

Caring Matters

January - April 2025

Durham Tel: 0300 005 1213
Darlington Tel: 0300 030 1215
www.dccarers.org



Honoured with King's Award for Voluntary Service
See page 3



Info on Pension Credit and Carers Credit
See page 12



Your local charity supporting carers



County Durham & Darlington carers support



DARLINGTON Borough Council



North East and North Cumbria

FINANCIAL SUPPORT | HINTS AND TIPS | COURSES | AND MUCH MORE INSIDE...

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We would love to hear from you:

If you have any ideas/topics, share your caring story or top tips for future editions of Caring Matters that you would like us to include, please email Sophie Johnson at sophie.johnson@dccarers.org

How to access our services and refer to us:

- Call or email the office using the details below.
- For Carer Support visit: dccarers.org/sign-up-for-support/
- Ask your GP or social worker to refer you.

Contact us

Durham County Carers Support
The Old Methodist Church
Durham Street
Spennymoor
County Durham
DL16 7AT
T: 0300 005 1213

E: admin@dccarers.org

W: www.dccarers.org

Follow us on Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, TikTok and LinkedIn.

Darlington Carers Support
St Teresa's Hospice
91 Woodland Road
Darlington
DL3 7UA
T: 0300 030 1215

E: admin@darlingtoncarers.org

W: www.dccarers.org

Follow us on Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, TikTok and LinkedIn.

Are you a Carer?

A Carer is someone who, without payment, provides care and support to a partner, disabled child, relative, friend or neighbour who could not manage without your help. You may help with their personal care, provide emotional or practical support or just ensure they are safe and coping.

Support for unpaid Carers



If this sounds familiar, then we are here to help. Call us on 0300 005 1213 to register for support or do it online <https://dccarers.org/sign-up-for-support/>

Dementia Support

Carer Information and Support Programme (CrISP)

The Carer Information and Support Programme (CrISP) is a dementia support programme run by the Alzheimer's Society. It provides support and up-to-date, relevant information in a group environment, where Carers can share experiences and find out about local and national services that can offer support, including Durham County Carers Support.

The programme is run in a series of sessions which offers Carers the opportunity to share experiences in a confidential and friendly environment with others in a similar situation. Their trained staff and volunteers run the sessions to ensure carers get the most out of the programme and can provide further information and support.

The key benefits of the programme:

- Enabling Carers to have increased knowledge of dementia.
- Providing Carers with practical information that they can use in coping with living with dementia day-to-day.
- Help Carers to feel better informed and less isolated.
- Empowering Carers to access support services and financial benefits and entitlements.
- Enabling Carers to plan with and for the person they care for, now and in the future.

For more information you can contact the Alzheimer's Society directly on 0191 3890400 or durhamandchester@alzheimers.org.uk or click [here](#) to express an interest in this program or scan the QR code.



Latest News



Durham County Carers Support receives The King's Award for Voluntary Service

We are delighted to announce on the 14th of November 2024 the Volunteers for Durham County Carers Support (DCCS) have been awarded The King's Award for Voluntary Service. This is the highest award a local voluntary group can receive in the UK and is equivalent to an MBE.

We have over 100 volunteers who support the work of the charity by offering counselling, a keeping in touch service, fundraising and running support groups, administration and much more. Most importantly a Trustee board of 9 volunteers lead the organisation and support our Chief Executive. Last year a total of 7000 hours of time enabled our charity to reach more Carers and offer fantastic support to those caring for a someone who cannot manage without their help.

The King's Award for Voluntary Service aims to recognise outstanding work by local volunteer groups to support their communities. It was created in 2002 to celebrate Her Majesty The late Queen's Golden Jubilee and, was continued following the accession of His Majesty The King. 2024 marks the second year of The King's Award for Voluntary Service.

Representatives of DCCS will receive the award crystal and certificate from Mrs Sue Snowdon, Lord Lieutenant of County Durham later. In addition, two representatives from DCCS will attend a garden party at Buckingham Palace in May and June 2025, along with other recipients of this year's Award. *Mrs Sue Snowdon, Lord Lieutenant of County Durham said "I am absolutely delighted that Durham County Carers Support has received this really important recognition from His Majesty The King. It is an amazing group that provides outstanding support to carers who fulfil such essential and valued roles within our communities. It is a richly- deserved award and I am thrilled to offer Durham County Carers Support my warmest congratulations".*

Jenni Wood Chief Executive of DCCS

"This award is recognition of the skill, commitment and hard work our volunteer team delivers to unpaid Carers across County Durham and Darlington"



New Head Office

On the 30th of September 2024, we had our first day in our new office on Durham Street in Spennymoor.

We were met with a fair few "teething issues" being the new custodians of an old Methodist Church but thankfully they are now few and far between. The new office space works perfectly for our team, the main area has a bright and spacious feel, it has 3 separate offices and a large meeting space to host our Board meetings. The team also has an area to eat lunch away from their desks. Since the pandemic, hybrid working is still a part of our culture which promotes a healthy work-life balance.

