

- This is a 1-off service co-ordinated through Adult Social Care when there is a crisis / to avoid some crisis with the care you provide (i.e. not planned hospital admission/break) Call Adult Social Care on (01803) 219 700
- **Free** for up to 72 hours in 3-day period. NB care can be intermittent e.g. blocks of 3 hours, but cannot go beyond the 3-day period-Can include up to 3 'night sits' usually 7pm to 7am (not night sleeps)
- The 72 hours are to enable Social Care to undertake assessments and for longer-term plans to be put into place / contingencies to be built into a person's package.

Hospitality Scheme - Discounted hotel stays for unpaid carers

Are you on the Carer's Register? Would you like to have a break from your caring role?

We have agreements with some local hotels to offer discounted stays to you and/or the person you care for.

You can both have a break together, on your own with additional support in place at home for the person you care for, or they can have a break on their own with or without additional

support – whatever works for you.

If you would like to find out which hotels are participating and would like me to organise this for you, please contact Debi Porter on 07880 136859 or debi.porter@nhs.net

'I can thoroughly recommend such a break to other Carers, even one night away gave me some headspace and a break from my caring role.'

Planning for the future

– DO IT NOW!

The next four pages form a pull-out for you to keep and refer to in the future.

This section covers planning for the future with the person whom you care for. It includes useful information and resources to help you consider what you might need to do now and information you can refer to in the future.



**Message in a Bottle
could save your life**

Message in a bottle

Lions Clubs Message in a Bottle could help if you have an emergency.

Message in a Bottle pots are a simple but effective way for people to keep their basic personal and medical details where they can be found in an emergency on a standard form and in a common location – the fridge.

Message in a Bottle helps the emergency services staff to save valuable time in identifying an individual and knowing if they have any allergies or take special medication, plus who to contact.

Paramedics support this Lions life-saving initiative and know to look in the fridge when they see the Message in a Bottle stickers. The initiative provides peace of mind that prompt and appropriate medical assistance can be provided, and next of kin/emergency contacts can be notified. It is important that you keep this information up to date.

You can order your bottle online here: <https://lionsmessageinabottle.co.uk/contact/>, from the Paignton Carers' Centre, Paignton Library or by calling Signposts on **01803 66 66 20**.



**LifeBook – Helping
if you lose capacity or pass away**

Age UK's **LifeBook** is a handy way of recording the practical details of your life, from who insures your car to where you keep important documents. It's also a way of ensuring your loved ones have the details they need if they have to sort something out on your behalf.

The LifeBook is divided into sections to help you organise your information: personal details, life contacts, financial, documents, possessions and final wishes. Follow the step-by-step instructions to complete the various sections. Not everything will be relevant to you – you can just fill out the sections that are.

You can download a copy to complete and save on your computer. You might want to print a copy for your files too.

Download your LifeBook to get started – visit <https://www.ageuk.org.uk/information-advice/money-legal/end-of-life-planning/lifebook/> If you'd prefer a printed copy of the LifeBook to fill out, you can order one for free by calling Age UK Advice Line on **0800 678 1602**.

Helping Manage Someone's Affairs: A Guide for Carers

As a Carer, you may find yourself helping the person you support with everyday financial tasks, paperwork, or important decisions. Understanding the different legal options can make life easier and ensure you have the authority you need.



Short-Term Help

If temporary help is needed – for example, during a hospital stay – the person can give permission through:

- A bank's third-party mandate, allowing you to manage their account (contact your bank to do this); or
- An Ordinary Power of Attorney, which gives short-term authority over financial matters. These only apply while the person still has mental capacity. To submit a Power of Attorney, visit <https://www.gov.uk/power-of-attorney> or call The Office of the Public Guardian on 0300 456 0300.

If they can no longer make decisions

If capacity has already been lost and no Legal Power of Attorney is in place, you can still apply for formal authority:

- **Appointeeship** – allows you to manage only their benefits, not all finances (for all finances, see Deputyship below). Visit <https://www.gov.uk/become-appointee-for-someone-claiming-benefits> for more information.
- **Deputyship** – granted by the Court of Protection. There are two types – a property and financial affairs order, which gives responsibility for managing property and financial affairs, and a personal welfare order, which allows them to make decisions about medical care and daily living. Visit <https://www.gov.uk/become-deputy> for more information.

