The Golden Guide

...it’s worth its weight

PACKED FULL OF PRACTICAL INFORMATION for over 50s, with a wealth of local contacts and who can help if things go wrong

COVERS A RANGE OF LOCAL TOPICS including Money, Health, Care, Leisure and Your Home

NEW REVISED AND EXTENDED EDITION 2012

NORTHUMBERLAND – in association with Northumberland County Council, Northumbria Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust, Isos Housing Ltd and Age UK Northumberland
Would you like to be more active, but don’t know where to start?

Maybe you are worried about a medical condition or have not done any exercise for a long time. The Healthy Life Scheme is here to help.

Call 01434 613225 for more information.

Active Life sessions are for people new to fitness or returning to fitness and looking for gentler exercise or as a follow on to Healthy Life sessions.

Look out for the Active Life symbol on our timetables and posters to choose the right sessions for you.

As health and social care services for older people continue to change it’s more important than ever to keep up to date, so we hope you agree that the Golden Guide is a handy way to do just that!

There are new contacts for helplines, services and organisations which may be local, regional or national - to ensure you stay connected and can find advice when you need it. And as part of our usual roundup we’ve included more leisure activities to keep you fit, more on independent living and a revised Money Matters chapter to keep your finances in order too.

This year we have been asked for copies in quite a few extra places - The Maltings will be getting a supply in Berwick and so will the very active Community Centre there. Housing providers, health support groups and hospitals are asking about them too - we are delighted to be reaching out into more nooks and crannies than ever.

As always we welcome any feedback or suggestions for inclusion. Please contact Heather at the address overleaf if you would like to comment.

Finally a big thank you to all those who have supported the guide by sponsoring pages within it. Please help us by mentioning the guide when you contact them.
Partners and Sponsors

Major Partners

Once again the Golden Guide has been very fortunate to find generous support from its partners who have helped out in very difficult times, namely Northumberland County Council, Northumbria Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust, Age UK Northumberland and Isos Housing. Our partners remain committed to providing quality information for older people across the county and their foresight and solid support has been much appreciated.

Particular thanks to Stephen Corlett and team at the Trust and Deb Still of Age UK Northumberland, who have given invaluable assistance with information checking and getting to the printers on time! Also to tenants of ISOS Housing who have again voted in favour of supporting the guide.

Sponsors

Grateful thanks to all other loyal agencies too, who have given their backing and helped enormously by taking sponsored pages. They would love to hear from you, so please mention the guide when you use their services.

- Barchester Care Homes
- Bernicia Housing
- Carers Northumberland
- Care & Repair Northumberland
- CISWO
- Community Safety
- Fiona Hall MEP
- Guy Opperman MP
- Helping Hands Care
- Ian Lavery MP
- Maltings Theatre & Cinema
- NBSL
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- NCDC
- Need Ltd
- North Country Leisure
- North East Drive Mobility
- Northumberland Carers’ Guide
- Northumberland Clinical Commissioning Group
- Northumbria Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust
- Northumbria Police
- Parkinsons UK
- Paying for Care
- Ronnie Campbell MP
- Seaton Care
- Sir Alan Beith MP
- SSAFA
- Swan Leisure Centre
- Valley Care
- Volunteering Northumberland

Note on Content: Material contained within this book is for general information - and does not constitute advice. Always consult a qualified adviser on your own personal situation before making any decisions. Content is as accurate as we could make it but the editor cannot accept responsibility for any inconvenience sustained by anyone using this book. The guide is based on information available in November 2011.

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Heather Alabaster, Editor © 2012
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COMMMUNITY GROUPS, SOCIETIES AND CLUBS

If you are involved in setting up a new community or voluntary group help with getting started is offered by Community Action Northumberland, 01670 517178 www.ca-north.org.uk They hold information on over 250 village halls across the county and give advice to community groups, their committees and officials.

Bell View Resource Centre, 33 West Street, Belford, NE70 7QB, 01668 219220 Charity has a fully accessible building combining day care for older people, a community Resource Centre and office/room rental. Rag Rug making, Art, Crafts and Walking for Health are popular groups. More services include: care worker brokerage register; home support scheme; luncheon club with activities; “Potting Shed Project”; therapy garden; cardiac rehabilitation sessions and NHS podiatry. Their wheelchair-accessible car (called the “BRINGO”) can be used for essential and social journeys.

See also Reaction Independent Living Shopping project, page 40

The Ambler, 01665 712929 www.theambler.co.uk Amble’s community newspaper. Get involved as journalist or in production tasks, some familiarity with computers is desirable. Team meets Thurs 1.00pm – 5.00pm.

Blyth & District Talking Newspaper, CVA, 22 Beaconsfield Street, Blyth, NE24 2DP 01670 367293, Val Lockhart Alternate Wednesdays from 2.30pm. Volunteers record local newspaper articles onto audio tapes to post to visually impaired listeners locally. Also magazine tapes, new members welcome.

Age UK Northumberland, Rural Access Project, 0845 140 0088 Wide range of group activities and outings from shopping trips to health awareness or just for fun, e.g. theatres, museums, tea dances, sightseeing etc. Covers North Northumberland for those who are isolated whether socially, geographically or through restricted mobility.

See also page 70 Care Workers’ Register and page 62 Home Support scheme.
Out and About

OLDER PERSON’S FORUMS

Groups hold meetings to consider, debate and sometimes campaign on local issues such as transport, health, housing etc.

Contact as follows:
- Voices of Experience group covers Bamburgh, Beadnell, Belford, Holy Island, Seahouses, 0774 557 1802, Kelvin Rushworth
- Haltwhistle Partnership, 01434 321242, Ellen Walton
- Prudhoe Community Partnership, 01661 836668
- Wansbeck Golden Age Forum, Wansbeck CVS, Karen Cox, 01670 858688

See also page 58 for health and social care forums

Age UK Northumberland, 0845 140 0088
New forums are being set up across the county in 2012 for older people to help shape services and have their views heard. Ring Clare Owen-Smith or Michelle Muckle if you would like to participate

LUNCH CLUBS

Organised in churches, village halls and community centres, lunch clubs are a popular way to socialise and enjoy a reasonably priced meal. Check with your local church or community venue.

Fourteen clubs are currently run by Age UK Northumberland, with more planned, ring 0845 140 0088 for details.

Fourth Action, 01668 219879 also includes North Northumberland Women's Network
www.nnwn.org
Social gatherings, workshops, training and trips to build self-confidence and skills. Events across north Northumberland.

See also page 21 Northumberland Community Development Network

Men’s Breakfast, Railway Carriage, Anglers Arms, Weldon Bridge, Longframlington, NE65 8AX
01665 570660, David Shipley
Monthly group includes cooked breakfast, speaker, film-showings, occasional walks and trips. Last Sat of the month at 8.30am.

Men’s Fellowship, Salvation Army Hall, Hartford Road West, Bedlington, NE22 6UK
01670 829356
Meets on third Wed of the month, from 7.30pm. Women’s Fellowship on first Wed.

National Women’s Register (NWR)
0845 4500 287
www.nwr.org.uk
Informal social groups for women (all ages). No campaigns, or fund-raising but activities, speakers and get-togethers in each others’ homes.

Local groups in Hexham, Morpeth and Coquetdale – ring the national number for details.

www.northumberlandlife.org
Website has information on clubs, groups, jobs and events in Northumberland.

Northumberland Federation Women’s Institute, 0191 217 0808
www.thewi.org.uk/northumberland
Activities are wide ranging – courses, campaigns, and community work, to enrich skills and experience and educate women. Around 117 branches in Northumberland with regular events and courses.

Rotary North East
www.rotary-ribi.org/districts
Members are professional people who support community campaigns by fund-raising and events. Regular meetings, often with speaker. 14 clubs in Northumberland, listed on the website with meeting times, venues and contact numbers.

Also see Volunteering page 31-32

See also page 21 Northumberland Community Development Network

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Out and About

**Information & Advice service**

Free confidential, impartial and independent advice

**Information & Advice service**
For the over-50s, their families, carers and organisations.

- Welfare benefits, grants and entitlements
- Community, residential and social care
- Housing and home adaptations
- Disability issues and aids
- Local leisure, health and educational activities
- Wills, Powers of Attorney, family protection trusts
- Local trader register

Open 10am–1pm Monday–Thursday
08450 950 150 or 01665 605 707

**Face-to-face welfare rights service**

- Benefit checks
- Form completion
- Appeals to tribunal
- Appeals to upper tribunal
- Home visits

Open 9am–5pm Tuesday–Thursday
01665 511 571

**DAYTIME ACTIVITIES IF YOU ARE ILL OR DISABLED**

If you find it difficult to get out to socialise or to attend activities Adult Care can advise and help put you in touch with many local opportunities. If necessary they may give financial support through a “personal budget” (subject to a financial assessment). Traditional day centres are still available across the County, offering art, craft, music etc and a chance to socialise – though many older people now choose to use their personal budgets to pay for help to get out to mainstream leisure and social activities. Ring Adult Care for information on 01670 536400

See page 68 for social care support

**Age UK Northumberland**

0845 140 0088

Operate eleven Day Centres for Northumbria Healthcare and also offer their own private day care, and dementia day care, ring for details.

**ARTS AND CRAFTS**

- Ashington Art Group, North Seaton Colliery Community Centre, 27 Links View NE63 0XQ 01670 856602, E. Taylor Meets Thurs 6.00pm – 8.30pm and

Sat 10.00am – 12.00pm. Members are practising artists, group also holds annual exhibition, demonstrations from visiting artists and trips. New members welcome

- Berwick Writers’ Workshop, The Maltings Theatre and Cinema, Eastern Lane, Berwick-upon-Tweed, TD15 1AJ 01289 302929, Wendy Scott www.berwickwritersworkshop.co.uk Sociable creative writing sessions and courses. Writing for media includes songwriting, screenwriting, plays, soaps. Also novels, short stories, poetry, haiku, non-fiction, history. Complete beginners as well as published authors welcome. Yearly anthology published.

- Community Creative Writers, Berwick Library, 01289 305213, Maureen Roper Fortnightly morning meetings for all styles of writing e.g. Radio and TV, Comedy, Romance, Crime, Life stories, Children’s etc. Popular distance learning course. Ring for further details.

- Cramlington Crafts Club, Village Community Centre, East Farm Terrace, NE23 1 AX 01670 714557, Marina Callaghan Wed 1.00pm – 3.30pm all year. All kinds of handicrafts including embroidery, decoupage, tapestry,
Garden Club, Alnwick Town Hall, NE66 1HS.
01665 510803, Geoff Watson, Last Tues of the month from Sept to May, 7.00pm. Speakers and demonstrations. Annual membership fee £2.50 gives discounts in local garden centre.

Heddon Stitchers, Knott Memorial Hall, Townege, Heddon-on-the-Wall, NE15 0DT 01661 853798, Allison Laker, Mon 1.00pm – 3.00pm. Needlework and craft group open to all. Regular workshops, visits, competitions.

Knitting and Crochet Guild, Berwick Branch, 01289 303212, Terri Bearhope
Once a month on Sat afternoons, ring for details of time and venue.

Hexham Sugarcraft Guild, Community Centre, Gilesgate, Hexham, NE46 3NP 01434 609028, Olive Maddison, www.bsguk.org
Second Mon of the month 7.30pm – 9.30pm. Exhibitions, demonstrations, visits, links with other guilds in the region, social events.

Hexham & District Photographic Society, Moot Hall, Hexham, NE46 3NH 01434 606479, Bob Turner www.hexhamphotographic.org.uk Tues from 7.30pm with talks, assignments, competitions and exhibitions. Sometimes a waiting list, ring or email from the website for details.

First Wed of the month 7.00pm – 9.00pm. Sociable, friendly group has demonstrations, competitions, visits. Also groups in Hexham, Alnwick and Brampton.

NB Flower Clubs also in Alnwick, Bedlington, Callerton, Cramlington, Ellington, Embleton, Morpeth, Ponteland, Stocksfield, Warkworth

Morpeth & District Gardening Club St. James’ Community Centre, Wellway, Morpeth, NE61 1BN 01670 503566 D. Patterson
Meets last Tues of the month from 7.30pm, indoors from Sept – May. Speakers and occasional evening visits during summer.

Morpeth Model Makers, 01670 772372, David Gilson,
All kinds of model makers get together to share knowledge and exchange ideas.

Wansbeck Writers’ Group, St. Aidan’s School Annexe, Park Road, Ashington, NE63 8DZ 01670 860213, Neil Taylor
Wed 10.00am – 12.00pm in school term time. All abilities, newcomers welcome. Weekly theme – fiction, poetry, memoirs, anecdotes etc. Occasional visits or speakers. Ring for details before your first visit.

Wansbeck Art Group, St. Aidan’s Parish Hall, Ashington, NE63 8AD 01670 504305, Pat Pierpoint
Fourth Wed in the month from 8.00pm. Some tuition, but classes for beginners and more advanced players at Rothbury Middle School on Tues evenings. Ring for details.
We have a range of supported housing schemes specially designed to meet the needs of older people across the North East.