Being the owner of our premises means we are now able to easily monitor our energy consumption and has taken away the worry of negotiating new rental contracts with landlords.

The purchase of our new building would not have been possible without the very generous donation left in the Will of Geoffrey Stanley Walker, for which we are extremely grateful, and Geoffrey's name will be placed on a commemorative plaque in our reception area for all to see.

Our new address for all correspondence is Durham County Carers Support, The Old Methodist, Church, Durham Street, Spennymoor, County Durham, DL16 7AT.

Parent Carer Support – New Funding Secured

We have been successful in obtaining a funding bid from the Masonic Charitable Foundation to continue our specialist Parent Carer support. They were very impressed by the work we do and the fantastic feedback we got from surveying Parent Carers. This new funding will run for 2 years until April 2027.



Health and wellbeing

Warm and well this winter

It's important to look after yourself and others during cold weather. Here are some seasonal health tips to help you stay well and build activity when the temperatures begin to fall.



Staying warm, well and hydrated

These simple tips can help keep us all warm and well in the colder months ahead.

- ✓ Stay active, remember to dress for the weather and wear shoes with good grip when outside
- ✓ Drink at least six to eight mugs of liquid a day, especially warm drinks during cold weather
- ✓ Keep your home between 18°C and 21°C during the day and at least 18°C at night

For more help, including energy tips and money advice, visit www.durham.gov.uk/warmandwell

Be Wise, Immunise

One of the best ways to protect yourself and those around you from winter illness this year is to get your winter vaccines, including flu and Covid.

- The flu vaccine is available to people who are:
- ✓ pregnant
 - ✓ children (aged two to 16)
 - ✓ in clinical risk groups
 - ✓ aged 65 years and over
 - ✓ care home residents
 - ✓ carers and health and social care workers
 - ✓ close contacts of people with compromised immune systems

- The Covid vaccine is available to people who are:
- ✓ adults aged 65 years and over
 - ✓ residents in a care home for older adults
 - ✓ aged six months to 64 years in a clinical risk group

This winter, the UK will also be rolling out a vaccine for respiratory syncytial virus (RSV). RSV typically causes mild, cold-like symptoms, however, it

can lead to severe lung infections like pneumonia and infant bronchiolitis.

- The RSV vaccine will be available to people who:
- ✓ are pregnant
 - ✓ turn 75 on or after 1 September 2024
 - ✓ are already aged 75 to 79 on 1 September 2024



Your GP should contact you about flu, Covid and RSV vaccines. If you don't hear from them and think you are eligible, please contact them directly.

Home Fire Safety Visit?

Do you or the person you care for have or do any of the following?

- Smoke
- Memory Issues
- Hearing loss
- Vision loss
- Have mobility issues
- Have alot of belongings in the home

If you have answered yes to any of the above, then it may be worth having a Home Fire Safety Visit from your local Community fire safety team.

Do you have working smoke alarms? No? then we can arrange to get them fitted to help keep you and the person you care for safe.

As community safety we give advice about keeping safe in the home. We can help refer you to other services for other assistance you may need. We can check you have working smoking alarms.

Our community safety team cover all of Darlington and Co. Durham, so no matter where you are we will come and give the advice to help keep you safe in your homes.

Contact our admin team to arrange your free home fire safety visit on: 0345 223 4221



24/7 response at the press of a button

We provide a monitoring and response service to people's homes 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, 7 days a week with a 24-hour Control Centre and simple personal alarms.

What can our personal alarms do for you?

- Help on hand out of hours
- Maintains freedom and independence
- 24/7 support and reassurance
- Peace of mind for all



For further information:
www.durham.gov.uk/careconnect
 03000 262 195
care.connect@durham.gov.uk

You can also find us on [facebook.com/CareConnectDCC](https://www.facebook.com/CareConnectDCC)



Parent Carer Support

Our Parent Carer Team provides assistance and resources to parents or guardians who care for a child with disabilities, chronic illnesses, and additional needs. These parents often take on significant caregiving responsibilities, managing their child's physical, emotional, and developmental needs while navigating healthcare, education, and social systems on their behalf.

How can we help:

- Emotional and Peer Support: Access to counselling, peer support groups, and networks to connect with other parent carers who understand their challenges.
- Financial Assistance: Information on financial benefits, grants, and resources to help with the costs of care.
- Signpost to Respite Services: Short-term care options to give parents a break, allowing them time to rest and recharge.
- Practical Help: Guidance on managing appointments, educational plans, and advocacy to ensure their child receives appropriate support.
- Training and Workshops: Skills training on coping techniques, managing challenging behaviours, and navigating available resources.
- Information and Advocacy: Guidance on rights, local resources, and advocacy to support their child's access to healthcare, education, and social services.

The goal of Parent Carer Support is to alleviate some of the pressures Parent Carers face, improve their well-being, and ensure they have the resources to provide the best care for their child.