Extra Support for Carers

You can also register with the **Vulnerability Registration Service** or your utility provider's **Priority Services Register** (see p. 14) to make dealing with companies easier when acting on someone else's behalf, or if they need priority support.

Planning Ahead: Lasting Power of Attorney (LPA)

If the person you care for still has mental capacity, the best time to plan is **now**. A **Lasting Power of Attorney** allows them to choose someone they trust to act on their behalf should they become unable to make decisions in the future.

There are two types:

- **Property & Financial Affairs LPA** – covering money, bills, bank accounts, pensions, and property.
- **Health & Welfare LPA** – covering medical treatment, care decisions, where they live, and end-of-life preferences.

Both LPAs must be registered before they can be used, and there is a cost. To make an LPA, you will need to contact a solicitor. You may be able to access 30 minutes of free legal advice from a solicitor, so do ask about this. Torbay Carers will run a free Legal Workshop soon. Take a look at the Education brochure for more information.

Alternative Housing Provision

The information below explains the options available should the person you care for need it.

If you have had a Social Care Assessment, you may be eligible to receive financial support to help with the cost of care. Torbay's Financial Assessment and Benefits (FAB) team help people (or their Carers when needed) to complete financial assessments for social care services and offer full benefits advice. They have to work to certain rules and regulations for both charging for care and making benefit claims. <https://www.torbayandsouthdevon.nhs.uk/services/financial-assessment-and-benefits/>

Choosing suitable accommodation is a complex area. Please see Torbay Council's website for further information. <https://www.torbay.gov.uk/adult-social-care/asc-housing/>. If you have Adult Social Care support, we would suggest seeking advice from them.

Adaptions, Equipment and Care at Home

Most of us want to live independent lives in our own homes for as long as possible. There are lots of home care services, including support from professional care workers and meal delivery services. There is a wide range of equipment and adaptions available that could help to support the person with needs living at home for longer. Please see page two of Signposts for more information on Technology Enabled Care.

Torbay Council provides **Disabled Facilities Grants (DFG)** and various discretionary grants to help disabled residents adapt their homes for independent living which you may be entitled to. The grants are primarily for essential works like installing ramps, stairlifts, or level-access shower.

For more information on the options above, please visit the council website:

<https://www.torbayandsouthdevon.nhs.uk/services/disability-information-service/dis-information-sheets/>

Supported Accommodation (Private or Sheltered) – including for Younger People

Supported living enables anyone over the age of 18 to live independently by providing additional support linked to the accommodation. For more information please visit the council website:

<https://www.torbay.gov.uk/adult-social-care/asc-housing/>

Extra Care Housing (housing and personal support in a more independent setting, with staff available to help with daily tasks. There is no 24-hour medical supervision like in a nursing home)

- **Focus:** A housing option with a focus on independence, with support services available.
- **For whom:** People who want some help with daily tasks and enjoy a social environment.
- **Staff:** Staff can assist with activities like meals and personal care, but there is no 24-hour medical supervision.
- **Environment:** Emphasises flexibility and allows residents to manage their own schedules.

Residential care homes (Care homes provide personal care and support for daily living)

- **Focus:** Assistance with daily living activities like bathing, dressing, and eating.
- **For whom:** Individuals who can no longer live alone but do not require complex medical care.
- **Staff:** Trained staff assist with personal care and medication, but are not qualified for 24-hour nursing.
- **Environment:** Offers social activities and meals, often with shared communal areas.

Nursing homes (24/7 medical care from registered nurses for people with complex health needs)

- **Focus:** Comprehensive medical care and support for those with complex health needs.
- **For whom:** Individuals requiring 24-hour nursing care, medical monitoring, and specialised treatments.
- **Staff:** Includes registered nurses on-site 24/7, supported by care assistants.
- **Environment:** Offers social activities and meals, often with shared communal areas with the support of on-site medical staff.

For further information, please see website.

<https://www.torbayandsouthdevon.nhs.uk/services/disability-information-service/dis-information-sheets/>

If you have any trouble accessing any of this information, please contact Signposts on 01803 66 66 20.

When the person you care for dies

When someone you care for dies, it can be easy to feel overwhelmed. The legal and practical steps like getting a medical certificate and registering the death will need to be considered. Simultaneously, you need to allow yourself to grieve, find support through friends, family, or professional services, and begin the process of adjusting to your new life without them. Please use the following as a guide to what is needed following the death of the person you care for.