From self-contained centrally heated flats, and sheltered schemes with communal lounges and laundry facilities, to hundreds of one and two-bedroom bungalows that all come with the support you need to live independently.

Whatever your needs, we want you to enjoy living in the comfort of your home for as long as possible and with our support, you can.

For more information about how we can help you, please ring us on 0300 300 1505 and ask to speak to our older person’s team. www.isoshousing.co.uk
Cramlington Folk Club, The Hind, Dewley, Cramlington, NE23 6DT, 01670 715106, Keith Taylor, www.cramfolk.co.uk
Tues from 8.00pm. Guest nights and open nights for performers. Wide range includes blues, jazz, singer-songwriters. Everyone welcome to listen or perform, no age limits.

Durham & Newcastle Diocesan Association of Church Bellringers, 07801 681068, Kevin Maughan www.dandn.org
Members ring at 7 church towers in Northumberland. Practice one evening a week and ring for Sun service. Mid-Week group goes daytime ringing and visitors are welcome. Social events, competitions.

Hexham Male Voice Choir, West End Methodist Church, Hexham, NE46 3DF, 01434 600488, Tom Arthur, Meets Thurs 7.00pm – 9.00pm. Free concerts for charitable causes. Friendly, informal group, new members always welcome.

Longframlington Pipers’ Group, Memorial Hall, Rothbury Road, Longframlington, NE65 8AH, 0191 259 1752, Gill Sargeant www.longframlingtonpipers.org Wed 1.30pm – 3.30pm. Popular friendly group, open to all abilities.

Maltings Theatre and Cinema, Eastern Lane, Berwick-upon-Tweed, TD15 1AJ, 01289 330999 www.maltungsberwick.co.uk
Berwick Community Choir Mon 7.30pm – 9.30pm
Open Mic/Open Art sessions, second Sun of the month from 7.30pm.
Also see more for Maltings Theatre and Cinema on page 19

Mid Northumberland Chorus, Morpeth Chantry Middle School, Mitford Road Morpeth, NE61 1RQ, 01670 790764, Mike Elphick www.mindnorthumberlandchorus.org.uk
Rehearsals Wed from 7.30pm in school term time. Classical, folk and seasonal music in large mixed choir. Regular concerts and events.

Northumbrian Pipers’ Society, Chantry Bagpipe Museum, Morpeth, NE61 1PD, 01670 860215, Julia Say www.northumbrianpipers.org.uk
Meets third Sat in the month 2.30pm – 5.00pm and first Mon in the month 7.30pm – 10.00pm. All welcome including just coming in to listen. Pipes available to hire.

Prudhoe Community Choir, Stocksfield Baptist Church, Main Road, Stocksfield, NE43 7DU, 01661 835738, Catherine Edge Wed 7.45pm – 9.45pm. Mixed choir singing popular and choral pieces, reading music helps but not a requirement. Annual concert and performances for weddings, charitable groups etc. All ages welcome.

The Tynedale Orchestra, School Hall, Corbridge Middle School, Corbridge, NE45 5HY, 01434 602306, Fay Winkworth www.tynedaleorchestra.org.uk
Rehearsals Thurs 7.30pm. Two concerts per year in Autumn and Spring terms. No auditions and always keen to have more strings players.

Tyne Valley Big Band, West End Methodist Church, Hexham, NE46 3DF, 07757947755, Dave Hignett www.longframlingtonpipers.org Mon 7.00pm – 9.00pm. Concerts with choral, solo singing and comedy in Wansbeck and Morpeth, new members always welcome.

The Tynedale Orchestra, Hexham Community Church, Central Chambers, Beaumont Street, NE46 3LS
01434 604512, Jane Dammers Rehearsals Mon from 8.00pm. Folk, gospel, sea shanties and more.

Warkworth Village Choir, Memorial Hall, Castle Street, Warkworth, NE65 0UN, 01670 Mon 7.30pm – 9.30pm. Friendly group with wide ranging repertoire, just turn up to join in.

THEATRE

Alnwick Stage Musical Society, Alnwick South First School, The Avenue, Alnwick NE66 1UL, 01665 710296, Teresa McQuillen www.alnwickstagemusical.co.uk
Tues 7.30pm – 9.30pm. Rehearse from September for main show at Alnwick Playhouse in March. All welcome.

Alnwick Theatre Club, St. Paul’s RCVA School, South Road, Alnwick, NE66 2NU, 01665 603233, Peter Biggers www.alnwicktheatreclub.co.uk
Rehearse Mon and Thurs from 7.30pm. Three annual performances at Alnwick Playhouse, including panto. All welcome to perform or help backstage or front of house.
Coquetdale Amateur Dramatic Society, Jubilee Hall, Rothbury, NE65 7SD, 01665 570221, Mike Jevons
Rehearse Thurs from 7.00pm. Annual production, street fair, events etc. Fund-raising nights, all welcome.

Maltings Theatre and Cinema, Eastern Lane, Berwick-upon-Tweed, TD15 1AJ, 01289 330999
www.maltingsberwick.co.uk
Berwick Community Choir,
Mon 7.30pm – 9.30pm

Berwick (Maltings) Chess Club,
Mon 7.00pm – 9.30pm.

Berwick BroadCasting Corporation,
Live 40s-style radio plays, third Sun of the month, 7.00pm. Free but donations welcome.

T.A.M.S. – (Third Age Maltings)
Join TAMS via the Box Office. Members can book free or subsidised seats at Maltings’ performances. TAMS programme includes tea dances, singing workshops, fund-raising etc. For over 50s residents only.

Phoenix Theatre, Beaconsfield Street, Blyth, NE24 2DS,
Box Office, 01670 367228
www.thephoenixtheatre.org.uk
Musicals, panto and plays over the year. All welcome to act, sing or help in other ways. Runs a varied professional programme too. Social events and coffee mornings at the theatre.

Ponteland Repertory Society,
Memorial Hall,
Darras Road, Ponteland, NE20 9NX
0191 250 1818, Carole Stephen,
www.pontelandrep.co.uk
Two productions a year, either panto, play or musical. Ring for more details.

Queen's Hall Theatre Club, West End Methodist Church, Hexham, NE46 3DF
01434 685580, Moya Holmes
Two plays per year. Rehearsals Mon and Thurs from 7.00pm.

Warkworth Drama Group, Memorial Hall, Castle Street, Warkworth, NE65 0UN, 01670 760007, Mike Dixon
www.warkworthdrama.org.uk
Rehearse twice weekly either at Memorial Hall or Parish Rooms. Several productions a year – revues, plays, sketches. All welcome.

We have a further 12 Sheltered schemes and an Extra Care scheme located across the North East offering Independent Living within a secure and safe environment for your peace of mind.

- All homes are self contained
- Emergency Alarm Service
- One / Two bedroomed properties
- Dedicated Care and Support staff
- Laundry and guest room
- Accessible—Lifts*
- Communal facilities
- Landscaped gardens

*dependent upon scheme

For further information or advice on moving to supported accommodation contact Customer Services on: 0844 800 3 800
LIFELONG LEARNING

Pursue an interest, or study for a specific qualification, there is a wide range of classes available locally for informal or more targeted learning.

Northumberland Adult Learning Service, 01670 534530
www.northumberland.gov.uk/adultlearning

Courses run across the county, either for fun, or to gain qualifications. Some are free, others have concessions for those receiving benefits. There may be extra support for people with disabilities. Course examples:

- Science, Maths, Business, Computing,
- Cookery, Yoga, Needlework,
- Woodwork, Psychology, Languages,
- Complementary therapy, Dance, Drama,
- Art, Gardening, Sailing and more.

Enrol throughout the year by post, in person or by telephone.

Northumberland Community Development Network, 01670 520889, www.ncdn.org

One to one holistic support for those seeking new opportunities for career or personal development. They can offer training to those interested in mentoring older people in this way and have a pool of digital champions to help people become more confident with IT. Support includes tackling issues of discrimination of all kinds.

University of the Third Age, (U3A) www.u3a.org.uk

Although this national organisation for retired people is called a “University” no qualifications are required and none are awarded. Branches run their own special interest groups, using the expertise of members. Popular groups include art, music, languages, genealogy, philosophy, dancing, painting, science, computers, architecture, walking, foreign travel groups and many more.

Groups in Northumberland are as follows:

- Alnwick, 01665 575552
www.nru3a.co.uk/northumberland/alnwick
- Ashington, 01670 221924
- Berwick-upon-Tweed, 01890 781400
www.berwicku3a.org.uk
- Mid-Northumberland (Longhirst) 01670 512238
www.mid-northumberland-u3a.org.uk
- Morpeth, 01670 518416
www.nru3a.co.uk/northumberland/morpeth
- Ponteland, 01661 871042
www.nru3a.co.uk/northumberland/pontsite/pont.htm
DISTANCE LEARNING AND OPEN LEARNING

Learning by post, radio, television or email allows you to decide the content of a course and how long you want it to take.

Next Step Careers Service, 0800 100 900 www.nextstep.direct.gov.uk
Telephone, internet and face to face advice on careers, vocational and recreational courses, retraining and funding. Covers distance learning courses as well as those at local centres.

The Open University, 0870 333 4340 national enquiries 0191 477 6100 (regional centre in Newcastle) www.open.ac.uk
Wide range of courses in arts, social sciences, community education and leisure, to degree level or just for interest. No entry qualifications required, good support for students with disabilities e.g. large print or audio course books. Library of course materials held at the regional centre.

Fiona Hall MEP
Lib Dem MEP for the North East
www.FionaHall.org.uk
It’s easy to contact Fiona...

By post:
55a Old Elvet, Durham, DH1 3HN
By email:
fiona@fionahallmep.co.uk
By phone:
0191 383 0119

Please get in touch if there’s anything I can help you with.

Best wishes,
Fiona.

LIBERAL DEMOCRATS
www.libdems.org.uk

The Roundhouse, Age UK
Northumberland, Lintonville Parkway, Ashington, NE63 9JZ, 0845 140 0088 www.ageuk-northumberland.org.uk
Age UK’s resource centre offers a wide range of activities including courses on computers for absolute beginners.

WEA Northeast, 0191 212 6100 www.wea.org.uk
Adult learning classes in centres across Northumberland. Subjects include Family Trees, Ornithology, Poetry, Music Appreciation, Painting, Maritime History, Forensic science etc. Contact the regional centre for more information or find a brochure in your library.

The Golden Guide…it’s worth its weight

• Prudhoe, 01661 832020 www.nru3a.co.uk/northumberland/prudhoe.html
• Tynedale (Hexham), 01434 632913 www.tynedaleu3a.org.uk
• Wooler, 01668 281408 www.wooler.org.uk

2012 edition

www.alabasterpublishing.co.uk
We all cherish our independence, but if you are living alone, the risk of accidents, falls and illness is always a worry.

Join Valley Care and your call will always be answered

- 24 hours, seven days a week across the county
- Simple to use
- Simple to install - works alongside your own telephone
- Specialist contact centre
- Qualified staff who respond promptly to emergencies and enquiries

Telecare gives carers and their families peace of mind. Additional sensors link to the basic alarm and then automatically contact Valley Care.

Margaret uses Telecare services. She is 89 and lives alone, but has early stage dementia.

Margaret’s daughter said:

“The telecare system means mum can live in her own home, it’s given her confidence and makes her feel good about herself and about everything.”

Valley Care is Northumberland County Council’s community alarm service delivering county wide community alarm and Telecare services to all its residents. For more information contact

Valley Care on
01670 827100
or email telecare@northumberlandcaretrust.nhs.uk

Open College of the Arts,
0800 731 2116
www.oca-uk.com
Home study arts courses e.g. photography, musical composition, creative writing, art history. No entry requirements, good support for disabled students, possibility of bursary for those on low income. Degrees in Photography, Painting, Creative Arts may be financed through Student Finance England or appropriate regional body.

The National Extension College (NEC),
0800 389 2839
www.nec.ac.uk
Courses from maths and electronics to business, IT and local authority training.

LIBRARIES

www.northumberland.gov.uk (keyword search “libraries”)
0845 600 6400 general enquiries and branches
0845 600 6401 enquiries for the
County Reference Library
Northumberland has 34 Branch libraries, 4 Mobile libraries for remoter areas and a Home Library Service for housebound readers. Membership is free, with small charges for loan of some items e.g. dvds. As well as fiction, non-fiction and large print books, branches stock spoken word tapes, cds, dvds, magazines and newspapers. Also music sets, play sets, and the Memory Boxes – lent to groups free of charge at Morpeth.

Every branch has computers with free internet access and staff will help you with computer use. Activities may include clubs, courses, author visits, craft sessions or even a Murder Mystery evening. They may also host surgeries for Councillors or Police and various other advice sessions.

Website lists opening times, contact numbers and services for each library, or ring the general number above and ask for the branch you require.