Being a Parent
 Do you have a child aged 2-11?

- Term time only
- Course for Durham parents, led by Durham parents

Our FREE course helps you to understand your child's behaviour

Learn positive strategies to help you as a parent

9 week course for 2 hours a week

Take time out for yourself

Meet other parents

Being a Parent

Get practical support for day to day challenges of being a parent

For more information www.durham.gov.uk/EPEC

EMPOWERING PARENTS EMPOWERING COMMUNITIES

Durham County Council

Grants

Financial assistance and other forms of support are often available from grant providers, depending on your background and circumstances. Each grant provider has a set of criteria and income & expenditure forms are required to be completed for each application.

Grants may be used for several things, including, but not limited to:

- Essential items, such as furniture, bedding, clothing, and white goods like washing machines, fridges, freezers.
- Paying for services such as required house decorating, a brief break/holiday, or respite care.
- Provide amenities, such as the supply of books or study materials, vocational training, or technical skills.

You can take a look at the online Turn2Us grant search on our website at: <https://dccarers.org/benefits-and-grants/>

Daisy Chain support and empower autistic and neurodivergent individuals through the provision of holistic person-centred services, whilst promoting training, wellbeing, inclusion and acceptance regionally and nationwide.



Events in the area:

- Consett Family Hub Coffee Mornings (DH8 8EQ) 1st and 3rd Monday of the month, 10am – 12noon (term time only).
- Chester-le-Street Family Hub Coffee Mornings (DH2 2EL) 3rd Friday of the month (term time only).
- Workshops at Tudhoe Family Hub 14th February 2025, 10am – 12noon – Understanding Sensory Differences
- Ferryhill Family Hub (DL17 8PH) Thurs 14th March - ARFID and Friday 11th April – Understanding Autistic Overwhelm, Meltdown & Shutdown both 10am-12noon

For further information on the above contact Daisy Chain on 01642 378461 or email: support@daisychainproject.co.uk website: <https://daisychainproject.co.uk/autism-central/>

Support for Carers

during and after a hospital stay for the person they care for

The Hospital Discharge Project has now been running for 1 year in Durham and for 9 months in Darlington.

In this time, we have had over 270 referrals from Carers seeing our information at all the hospitals in County Durham and Darlington, and from health and social care staff working in these areas. We are also working with staff in other areas for example James Cook and the RVI in Newcastle. If you know of someone who needs our support call us on 0300 005 1213 and say it's around hospital discharge.

Our team have been working in the main hospitals on a weekly basis, visiting wards, holding information events, presenting to large groups of staff and holding meetings one to one with Ward Managers, Social Workers and Hospital Discharge team leads. Raising awareness of the project, developing working relationships to improve referral networks partnerships. We are on site around visiting times and can meet with Carers for an initial chat to explain our support and arrange future meetings.

We have received lots of very positive feedback on the difference having support has made. From helping to gain benefits when things suddenly change, accessing grants for equipment or knowing who to ring to get the help needed. Sometimes it's just having someone to listen when things are difficult. There is more information on our website and some downloadable resources. Click [here](#) to see them or visit <https://dccarers.org/hospital-discharge/>



Ruth Sykes at an evening information hub at Darlington Memorial



Specialist Nurse Practitioners Presentation Day

An example of some support we recently gave

Jean has health issues of her own and has cared for her husband who lives with Dementia and other physical difficulties.

During the summer John became unwell and was admitted to University Hospital in North Durham. Jean was able to get lifts from friends and family members who would help her to John's ward and then collect her again after a couple of hours. Jean is unable to walk far without help and uses a wheelchair.

However, when John was transferred to Sedgefield hospital, she was unable to get this help.

We researched and explored every possible means of helping her with this issue, but we were unable to find her the help she needed. However, we kept in contact with her and offered her emotional support during a very difficult time.

John was eventually discharged home in November. Our Hospital Discharge Coordinator helped her to prepare for John's home coming as John now needed to have a hospital bed and other equipment downstairs.

We continue to support Jean with regular calls offering practical support and help where needed. Jean said she felt wonderfully supported by the team throughout her journey and it has helped enormously to know help has just been a phone call away.

Other examples given to Carers recently include helping to access hospice placement for end of life care, explaining jargon and processes which are often very complex and speaking to ward staff to ensure Carer with their own health needs was given the extra support during visiting times.

Celebrating Our Silver Success:

Investors in the Environment Award

We are thrilled to announce that our commitment to sustainability has been officially recognised with the Silver Award from Investors in the Environment (iE). This accomplishment marks an important milestone on our journey to reduce environmental impact and prioritise eco-friendly practices in all that we do.

Achieving the Silver Award is no small feat. It represents dedication, teamwork, and an organisation drive to build a sustainable future. This prestigious recognition from iE reflects our successful efforts to meet rigorous standards in environmental management, from waste reduction and energy conservation to sustainable sourcing.

The Silver Award recognises that we're going beyond simple compliance; we're creating lasting change that aligns with our values and our community's needs.