Practical and legal steps

- **Get a medical certificate:** A doctor or hospital will provide a medical certificate of the cause of death, which is necessary for registering the death. This should be obtained within five days of the date of death,
- **Register the death:** You must register at a registry office. You will need the medical certificate to do this. To register deaths in Torbay by phone, call Torbay Council's Registrars on (01803) 207 130.
- **Notify Relevant Agencies:** Once you have a death certificate, you may need to notify relevant agencies i.e. banks and utility providers. The Government have a 'Tell us Once' system which should help with this. You will need to visit: <https://www.gov.uk/after-a-death/organisations-you-need-to-contact-and-tell-us-once>
- **Find the will:** Locate the will. A solicitor or the

deceased's family may have a copy.

- **Begin funeral arrangements:** A funeral director can help arrange the funeral, which may include details from the will.

Grief and emotional support

- **Allow yourself to grieve:** It is important to acknowledge your sadness and not ignore your feelings.
- **Talk to others:** Share memories and support with other people who knew the deceased well.
- **Seek professional help:** If you are struggling to cope, contact a bereavement support organisation like Cruse Bereavement Support (call 0808 808 1677), Marie Curie Support Line on 0800 090 2309 or speak to your GP about counselling.

Adjusting to life after care

- **Reflect on your skills:** Recognise the skills you developed as a Carer, such as being organised, problem-solving, and coping under pressure.
- **Find a new focus:** Think about your needs and what you would like to do with your time when you are ready. You may want to return to your old life or explore new opportunities like joining a club, traveling, or volunteering.

More detailed information on the above steps can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/after-a-death>



Children & Families in Grief

Children and Families in Grief is a charitable organisation that provides practical, emotional and creative support for children and their families in South Devon following bereavement.

To find out more about accessing their services, please visit their website here: <https://www.childrenandfamiliesingrief.co.uk/referral>



Did you know – If your cared for received support from Rowcroft Hospice, you can receive support from their specialist team. Support is available for family members and Carers of anyone who was helped by Rowcroft before their death. There is no cost involved. To find out more, please visit:

<https://rowcrofthospice.org.uk/how-we-can-help/hospice-care-south-devon/caring-relative-friend/bereavement/>

Keeping Active

Deconditioning is the loss of physical and cognitive abilities due to reduced activity. This often happens after illness or hospital stays. It affects muscle strength, balance, fitness, memory, and motivation. Anyone can be at risk, especially those with long-term conditions, and the decline can be rapid if people don't move for long periods (including during hospital admissions). Shorter hospital stays help reduce this risk. Carers can help at home by encouraging the person you care for to do as much activity as they can.



How Carers can help the person they care for

- Encourage independence in any daily tasks, even if it takes longer.
- Support them to get dressed daily and wear proper footwear (if possible).
- Stimulate the mind with reading, conversation, or puzzles.
- Attend community exercise or social groups if possible.

In Hospital

- Ask staff about safe activity levels.
- Encourage sitting out of bed for meals and safe movement.
- Support gentle exercises and bring familiar items for comfort.
- Talk about home routines to maintain orientation.
- Help plan for returning home as soon as medically safe.
- Ask if you can attend the Physio's visit to learn about what is important.

At home

- Ensure movement is part of daily life: making drinks, walking, meal preparation.
- Encourage short, frequent activity rather than long sessions.
- Remove trip hazards and improve lighting.
- Use recommended equipment for safety.
- Seek clinical review if mobility or cognition worsen.
- Never attempt unsafe lifting – get professional help from Social Care if needed.

Carers: This is equally important for you

- Keep moving with short walks and light strength activities.
- Try to get enough sleep and make sure you have enough to eat and drink.
- Take on physical tasks like lifting safely and use equipment when necessary.
- Seek help early – use replacement care ('respite') and support protect your health.
- Stay up to date with your own healthcare – make time for GP visits.

Care Quality Commission inspection – Thank you to Carers

The Care Quality Commission (CQC) inspected Torbay's Adult Social Care provision in September, and their report was published on 17th December, giving Torbay an overall rating of 'Good'.

