

York Carers Centre News

January to March 2021 **Issue 93**

Carer friendly employers

We start the year with congratulations to York Teaching Hospital NHS Foundation Trust who have achieved our Carer Friendly Employer charter. With a 9,000 strong workforce across eight hospitals and the community, the Trust are one of York’s largest employers, and they have committed to supporting their staff who have caring responsibilities outside of work. Support will be given through new ways of working, training and flexible policies. It marks an important commitment to carers who are balancing employment with care, at a time when it’s needed most.



Chief Executive Simon Morritt

To know more about how we support carers balancing paid work with care, and employers in creating carer friendly workplaces, see page 11.

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Evening Advice Line

Do you need some help or advice to support you in your caring role, such as:

- Benefits for you or your family?
- Your rights as a carer– such as rights in employment, or disability rights?
- How to get support or equipment for the person you care for?
- How to plan and pay for care?

We can offer you help on a range of topics, and as well as being here for you during weekdays, we also offer a free, weekly evening advice line.

There's no need to book an appointment for the evening advice line, just pick up the phone and our benefits and advice workers Andrew Davies and Shirley Monteith will be there to offer you help.

Every Wednesday 5 to 8pm

01904 715 490

Welcome

Hello and welcome to our January newsletter, which comes with our very best wishes for 2021. We've been listening to your experiences and appreciate how difficult the past year has been for carers; we are working hard to do whatever we can to support you. Please do pick up the phone or keyboard and get in touch to let us know if you have any ideas for what we can do to make things a little easier, and rest assured that we are banging the drum for all unpaid carers whenever we get the chance. We're here on the telephone during our usual hours during the lockdown, with all of our usual support and advice.

Have a look at the free online hubs and wellbeing sessions coming up in the next few months, and whatever your caring situation, these are for you. There are Carers Hubs every week - a chance for a chat and to try some new activities, as well as yoga and mindfulness courses starting in February, if you'd benefit from some quiet time for your own wellbeing.

Joining in with groups or speaking to friends and family online is new to many of us, and it can be a great way to keep in touch during restrictions. If you need help to get online, even if its from the very basics, we have suggestions and sources of help on page 6.

Lastly we're looking forward to offering new sessions this year, specifically for parent carers of disabled children; the sessions are detailed overleaf.

Support for parent carers

We have new sessions coming up this year specifically for parent carers of disabled children, thanks to funding from York Inspirational Kids. The supportive sessions will be a chance to explore some key issues along with other parents. The first topics are detailed below, with more to follow later in the year.

Benefits for parent carers

Wednesday 3 February 10am

The Welfare Benefits Unit will provide information on benefits, followed by a question and answer session, and opportunity for individuals to get advice from Andrew Davies, our Benefits Advisor.

Communicating with professionals

Thursday 4 March 10am to 12pm

Delivered by Not a Care in the World, this session will be a chance to step back and explore challenging communication situations with professionals using examples from the group. We'll discuss and practice positive solutions for the future, in a supportive environment.

Booking: Sessions will be on Zoom, and you will need to be registered with York Carers Centre to book as places are limited. All carers attending will receive a cream tea delivery to your door. Please book on enquiries@yorkcarerscentre.co.uk or call: **01904 715 490**.

COVID updates for carers

Symptom-free testing

Unpaid carers are eligible to have regular, free coronavirus tests, without any symptoms. The tests take place at York St John University and are available seven days a week. To book or get help with symptom-free testing in York call the support line Monday to Friday, between 9am and 5pm on **01904 551 559**.

Vaccine news

It has been confirmed by the government that those who are in receipt of carer's allowance, or those who are the main carer of an elderly or disabled person whose welfare may be at risk if the carer falls ill, should be offered priority coronavirus vaccinations - alongside people with underlying health conditions. To ensure you are contacted by your GP to be offered a vaccination in due course, please let your GP know that you are someone's main carer to have it noted on your record.

Caring responsibilities and Covid

Do you need support explaining why you are visiting the home of the person you care for in the lockdown, or why it's necessary to leave the house more frequently to undertake responsibilities like shopping for the person you care for? If so we can provide letter proof of your registration with York Carers Centre, please get touch if you need our help: **01904 715 490**.

Do you need help to get online?

The past year has shown us how important it is to be able to use technology. Being online is a way to connect with friends and family, get information, watch films or order your prescription. It can also enable you take part in support groups and activities from home such as our carer support groups which are held on zoom while restrictions are in place.

If you'd like help to get started using technology or want to build your confidence to do more online, there are supportive sources who can help over the phone. You can get help on what type of device to buy, to how to access groups, or how to contact others.