The iE Silver Award is a testament to our ongoing commitment to maintain and build upon these achievements. By choosing to receive this magazine by email, you're joining us in reducing paper use and helping to lower our carbon footprint further.

Thank you for supporting us on this journey. Together, we're making a real difference for a greener future.



Durham County
carers support
caring for the environment



Household Support Fund

The Household Support Fund, funded by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP), provides local authorities with a set amount of funding to assist households facing significant need. This fund is designed to help with essential items such as:

This fund is designed to help with essential items such as food, energy and essential goods/supplies, including water. We are pleased to have received dedicated funding specifically to support Carers in County Durham (for Carers living in Darlington visit www.citizensadvisedrc.org.uk/services/household-support-fund-darlington or email the CAB dedicated household support fund on hsfdarlington@citizensadvisedrc.org.uk)

If you're experiencing financial hardship, we may be able to assist with energy costs, including gas, electricity, and solid fuels like coal, logs, and oil. Additionally, we can provide support through food vouchers or packages and small energy-efficient appliances to help you stay warm and well.

Eligibility criteria apply but please don't hesitate to reach out to us for more information and to see if you qualify for this support.

LGBT+ NORTH EAST

County Durham and Sunderland Parent / Caregivers Sessions

Ask us anything

Sometimes asking questions around LGBT+ issues can be difficult, our family worker is here to support you in this area.

If you feel that this is something you would benefit from please contact:
LGBT@waythrough.org.uk,
01325 731160
Or scan our QR code fill in our form

Waythrough

Craft Work from a Carer

One way to take time out from your caring role is to try a crafting activity, such as painting, card making, knitting and needlework. Crafting at home promotes relaxation and can help ease levels of stress and anxiety.

Through our Carer break funding, this is exactly how one of our Carers Evelyn Gowland spends her spare time with lots of projects. The lovely Cat Cushion and Panda design bag below, are examples of Evelyn's work.

"Thanks to your Carer Break funding, I have managed to make 88 children's Xmas bags and then I bought some more fabric with the left-over money. I love making things for people, to see their face's it's amazing. Thank you so much."



Carer Training

Taking time out for self-care is equally important, especially considering the demands of the caring role. Carers often neglect their own well-being while caring for others, so try to prioritise “me time.”

If you receive your Caring Matters via email and would like to attend any of the sessions simply click on the link provided below the information. If you receive it by post, you can call Alison Dixon on 0191 5006031 email alison.dixon@dccarers.org or use a digital device to scan the QR code at the right of this article to express your interest.



Yoga – Online

Yoga is linking the body, the breath and the mind. Whatever your circumstances, yoga can help to reduce aches and pains, help you feel physically stronger, deal with stress and maybe even help you sleep better.

This is a 6 week course and will take place online via Zoom beginning on Friday 17th January – Friday 21st February 2025 9.15am – 10.15am.

Click on the link to book your place or scan the QR code at the top of the page <https://forms.office.com/e/9ZardOQzuz>

Power of Attorney, Wills and Trusts - Online

POA -Creating a Power of Attorney in advance ensures that if the worst were to happen, you can rest assured that both your financial affairs and personal welfare are in safe hands. Wills - Making a Will enables you to plan exactly what will happen to your property (estate) following your demise. This ensures that those you would like to benefit actually do so, in accordance with your wishes and also avoids disputes between relatives. Trusts - The strategic use of Trusts can ensure that your children and grandchildren are able to benefit completely from the inheritance you want them to receive and at the same time, protect the family home and other assets from being lost to the costs of Long-Term Care.

This will take place online via Zoom on Wednesday 19th February 2025 6pm – 7pm.

Click on the link to book your place or scan the QR code at the top of the page <https://forms.office.com/e/dg347rFHu6>

Emotional Resilience delivered by MIND Darlington

Learning sessions are aimed at individuals experiencing any amount of mental or emotional discomfort including anxiety, depression, low mood negative thoughts, stress or emotional difficulties.

This session will take place at Belmont Community Centre, DH1 2LL on Wednesday 19th February 10am 12.30pm and Virtual via Teams on Thursday 20th March 10am -12.30pm.

Click on the link to book your place or scan the QR code at the top of the page <https://forms.office.com/e/3W8Evtbc5r>

Awareness Sessions on how to stay safe from Internet, Phone and doorstep criminal with the North East Regional Special Operations Unit (NERSOU)

Andy Hampson from the Northeast Regional Organised Crime Unit will explain how to keep yourself safe from criminals and raise your awareness of the scams the criminals are using. This awareness session will last for 40 minutes.

This will take place online via Teams on Tuesday 25th March 2025 11am - 12noon.

Click on the link to book your place or scan the QR code at the top of the page <https://forms.office.com/e/mR6qi7vqhG>



Creative Writing with Steve Urwin

With over thirty years of experience as a published author and twenty years of regular writing workshop facilitation - incorporating poetry, journaling and flash fiction - Steve exudes energetic and infectious enthusiasm for the art of self-expression, instilling the belief that every individual voice is valid while bringing a sense of fun and inclusiveness to creative writing. He has a strong ability to engage groups and individuals with a wealth of advice on composition, performance and publication, drawing on an extensive range of exercises and techniques.