Torbay Carers Services would like to thank the Carers who helped with their contribution to the inspection. The Inspectors heard Carers had positive experiences, as well as very high satisfaction levels with the support they receive for their caring roles.

The CQC report highlighted areas that require improvement as well as elements to be proud of. It has given useful feedback to improve the experience people using Social Care services and Carers have in Torbay. To read the full report visit <https://www.cqc.org.uk/care-services/local-authority-assessment-reports/torbay-1225> or contact Signposts on (01803) 66 66 20 to request a paper copy.

Attendance Allowance

Getting started

Attendance Allowance (AA) is a disability benefit claimed by adults who are above state pension age and awarded purely based on care and/or supervision needs. It's classed as a **qualifying benefit** for Carer's Allowance (CA) purposes. This means that the person you care for must have an AA award before you can claim CA (see <https://tinyurl.com/59cjha7n>). However, AA claims have a relatively low initial success rate, so this article focuses on the essentials of getting a claim off to a good start.

No financial barriers

AA is paid regardless of income, savings or national insurance contributions. It's tax-free and doesn't negatively affect means-tested benefits such as Pension Credit and Housing Benefit. Care/supervision needs must have existed for at least 6 months prior to claiming (unless the terminal illness rules apply, see <https://tinyurl.com/yu5np2j5>).

Caution: *AA cannot be claimed if Personal Independence Payment (PIP) continues beyond state pension age. The PIP (daily living component) is an alternative qualifying benefit for CA purposes.*

Before you attempt the form

Read through the form to familiarise yourself with the questions. It's important to stress that it doesn't matter if help is actually provided or not – what is important is *whether help is reasonably required*. A conversation with the person you care for about their needs (whether they are met or not) should help.

The AA structure

AA is awarded at one of two weekly rates. Lower rate (£73.90) for frequent help or *constant supervision during the daytime. Higher rate (£110.40) for supervision throughout the day and night (also terminal illness claims). Claimants must be so *severely disabled, physically or mentally* that they require care or supervision. (*frequent or regular)

What is care?

Tasks include: getting in and out of bed; washing and bathing; using the lavatory; dressing and undressing; eating; drinking; taking medication; and moving around safely indoors (outdoor mobility is excluded).

What is supervision?

Supervision includes: watching over someone to prevent danger to themselves or others; prevention of wandering (dementia); averting falls; prevention of self-harm; prompts for medication, eating and drinking.

Supporting evidence is important

Patient copy letters (the clinical correspondence between health care professionals about the patient), may be helpful to request as they're generated during the treatment process. A formal diagnosis is not essential. A 7-day diary of care/supervision episodes (showing help required, duration, and the time of day) is good evidence to submit.

You can get detailed AA information sheets (free) from Age UK (<https://tinyurl.com/t9dx7rjx>) and Carers UK (<https://tinyurl.com/4u23r968>). These also include advice on challenging negative decisions.

Obtaining a claim form

Forms can be requested from the AA Helpline (0800 731 0122), downloaded from <https://tinyurl.com/4jhkte72>. You can also claim online at <https://tinyurl.com/3s5n2f2t>.

If you need help or advice with the form, local agencies such as Bay Benefits, offer support, see <https://tinyurl.com/3s5n2f2t> or call 0753 0790 354 (Tuesdays and Thursdays only).



Next edition:
Universal Credit.

Written by
Steve Gale



Carers Aid Torbay

Happy New Year from all of us to all of you. Hope you had great fun at the Christmas coffee morning. The cake was fab and the raffle, as ever was fandabbydozy.

Sidmouth Folk Festival will once again be offered as a free day out for Carers in August. Remember to book early to guarantee your place.

Carer's Aid Torbay (CAT) offers advocacy, one-to-one support and Carers' assessments for unpaid Carers in the Bay. Your one-to-one workers are Pennie (Manager), Julie (Senior Carer Support Worker) and Simon (Carer Support Worker). Steph co-ordinates the team, and answers the phone when you ring CAT on 01803 323 510.

Bay Benefits offers paperwork and benefit and entitlement advice to unpaid Carers and their families on Tuesdays and Thursdays only. Ring Kyla on 07530 790 354 to make your appointment.

Please ring Steph in the office if you need to talk



to a solicitor regarding a caring matter. She can arrange a free half-hour phone appointment with a local solicitor for you.