HEALTH AND WELLBEING PROJECT

Age UK Northumberland,
0845 140 0088
Project promotes physical, mental and social wellbeing to enhance quality of life, encourage independence and a healthy lifestyle. Exercise sessions run in local venues across the county. Includes zumba, pilates, yoga, dance. Also sessions on falls prevention, healthy eating etc. Ring for details, to attend or else volunteer to help.
The Roundhouse, Age UK
Northumberland, Lintonville Parkway, Ashington, NE63 9JZ, 0845 140 0088
www.ageuk-northumberland.org.uk
Age UK’s resource centre offers a wide range of activities including courses on computers for absolute beginners. Other classes include singing for over 50s, exercise classes, line dancing, Zumba Gold and there is a small gym. There is also a monthly foot care clinic, and the Roundhouse café for snacks and light lunches.

SPORT AND LEISURE CENTRES

www.northumberland.gov.uk
The centres offer a mix of activities and classes. Join as a Member to receive discounts for activities, with further discounts if in receipt of benefits. Most centres have Over 50s sessions offering a range of facilities for a flat rate. These are listed here, but get in touch with centre directly to find out what else is on offer.

NB Details here were correct at the time of writing, but may be subject to change. Check in advance.

North Northumberland
Riverside Leisure Centre,
New Market, Morpeth, NE61 1PR
01670 514665
www.harpersfitness.co.uk
Young at Heart gentle exercise class for over 40s, Mon, Wed 10.30am – 11.30am. 50+ and Disabled swim session Wed 6.30pm – 7.30pm. Aquafit Mon 6.45pm – 7.00pm, Thurs 6.30pm – 7.15pm. Zumba Mon 9.15am – 10.00am, Fri 7.00pm – 7.45pm. Reduced rate for fitness suite 9.30am – 4.30pm Mon – Fri. Health Start scheme.

Seahouses Sports & Community Centre, Stone Close, Seahouses, NE68 7YW, 01665 721868
www.seahouses.org
Newly refurbished centre has outdoor and indoor bowls, kurling, badminton, tennis courts available to book by arrangement.

Swan Leisure Centre,
Northumberland Road, Tweedmouth,
Berwick, TD15 2AS, 01289 330603
www.swanleisurecentre.co.uk
Fit for Life class, Tues and Thurs 11.00am – 12.00pm low intensity workout for all ages. Aquafit Mon 9.15am – 10.00am, Tues and Thurs 7.00pm – 8.00pm. Aqua Health Thurs 3.00pm – 4.00pm. Mind, Body & Soul, combination of yoga, pilates and Tai Chi.

Thurs 7.00pm – 8.00pm. Zumba range of times over the week ring for details.

Willowburn Sports & Leisure Centre,
Willowburn Avenue,
Alnwick, NE66 2JH, 01665 605030
www.northcountryleisure.org.uk
Sessions for over 50s on Wed 1.00pm – 4.00pm and Fri 10.00am – 1.00pm, includes swimming pool, badminton, table tennis and gym (after induction). Also Tai Chi on Tues 10.00am – 11.45am and Line Dancing Wed 2.00pm – 4.00pm and Fri 9.30am – 11.30am.

South East Northumberland
Ashington Leisure Centre, Institute Road, Ashington, NE63 8HP
01670 532380
www.northumberland.gov.uk
Agewell Mon 10.00am – 12.00pm, Tues, Fri 11.00am – 3.00pm, includes badminton, indoor and outdoor bowls, exercise classes and swimming (Fri only), Aquafit Tues 1.00pm – 2.00pm and Fri 2.30pm – 3.30pm. Zumba, Fri 9.45am – 10.45am. Yoga, Tues 7.15pm – 8.15pm. Indoor bowling rink. Healthstart scheme.

Blyth Sports Centre, Bolam Avenue,
Blyth, NE24 5BT
01670 542222
www.bval.co.uk
Nifty Fifties sessions Tues and Fri 10.45am – 2.00pm, includes swimming, badminton, squash, table tennis and for small extra charge – gym use or Aquafit class.

Age Well exercise class for over fifties Wed 11.00am – 12.00pm. Yoga Mon and Wed 10.00am – 11.00am, Zumba, Thurs 11.00am – 12.00pm.

Concordia Leisure Centre, Forum Way,
Cramlington, NE23 6YB
01670 542222
www.bval.co.uk
Age Well sessions for over 50s, Mon and Wed 11.00am – 3.00pm. Includes swimming, keep fit and aerobics, use of gym and all courts. Age Well Circuits Fri 10.00am – 11.00am. Carpet Bowls subject to availability. Badminton morning Mon 10.15am – 12.00pm. Walking Club, Mon at 10.00am.

See Healthy walks page 30
Newbiggin Sports & Community Centre, Woodhorn Road, NE64 6HG, 01670 532348
www.northumberland.gov.uk
Join as a social member to access the clubs here. Over 50’s group Mon 2.00pm – 4.00pm, Over 55s Thurs 2.00pm – 4.00pm. Sequence dancing with instruction Sat 7.00pm – 9.30pm. Zumba classes Tues 7.15pm – 8.15pm, Wed 10.00am – 11.00am, Thurs 8.00pm – 9.00pm. Healthstart scheme.

Northburn Sports and Community Centre, Crowhall Lane, Cramlington, 01670 714154
www.bval.co.uk
Zumba Tues 1.00pm – 2.00pm. Fitness for fun Tues 10.00am – 11.00am.

Sporting Club, Cramlington, within Cramlington High School grounds, Highburn, NE23 6BN, 01670 542222
www.bval.co.uk
Health Start and Health Quest exercise referral scheme. Badminton, tennis courts, fitness, table tennis, pitches, cricket nets available to book. Open in school holidays, weekends and evenings in term time.

West Northumberland
Haltwhistle Swimming & Leisure Centre, Greencroft, Haltwhistle NE49 9DR, 01434 320727
www.haltwhistleleisure.co.uk
Young at Heart session Tues and Thurs 10.00am – 12.00pm includes badminton, table tennis, carpet bowls and free refreshments. Mixed carpet bowls Mon 1.30pm – 3.30pm, T’ai Chi Mon 10.00am – 11.00pm. Outdoor pool opens Easter, adult only swim 7.00pm – 7.45pm, ring to check evenings. GP referral scheme.

Ponteland Leisure Centre, Callerton Lane, Ponteland, NE20 9EG
01661 825441
www.leisureconnections.co.uk
Young at Heart gentle exercise class, Fri 11.00am – 12.00pm. Aquafit Mon 9.30am – 10.30am. Pilates Tues 10.30am – 11.30am. Adults only swim Mon – Fri 12.00pm – 1.30pm. GP Healthy Life referral scheme.

Waterworld, Front Street, Prudhoe, NE42 5DQ, 01661 833144
www.northcountryleisure.org.uk
Young at Heart pool sessions for over 45s include aquafit, volleyball or lane swimming. Thurs 9.00am – 10.00am, Tues 1.00pm – 2.00pm. Be Able Disabled pool exercise session Wed 7.30pm – 8.30pm. Young at Heart dry-side exercise sessions Mon – Thurs

22 million people use their spare time to improve the lives of others...why not do it too?

Here’s what you can gain...

- The chance to try something new and learn new skills
- The satisfaction of giving something back to the community
- Opportunities to meet new people and build confidence

It doesn’t matter how much experience you have, your time and enthusiasm are invaluable and very much appreciated. Volunteer – it’s worth it!

Childcare; befriending; events; administration; mini bus driving; mediation; trusteeships; environmental; health; youth work; museums...and many more...

Ring for an informal chat on 01670 858688 www.thevolunteercentre.org

Any benefits you get should not be affected.
10.30am – 11.20am. Healthy Life GP referral scheme runs light aerobics Tues and Thurs 11.30am – 12.20pm.

Wentworth Leisure Centre, Wentworth Park, Hexham, NE46 3PD
01434 607080
www.northcountryleisure.org.uk
Young at Heart Badminton
Mon 10.00am – 12.00pm and Fri 10.30am – 12.00pm. Young at Heart Aquafit Fri 2.02pm – 3.05pm. Tai Chi Wed 10.30am – 11.30am and 7.00pm – 8.00pm. Pilates Tues 10.30am – 11.30am and Thurs 9.30am – 10.30am, 6.00pm – 7.00pm, 7.00pm – 8.00pm. Healthy Life scheme. Healthy Walks.

Wheelchair Sports and Leisure Club, The Torch Centre, Corbridge Road, Hexham, NE46 1QS
0191 236 5787, Isobel Landers
Friendly club for wheelchair users across the county. Fri 2.00pm – 7.00pm. Snooker, bowls, darts, table-tennis, basketball, kurling, rifleshooting, dominos etc. All free. Bar and kitchen. New members welcome, no need to be good at sport to join, just turn up for all or part of the afternoon.

OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES – WALKING GROUPS

Nordic Walking, Northumberland,
Angie Patrick 01670 784839 or 0845 140 0088
www.nordicwalking.co.uk
Walking with poles exercises the upper body and adds major fitness benefits to walking. Age UK Northumberland has groups in various locations. Ring for details.

Northumberland Health Walks
Blyth Valley Walkers, Alan George, 01670 542561
www.bval.co.uk
Groups in Cramlington, Blyth, Seaton Sluice, Seaton Delaval and Seghill.

Central Walks, Vanessa Burgess
07860 504763 or 01670 532348
Groups in Ashington, Morpeth, Newbiggin, Widdrington, Ponteland.

North Northumberland, North Country Leisure, 01665 605030
www.northcountryleisure.org.uk
Groups in Alnwick, Amble, Belford, Berwick, Rothbury, Seahouses, Wooler.

West Northumberland, North Country Leisure, 01434 613227
Groups in Allendale, Bellingham, Corbridge, Wark, Haltwhistle, Hexham, Prudhoe and Stocksfield.

Northumbria Ramblers Association
www.northumbriaramblers.org.uk
Website gives details of times and venues, otherwise contact as below:

• Alnwick, Linda Law, 01665 575633
• Berwick, Serena Dean, 01289 388668
• Hexham, Ros Blaylock 01434 604639
• Morpeth, Margaret Siggens 01670 518031
• Ponteland, Colin Braithwaite, 01661 822929
• Short Walks group (6 miles or less), David Moore 0191 285 2925

Walking for Health,
www.wfh.naturalengland.org.uk
Walk England,
www.walkengland.org.uk

Other outdoor activities include Archery, Nature Club, Cycling, Sailing, Riding as well as sports such as Tennis, Cricket, Golf and Bowling can be found on the website at www.northumberlandlife.org or in the Yellow Pages directory.

WALKING GROUPS

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Central Walks, Vanessa Burgess
07860 504763 or 01670 532348
Groups in Ashington, Morpeth, Newbiggin, Widdrington, Ponteland.

North Northumberland, North Country Leisure, 01665 605030
www.northcountryleisure.org.uk
Groups in Alnwick, Amble, Belford, Berwick, Rothbury, Seahouses, Wooler.

Volunteering is an enjoyable way to support a worthwhile cause using skills you already have, or learning new ones. Meet people, find new challenges and have structure to your day. It can be a good first step into employment. Support and training is offered by all organisations.

Opportunities in Northumberland have included work with children, young people or disabled people, animals, conservation, heritage and history, befriending, gardening, shop, admin work and trusteehips. Contact your local centre for an appointment, or visit their website for volunteering opportunities.

Age UK Northumberland, 0845 140 0088
www.ageuk-northumberland.org.uk
Volunteers always welcome to help support the wellbeing of older people in the community. Wide range of projects and services, get in touch for details.

Volunteering Northumberland, 01670 858688
www.thevolunteercentre.org
• Main Office at Wansbeck CVS, 107-109 Station Road, Ashington, 01670 858688

• North, Terri Bearhope, 07900 998933 West, 07884 414396

Volunteer Centre, Prudhoe Infopoint, 82 Front Street, Prudhoe, 01661 836668 or 07896285137 www.volunteerprudhoe.org
Moving to new premises in March 2012.

Also see www.do-it.org.uk – for lists of opportunities
www.volunteering.org.uk – for general information

REACH, 0207 582 6543 www.reachskills.org.uk
Reach finds opportunities for skilled volunteers to use their professional, managerial and business experience within the voluntary sector.

RSVP (Retired and Senior Volunteer Programme) 01913 891155 regional office. www.csv-rsvp.org.uk
Recruits volunteers over 50 for various projects, e.g. telephone befriending, knitting (trauma teddies, blankets, clothing).

PAID WORK AFTER RETIREMENT

After retirement many people wish to continue working, sometimes to make a change of direction and retrain, to start a business, or just to improve their finances.

You can carry on working while still taking your State Pension, or if you defer claiming your pension you’ll be paid a larger weekly amount later on, or may be able to have the deferred amount as a tax-free lump sum.

State Pension counts along with earnings as taxable income, and earnings after pension age may affect benefits such as Pension Credit, Housing Benefit or Council Tax Benefit. Consult the Pension Service if this may be a problem.

For help to find vacancies, training courses or to plan your income needs try the following.