This will take place at Belmont Community Centre, DH1 2LL on Wednesday 5th February 11am – 1.30pm.

Click on the link to book your place or scan the QR code at the top of the page <https://forms.office.com/e/DVmJVSA6P5>



Making Sense of Caring

Making Sense of Caring helps you understand what help and support is available for all Carers who care for an adult in County Durham. It helps you find your way through the maze of services that make up the Health and Social Care system. Lunch will be provided on the face-to-face sessions, so it is essential you book your place. Places are limited.

This will take place at Easington Social Welfare Centre, SR8 3PL on Wednesday 29th January 2025 10am – 12noon.

Click on the link to book your place or scan the QR code at the top of page 8. <https://forms.office.com/e/8zi7kte8Gp>



First Aid Training (Funded by Durham County Care Academy)

This course will cover the most common accidents and medical emergencies and will give Carers the knowledge to be able to prioritise injuries, establish if something is seriously wrong and give immediate first aid.

This will take place at Four Clocks, Bishop Auckland on Thursday 13th February 2025 10am – 1pm.

Click on the link to book your place or scan the QR code at the top of page 8. <https://forms.office.com/e/f8mBXqex5X>

Positive Behaviour Support (Funded by Durham County Care Academy)

Do you support an adult with a learning Disability with behaviours you find challenging? These workshops will be delivered by qualified and experienced NHS staff and help you identify more about tools that could help you and the person you support live a better life. Lunch will be provided so book soon.

These three sessions will take place at Belmont Community Centre, DH1 2LL on Tuesday 4th, 11th and 18th March 2025 10am – 3.30pm.

Click on the link to book your place or scan the QR code at the top of page 8. <https://forms.office.com/e/4E6BaZrEds>



Darlington Carers Support

Join us for Afternoon Tea

Due to the recent success from our previous events Darlington Carers Support would like to invite registered Carers to join them for afternoon tea on Wednesday 12th March 2025, at the Bannatyne Hotel, Darlington, from 12pm to 2pm.

Cost - £5.00 per person

To register your interest please click [here](#) to complete the forms link scan the QR code or telephone 0300 030 1215.

Places are limited and unfortunately will not be available to Carers who previously attended our afternoon tea events.



Ghost The Musical

We were delighted that, due to a generous donation of 30 tickets from the Darlington Hippodrome Theatre, 15 Darlington Carers and their guests were able to attend a free performance of Ghost – The Musical.

The movie 'Ghost' has proven to be one of cinema's biggest all-time hits. Producer Bill Kenwright has said that Ghost is a story full of hope and is one of those films which never leaves you. We are sure that the same was true of the show, having received some fantastic feedback from the Carers who attended, who clearly appreciated this well-earned opportunity to take a break from their caring roles and to have some vital 'me time': -

"I was so delighted with the tickets, the performance, the break from my caring role and stress in life."

"I had the most wonderful day- true escapism and feel recharged. I cannot thank the Charity enough."

"I had excellent seats in the stalls, and the performance was amazing, so thankful to have been considered for this opportunity. Thanks to DCS for this."

"I have been looking at going to see this, but I could not afford it - your phone call to offer me this, was the best news I have had all year, thank you so much."

"Wow I don't know what to say but thank you so much. A fantastic time was had on Saturday it was brilliant; got a standing ovation!!"

"Just wanted to drop a short liner to say that we made it to the Ghost production, and it was a phenomenal show! Thank...again."

"We had a great time at the theatre last night; thank you for offering us the tickets."

"Thank you so much for all your contact and support. It is truly appreciated as being a Carer for two people can be very consuming and isolating especially given everything we have endured. I really enjoyed the theatre production and felt so refreshed afterwards. This comes as a welcome surprise."

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Heather Barwick (R) and her friend at the performance

Carers Wellbeing Aromatherapy Sessions

Darlington Carers Support would like to invite registered Carers to join them for a Wellbeing Aromatherapy Sessions for physical and emotional wellbeing. Join Anne of Greenleaves Aromatherapy on this wellness event and discover the art and science of Aromatherapy, plus create your own essential oil blends to use at home.

Learn all about Aromatherapy which has been proven to support physical, emotional and mental health in many ways, for example, for stress and anxiety or aches and pains. Increasing your confidence in choosing and using essential oils, to reap their benefits. No previous knowledge or experience is needed – this will be a fun interactive event.

This is a free event for Carers registered with Darlington Carers Support. Places will be limited therefore you will be contacted prior to the event if you have been successful. If we are oversubscribed names will be picked out of the hat. We will also be holding a reserve list.

In person Session

Wednesday 19th February 2025, 10am to 2pm at the Wolfson Suite, St Teresas Hospice, 91 Woodland Road, Darlington, DL3 7UA. Lunch will be provided.

