

Living With and Beyond Cancer Information Sheet

25. Caring responsibilities including pets

Being diagnosed with cancer when you feel responsible for caring for someone else may seem like an impossible situation. It can certainly cause a great deal of worry. Carers include parents, who may be intensely concerned for the welfare of their children, or a partner or other relative of someone who is ill, elderly or disabled. And caring of course includes the care of pets. Carers very often understate their own needs in favour of those of the person they are caring for.

How can I manage my caring responsibilities?

Caring for an adult

- Are you the sole carer or are your responsibilities shared (e.g. with a sibling)? What other resources are available to you and the person you are caring for? Consider whether other members of your family or friends could help out.
- If you have no-one to assist in your caring responsibilities whilst you are receiving treatment there are several sources of help available (see below).
- It is worth considering whether the person you care for would be able to cope temporarily without your care. In this case you may wish to consider having a period of respite from your caring responsibilities. Try to identify and list what tasks have to be done for that person on a daily basis, etc.

Caring for a child

- Family, friends and neighbours are often the main source of support for many parents. They may be able to help with everyday things, for example looking after small children during the day, picking up the children from school if you have hospital appointments or looking after them in the holidays. Remember that most people are happy to be asked. In fact, they may already want to offer their support but are worried about interfering or offending you.
- You may decide to look into more formal childcare arrangements such as nurseries or crèches ; playgroups, after school clubs and play schemes; child-minders, nannies and au pairs. You can find out more about childcare options through your local council's children's information service.

Caring in general

- Sometimes a better understanding of your treatment plans (i.e. duration, appointment times and what will be involved) can help you anticipate whether you will be able to continue the caring responsibilities or whether you will need to consider extra help. Please ask your medical team for advice about treatment plans.
- It might also be helpful for you to plan ahead to ensure you have some rest time (respite) from your responsibilities before treatment begins.
- If you have no one to assist in your caring responsibilities whilst you are receiving treatment there are government agencies and charities that can help (see below).
- Often the concern associated with being a carer can lead to anxiety or depression, worry, fear or anxiety, or guilt. Talking your worries through with family or friends can often help; alternatively speaking to a professional can also help.
- The extra costs of childcare can be an additional worry but help is available (see Finances, Work or Housing elsewhere in this directory)
- If you need additional help you may find your local social services department helpful as they can assist with advice on

25. Caring responsibilities

Local Resources:

Devon Carers	
<p>Devon Carers Westbank, Farm House Rise Exminster EX6 8AT Telephone: 03456 434 435 Calls charges: Calls to 0345 cost no more than calls to geographic numbers(01 and 02)and must included in inclusive minutes and discount schemes in the same way by your service provider. Helpline open Mon-Fri –8am—6pm and Sat 9am –1pm</p>	<p>Devon Carers is a FREE service aimed at providing support to carers. You are a carer if you provide unpaid support for family or friends who need help because they are ill, frail, disabled or have a mental health or substance misuse problem. For more information about any of these services please contact Devon Carers via : Website: www.devoncarers.org.uk Email: info@devoncarers.org.uk</p>
<p>Ambassadors: Devon Carers have Carer Ambassadors who are current and former carers who use their experience and knowledge of caring to improve life for Carers in Devon. If you are interested, they would love to hear from you to discuss the various roles available and how you could help.</p>	<p>Volunteers: Roles for volunteers include assisting at events, 1:1 support with other carers, helping at support groups, administration tasks or the helpline.</p>
<p>Have your say: Shared experiences, provide valuable support for other carers. They look to the carers in our community for contributions to the quarterly magazine and website—so it is relevant to you as a carer. The magazine has carers stories, information and news, training and support groups. Carers Groups: Peer Support—make friends and join activities whilst supporting each other Support Groups—share experiences and gain information Online training: Access to free carer related online training courses The Pod: On line carer community, chat with other carers and participate in regular Q&A sessions with professionals during Carers Hour Events: Carers week, Carers Rights day and Information days</p>	<p>Support for You: Alert Card: This identifies you as a carer and is recognised by police and the ambulance service should you find yourself in an emergency situation and unable to inform people yourself. The card will be used to alert a 24hr emergency call centre that the person you care for might need help or assistance. Planning ahead: Devon Carers can assist you to create a contingency plan in the event of an emergency. Face to Face training: There are free courses which enable you to develop new skills and knowledge that you may need to be more confident in your caring role. Hospital Services: Devon Carers offer practical support and advice ensuring you and the person you care for are able to cope in the first few weeks at home. Carer health and Wellbeing Check: This is an opportunity to discuss your needs as a carer and how they can help to support you in your caring role. Please note that some services offered are dependent on the outcome of your assessment.</p>
<p>Devon Carers have helped and continue to help carers all over Devon excluding the Plymouth and Torbay areas. where there are other agencies providing support to carers. Give them a call today for support and help.</p>	
<p>CarersUK 20 Great Dover Street London SE1 4LX Tel: 020 7378 4999 Carers' Forum: careuk.org/forum Advice Team: advice@carersuk.org</p>	<p>Carers UK campaign and innovate to find better ways to reach and support carers information for new carers. They give carers expert advice, information and support. Our UPFRONT guide to caring is an online tool to help you find your way through the maze of benefits and entitlements. It is especially useful if you are new to caring – fill in your details, spend a couple of minutes answering questions and we'll guide you to the information you need.</p>