Also see sections on Pensions and Benefits, pages 78–81

Jobcentre Plus 0845 604 3719 www.direct.gov.uk
They carry lists of vacancies and can advise on finding work, training and benefits available. Local branches are:

• Roxburgh House, Roxburgh Place, Alnwick, NE66 1LX
• Government Buildings, Reiverdale Road, Ashington, NE63 9YY
• Longridge House, Front Street West, Bedlington, NE22 5TL
• Norham House, 15 Walkergate, Berwick, TD15 1DS
• Bridge House, Percy Street, Blyth, NE24 2AQ
• 17-19 Dudley Court, Cramlington, NE23 6QW
• St. Andrews House, Haugh Lane, Hexham, NE46 3RB
• Fountain House, New Market, Morpeth, NE61 1LA

Job Seeker Direct, 0845 60 60 234 0845 60 55 255 textphone www.direct.gov.uk
Telephone service and website also have details of local vacancies and advice on how to apply.
ACAS, 0845 747 47 47, 0845 606 1600 minicom www.acas.org.uk
Advice on all areas of employment relations, including age discrimination.

STARTING A BUSINESS

Business Link, 0845 600 9006 www.businesslink.gov.uk
Practical advice on business planning, finances, marketing etc. via the helpline and website.

Also see sections on Pensions and Benefits, pages 78–81

NBSL, Wansbeck Business Centre, Rotary Parkway, Ashington, Northumberland, NE63 8QZ 01670 813322 www.nbsl.org.uk
Free practical advice and one to one help to start a business, including grants and funding information, business skills workshops etc. Centres in Morpeth, Hexham, Blyth, Berwick, Alnwick and Ashington as well as outreach into rural areas too.

Prime, 0800 783 1904 www.prime.org.uk
www.primebusinessclub.com
Dedicated to helping people over 50 set up in business. Ring to receive a free information pack.

TAEN (The Age & Employment Network), 020 3033 1507 www.taen.org.uk
Campaigns for better opportunities for over 50s. Not an employment agency but they can signpost individuals to organisations that will help directly.

Also see pages 85 for advice on legal issues.
HOLIDAYS

Local travel agents
As well as arranging coach trips, cruises, sightseeing, special interest, long stay or action holidays travel agents can arrange wheelchairs, preferential boarding and help with luggage at airports if you have mobility problems. They will also check hotels for suitable accommodation and facilities.

Avalon Freedom Holidays,
01423 856589 or 01423 530053
www.avalongroup.org.uk
Short breaks and holidays in the UK or abroad for people requiring assistance by a trained companion or supporter.

Enable Holidays,
0871 222 4939
www.enableholidays.com
Specialist tour operator for wheelchair users, people with limited mobility and their families and friends.

RADAR, The Disability Network,
12 City Forum, 250 City Road,
London EC1V 8AF, 0207 250 3222,
0207 250 4119, minicom
www.radar.org.uk
Campaigning group also offers printed guide to accessible holiday accommodation in Britain and Ireland in print or on the website. Organisers of the National Key Scheme to supply personal keys for disabled toilets across the UK which may be kept locked.

Tourism for All, 0303 303 0146
www.tourismforall.org.uk
Charity offers information on all aspects of holidays for disabled people and older people.

www.direct.gov.uk/en/disabledpeople/motoringandtransport
Transport and travel advice and information for disabled and less able people.

TRANSPORT

Concessionary Fares: Bus Passes
0845 600 6400
www.northumberland.gov.uk
Free bus passes for people of pension age or who are registered disabled cover travel on local buses anywhere in England. In some areas you may only travel after 9.30am but in

Ian Lavery MP for Wansbeck says:
As we get older and our priorities change it’s useful to have a guide like this to help us find out about things, or solve day to day problems.

So I am delighted to recommend this excellent little book - full of ideas and advice for improving our quality of life wherever in Northumberland we live.

If you are from Wansbeck and have something you would like to discuss, or a particular problem I can help with, contact me as follows:

Guy Opperman MP
Member of Parliament for the Hexham Constituency

I enjoy my time working as one of your local MPs here in Northumberland. In particular I enjoy being able to help local residents who may need a helping hand to solve a problem, or some advice on issues such as benefits, bus passes or elderly care.

If you have any concerns and want to get in touch please do not hesitate to do so. You can contact me by letter, email or phone, or else arrange an appointment at one of my regular surgeries. Or feel free just to have a word if you see me in the street.
Northumberland they can be used all day from 9.00am including weekends.

Disabled pass holders go free at any time, any day. If you need a carer to travel with you, apply for a Companion Card to cover their bus fare too. For this you will need a letter from your GP to confirm your condition.

Pass not for use on Tyne & Wear Metro or local train services. For travel into Scotland, check with the County Council.

To Apply by Post
Ring for an application form and send to Concessionary Travel, Northumberland Council, Hadrian House, Market Street, Hexham, NE46 3NH. If you lose your pass a replacement costs £15. (Free if your pass is stolen and you can supply a crime number.)

To Apply in Person
Visit one of the council Information Centres, taking proof of age (birth certificate, passport) and residency, your disability (if applicable) and a passport photograph. Your pass should arrive within two weeks.

Council Information Centres located in:
• Greenwell Lane, Alnwick
• Wansbeck Square Ashington
• Front St. West, Bedlington
• Wallace Green, Berwick
• Keel Row Centre, Blyth Valley
• Forum Way, Cramlington
• Hadrian House, Hexham
• 28 Bridge Street, Morpeth
• Avenue Rd, Seaton Delaval

Concessionary Fares:
Taxi Tokens 0845 600 6400
Concessionary scheme for anyone receiving certain benefits, without access to a car and who cannot use existing public transport because of disability. The scheme allows you to buy £50 worth of tokens per year for £10. Ring for details or visit a County Council Information Centre for an application form and a list of taxi firms who will accept tokens.

Blue Badge Parking Scheme, 0845 600 6400
National scheme allows parking concessions for people with severe mobility problems – whether drivers or passengers. Badges are issued for up to three years, only to people with permanent disabilities. To apply, contact Adult Care as above. If your badge is about to expire, get in touch, as no reminders are issued.

Ronnie Campbell MP
Blyth Valley Constituency
Office hours: Mon-Thurs 9am-5pm
Fri 9am-3.30pm
Ronne now has monthly surgeries in the Blyth Valley area on a Saturday. Check local press for details or contact the office where staff will be able to assist.

Ronnie Campbell MP
Blyth Valley Constituency
42 Renwick Road
Blyth
NE24 2LQ
Email: campbellr@parliament.uk

Northumberland, Tyne and Wear NHS
NORTH EAST DRIVE MOBILITY
Driving and Passenger Assessment Service
Our service helps people to retain or regain their independence as drivers and passengers. We provide independent assessment and advice to people with a medical condition, or disability, which may affect their ability to drive, or use a vehicle as a passenger.

We are based at Walergate Park, Centre for Neuro-rehabilitation and Neuro-psychiatry, Berfield Road, Newcastle upon Tyne NE6 4QD

Please contact us for further information:
0191 287 5090 or email northeast.drivemobility@ntw.nhs.uk or visit our website: www.ntw.nhs.uk/mobility
MOBILITY SCHEMES

For Wheelchair Hire – see below and also pages 62 and 70

Motability, 0845 456 4566
www.motability.co.uk
Non-profit making organisation sells and hires cars, scooters and powered wheelchairs through a network of dealers. You are eligible if you receive the higher rate of the mobility component of Disability Living Allowance or War Pensioners’ Mobility Supplement. Ring for an information pack, and to find suitable dealers.

National Forum of Mobility Centres, 0800 559 3636
www.mobility-centres.org.uk
Helpline and information sheets on all aspects of outdoor mobility. Includes vehicle access and adaptations, scooters, wheelchairs, driving with a disability etc. North East Forum member as below

North East Drive Mobility, Walkergate Park, Centre for Neuro-Rehabilitation & Neuro-Psychiatry, Benfield Road, Newcastle, NE6 4QD 0191 287 5090
Personal driving assessments for people with a condition affecting their ability to use a vehicle as driver or passenger. Accredited by the Forum of Mobility Centres.

USEFUL TRANSPORT NUMBERS

Traveline, 0871 200 22 33
www.travelinenortheast.info
Information on local fares, times and routes for bus, coach, train or ferry travel.

Transport Direct
www.transportdirect.info
Includes national journey planner using a range of transport options as well as route comparisons, car park lists, cycle routes, cheaper rail fares etc. Internet only.

National Rail Enquiries,
08457 48 49 50
0845 60 50 600 textphone
www.nationalrail.co.uk

COMMUNITY TRANSPORT SCHEMES

Adapt (North East), 01434 600599
www.adapt-ne.org.uk
Range of transport schemes for members, who are isolated by disability or through living in a rural area. (Individual membership currently £2 per year).

Services include Minibus hire, Dial a Ride, Individual Support Service and Wheelchair Loan.

Stuck without transport?
Want some help to get out and about?
NEED’s community transport can get you there

If you, or your group, have no transport, or are isolated, or just need a more personal service we can help.

Call us on 01665 605780 to find out what we can do for you.

Helping the community every day

Need Ltd, (NE Equality & Diversity)
Alnwick Fire Station, South Road, Alnwick,
Northumberland, NE66 2PA
www.needltd.co.uk

NEED Ltd
North East Equality & Diversity Ltd
Regd Charity no. 1120968
Blyth Valley Disabled Forum,
01670 364657
www.blythvalleydisabledforum.co.uk
Fully accessible vehicle for people who are disabled or who have limited or restricted mobility for social outings, church services, recreation, etc.

The BRINGO, Bell View Resource Centre, 33 West Street, Belford, NE70 7QB, 01668 219220
Wheelchair accessible car scheme for essential and social journeys, driven by volunteer drivers. 
See also page 7

Getabout Northumberland,
0845 266 8906,
(ring 9.00am – 1.00pm)
or 07834 753387
www.wrvs.org.uk
WRVS volunteer car transport scheme for regular or one-off trips, shopping, social, hospital etc. Known for its friendly and committed volunteer drivers and passenger assistants.

NEED Ltd (NE Equality & Diversity),
01665 605780
www.needltd.co.uk
Formerly known as TINN the expanded organisation specialises in services for older people and people with disabilities. Safe, accessible transport across the North East and Border region, for organisations and individuals who are isolated, or without access to conventional transport or require a ‘door to door’ service. Includes Dial-a-Ride service into market towns from rural areas, also free Travel Planning for help with difficult journeys.

North Seaton Colliery Community Centre Minibus, 01670 851457
Wheelchair accessible, 17 seat minibus for groups and individuals. Ring evenings, after 9.30pm if possible.

Northumberland Car Share,
Northumberland County Council,
01670 533966, Sarah Rowell
www.northumberlandcarshare.com
Car sharing scheme for one-off or regular trips, saves money, carbon footprint, and time. Participants share the cost of petrol. Register on the scheme online which will then find a match for you either as driver or passenger.

Reaction Independent Living,
Shopping Project, Wansbeck CVS,
01670 858688, Karen Cox
Scheme to enable people who are isolated or disabled to travel to the shops, bank etc. Collects from home, along with volunteers to help. Runs Tues, Wed and Thurs from different parts of Blyth, Wansbeck area and Seaton Valley. Ring to apply or ask your care manager.

Also see page 7 for Age UK Rural Access Project

Red Cross Transport Scheme.
0191 273 7961
www.redcross.org.uk
North of Tyne scheme covers Northumberland too. Car or wheelchair-accessible minibus can be arranged for individuals or groups for any journey purpose.

Upper Coquetdale Community Transport, 07870 577 667
or 01669 621855
www.ucct.btck.co.uk
Wheelchair accessible 17 seat bus covers whole area for individual or group bookings. Regular Friday shopping trips to Rothbury.

Watbus Community Transport, 
01670 522999
www.watbus.org.uk
Community transport scheme across Northumberland for users who are older or who have difficulty using mainstream transport. For individuals or groups. Look out for new cycle trip scheme.
HOME AND COMMUNITY

Running a home as efficiently as possible and helping achieve a safe community sometimes needs a little support. Here are some schemes, services and contacts to help things along.

REPAIRS & MAINTENANCE

Age UK Northumberland Handyman and Gardening service, 0845 140 0088 www.ageuk-northumberland.org.uk
Indoor and outdoor service includes house painting, cleaning of windows, patios, paths and gutters, also fitting handrails, locks, bolts, smoke alarms, assembling or moving furniture. Gardening service includes maintenance of lawns, borders, hedges, as well as building walls, fences, path laying etc. They can also advise on home adaptations and hold a local trader register.

Blyth Star Enterprises, 01670 855130 or 07764 939189 www.blythstar.com
Charity runs gardening service in Blyth Valley and Wansbeck areas, including maintenance, tidying, supplying bedding and hanging baskets.

Care & Repair Handyperson Service, (formerly STARS) 01670 851952
DIY & small repairs are carried out for older, or disabled people across Northumberland. Ring for a visit from the Handyperson. He checks for potential problems, including fire safety, and can fit a smoke detector. Suitable work includes: replace light bulbs; fix curtain rails; take up floor coverings; move furniture for better access; fit security features. They cannot do: electrical or plumbing work; roofing repairs; decorating; gas appliance maintenance.

HOME IMPROVEMENT AGENCY

We help older, disabled or vulnerable owner-occupiers or private tenants to remain living in their own home by giving practical advice and assistance to enable them to carry out property repairs, improvements and disabled adaptations.