Free sources of help:

- **Citizens Online:** Charity helping anyone get started using technology. Call **0808 196 5883**, and you will be called back by a trained Digital Champion to offer friendly, patient support to talk you through everything you need for getting set up.
- **AbilityNet:** Charity providing support to help older people and disabled people of any age with technology, and getting set up online. Call the friendly team on **0800 048 7642** on weekdays.
- **Zoom Confidence Sessions:** Once you're set up on your technology, why not drop into our friendly Zoom Confidence sessions. It's a chance for a chat and to see what it's like at an online group. The dates are: **Monday 1 February** and **Monday 1 March from 2.45 to 4pm**. Get in touch to book: 01904 715 490.

Words from a carer:

“Socialising in the time of Covid is hard and we can become isolated. However, there are great opportunities to join in with activities, courses and groups in this season by means of technology. We can meet on zoom in support groups, and we can try things such as yoga, creative writing and more!

Most recently I joined in with the Mindfulness course from York Carers Centre. I had done the face to face course with facilitators Ali and Susie last year and wondered if it would be the same. It was actually rather easier to take part in the group each week online from home, and the convenience was such that one lady attended from her parked car. Practising the exercises was more relaxed in my own arm chair. I have to say that the teaching was just as good!

The course leaders dealt with the technology side and offered support where needed. You can choose to be visible or just choose to be heard. You can even choose just to listen if you are really quite shy like me— though you might miss out on the full experience. You can also step away from the screen during practice, which is another bonus not available in a face to face class. I felt that I did get some contact with other carers during the course and was encouraged by what they had to share.” Kindly shared by Vanda, December 2020.

Wellbeing sessions coming up

Take some quiet time for yourself with these supportive weekly wellbeing sessions, focussed on finding some space for you, whilst managing the demands of caring.



Mindfulness for caring and coping

Our Mindfulness for Caring sessions with facilitators Ali and Susie have been described as “a set time away from the usual routine; a self-care break on the job”. We’d love you to join us for the upcoming five week course, running every Friday from 26 February to 26 March from 10.30am to 12pm on zoom.

You will also receive a free copy of Dr Cheryl Rezek’s book, Mindfulness for Carers, to support your own mindfulness practice at home.

Yoga

A gentle taster to Vinyasa Yoga with Jenny Carpenter, free and suitable for beginners as well as anyone who already practices yoga. Sessions will run over six weeks from Monday 22 Feb to Monday 29 March from 7.15 to 8.30pm, and will take place on zoom.

Please get in touch to book your space on mindfulness or yoga: enquiries@yorkcarerscentre.co.uk or 01904 715 490.

Carers Hubs

Join us at the friendly, free Carers Hubs taking place online weekly. At each Hub we catch up, try our hand at something new- and the person you care for is welcome to come along with you. Please contact us to book a place. For the new year we have a different Hub activity each month:

January: Get Moving

Come and try out some gentle, easy ways to get moving for all abilities in these sessions with the coaches from Complete Life Fitness.

When: Tuesday 19 Jan 6.45 to 8pm, Thursday 28 Jan 10.15 to 11.30pm.

February: Art Tutorial

Join us to paint a watercolour landscape with Liz Foster from York Learning. No experience is needed, and all equipment you'll need to take part will be sent to your home prior to the session.

When: We'll be running the session on three February dates; please book your preferred date and you can be put on a reserve list if you'd like to repeat the session on a further date. Available dates are: Wednesday 10 Feb 2.45 to 4pm, Tuesday 16 Feb 6.45 to 8pm, and Thursday 25 Feb 10.15 to 11.30pm.

March: Jorvik Viking City

We'll be delving into the history of York with York Archaeological Trust, who are coming to talk to us about Viking York.

When: Wednesday 10 March 2.45 to 4pm (Viking Q&A), Tuesday 16 March 6.45 to 8pm (DIG the Vikings), and Thursday 25 March 10.15 to 11.30pm (Meet the Medic).

Regular support groups

Our monthly groups are a supportive space to talk to our staff and other carers. If you're wondering whether a particular group is right for you, please get in touch and we can answer any questions – new members are always welcome. Groups are currently on zoom; to book a place please get in touch.

Mental Health Groups

We have two monthly sessions for people who help care for someone with a mental health condition.

- **Mental Health Drop In:** primarily aimed at people new to caring, or caring for a young person or someone in crisis. It runs the last Wednesday each month from 6 to 7pm.
- **York Mental Health Carers Group:** some sessions are focused on sharing support, others have visiting speakers, we run this group in partnership with Rethink Mental Illness York Group. It runs the second Wednesday of each month from 7pm.