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25. Caring responsibilities - Resources/Information

Local Resources:

<p>NEW! Dementia Support Café, North Devon District Hospital 1st Wednesday of the month 2.00 — 4.00 pm 3rd Wednesday of the month 4.00 — 6.00 pm For more information, please contact Angela Walter by email at angelawalter@nhs.net or call her on 01271 313998</p>	<p>Dementia support café is a safe, social and welcoming environment where people living with dementia and those who care for them can talk to others with a shared understanding and shared experiences. Everyone is welcome – come and have some tea, cake and a chat, if you like! There will also be information to take away about services that can help.</p>
<p>The Cinnamon Trust 10 Market Square Copperhouse Hayle TR27 4HE Tel: 01736 757 900 Website: www.cinnamon.org.uk</p>	<p>The only specialist national charity for people in their last years and their much loved, much needed companion animals. A network of 17,000 volunteers “hold hands” with owners to provide vital loving care for their pets. We keep them together – for example, we’ll walk a dog every day for a housebound owner, we’ll foster pets when owners need hospital care, we’ll fetch the cat food, or even clean out the bird cage, etc. When staying at home is no longer an option, our Pet Friendly Care Home Register lists care homes and retirement housing happy to accept residents with pets, and providing previous arrangements have been made with us we will take on life time care of a bereaved pet.</p>

National Resources:

<p>NHS UK/NHS Choices Dementia Care</p>	<p>The NHS, social services and voluntary organisations can provide advice and support.</p>
<p>Dementia Hotline, Dementia UK - Helpline: 0800 888 6678 Email: helpline@dementiauk.org</p>	<p>The support line is open Monday—Friday 9.00am-9.00pm Saturday/Sunday 9.00am— 5.00pm (excluding bank holidays)</p>
<p>Admiral Nurse Dementia Specialist supported by Dementia UK - Angela Walter based at NDDH. Tel: 01271 313998</p>	<p>Patient can be referred if there is a confirmed diagnosis of dementia. Available to support patients, relatives and carers who have concerns or difficulties because of dementia</p>
<p>Macmillan Cancer Support Line www.macmillan.org.uk Call 0808 808 00 00 — 7 days a week 8:00am—8:00pm</p>	<p>Calls are free of charge from all consumer landlines and mobile phones plus all mobile networks. Please note that calls to this number are not free when made from outside the UK. If you are calling from outside of the UK call on +44 207 091 2230</p>
<p>Marie Curie Support Line — Living with a terminal illness and looking for support www.mariecurie.org.uk/help/support/marie-curie-support-line Support Line: 0800 090 2309</p>	<p>Calls are free of charge from all landlines and mobile phones plus all mobile networks. The Support Line is open 8am – 6pm Monday to Friday and from 11am – 5pm Saturday and Sunday</p>

Other Resources :

<p>Macmillan Booklets:</p>	<p>A guide for patients living with cancer and dementia—MAC16126</p>
<p></p>	<p>Cancer and Dementia — A guide for carers- MAC16831</p>
<p>Further information:</p>	<p>www.macmillan.org.uk/information-and-support/coping/side-effects-and-symptoms/other-side-effects/chemo-brain.html</p>