What's your New Year's resolution? Hopefully it is about looking after you, finishing off the cherry liqueurs and keeping warm!

Warmest wishes from Pennie and the team at Carers Aid Torbay.



Torbay Family Carers

Torbay Family Carers of Adults with Learning Disabilities offers support to Carers of adults with a learning disability in Torbay. We are a friendly and welcoming service and offer 1:1 support as well as regular groups for Carers in the daytime and evening.

We are pleased to announce that we have been successful in obtaining funding from the National Lottery Community Fund! This will allow us to offer social get-togethers for our Carers, as well as some family activities. We will use the money to develop a website and information packs for Carers and will also create a new group for adults



with learning disabilities who care for other people with learning disabilities. This will all be in addition to continuing our core work.

If you're a Carer of an adult with a learning disability in Torbay, we'd love to know what activities and information you'd like. To get in touch, contact our Specialist Carer Support Workers: Helen (07937 838789) or Emma (07852 546530) or email carers@devonlink-up.org

Volunteers Wanted

Torbay Carers are always looking for volunteers to help to identify and support Carers. There are a couple of different roles currently available.

If you are interested, contact Debi Porter on 07880 136 859 or debi.porter@nhs.net

SAME4: Fire safety starts at home

Make a referral to Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Service if you think that a person you are in contact with may be at increased risk of fire due to the following SAME fire death factors.

Smoking



Smoke in bed, fall asleep with a lit cigarette, and overload ashtrays.

Age



Are over the age of 65 and show signs of isolation, deteriorating health, dementia and sight loss.

Mobility



Have mobility concerns and might use equipment which could block exit routes.

Emollient creams



Emollients, with or without paraffin, pose a fire risk when residue dries on fabrics.

Families, caregivers, and community members all play a vital role in protecting people most at risk

You can help

Small changes save lives. Remind people of the risks or refer to our Home Fire Safety Team if you are concerned.



You can complete a home safety visit referral form on our website: www.dsfire.gov.uk, or call: 0800 05 02 999.



Carers' Coffee Groups



Brixham	Paignton	Torquay
Last Tuesday of every month	1st Wednesday of every month	3rd Thursday of every month (not in January)
1.00 - 3.00pm	1.00 - 3.00pm	1.45 - 4.15pm
Christian Community Centre TQ5 8DS	St Paul's Church TQ3 2PB	The Anchorage Hotel TQ1 3PT
Contact Carole on 07385 407683	Contact Laura on 07919 063025	Contact Romina on 07785 515979

Do you support a friend, family member or neighbour?



Access Online Carers Self-Help

Personalised Advice & Toolkits

Local Services & Events

Smart Forms

Financial Support & Discounts



To create your own self-help plan, scan the QR code or go to...
<https://carers.bridgit.care/app/torbay/live>



Time Out

For Brunel, Chilcote and Chelston Hall Carers

Join us at one of our meetings at the Torquay Coffee Group, held on 3rd Thursday of every month. Please be aware there will be no meeting in January.

Future topics:

February – The Cary Family in Torquay

March – Torquay's Lav Affair with the smallest room in the house

April – Craft session (booking essential)

If you have any questions please contact Beccy on 07555 354 795 or Romina on 07785 515 979.



The Priority Services Register (PSR) is free to join. It helps utility companies, including energy suppliers, electricity, gas and water networks to look after customers who have extra communication, health access or safety needs. It supports households that need extra help with everyday energy matters like bills, or to be a priority in the unlikely event of a power cut, gas or water supply interruption.

The Register is particularly helpful to people who have vital medical equipment, so please consider joining if it could help you or the person you care for.

Or call Signposts
01803 66 66 20

Find out more at www.thepsr.co.uk

Hello From Young Adult Carers



We had a very busy few months leading up to the end of 2025 and would like to give heartfelt thanks to our supporters.

Torbay Young Carers and Young Adult Carers had a joint information stand during Freshers' Week at South Devon College with lots of young people visiting our stand. The end of September saw the return of Young Adult Carers from their Tall Ships Trust sail with positive feedback on life skills learnt and friendships made. A big THANK YOU to Torquay Rotary Club's donation making this annual event happen.