Tel: 01670 851844 
Email: susan.poole@threerivershousing.co.uk

HANDYPERSON SERVICE

A partially free service for older and vulnerable people

Work which helps prevent falls and accidents is free and includes

• change light bulbs, 
• hang curtains, 
• take down light shades

Other core work is charged at £10 per visit and includes

• changing tap washers 
• door handles

Extra non essential work is charged at £20 per hour + VAT and includes

• flat pack furniture, 
• cat flaps

Tel: 01670 851952 
Email: northumberlandhandyperson@threerivershousing.co.uk
HOME ADAPTATIONS

If you have a disability or illness you may need adaptations to your home e.g. installing a stairlift, fixing grab-rails or constructing a wheelchair ramp. Depending on your circumstances, you may be eligible for financial help with this through the Disabled Facilities Grant. You can also hire equipment such as stairlifts privately.

If you are a tenant your landlord may arrange adaptations, particularly if you live in social housing. Whether you apply for a grant or ask your landlord to do the work you will need to arrange an assessment of your needs by an occupational therapist – and may find this helpful even if you intend to pay yourself. Contact Care and Repair Home Improvement Agency as below for details.

Care & Repair Home Improvement Agency, 01670 851844
Practical help with property repairs, improvements and adaptations for older, disabled or vulnerable owner-occupiers or private tenants. They can carry out home assessments, then help you find finance for the work, choose a contractor and manage the project. If work proceeds then a fee of 10% of the net cost may be charged.
Disabled Facilities Grant
Available to people in any kind of housing, including owner-occupiers. Whether you are entitled to support, and how much, will depend on your finances; people receiving Guarantee Credit under the Pension Credit scheme will usually not have to pay any of the cost of home adaptations which an occupational therapist has assessed as being necessary.

Also see page 68 for Staying at Home with Help

LOW COST FURNISHINGS

Core Furniture, The Tynedale Centre, Haugh Lane Industrial Estate, Haugh Lane, Hexham, NE46 3PU, 01434 607509
Furniture donated is restored and sold on at low cost. No white goods or electrical equipment. Open for anyone whether on a low income or not Mon – Thurs 9.30am – 4.00pm, Friday close at 3.30pm. Free collection of donated furniture, small charge for deliveries.

Re’Nu’It, St. Thomas Close Workshops, Alnwick, NE66 1DJ 07792 175827
Furniture, electricals, bedding, crockery etc. Free (or very low cost) delivery and collection of donations. Open Tues and Fri 9.00am – 3.00pm.

Revive Furniture, Unit 16D, Cowley Road, Blyth Industrial Estate, Blyth, NE24 5TF, 01670 368665 www.reviveenterprise.co.uk
Low cost furniture for people on low incomes or benefits. Take proof of benefit to register. Beds, wardrobes, sofas and chairs, dining suites, no electrical equipment. Open Mon – Thurs 9.00am – 4.30pm, Fri close at 4.00pm. Free collections and deliveries to many areas, but donated furniture must have fire safety labels in order to resell.

FurniCheaper, Unit 16D, Cowley Road, Blyth Industrial Estate, Blyth, NE24 5TF, 01670 368665
www.reviveenterprise.co.uk
Low cost furniture for people on low incomes or benefits. Take proof of benefit to register. Beds, wardrobes, sofas and chairs, dining suites, no electrical equipment. Open Mon – Thurs 9.00am – 4.30pm, Fri close at 4.00pm. Free collections and deliveries to many areas, but donated furniture must have fire safety labels in order to resell.
Warmth and Energy Efficiency

Warm Front Scheme, 0800 316 2805
www.direct.gov.uk/warmfront
Government grant for heating and insulation improvements. Currently (Dec 2011) up to a maximum of £3500, or £6000 for oil systems. Available to private tenants or owner-occupiers who receive certain benefits and who have non-working central heating and/or poor insulation.

Northumberland Warm Zone, 01670 356642
01670 356624 Lisa Oxley (Benefits Advice Officer)
www.warmzones.co.uk
Practical advice on improving the warmth of your home and increasing energy efficiency and checks for grant eligibility. Ring to book a confidential home visit to assess your needs, or apply from the website.

Winter Fuel Payment Helpline, 0845 915 15 15
0845 601 5613 textphone
www.direct.gov.uk/winterfuel
For anyone of qualifying age – born on or before 5 July 1950. If you are receiving certain benefits you are paid automatically, otherwise you should claim by the end of March at the latest. Ring for advice on eligibility and how to make a claim.

Energy Saving Trust
North East Advice Centre, 0800 512 012
www.energysavingtrust.org.uk
Impartial energy saving advice, help with reducing fuel bills, information on grant schemes and applying for them.

Home Heat Helpline, 0800 33 66 99, Textphone 0800 027 2122
www.homeheathelpline.org.uk
Information on grants and schemes to save fuel costs, and advice on making your home more energy efficient.

Northumberland is a very safe county to live in. By carrying out some simple steps you can help to make it even safer.

- Keep all doors locked, even when you are at home.
- Don’t keep large amounts of money in the house.
- Check and verify the callers’ identities by phoning the organisation they say they are from – check identity badges.
- Have a peephole or door chain fitted to your door so you can see who is outside.
- Don’t engage in personal conversation with telephone sales people.
- Never give out personal information such as bank or bank card details to strangers.
- Make sure you have good exterior lighting on your home.
- If you leave the house, try to inform somebody where you are going and when you expect to be back.
- Call the council and let them know when street lights are not working in your neighbourhood.

Neighbourhood Watch schemes operate throughout the county.

It would be worthwhile to acquaint yourself with the organisation. Contact Northumbria Police on 101 for information about schemes in your area.
**HOME SECURITY**

Emergency calls, 999  
For any situation which has become dangerous or where a crime has just been, or is about to be, committed.

Northumbria Police, 101  
[www.northumbria.police.uk](http://www.northumbria.police.uk)  
Use this new number for all non-emergency concerns, enquiries and information.

Northumberland Fire & Rescue Service  
[www.northumberland.gov.uk/fire](http://www.northumberland.gov.uk/fire)  
Ring 999 for ALL emergencies.

Fire Safety Advice,  
0800 731 1351 or 01670 591149  
Advice on fire safety in the home from the Community Safety Academy or from any fire station. They recommend a smoke alarm on each level of your house, which should be tested regularly. Advice also on specialist alarms for hearing-impaired residents.

Gas Emergency Contact Number,  
0800 111 999  
[www.nationalgrid.com/uk](http://www.nationalgrid.com/uk)  
Free 24 hour national emergency number if you suspect a gas leak or escape of other fumes such as carbon monoxide. Local engineers will attend free of charge.

**ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR**

You should still ring 999 when there is immediate danger or you witness a crime taking place.

Community Safety Team,  
0845 600 6400  
Ring them with concerns about a safety issue, or anti-social behaviour in your area. They help with noisy neighbours, vandalism, harassment and fly-tipping and other local problems. Housing Association tenants can contact the Tenancy Enforcement team through the Housing Association number.

Disability Hate Crime,  
077 477 581 81, Michelle Redfern or Northumbria Police, 101  
[www.northumbria.police.uk](http://www.northumbria.police.uk)  
Any crime which is motivated by the victim's circumstances – i.e. disability – is classed as a disability hate crime. If you encounter this, the police encourage you to report it to them. Either contact Michelle directly or report to the police as for a normal crime and they will refer it on.

See also p64 for Wansbeck Disability Forum

**DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND ABUSE**

Safeguarding Adults at risk of abuse  
If someone you know, is being abused or neglected contact the police if there is immediate danger, or Adult Care on 01670 536400.

Cease24, 01665 606881, Alnwick  
01670 360182, Blyth,  
01670 790960, Morpeth  
[www.enough.me.uk](http://www.enough.me.uk)  
Emotional and practical support for domestic abuse victims, not counselling.

Elder Abuse Response Line,  
0808 808 8141  
[www.elderabuse.org.uk](http://www.elderabuse.org.uk)  
Information and support for victims, or others with concerns. Deals with physical, psychological, sexual and financial abuse and neglect.

Grace Northumberland,  
(Tyneside Rape Crisis)  
0800 035 2794, helpline  
[www.tynesidercc.org.uk](http://www.tynesidercc.org.uk)  
Helpline and free individual counselling sessions across Northumberland for women survivors of sexual violence no matter when it happened. For referrals ring 0191 222 0272.

[50 www.alabasterpublishing.co.uk](http://www.alabasterpublishing.co.uk)  
[51](#)
MPS IN NORTHUMBERLAND

Contact your MP at the constituency office, or attend one of their surgeries - held in local venues, either by appointment, or on a drop-in basis. Or write to them at:

The House of Commons, Westminster, London SW1A 0AA

Berwick: Sir Alan Beith, 01665 602901, 54, Bondgate Within, Alnwick, NE66 1JD alanbeith@berwicklibdems.org.uk

Blyth Valley: Ronnie Campbell, 01670 363050, 42 Renwick Road, Blyth, NE24 2LQ campbellr@parliament.uk

Hexham: Guy Opperman, 01434 601420, 1, Meal Market, Hexham, NE46 1NF guy.opperman.mp@parliament.uk

Wansbeck: Ian Lavery, 01670 852494, 94, Station Road, Ashington, NE63 8RN ian.lavery.mp@parliament.uk

Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence affects both females and males of all ages.

If you want advice or support in Northumberland in relation to Domestic Abuse or Sexual Violence you can contact the following organisations in confidence:

Cease24 Domestic Abuse Project, Northumberland - 01665 606881
Provides Independent Domestic Violence Advocates who support and advise female and male victims of domestic violence and abuse across Northumberland.

Sixtyeightythirty, Hexham - 01434 608030
Provides practical and emotional support to women and their children who have experienced domestic abuse in the West of Northumberland. www.sixtyeightythirty.com

GRACE Northumberland Rape and Sexual Violence Project - 0191 222 0272
Provides specific support and counselling to women victims and survivors of rape and sexual violence in Northumberland. www.tynesidercc.org.uk

A wide range of information is available along with the details of local and national contacts at: www.enough.me.uk

See page 64 for main entry.
HEALTH AND WELLBEING

In this section we have tried to reflect the range of services and advice providers available. The support group list has grown longer, but if you belong to a group we should include, please let us know.

MEDICAL CARE

NHS Direct, 0845 46 47
www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk
Confidential 24 hour helpline and online enquiry service. Staffed by health professionals who do not diagnose, but advise on practical matters e.g. symptoms, drug side-effects, dental queries etc. Website includes online symptom checker. They have contacts for local health services including doctors, dentists, opticians and pharmacies.

GP Surgery or Health Centre
NE Primary Care Services Agency,
0191 275 4200 www.nefhsa.nhs.uk
PALS service, 0800 032 0202,
Ring for lists of practices in the area. Your practice can refer you to specialised health services as necessary.

Out of Hours Care, 0300 123 4343,
0300 123 1932 (textphone)
www.northern-doctors.org
If you need a doctor outside surgery hours ring this number and not your own GP surgery. A clinician will ring back and may give medical advice over the phone or an appointment to attend an Out of Hours Centre, or a doctor may visit you at home. The service can also arrange transport if this is a problem.

Out of Hours Centres
Centres are in Alnwick, Ashington, Berwick, Hexham and Longbenton and you will be given an appointment in advance so do not just turn up. Centres are open Mon – Fri 6.30pm – midnight and from 8.00am – midnight on Sat, Sun and Bank Holidays.

HOSPITALS

0844 811 8111 is the telephone number for the following Hospitals:

• Alnwick Infirmary
• Berwick Infirmary
• Blyth Community Hospital
• Hexham General Hospital
• Morpeth Cottage Hospital
• North Tyneside General
• Wansbeck General

Other Hospitals:
• Haltwhistle War Memorial Hospital, 01434 320225
• Rothbury Community Hospital, 01669 620555
• Newcastle General, RVI, Freeman and Dental Hospitals 0191 233 6161
• Sir GB Hunter Memorial Hospital, 0191 220 5953

DENTAL CARE

For dentists taking on NHS patients, or for emergencies if you have no dentist, please call NHS Direct on 0845 46 47. For out of hours treatment call the Out of Hours service on 0845 608 0324.

NB: You cannot turn up for treatment at the hospital unless you have been referred through the Out of Hours service.

Also see page 58 for help with dental and other health costs

NHS Health Trainers, 01670 784 198
One to one advice to help you plan and implement healthy lifestyle choices, including diet, keeping fit, smoking, alcohol consumption etc. They run groups such as weight loss and weight management and can signpost you on to other services and support groups. They operate across Northumberland in various locations.
PHARMACY SERVICE
Pharmacists advise on treatment for minor ailments and illnesses, can review medicines and give support if you commence new medication. If you receive free prescriptions you can go straight to the pharmacist for treatment without having to visit the doctor first. Other services vary and may include tests for cholesterol, blood pressure, blood glucose, flu jabs, dosage aids etc.