To register your interest in the session above, please click [here](#) to complete the forms link or scan the QR code opposite. Alternatively, contact 0300 030 1215.



Virtual Sessions (2-part Course)

Monday 3rd March and Monday 10th 2025, 6.30pm - 8.00pm. Joining instructions will be sent via email and all required equipment will be forwarded to your address prior to the events.

To register your interest in the virtual session above, please click [here](#) to complete the forms link or scan the QR code opposite. Alternatively, contact 0300 030 1215.



Pension Credit Save time claim online

It is estimated that almost one million pensioner households are missing out on around £3,900 a year via Pension Credit. You may be able to claim Pension Credit when you reach State Pension age (currently age 66 or 67 years of age depending on your circumstances) There are 2 types of Pension Credit, Guarantee Credit and Savings Credit, which treat income and savings differently. Disability benefits such as Attendance Allowance or Personal Independence Payment are disregarded as income.

How likely am I to be awarded "Guarantee" Pension Credit?

If you're single with total weekly income under £218* - Likely

If you have a weekly income of under £235* - Possibly.

If you're a couple both of pension age, with total weekly income under £333* - Likely

If you have a weekly income of under £350* - Possibly

*There's a higher weekly income amount if you claim certain disability benefits or have caring responsibilities. If this is you, it's worth getting advice.

How does "Savings" Pension Credit work?

If you reached State Pension age before April 2016 (so you're aged around 72+) you may be due a top-up if you have savings, even if you can't get Guarantee Credit. Your savings and investments do matter when working out your eligibility for Pension Credit.

Less than £10,000 saved or invested doesn't count.

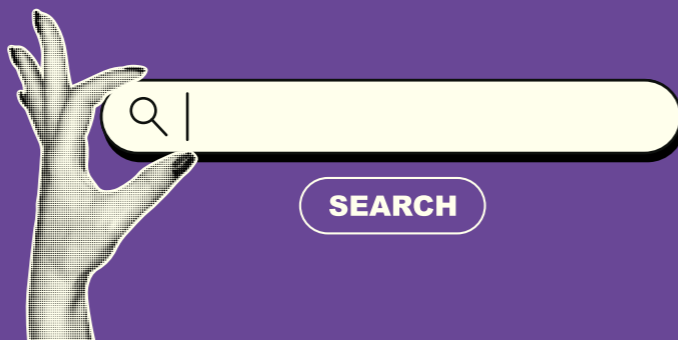
If you have less than this, it won't affect your eligibility for Guarantee Credit or Savings Credit at all.

More than £10,000 in savings or investments?

Pension Credit assumes you get an income of £1 a week per £500 of savings and investments that you hold and assesses your claim on that assumed income.

How do I claim Pension Credit?

The quickest way to claim Pension Credit is by going online to the Gov.uk site or calling the Pension Service on 0800 99 1234 who will help you with the application.



Worried about making ends meet for you or the people you're caring for?

As a Carer, we know that your own worries aren't always at the top of your list.

But we also know that there are so many other things you're worrying about too. Many of you have told us you're struggling to make ends meet and pay bills on time.

That's why we're here to help make money less of a worry.

We want to help you feel more confident about money, for you and the people you're caring for. Our Carer Financial Wellbeing Coordinator can help you understand, and get, the financial support you're entitled to.

We offer free advice on energy saving and energy debt, and we can help you get on the Priority Services Register with your supplier. This will help you get extra support with things like meter readings, advance warnings of supply interruptions and how to save on cooking and heating. You'll also get priority reconnection if your supply is interrupted. We'll also advise you on practical ways to reduce your energy bills that work for your individual circumstances.



We can talk to you about other money matters too. We understand that balancing caring responsibilities and finances isn't easy, and we can help you to access the support you need to manage money and reduce debt.

Taking care of others means taking care of yourself. So, please get the help you need to help the people you care for.

Get in touch now to see how we can help you with your Financial Wellbeing. Call Johnny Toas on 01388 418327 or email johnny.toas@darlingtoncarers.org

Carers who do not qualify

for Carer's Allowance may qualify for Carer's Credit.

Carer's Credit is not a financial payment but may help to top up your National Insurance record if you are not paying or receiving contributions from another source, such as employment, and goes towards your State Pension. Your income, savings or investments will not affect eligibility for Carer's Credit.



You could get Carer's Credit if you're caring for someone for at least 20 hours a week. You must also be over 16 years of age and under State Pension age to qualify.

The person you care for may be claiming a "Qualifying Benefit" for Carers Allowance such as Disability Living Allowance Care component at the middle or highest rate, Attendance Allowance, Personal Independence Payment Daily Living component. Some Armed Forces Disability payments also apply.

If the person you're caring for does not get one of these benefits, you may still be able to get Carer's Credit. When you apply, fill in the 'Care Certificate' part of the application form and get a health or social care professional to sign it.