Each year Marldon Community Choir nominates a Charity to support with their Summer Concert, and this year Torbay Young Adult Carers charity was chosen. We enjoyed a beautiful night of singing at the choir's Sounds of Summer 2025 concert, it was so lovely to meet the choir. Later, Cheryl and Ruth were invited to a rehearsal and presented with £500.00 for the YAC Charitable Fund. We will be able to use this generous donation to offer activities throughout the year that will build confidence, vital skills, and resilience for our Young Adult Carers. As well as giving them a much-needed break from their caring responsibilities. A big THANK YOU to Marldon Community Choir.

November gave us Carers' Rights Day and the Carers' Celebration Event at Paignton Library where we held a stand with other services providing information. Thanks to Pat Brodie who donated a cake for the YAC cake raffle which raised £81.00.

December started with the Young Adult Carer annual Festive dinner, a great chance to have a get together and have fun whilst having some tasty food – a good time was had by all. Young Adult Carers took to the ice on the Bay of Lights: real ice rink, showing their skills, a good laugh was had by all. Plymouth YAC and Torbay YAC got together for a Christmas drop in special held in Plymouth – Young Adult Carers really got into the festive spirit with food, games and of course a Christmas quiz.

Finally, and an important part of our run up to Christmas came the delivery of 50+ Christmas stockings, with gifts donated by NHS staff. A big "THANK YOU" to all who donated and once again helped to make this a special time for our Young Adult Carers.



Best wishes to one all for a Happy New Year!

If you are a Young Adult Carer or know someone aged between 16-25 years old, who is in a caring role, please contact us. You can do this via our website: www.torbayyac.co.uk or email: torbayyac@nhs.net or phone: (01803) 208455/ 666620. Cheryl, Dave and Julie (YAC Team)

Young Carers

Young Carers are children and young people under 18 years old, who look after a family member or friend who is sick, disabled, has mental health problems, or has a drug or alcohol problem. The next edition of Signposts will feature an introduction to Torbay's Young Carers Team.

To find out more about the Torbay Young Carers' Service, please visit

<https://www.torbay.gov.uk/children-and-families/services-and-support/young-carers-service/>

Torbay Carers' Strategy

Five Carers' Rights Days ago, Torbay Council and Torbay & South Devon NHS Foundation Trust (TSDFT) were the first organisations to sign up to the Devon-wide Commitment to Carers. It was the first year of COVID, and the formal Devon-wide launch in March 2020 had been cancelled, but both organisations wanted to acknowledge Carers' contributions and formally commit to supporting them.

Five years on, most of the senior leaders have changed, but their commitment has not, so we are pleased to say that both organisations refreshed their Commitments to Carers on Carers' Rights Day in November.

Nicola McMinn, Chief Nurse at the Trust said, 'We know our health and care system can be complicated to navigate, and we're committed to supporting Carers, which is why I'm so pleased that both organisations have updated and signed the Commitment to Carers. The pledge covers seven principles to ensure we do all we can to identify and support Carers, enabling them to make informed decisions about their caring role.'

These principles are underpinned by the Triangle of Care, which is about treating the people we support and their Carers as equal partners in their care and treatment. Both TSDFT and Torbay Council have agreed to prioritise Carer awareness to all staff.

Anna Coles (Director of Adult and Community Services), David Thomas (Leader of Torbay Council) and Anne-Marie Bond (Torbay Council Chief Executive)



Joe Teape (Chief Executive, TSDFT) and Nicola McMinn (Chief Nurse, TSDFT)



Torbay Carers' Education Brochure

You will have received a copy of the latest Education Brochure for Carers in Torbay with this newsletter. Carers' Services encourages all Carers to look at the brochure to see if there is anything that would help with your caring role, as a fun activity or to meet others. A quote from one of the attendees at a recent Pilates course is below:

"The free five-week introduction to Pilates course was excellent. The tutor was very

helpful and clearly and patiently described what we needed to do. I learned so much and thoroughly recommend the course to others."

The course will run again in April so please complete the form within the brochure or go to <https://tsdft.uk/carerscourses>

Please contact us if you would like to attend a course or have any questions. We are always looking to offer new courses if you have any suggestions as well.



If you are no longer a Carer, please let us know on 01803 66 66 20, or by using the QR code. If you have already informed us, but have still received this magazine, please accept our apologies. It may be that our database has not been updated at the time of printing.