PODIATRY SERVICE
Good footcare helps keep you steady on your feet to prevent falls. The service gives self-care advice, help with toenails, skin problems, foot pain, or help if you have diabetes, arthritis or medication concerns. Your GP can refer you, or your GP’s reception will advise on making an appointment. Also see p26 For Age UK’s monthly foot care sessions.

DEALING WITH HEALTH ISSUES
PALS Service (Patient Advice and Liaison), 0800 032 02 02
Email: northoftynepals@nhct.nhs.uk
Confidential support for patients, their families and carers. General information, advice and problem-solving about NHS care, including hospitals, GPs, Dentists, Optometrists and Pharmacists. They can refer you on to other agencies if necessary.

Age UK Northumberland Advocacy Service, 01665 511561
Confidential, free service for over 50s who would like help to express their views and speak up for themselves. Currently Berwick upon Tweed district only, but hoping to expand to other areas during 2012.

Northumberland LINk (Local Involvement Network), 01434 600599
www.northumberlandlink.org.uk
A network of local people and groups who influence change and improvement in health and social services in Northumberland. Get in touch to join. NB This will change to Healthwatch, from October 2012.

Northumbria Healthcare Adult Care Forums, 01670 394493, John Dowswell
A range of forums meet regularly to discuss community health and social care services. Contact as above for details and to get involved.
HELP WITH HEALTH COSTS

Help with Health Costs, 0845 850 11 66
www.nhsbsa.nhs.uk
Most NHS treatment is free for over 60s, including prescriptions, hearing aids and sight tests. Where there are costs, e.g. for glasses, dental treatment and travel to and from hospital, you may apply for assistance if you are on a low income or in receipt of certain benefits.

Prescription Prepayment Cards (PPC), 0845 850 0030
www.nhsbsa.nhs.uk/ppc
If you might have to pay for four prescriptions within three months, or fourteen within twelve months, it may be cheaper to buy a PPC. This means you pay a certain amount in advance and are then covered for unlimited prescriptions for either three or twelve months.

STOPPING SMOKING

Northumberland Stop Smoking Service, 01670 813135
Smokers are up to four times more likely to quit using support from local NHS stop smoking services.

Free friendly support and advice is available throughout Northumberland including some pharmacies. Ring to find out what help is available in your area.

GP or Practice Nurse
Some GP practices have a nurse trained to help people stop smoking. Ring to make an appointment.

NHS Smoking Helpline, 0800 022 4 332
www.smokefree.nhs.uk
Helpline Mon – Fri 9.00am – 8.00pm, Sat-Sun 11.00am – 5.00pm. Advice, information packs, specialist adviser and free dvd on request.

ALCOHOL, MEDICATION OR DRUGS PROBLEMS

Escape Family Support, 01670 544055, office 07702 833944 24 hour helpline
www.escapefamilysupport.co.uk
Support for alcohol or drug problems in Northumberland. Confidential counselling, complementary therapies, respite breaks, diversionary activities and family support. Self refer or be referred by a GP or other professional.

Alcoholics Anonymous
0845 769 7555 national
0191 521 4400 local helpline 24 hour
www.alcoholics-anonymous.co.uk

Drinkline, 0800 917 8282
Confidential 24 hour helpline

MENTAL HEALTH

Doctor/GP, Nurse, Health Visitor
A good first point of contact for a mental health concern e.g. depression, stress, eating/sleeping disorders etc. Sometimes it is enough to be reassured that certain emotions are “normal” with no need for treatment. Your GP will refer you for specialised or longer term treatment as appropriate. For details of the range of services available contact Adult Care on 01670 536400.

Age UK Northumberland Community Dementia Service, 0845 140 0088,
Day centre service for older people with dementia, in Amble, Berwick and Belford, transport provided. On referral from care manager.

Alzheimer’s Society,
0845 300 0336 national helpline
www.alzheimers.org.uk
Advice and support for people with dementia and their carers may include support groups, individual support, courses on understanding dementia etc.

Berwick, 01289 303143
Blyth, 01670 366123
Morpeth, 01670 511159
Hexham, 01434 607318

IAPT (Improving Access to Psychological Therapies), 0300 123 4502
Free, confidential service supports adults in Northumberland suffering mild to moderate mental health problems such as depression and anxiety. IAPT offers a range of short term talking (psychological) therapies. Self refer or be referred by a health or social care professional. Mon – Thurs 8.00am – 8.00pm, Fri 8.00am – 5.00pm, Sat 9.00am – 1.00pm.

Mind Infoline, 0845 766 0163
0300 466 6463 Mind Legal Line
www.mind.org.uk
National information line dealing with all aspects of mental distress. Mind Legal Line deals with issues connected with Mental Health Act, Mental Capacity Act or Equality Act.

Samaritans, 0845 7 90 90 90
www.samaritans.org
24 hour emotional support for those in despair, or who just need to talk.
Northumberland GPs to take the lead for health spending in the county

GPs across the county have come together to form a group which will be responsible in the future for making sure local people receive the right healthcare services to meet their needs.

Northumberland Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG), covers all 46 GP practices across the county who will work together to improve health and healthcare for the population.

“Dr Alistair Blair, GP lead for the CCG, said: “As a clinical commissioning group we are focusing on providing healthcare closer to where people live to avoid unnecessary travelling to hospital and to create more support in the community for vulnerable and elderly people. We are ideally placed to understand the needs of our patients and to make sure that the services that are developed locally meet their wishes.”

MORE LOCAL SUPPORT GROUPS & SCHEMES

Action on Hearing Loss (formerly RNID), Reiver House, Staithes Lane, Morpeth, NE61 1TD, 01670 513606, www.actiononhearingloss.org.uk

A project giving information and support in Northumberland and West Durham. Regular visits to library branches for information-sharing.

Age UK Northumberland Advice Service, 0845 0950 150 or 01665 605707
www.ageuk-northumberland.org.uk

Telephone advice Mon – Thurs 10.00am – 1.00pm. Advice for over 50s, their families, carers and organisations. Welfare rights face to face casework service Mon – Thurs 9.00am – 5.00pm.

See ad on page 10

Age UK Northumberland Friendship Line 0845 140 0088

Weekly telephone call for isolated or lonely older people in Northumberland provides regular contact, friendly reassurance, help and information. Also Phone a Friend scheme introduces people with similar interests to make contact at evenings and weekends. Ring for details.
Bell View Home Support Scheme, 01668 219220
Volunteers offer basic short term support to provide practical help and social contact.

Berwick Heart Support Group, 0774 664 2270
www.berwickheartsupport.co.uk

Blyth Valley Disabled Forum, Disability Centre, 01670 364657, Home Care Centre 01670 360927
www.blythdisabledforum.co.uk
Advice on all disability issues, full welfare rights service, home care support on referral.

Castle Morpeth Disability Association, Office 3D, 1st Floor, Austin House, Sanderson Arcade, Morpeth, NE61 1NS 01670 504488
www.cmda.org.uk
They sell living aids e.g. walking sticks, jar openers, wheelchairs, walkers etc. Free loan scheme for wheelchairs. Also job search and cv writing, computer workshop, Healthy Living group, Blind and Partially Sighted group. See page 44 for new handyman and gardening service.

Central Palz, Seaton Park Medical Group, Norham Road, Ashington, NE63 ONG, 01670 842021
Therapies, counselling, social groups, transport for patients with life-limiting illness and carers in Central Northumberland. On referral from GP, nurse or care manager. Operates Wed and Thurs only.

Contact The Elderly, 01434 672110
www.contact-the-elderly.org
Social afternoons of tea and chat in a family home for over 75’s who are isolated and unable to get out without help. Transport provided. Free service. Get in touch for details of your local group.

Grandparents Association, 0845 434 9585
www.grandparents-association.org
Helpline gives advice on non-contact, caring for grandchildren and welfare benefits.

Hearing UK LINK, 0300 111 1113
07526 123255 sms/text enquiries@hearinglink.org
www.hearinglink.org

Multiple Sclerosis Society, 0808 800 8000 National helpline 07581 460207, Alnwick 01890 751 490 Berwick 01661 834196, Hexham 01670 858939 SE Northumberland www.mssociety.org.uk
Advice, support and meetings.

Northumberland County Blind Association
Support blind and partially sighted people in Northumberland

Our services include:
Local clubs and support groups, including our newest service …

Social Eyes Northumberland.
We can support you to visit our lively, independent groups to meet other partially sighted people locally and join in to choose activities and events.

And see what else we do…
• Rehabilitation
• Information, advice and telephone support
• Sightline Telephone Support Service
• Demonstration of Specialist Equipment and Low Vision Aids
• Transcription Service
• Home Visiting Service
• Awareness Training
• Volunteering Opportunities

NCBA, Reiver House, Staithes Lane, Morpeth, NE61 1TD
Tel: 01670 514316 www.ncba.org.uk Registered Charity 1102386

Coal Industry Social Welfare Organisation (CISWO)
Did you, or your partner, work in the Coal Industry?
Among the services offered by CISWO are:

• Confidential home visiting service.
• Benefits advice and assistance with applications.
• Practical and emotional support at times of difficulty.
• Access to funds for those facing financial hardship*.
• Advice on disability issues and mining related illnesses.
• Therapeutic holidays*.

* (subject to eligibility criteria being met)

For further information about us or to access our services please contact us:
By post: 6 Bewick Road, Gateshead Tyne & Wear NE8 4DP
By telephone: 0191 477 7242
Website: www.ciswo.org.uk Charity Registration No: 1015581
Leading the work to

Did you know we provide one-to-one information and have support groups in Northumberland?

Did you know about our opportunities for volunteers and training and education service for professionals?

Want to know more?
Free National Helpline: 0808 800 0303
Information and support worker – Northumberland: 0844 255 3608
Email: info@setoncare.org.uk

Would you like to choose your own mix of care and support?

Seton Care’s commitment to quality and choice offers personal care packages, individually tailored to suit your needs. All our services can be long or short term and we employ both male and female staff, police checked and trained to NVQ2 standard.

Domestic Services
Laundry, general house cleaning, shopping, dog walking, help with paperwork, gardening

Personal Care
Meal preparation, help with washing and bathing, help with dressing, assistance with medication, companionship, respite for main carers

Enabling Services
We can help you attend appointments, visit social events, continue your hobbies, go shopping

There are more services too – to see what else we can do for you please contact:

01289 306419
email: info@setoncare.org.uk

Seton Care, Unit 3 & 4 the Chandlery, Berwick upon Tweed, TD15 1HE
www.setoncare.org.uk

DO YOU LOOK AFTER SOMEONE...
because they’re ill, disabled or frail?

You’re not alone. An estimated 36,000 carers in Northumberland provide unpaid care for a partner, relative or friend.

Carers Northumberland works to improve the lives of carers like you.

We offer information, a listening ear, a chance to socialise, and a voice for carers in decisions affecting them.

Call us on 0844 800 7354
Email: info@caresnorthumberland.org.uk
Visit: www.caresnorthumberland.org.uk

Northumberland Cancer Support Group, Ward 1, Hexham General Hospital, 01661 842029
northumberlandcancersupportgroup.co.uk
Meets Tues 7.00pm – 10.00pm. Ring in advance or just turn up.

Northumberland County Blind Association, (NCBA) Reiver House, Staithes Lane, Morpeth, NE61 1TD, 01670 514316 www.ncba.org.uk
Information, advice and support as well as specialist rehabilitation, clubs, support groups, home visiting service, including Sight on Sight Service. Also Sightline telephone peer support service, transcription, low vision equipment demonstrations.

Parkinsons UK,
0808 800 0303, national helpline
0844 225 3608, Information & Support Northumberland
www.parkinsons.org.uk
Alnwick, 01665 577316
Berwick, 01289 307167
North Tyneside, 0191 252 7876
SE Northumberland, 01670 860269
Tyne & Wear Active Persons, 0191 455 4794

St. John Ambulance Northumbria, Listening Service, 0191 256 7070 www.sja.org.uk
Confidential listening support and information for anyone with a long term health problem and their carers. Mon – Thurs 10.00am – 3.00pm with answerphone at other times.

Stroke Association,
0303 30 33 100 national helpline
01670 840808
www.stroke.org.uk
Stroke clubs, or Speech after Stroke clubs, in Alnwick, Hexham, Morpeth and Bedlington Station. Self referral or via GP or speech therapist. Peer support service in Blyth, Morpeth, Belford, Wooler and Berwick.

Wansbeck Disability Forum,
The Toy Library, Station Villa, Kenilworth Road, Ashington, NE63 8AA, 01670 523539
www.wansbeckdisabilityforum.com
Information and support for disabled people. Meetings, outreach sessions and activities. Also a reporting point for victims of hate crime.

WHAC (Women’s Health Advice Centre), 1 Council Road, Ashington, NE63 8RZ
01670 853977
www.whac-online.co.uk
Confidential counselling and support for women includes physical and mental health and wellbeing, bereavement, divorce, confidence, debt, and more. Also courses e.g. relaxation, healthy eating, self-esteem.
FINDING OUT ABOUT CARE

In Northumberland as elsewhere, changes are under way to improve the care system and give more control to those eligible to receive it. You will find many of the contacts listed here will help you understand the new arrangements, explain your rights and show you where to find support.