You do not need to apply for Carer's Credit if you get Carer's Allowance or get Child Benefit for a child under the age of 12 - you will automatically get credits.

To apply you can download the Carer's Credit Claim form, including the "Care Certificate" from the Gov.UK website or by calling the Carer's Allowance Unit on 0800 731 0297 or Textphone 0800 731 0317 between 8am to 6pm Monday to Friday.

Keep us updated!

Have your details recently changed? Would you be happy to receive the newsletter by email? Would you like to be removed from our database?



Please let us know here or scan the QR code to complete the form online.

Current address details

Name:

Address:

Postcode: Telephone: Email:

Previous address:

Postcode:

Please tick as appropriate:

- I would like to receive all future "Caring Matters" via email
- I no longer wish to receive the "Caring Matters" newsletter.
- Please remove my details from your database as I'm no longer a Carer.

Return this form to: Durham County Carers Support, The Old Methodist Church, Durham Street, Spennymoor, County Durham, DL16 7AT

Congratulations to Carole Craggs, who was the lucky winner of the £20 Amazon Voucher for changing her mailing preference from postal to an email newsletter.

Become a Volunteer for us

Volunteers are the heart of everything we do. Their dedication, time, and skills help us provide essential support to Carers in our community. Whether it's assisting at events, offering administrative help, or providing a listening ear, our volunteers make a real and lasting impact. We have an amazing team of over 100 volunteers who between them since the 1st April 2024 have provided us with:

8,000 hours of support	774 group support with over
552 counselling hours delivered and	177 Carers attending our groups
237 Carers support supported	78 benefit forms completed by volunteers supporting
	77 Carers

You may not think volunteering is not for you, but we have lots of different roles that suit almost everyone, such as:

- Arranging a community fundraising event such as a coffee morning or bag pack.
- Helping Carers to complete benefit forms over the phone.
- Popping along to a monthly group to make sure Carers feel welcome.
- Helping out with admin tasks in the office.
- Attending information events to raise awareness and promote Durham County Carers Support.
- Keeping in touch – calling Carers to 'check in' and make sure they are kept up to date with all the support they can access.

If you would like to find out more about any of these roles, please contact Andrea on 0191 5006010 or email andrea.emerson@dccarers.org

Other ways you can help support us

Our Counselling Service is a lifeline for Carers, offering free and accessible support to those who need it most. Despite our wonderful team of 30 volunteer counsellors generously donating their time, we still face significant costs such as room hire, supervision, and travel expenses—amounting to £15,000 per year. Last year alone, we provided free counselling to over 250 Carers, helping them navigate their challenges and caring responsibilities. Here's how you can help keep this vital service running:

1. Sign Up for Easyfundraising

Easyfundraising allows you to support us without spending any extra. When you shop online at major retailers like Next, B&Q, Dunelm, Booking.com, and hundreds more, these companies donate a small percentage to us at no cost to you. It's a simple way to contribute while shopping for your essentials. To start, just search for Easyfundraising online and select our cause.



2. Join Our 50:50 Club

For just £12 per year, you can join our monthly prize draw. Each number you purchase is entered into a draw for one of three cash prizes. The more members, the bigger the prizes—and the greater the support for our counselling service! Multiple numbers increase your chances of winning while helping Carers (see across the page for more info).



3. Participate in Fundraising Events

From coffee mornings and cake sales to adventurous activities like a skydive or bungee jump, there are endless ways to get involved. These events not only raise funds but also bring our community together in support of Carers.

If you'd like to help, please contact Jacqui Coulson at Jacqui.coulson@dccarers.org for more information or ideas. Every contribution, big or small, makes a difference to the lives of Carers in our community. Thank you for your support!

Your Support is Changing Lives: Thank You from the Heart

In this issue of Caring Matters, we're excited to share the impact of your incredible support and dedication to our fundraising cause. Every step taken, every lottery ticket bought, and every donation given goes directly to funding our **FREE Counselling Service for Carers**—a lifeline for those in need.

We extend a huge thank you to everyone who took part in this year's Great North Run on our behalf. Thanks to our amazing runners, we raised over £6,000, providing critical funding for our counselling services. Your commitment and energy make a genuine difference. We're incredibly grateful for every mile you covered and every pound you raised.

Additionally, our 50:50 Lottery Club is thriving! With more members joining each month, prize money is rising, giving supporters the chance to win while making an impact. Every lottery entry brings us closer to meeting the needs of our community.

As we look back over the past 10 years, we've seen demand for our Counselling Service grow significantly. In 2015, we delivered 542 hours of counselling. By 2024, this number has risen to over 5,500 hours, underscoring the essential support this service provides. Thanks to your generosity, we're able to meet this increasing demand and continue offering free, compassionate care to those who need it most.



Jacqueline Armstrong GNR Runner 2024

To every supporter—thank you. Whether you're a runner, a lottery member, or a regular donor, you're helping us meet the growing need for our services. Together, we're creating a community where Carers receive the support they deserve.