Substance Misuse Group

We have two sessions for people affected by someone else's substance misuse. If it's your first time attending our facilitator will offer you a telephone appointment beforehand.

- **Substance Misuse Carers Group:** third Wednesday of each month from 1.30 to 3pm.
- **Gambling and Substance Misuse Carers Group:** we know that some carers find daytime groups difficult to attend, so this group is in the evenings. It runs on the first Tuesday of each month from 6 to 8pm.

Working and caring

If you're one of the 1 in 7 working people balancing your paid job alongside caring for someone outside of work, it might feel like a juggling act. For many carers being in paid work as well as caring can be emotionally and financially beneficial - but it can come with its own challenges. 1 in 6 working carers may end up cutting back or stopping their paid work because the challenge of juggling everything becomes too much.

Support for carers:

If you're a carer in this position we can help. You might want someone to liaise with your employer on your behalf, provide you with information or advice about your rights, or, we may be able to offer training for your employers. We can also offer benefits advice and support if you are thinking about reducing your hours or leaving work altogether. We also have a range of factsheets to share.

Support for employers:

If you're an employer we can support you to create a carer friendly workplace, which can make a significant difference in retaining staff. We can help with: Good practice for managing carers in your workforce; Training for you and your team; Employment Support Pack; Support with developing carer friendly policies.

Please see page 12 for information about our Carer Awareness Training and the upcoming dates for 2021.

Carer Awareness Training

Our face to face, group training sessions are an opportunity for organisations, community groups or employers to come and learn more about carers and the support available for unpaid carers across the city. This will increase your understanding of carers, their role and its effect on their lives.

We will explore how the community, professionals and employers can identify carers early, recognise and work with carers as partners in care, and help carers to maintain their own health and wellbeing. **Dates for 2021 are:**

- Mon 26 April
- Tues 25 May
- Weds 30 June
- Mon 26 July
- Tues 24 Aug
- Weds 29 Sept

Sessions all run from 10.30am to 12.30pm. Please contact Sam Varo at Vale of York Clinical Commissioning Group to book: **sam.varo@nhs.net or 01904 551 773.**

Mental health marketplace

Join us for a Q&A session with guest speakers from mental health services in York on **Wednesday 10 February 6 to 7pm online.**

This session will be followed by the mental health carers group; please contact us to book a place: 01904 715 490.

News from the Adult Team

Sharron Smith, Adult Team Lead



Hello to all you wonderful carers out there and here's hoping for a better 2021! Our team of Carer Support Workers are still here offering one to one support to adults, as well as Carers Assessments of Need. All our support is being given over the telephone, and the groups and Hubs are on Zoom - we hope to return back to face-to-face as soon as it's safe to do so. Remember we didn't even know Zoom existed until March - so we are all in it together!

The Carers Action Group continues to meet regularly, making sure carers voices are included on issues like accessing the city centre and blue badge parking, as well as meeting with the council's Commissioning Manager for Carers, Craig Waugh. We've also been involved in local developments such as in mental health services, as well as talking on local radio to raise awareness of the challenges facing carers during the pandemic.

We've been making contact with isolated older carers through welfare calls, and we've provided self-care boxes for specific groups of carers, thanks to funding we've received.

Lastly just a reminder look after yourselves - it's not selfish, it is self care, and it's vital that for some time each day you have a little moment of self care, whether it be 5 deep breaths, a tea and a sit down, or chance to take a closer look at nature around you.

Please get in touch if we can help.

Young Adult Carer News

From Leah Nicholson,
Young/Young Adult Carer Support Worker



Our team are here supporting young adults aged 18 to 25 through one to one calls, check ins and online activities during the lockdown. We hope to do a mix of online and in person activities as soon as it's safe to do so, so check our Facebook group **Yac York** where we'll post everything new. We also send text updates when young adult carer activities are coming up; please get in touch to start receiving our texts if you don't already get them!

Thank you to everyone coming along to activities and steering groups, it's been great to see you all. We've received lots of useful feedback and ideas for the future. If you'd like to start coming to YAC steering groups please get in touch with me on leah.nicholson@yorkcarerscentre.co.uk for details. Our personal favourite activity has been 'Paint with Bob Ross' (shown below), we were impressed by your artistic talent!

The Essentials and Education Fund has now closed; thank you to everyone who applied, we'll keep you updated with future funding opportunities.

Lastly, we're immensely proud of the resilience that you have shown, keep going and remember that we're here for you.