SUPPORT FOR CARERS

Carers Northumberland, 0844 800 7354
www.carersnorthumberland.org.uk
Countywide support for carers as individuals or groups includes regular meetings with other carers, skills development, emotional/listening support, emergency planning and small grants for personalised breaks. Carer Support Workers in Belford, Hexham and Ashington give local support. Information Line, Mon-Fri 10.00am-2.00pm and on first and third Tues of the month 5.30pm – 7.30pm (answerphone at other times).

Carer’s Emergency Card
If unexpected events should happen e.g. car breakdown, this card offers peace of mind that the person they care for will be looked after until longer term arrangements can be made. The card shows only a 24-hour telephone number and a unique reference that activates instructions given in advance by the carer. Contact Carers’ Northumberland to register.

Carer’s Allowance Unit, 0845 608 4321
0845 604 5312 textphone, www.direct.gov.uk/carers
Information on eligibility and claims for Carer’s Allowance and Carer’s Credit, though they cannot help filling in forms.

Northumberland Family and Friends Carers’ Guide

Are you providing help and support to a relative or friend who has a disability, a physical or mental illness, is frail, or has alcohol or drug related problems?

Northumberland Family and Friends Carers’ Guide will help you to think about the impact caring has on your own life and help you find solutions.

If you provide regular care to someone you may have the right to:

• ask for an assessment of your own needs
• apply for Carers Allowance
• request flexible working arrangements
and more...

For a free copy of a Carers Guide call 01670 394527
Also available from your care manager or from Carers Northumberland
Carers UK, Advice Line, 0808 808 7777 www.carersuk.org
National helpline open Wed and Thurs, 10.00am – 12.00pm and 2.00pm – 4.00pm. Practical advice on carer’s rights, making the most of your money, juggling work and care etc.

The National Careline, 0800 0699 784 www.thenationalcareline.org
Information about care and support for older people and where to go for help.

See also page 80-81 for Citizens Advice Bureau

STAYING AT HOME WITH HELP

Adult Care service, 01670 536400 www.northumberland.gov.uk
The Adult Care service, funded by the County Council, can help people who need short term help following a health crisis or accident, and also people who need longer-term support.

Self-Directed Support and Personal Budgets

If you need longer-term support, new self-directed support arrangements are designed to make sure that you stay in control. If you are assessed as needing it, you will be offered a personal budget which you can use to make arrangements in the way that best suits you.

You can either manage the money yourself or ask an organisation to handle the administration for you. Alternatively, you can opt to have Adult Care arrange more traditional forms of support, such as help from a home care agency, attendance at a day centre, or short breaks in a care home. Even if you are not entitled to a personal budget, you can still receive advice and information about social care services from Adult Care, ring as above.

COSTS FOR SUPPORT AT HOME

Most people will have to contribute at least part of the cost of all these forms of support. The contribution depends on your income and savings. Up to April 2012 there is a maximum charge of £120 per week for support at home – this may increase in April.

Our service is tailor made to meet your needs and is regulated by the Care Quality Commission.

Our services include:

- Assistance with bathing, showering, dressing and all aspects of personal care
- Escorted enabling and carer support
- Assistance with getting up in the morning or going to bed in the evening
- Assistance with meal preparation
- Shopping or escorted shopping
- Cleaning/housework
- Laundry/ironing
- Help with post and household domestic management
- Short term carer relief (including holiday cover)
- Overnight support or awake nights

Age UK Northumberland 0845 140 00 88 info@ageuk-northumberland.org.uk www.ageuk-northumberland.org.uk

Age UK Northumberland is a registered charity number 1072394 and a company limited by guarantee registered in England and Wales number 3639406. Registered office: The Round House, Lintonville Parkway, Ashington, Northumberland NE63 9JZ. 0288134 13/11
Where necessary, Adult Care can also arrange equipment to help with independent living – which is usually free, and also alarm sensors to alert people who can help if you have an accident.

They can help with applications for the Disabled Facilities Grant, and advice and support for carers, who have a right to have their own needs assessed. Contact Care and Repair on 01670 851844 for more information. See page 46 for Disabled Facilities Grant.

Age UK Northumberland Private Domestic Care Service, 0845 140 0088
Service available to all without referral. Covers housework, special cleaning, laundry, shopping etc, Mon – Fri. Charge per hour regardless of income.

Bell View (Belford) Care Workers Register, 01668 219220
Directory of trained care workers in rural North Northumberland.

Counsel and Care, 0845 300 7585
www.counselandcare.org.uk
Specialists in giving advice on community care, housing with care and care in a home, including choosing and paying for care. NB Now merged with Independent Age.

Disability North, The Dene Centre, Castle Farm Road, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, NE3 1PH, 0191 284 0480
www.disabilitynorth.org.uk
Advice and support on independent living and concerns including benefit claims, representation at appeals, rights to services, housing, holidays, mobility and access etc. A separate service demonstrates and assesses specialist equipment e.g. wheelchairs, walking aids, bed, bathroom and kitchen equipment, etc.

Over 65? Suffering from an illness or disability and struggling to manage at home?
There are many people who need a little extra help to continue living safely in their own home but cannot afford to pay for it.

Attendance Allowance could be the answer...

What is it? Northumbria Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust in partnership with Northumberland County Council want to make sure residents are aware of the support they are entitled to. Attendance Allowance is financial help for people who have extra costs because of their long term health problems or disability.

You don’t need to be receiving any help from social services, it isn’t taken off other benefits, and it doesn’t matter how much your pension or savings are. It is paid at one of two weekly rates, £51.85 or £77.45 (from April 2012), and is based on the help a person needs rather than their condition.

What can I spend it on? It’s entirely up to you. Some people use it to pay for things like taxis so they can go out to visit friends or go to the shops. Many pay for someone to help them at home and others buy equipment to help them manage everyday tasks.

To find out more about Attendance Allowance please visit www.direct.gov.uk or call the Department for Work and Pensions helpline on 0800 88 22 00

For independent advice call the Northumberland Citizens Advice on 0844 4111 309 or Age UK Advice line on 08450 950 150
Helping Hands Community Care
Professional and friendly care at home

What we offer
- Personal care and medication prompt
- Home help and laundry
- Shopping and meal preparation
- Companionship and support
- Overnight services and holiday help
- Friends and family relief

What to expect from us

Dignity and Respect
Our Care Workers will treat you with care, politeness and respect at all times.

Continuity
If we cannot send your usual Care Worker, we will let you know in advance and ensure you know the name of the replacement worker.

Confidentiality
Our Care Workers will not divulge details of your personal circumstances, unless you would be at risk otherwise.

Flexibility
We are committed to offering a responsive service wherever possible. This may include visits at weekends, bank holidays, early mornings, evenings or in urgent situations.

Punctuality
Your services are provided within the days and times specified on your Care Plan. If there were any unforeseen change you would be notified and alternative arrangements made.

All staff are fully trained with enhanced CRB checks

Contact us on
01661 843839 Stocksfield,
01670 797946 Blyth,
01670 320909 Haltwhistle
www.helphands.co.uk
Contact Adult Care for details on 01670 536400, or ring one of the following:

Valley Care, 01670 827100, Northumberland County Council alarm and Telecare service.
Age UK Personal Alarm, 0800 77 22 66 www.ageuk.org.uk/alarm
Astraline callsafe, 01625 850266 www.callsafe.org.uk
New service from Feb 2012 focusing on preventative safety care.

MEALS
Age UK Northumberland Meals on Wheels, 0845 140 0088
Meals delivered around Blyth on referral from Adult Care.
WRVS Meals on Wheels, 01642 222643 www.wrvs.org.uk
Frozen meals delivered weekly across Northumberland. Look out for brand new hot meals service coming along in Spring 2012.

RETIREMENT OR SHELTERED HOUSING
Bungalows, bedsits and flats to rent from the local authority and housing providers. Usually with alarm system, often with warden support and communal facilities e.g. laundry, lounge.

Northumberland County Council, 0845 600 6400
www.northumberland.gov.uk
Contact them for housing advice and options whether you live in public or private housing.

Northumberland Homefinder 0845 600 6400 www.northumberland.gov.uk
Housing allocation service for Northumberland will give you information and tell you how to apply.

Age UK AIMS service, 0845 600 2001 www.ageuk.org.uk/home-and-care
National helpline gives impartial housing advice for anyone living in, (or providing), sheltered housing. Helps with queries, problems, disputes and complaints.

First Stop Care Advice, 0800 377 7070 www.firststopcareadvice.org.uk
www.housingcare.org
Detailed information on specialist accommodation that offers support and/or care. They have lists of sheltered housing and care homes across the country, along with advice on making choices as well as a directory of services for those opting to stay at home.

At Barchester it’s all about quality of life.
We know how important hobbies and interests can be. That’s why we support the people we care for to continue their love of cooking and baking.
Barchester even has its own inter-home cooking competition, Cooking with Care, judging by celebrity chef – Paul Rankin!
Barchester offers a home-like feel with an award-winning reputation in over 200 locations.

Scones
Ingredients (makes 8–10)
Self-raising flour 250g, sugar 25g, butter 25g, currants 100g, milk 1 tbsp, egg 1, salt

Method
• Preheat oven to 200°C/gas mark 6. Grease baking tray.
• Sieve flour and pinch of salt. Stir in sugar and rub in butter. Stir in currants.
• Combine the mixture together with the milk and egg.
• Put the scone mix into fridge to rest for 10 minutes. Roll mixture to thickness of 2cm and cut into 6cm round scones.
• Place onto greased tray and bake on top shelf for 10–15 minutes until browned.

Our range of person-centred care services includes:
• 24-hour nursing and residential care
• Respite care and short breaks
• Dementia care in our Memory Lane Communities
• Convalescent care

At Barchester it’s all about quality of life.

Chester Court Care Home
Bedlington, NE22 6LA
Tel: 01670 820 111
Meadow Park Care Home
Bedlington, NE22 6LA
Tel: 01670 829 800
Station Court Care Home
Ashington, NE63 8HE
Tel: 01670 817 222
Woodhorn Park Care Home
Ashington, NE63 9AN
Tel: 01670 812 333
www.barchester.com
FINDING A CARE HOME

Care homes may be run privately or by charities, housing associations etc. All are registered and inspected regularly. Some provide nursing care and some do not. If you need financial assistance to move to a care home the Adult Care Service will assess you. If you have specific nursing requirements your care may be partly funded by the NHS, or if your primary need is for health care you may be eligible to have your care wholly funded by the NHS.

Counsel and Care, 0845 300 7585
www.counselandcare.org.uk
Specialists in giving advice on community care, housing with care and care in a home, including choosing and paying for care.

First Stop Care Advice, 0800 377 7070
www.firststopcareadvice.org.uk
www.housingcare.org
Advice on all care issues e.g. housing, types of care, legal and financial matters relating to housing and care, home adaptations etc.

Paying for Care
www.payingforcare.co.uk
A website dedicated to providing holistic information on all aspects of long-term care and access to independent specialist advice on how to pay for long-term care

See also page 85 for advice on legal issues, and page 83 for sources of financial help.

The funding of long-term care is likely to be one of the biggest financial decisions of your life – lack of planning could result in depletion of your assets and inheritance.

“...addresses a serious information gap”
Ian Robertson, Which? Magazine

Payingforcare.co.uk is a consumer service which provides information on all aspects of long-term care to help you achieve financial security and peace of mind.

• Single source of information on all matters relating to long-term care
• Access to information and specialist advice on the best way to fund your long-term care
• Information on state benefits you may be entitled to
• Ability to have an online ‘chat’ with an independent Care Fees Adviser

Payingforcare.co.uk is a trading style of Partnership Life Assurance Company Limited (registered in England and Wales No. 05465261). Partnership Life Assurance Company Limited is authorised and regulated by the Financial Services Authority. The registered office is Sackville House, 143-149 Fenchurch Street, London, EC3M 6BN.
HELPS WITH PENSIONS

The State Pension age is currently 65 for men and between 60 and 65 for women, depending on their date of birth. From Dec 2018 State Pension age for both men and women will increase to 66 in 2020. Further age increases to 67 or 68 will eventually follow.

What you get depends on the number of years of National Insurance contributions paid during your working life – 30 years for a full basic State Pension. If eligible, you may also buy missing years of NI contributions to boost the pension total. Or you may qualify for NI credits if you have been unable to pay regular contributions e.g. whilst raising a family or as a carer.

You may have other entitlements too, and perhaps an occupational or personal pension. Even with these extra amounts you may still qualify for Pension Credit – a top up benefit for those with modest pensions and savings. If you only receive basic State Retirement Pension you should always ask about Pension Credit even if you have savings.

To find out exactly what you are entitled to, contact:

Future Pension Centre, The Pension Service, Tyneview Park, Whitley Road, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE98 1BA
0845 3000 168
18001 0845 3000 168 textphone
www.direct.gov.uk/pensions
If you ring for a forecast they will work through the application form with you and post your forecast out in around ten days. Line open Mon – Fri 8.00am – 8.00pm.