"I decided to run for this amazing charity who have a mission to "Improve Carers lives" by offering tailored support, a listening ear/counselling, grants and funding, Carer breaks, signposting to relevant organisations/groups, events and training to Carers in our local community. I myself, family members and my patients have accessed these services as Carers for our loved ones with various needs. This charity relies on the donations to keep the support going so this was my way of giving something back to ensure the future of the great work you do'. Jacqueline raised over £600 for our Counselling Service.

If you are interested in taking part in next year's Great North Run, please email Jacqui.coulson@dccarers.org and we'll add you onto the waiting list.

50:50 Club Monthly Lottery

You could win 1 of 3 great cash prizes every month. As the name suggests, 50% of the money supports our Carers Wellbeing Fund and 50% is paid out in cash prizes. Club members pay £12.00 per year to be entered into 12 monthly draws. Winners are notified by post, announced on our Facebook page and in this newsletter.

To enter fill in and return the slip below or join online

www.dccarers.org

Name:

Mobile Number:

Address:

.....

..... Postcode:

.....

Email:

I would like _____ numbers at £12.00 per year and enclose a cheque made payable to: Durham County Carers Support.

I would like _____ numbers and would like to pay by Standing Order (we will send you a form to complete).

Please cut out and send this completed form to: Durham County Carers Support, Please cut out and send this completed form to Durham County Carers Support, The old Methodist Church, Durham Street, Spennymoor, County Durham, DL16 7AT

50:50 CLUB WINNERS			
<p>Avg 1st PRIZE £113</p> <p>Avg 2nd PRIZE £75</p> <p>Avg 3rd PRIZE £37</p>	<p>August 2024</p> <p>1st Wendy Henderson 2nd Stephen Black 3rd Nicola Dixon</p>	<p>September 2024</p> <p>1st Mr & Mrs Gilbert 2nd Roland Lewis 3rd Val Dawson</p>	<p>October 2024</p> <p>1st CW & M McCamley 2nd Pauline Tate 3rd Rataporn Deesomsak</p>
	<p>November 2024</p> <p>1st Alison Hodgson 2nd Maurice Bailes 3rd Elaine Armer</p>		

Support **Groups**

Pop along to one of our Carer support groups below where you can meet with other Carers in your community in a safe and supportive environment.

Bishop Auckland Carers Support Group

Where: Four Clocks, 154a Newgate Street, Bishop Auckland, Co Durham, DL14 7EH

When: 3rd Thursday of the month, 10.30am -12noon

Contact: Louisa Collin on **0191 500 6030** or email louisa.collin@dccarers.org for more information.

Chester-le-Street Carers Support Group

Where: Bullion Hall, South Approach, Bullion Lane, Chester-le-Street, Co Durham, DH2 2DW

When: 1st Friday of the month, 10am-12noon

Contact: Steve Gillgallon on **0191 500 6013** or email steve.gillgallon@dccarers.org for more information.

Consett Carers Support Group

Where: Masonic Hall, John Street, Consett, DH8 5AS

When: 2nd Tuesday of the month, 10.30am – 12noon

Contact: Grace Stewart on **01388 418321** or email grace.stewart@dccarers.org for more information.

Darlington Carers Support Group

Where: Well-Being Hub at St Teresa's Hospice, Woodland Road, Darlington, DL3 7UA

When: 1st Wednesday of the month, 1pm-2.30pm

- 1st January - no group
- 5th February - speaker Andy Hampson on frauds & scams
- 5th March - speaker from Co-op Estate Planning
- 2nd April - speaker Andrea Bosman, Community Safety Officer
- 7th May - speaker Adele Morris from Darlington Connect - mental health and general well-being

Contact: **0300 030 1215** or email us at admin@darlingtoncarers.org for further information.

Horden and Easington District Carers Support Group

Where: Shotton Community Hub, Bridge Road, Shotton Colliery, DH6 2PQ

When: 2nd Friday of the month, 10am – 12noon

Contact: Adele Blair on **01388 439748** or email adele.blair@dccarers.org for more information.

Stanley Carers Support Group

Where: The Venue, Community Centre, Wear Road, Stanley, DH9 6AH

When: 2nd Wednesday of the month, 10.30am – 12noon

Contact: Janice Coulson on **01833 600577** or email janice.coulson@dccarers.org for more information.

Teesdale Carers Support Group

Where: Woodleigh (Council Offices), Flatts Road, Barnard Castle, DL12 8AA

When: last Thursday of each month, 10am - 12noon.

Contact: Gill Taylor on **0191 917 4708** or email gill.taylor@dccarers.org for more information.

Check us out on social media. We love to share.



www.facebook.com/durhamcountycarerssupport
www.facebook.com/darlingtoncarerssupport



www.tiktok.com/@carerssupport



www.instagram.com/durhamcountycarers



Tips to make sure you always see our posts: Like our page & posts, comment or share. That's just the way social media works. It knows what you like, if you like it



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