Young Carer News

From Chris James, Young Carer Team Lead



The past year has been especially tough for young carers, with isolation and disruptions to their education. Our team is committed to ensuring our support continues to reach 5 to 18 year olds, and to providing consistency to help young carers manage their caring roles at a time when it's needed most.

We provide regular online youth groups and one to one telephone support, and will be taking our work back into schools as soon as it's safe to, so that young carers can benefit from peer-drop-ins and one to one sessions.

Despite the challenges, we've seen and heard incredible stories of giving and growth from the young carers we support. We've also noticed a real lift in energy and enjoyment in our online youth groups, as everyone becomes more confident taking part. This has allowed us to offer sessions where young carers can take time for themselves to be creative, have fun and express themselves, in the form of drama sessions, baking sessions, crafts and quizzes.

We know that January can be a difficult time of year so we are sending gift boxes for young carers courtesy of the Better Care Fund to offer a boost to their wellbeing. They'll include hand crafted 'cuddle blankets' donated by local makers at Project Linus which we think young carers will love receiving in the post.

Lastly, the annual Young Carers Action Day is coming up in March and we'll be using the opportunity to raise awareness of young carers and the incredible contribution they make across our city.

From a reader

“A few years ago I accompanied my friend during the latter part of her journey with vascular dementia. The unusual feature of our friendship was that we were/are both lesbian, and I was her main carer.

This presented me with a number of challenges whilst she was living in a nursing care home. It was difficult to be open about the exact nature of our relationship, and to openly express our love and affection for each other. I would have liked to have been supported by other members of the LGBTQ+ community at the time.”

If you're a carer who has been through, or is going through a similar experience and would like to talk, please let us know; we can put you in touch with the reader above, as well as supporting you directly.

Please get in touch with us on **01904 715 490**.

Would you like to receive our newsletter by email?

Please let us know on: enquiries@yorkcarerscentre.co.uk

What's still on in the city?

Are you looking for inspiration for getting out in the fresh air locally while restrictions are in place? Or ideas for online activities to take part in from home? The Live Well York website is a great place to start, with all the most up to date listings of what's on.



As well as all the 'Covid ready' community activity listings, there are also links to tried and tested walking and cycling routes, including how to hire one of the new e-scooters that we've seen popping up round the city. Take a look at the website to see what's available: www.livewellyork.co.uk

Speak to the social care team

If you have a question for City Of York Council's adult social care workers, as well as contacting the usual telephone



number 01904 555 111, you can now also take advantage of drop-in Talking Points video call appointments. The drop in video call appointments take place each Wednesday and Thursday from 10am to 12pm, and 2pm to 4pm. There's no need to book, just go to the website and enter the virtual waiting room at:

www.york.gov.uk/VideoAppointments#dropin

Donations and thanks

Our grateful thanks go to organisations, carers, volunteers and people in the community who have contributed funding or their time towards our work.

Recent support and grant funding has included:

- The University of York Pantomime Society kindly donated revenue from their live run-through of A 100 Years War to support our work.
- With thanks to Project Linus for donating hand-made cuddle blankets for our self-care hampers for young carers in January.
- We are grateful to York Inspirational Kids for funding our new parent carer sessions.
- Due to Covid-19 we have accessed funds to enable us to keep in touch and support carers in feeling less isolated in a range of ways, such as making regular welfare calls to carers who are not digitally connected, offering craft and wellbeing sessions and sending self-care boxes. We are incredibly grateful for Coronavirus Community Support Funds, distributed by The National Lottery Community Fund, and to Independent Age and Better Care Fund for making this additional support possible during such challenging times for carers.



Our opening hours

Monday 9am to 5pm

Thursday 9am to 5pm

Tuesday 9am to 5pm

Friday 9am to 4.30pm

Wednesday 9am to 8pm

If you need urgent help when we are closed:

- Adults should contact City of York Council Customer Access and Assessment Team on **01904 555 111** or email **adult.socialsupport@york.gov.uk**
- Children and young people should contact City of York Council Advice, Assessment and Early Intervention Service on **01904 551 900** or **childrensfrontdoor@york.gov.uk**
- **If these teams are unavailable contact** City of York Council Emergency Duty Team on **01609 780 780**

**Please let us know
if your details change**

Call us on **01904 715 490** or email
enquiries@yorkcarerscentre.co.uk

**Please ring us on 01904 715490
if you need a large print version
of this newsletter**

Contact us



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17 Priory Street, York, YO1 6ET
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York Carers Centre is an independent charity that helps unpaid carers in York find the support they need. We are a network partner of Carers Trust.