HMRC National Insurance Helpline,
0845 302 1479 www.hmrc.gov.uk

For personal help with entitlements an officer can visit you at home to work out benefits you are entitled to e.g. Pension Credit, Winter Fuel, Attendance Allowance, Bereavement Benefits, Council Tax, Housing Benefit. They help complete the forms and refer you to other services if necessary.

PENSION CLAIMS

The Pension Service contact you three to four months before you reach State Pension Age. Two months before your birthday get back in touch to make your claim. You can defer your pension to get a higher weekly amount or one-off lump sum payment (minimum 12 months for lump sum).

New Pension Claims, 0800 731 7898
0800 731 7399 textphone
After receiving your forecast ring to have your pension application form filled in for you over the phone.

The Pension Service, PO Box 6, Gateshead, NE92 1BF
0845 60 60 265
0845 60 60 285 textphone
www.direct.gov.uk/pensions
General enquiries about Pension credit, direct payments, checking on a claim etc. If they cannot help directly they will refer you to the correct department. Open Mon – Fri 8.00am – 8.00pm

Pensions Direct, 0845 301 3011, 0845 301 3012 textphone
Pensions paid by direct payment into an account.

Pension Tracing Service,
0845 600 2537
Can help trace schemes you may have paid into and lost touch with.

Post Office Card Account Helpline,
0845 722 3344 or 0845 722 3355
TPAS (The Pensions Advisory Service),
0845 601 2923
www.pensionsadvisoryservice.org.uk
Information on all aspects of pensions, whether state or private.
BENEFIT CHECKS AND ADVICE

Finding out about benefits can be complex and subject to change. The agencies listed here can give advice to help maximise your entitlement.

Age UK Northumberland Information & Advice Service 0845 0950 150 or 01665 685707 See ad on page 10

Benefit Enquiry Line, 0800 88 22 00 0800 24 33 55 textphone www.direct.gov.uk/benefits adviser
Information for people who are ill or disabled and their carers. They will call you back to help complete the forms over the phone.

Carer’s Allowance Unit, 0845 608 4321 0845 604 5312 textphone
Information on eligibility and claims, but they cannot help filling in forms.

Citizens’ Advice Bureau, (CAB) 0844 411 1309 Advice Line Northumberland www.adviceguide.org.uk – advice and information www.citizensadvice.org.uk – information about your local CAB Advice on debt, benefits, tax, housing, consumer and other issues. Branches open for limited hours and may offer appointments, drop-in sessions and a telephone advice service, although they all differ.

Ring Advice Line Northumberland or your local branch. They will also know where sessions run in other community venues, or visit the main CAB website for this. Currently only Wansbeck CAB offer a Saturday morning service.

• Alnwick, 01665 604135 Valuation Offices, off Wagonway Rd, NE66 1QL also at Amble
• Berwick, 0844 411 1309 5 Tweed Street, TD15 1NG also at Belford, Seahouses and Wooler

Disability Living Allowance and Attendance Allowance Helpline, 0845 712 3456 0845 722 4433 textphone Deals with claims and queries.

JobCentre Plus, 0800 055 66 88 0800 0 23 48 88 textphone www.direct.gov.uk Benefit claims for people of working age are made via JobCentre Plus. Ring to make a new claim and they will take your information over the telephone, then ask you to visit your nearest Jobcentre Plus. You can also make a claim online.

Pension Credit Application Line, 0800 99 1234 0800 169 0133 textphone

Some CAB Branches also have their own websites giving further information.

Macmillan Welfare Benefits Advisers
Make contact via your local CAB. They give advice, help with filling in forms, appeals etc. and help anyone affected by cancer – whether patient, carer, family or friend.
SSAFA Forces Help
(Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen and Families Association Est. 1885)
Whether you left the services yesterday or over sixty years ago, we have a network of volunteers and professional staff to help service men and women and their families.

SSAFA Forces Help - How we Help People Our volunteers act as knowledgable and confidential friends, very often working with veterans and their families, including widows and widowers.

Financial Help Sometimes we simply give support and advice, but in many cases our help includes drawing together a package of financial help:

- From service benevolent funds
- From other charities
- From financial grants
- By obtaining appropriate state benefit

Confidential Support Line: 0800 731 4880 for support, assistance or just a listening ear or, email the website at: www.ssafa.org.uk

Family Escort Service Volunteers accompany service families and dependants travelling to, from and within the UK who have compassionate needs, or who would find public transport difficult.

Northumberland Branch Run by volunteers from the President to our caseworkers, we have divisions in: Alnwick, Ashington, Berwick upon Tweed Blyth, Hexham and Morpeth

To contact them, do not hesitate to call me on 01665 576 756 or email northumberlandpao@gmail.com
Major Brian William Finlayson, Northumberland Branch

Don't delay - call us
Registered Charity number 210760

CISWO
(Coal Industry Social Welfare Organisation)
0191 477 7242
www.ciswo.org.uk
Help and advice on benefits, pensions and in some cases financial support if you meet the eligibility criteria.

Elizabeth Finn Care,
0800 413 2200
www.elizabethfinncare.org.uk
Charity gives grants to people from some 120 occupational backgrounds. Also part of Turn 2 Us.

Turn2Us,
0808 802 2000
www.turn2us.org.uk
Help people access grants, benefits or other financial support.

Paying for Care
www.payingforcare.co.uk
A website dedicated to providing holistic information on all aspects of long-term care and access to independent specialist advice on how to pay for long-term care.

Royal British Legion,
08457 725 725 Legionline
0191 495 9510 local branch
www.britishlegion.org.uk
Financial and welfare help for ex-service members and families.

Service Personnel & Veterans’ Agency,
0800 169 2277
0191 295 2376 regional welfare service
www.veterans-uk.com
Help with welfare problems, including benefits, pension claims and compensation. Also supports in-service personnel.

SSAFA Forces Help,
01665 576 756, Major Brian Finlayson
0800 731 4880 confidential support line
www.ssafa.org.uk
Financial, emotional or practical help for those with a forces connection.

Confidential Support Line: 0800 731 4880 for support, assistance or just a listening ear or, email the website at: www.ssafa.org.uk

Family Escort Service Volunteers accompany service families and dependants travelling to, from and within the UK who have compassionate needs, or who would find public transport difficult.

Northumberland Branch Run by volunteers from the President to our caseworkers, we have divisions in: Alnwick, Ashington, Berwick upon Tweed Blyth, Hexham and Morpeth

To contact them, do not hesitate to call me on 01665 576 756 or email northumberlandpao@gmail.com
Major Brian William Finlayson, Northumberland Branch

Don't delay - call us
Registered Charity number 210760

Consumer Credit Counselling Service,
0800 138 1111
www.cccs.co.uk
Confidential counselling, budgeting and money management advice to anyone worried about debt.

DAWN (Advice) Ltd, 0300 3333 445
www.dawnadvice.org.uk
Confidential service for people with
debt problems. They give advice and in some cases assist with a complete negotiation process. Advice also on housing, benefits, family and employment law and they are members of the Community Legal Advice service.

For a private face to face consultation ring 01670 510094 to make an appointment.

National Debts line, 0808 808 4000 www.nationaldebtline.co.uk
Free, confidential, self-help advice about debt. Counselling and telephone support.

Also see pages 80-81 for Citizens Advice Bureaux.

TAX

HMRC Taxes Helpline, 0845 300 0627 0845 302 1408 textphone www.hmrc.gov.uk
Advice on any tax issue, e.g. codings, tax after retirement, claiming tax back etc. Mon – Fri 8.00am – 8.00pm and Sat 8.00am – 4.00pm.

HMRC National Insurance Helpline, 0845 302 1479

HMRC Probate and Inheritance Tax Helpline, 0845 302 0900

Tax Help for Older People, (TOP) 0845 601 3321 www.taxvol.org.uk
Confidential tax advice for people with a household income of around £17,000, who are close to 60 or older. Help with queries e.g. PAYE codes, tax returns etc and may liaise with HMRC on your behalf.

Taxaid, 0845 120 3779 www.taxaid.org.uk
Free tax advice for people who cannot afford a professional adviser. Line open Mon – Fri 10.00am – 12.00pm.

SAVINGS AND INVESTMENTS

Money Advice Service, 0300 500 5000 www.moneyadvice service.org.uk
Free unbiased advice. Guidance on financial products e.g. insurance, savings options and pensions, as well as advising on budgeting, retirement planning etc. Website has online money healthcheck.

Financial Ombudsman Service, 0300 123 9 123 or 0800 023 4567 www.financial-ombudsman.org.uk
Impartial help with complaints about financial firms. Approach them once you have already complained to the firm in question.

LEGAL AFFAIRS

Age UK Legal Service, 0845 685 1076 www.ageuk.org.uk
Age UK service in partnership with a legal firm. Free initial consultation, then if you wish to proceed they will tell you the costs and carry out the work by post and telephone.

Advice from a qualified legal adviser on certain topics. These are: benefits and tax credits; debt; housing; employment; education; family. Also operates a directory service to find a local legal adviser.

LEGAL AID

Depending on the nature of the case, you may apply for financial help if you meet certain criteria. You may still be asked for a partial contribution. Ring the Community Legal Advice helpline to find a local solicitor who participates in the scheme.

Disability Law Service, 020 7791 9800 020 7791 9801 textphone www.dls.org.uk
Free legal advice for disabled and deaf people and their families and carers in certain areas of law only: Community Care (social services); welfare benefits; employment; discrimination (as regards goods and services, not housing or education).

Legal Ombudsman, 0300 555 0333 www.legalombudsman.org.uk
Independent, impartial and free service to investigate complaints against lawyers, including solicitors, barristers and legal executives.

Solicitors for the Elderly, 0844 567 6173 www.solicitorsfortheelderly.com
Independent organisation whose members specialise in issues affecting older people e.g. wills, care home contracts and funding advice, gifting property etc. They offer home
visits, provide documents in large print and take time to ensure clients properly understand all the issues. Members in Haltwhistle, Berwick and Newcastle.

**CONSUMER ADVICE**

Age UK Advice, 0800 169 65 65  
www.ageuk.org.uk  
Free factsheets include Consumer Issues, Pensions, Benefits, TV Licences, Telephones etc. Open 7 days 8.00am—7.00pm.

Consumer Direct, 0845 404 05 06 or 01642 692 043  
www.direct.gov.uk/consumer  
Impartial advice on goods and services, your rights and help with making a complaint. Covers gas and electricity, faulty goods, shoddy workmanship, dishonest traders, scams, unwanted post or telephone calls etc.

Citizens Advice Bureaux  
Advice on problems relating to consumer goods and services and debt. See pages 80-81 for contact details

Ricability, 0207 427 2460  
www.ricability.org.uk  
Consumer research charity for older and disabled people give detailed product information. Topics include: Choosing a car/power wheelchair; vehicle adaptations; buying a stairlift; home adaptations/aids; holidays; mobile phones etc.

Which? 01992 822800  
www.which.co.uk  
Campaigning consumer association. Subscribe to the magazine for consumer information and online access to their Which Local service listing recommended local tradesmen. Subscribe to their Legal Department for telephone help with consumer law and other issues.

2012 edition  
**The Golden Guide...it’s worth its weight**

**ORDER YOUR FREE COPY NOW**

**FREE**

Summer 2012

**LIVING easy**

Disability & Mental Health support, Northumberland

**PACKED WITH DETAILS OF**

facilities, services and specialist equipment in Northumberland and beyond

Resources for making life easier in your home or out of it

In association with North East Equality & Diversity Ltd

86  www.alabasterpublishing.co.uk
A brand new FREE handbook from the Golden Guide team, packed with details of specialist help and services in Northumberland and beyond.

Resources for making life easier in your home or out of it

LIVING easy is for people with disabilities and their families and friends. Content includes:

- Transport
- Mobility
- Equipment
- Care Support
- Leisure
- Holidays
- Money matters, including contacts for employment, benefits and pensions issues.

For a copy hot off the press – send your address and we will post one out just as soon as we can!

Due Summer 2012.

Drop us a line, ring or email to:
Heather Alabaster, Editor Living Easy Guide,
Alabaster Publishing, The Laurels, Sherburn Road,
Gilesgate, Durham, DH1 2JR

Tel: 0191 386 5918
Email: heather@alabasterpublishing.co.uk

Please include a contact number or email address in case of query.
Important Note on Telephone Numbers

Sometimes numbers of agencies or service providers listed in the guide are in the process of change and cannot establish their new number before we go to print. Where this has happened, please continue to use the old one, to be redirected as appropriate when you call.
Our focus is on you and your business whether you are just starting out or going for growth. Working with you on a one to one basis we can help you to:

- Explore your business ideas
- Develop your skills
- Set up and grow your business
- Plan your future
- Build your confidence

Skilled advisers help prepare a personal action plan so you can focus on how to make your idea a reality.

Plus our workshops, one to one sessions and specialist consultants are all part of the package. It’s free and it’s confidential.

Contact us now to start making it happen!

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Or visit us at our branches in Alnwick, Ashington, Berwick, Blyth, Hexham and Morpeth

Your local Enterprise Agency www.nbsl.org.uk