Carer Peer Support Service - FAQs

Why have carers services changed? Why has Devon County Council moved away from 'Devon Carers' to Caring in Devon?

For eight years, Devon Carers was run by Westbank Communities Health and Care and paid for by Devon County Council (DCC). That contract ended in September 2026. When contracts end the Local Authority has a duty to re-procure new contracts.

After that, some parts of the service were awarded to new organisations to run (like Age UK Devon), and some parts moved into the council. Together, these make up Caring in Devon.

DCC knows this has been confusing, especially when you are already looking after someone. They don't have every answer yet, because they are still developing their new service. Here at Age UK Devon, we will always be honest with you about what we know and what has not yet been decided.

What is happening with the Carers ID card?

Nothing has changed. Your Carers ID card is part of a scheme that covers Devon, Plymouth, Torbay and Cornwall, so the changes to the local service haven't affected it.

You can keep using it and get the same discounts and services as before.
If your card is lost or stolen you can contact the Caring in Devon Helpline (T: 03456 434 435 E: caringindevon@devon.gov.uk) and they will issue you a new one.

Can I still get free parking at local hospitals?

Yes. Nothing has changed about the discounts and benefits that come with your Carers ID card, and that includes free or discounted parking at local hospitals.

Will there be a Carers' Break Fund and who is eligible?

DCC are reviewing the Carers' Break Fund, so they can't yet tell us whether it will continue or who would be eligible. Carers have told us how hard it is to take a break. DCC want to check whether the fund gave carers who needed it real time away, or whether the money would help more if it was spent another way.

One problem with the old fund was that it was a fixed amount (£150,000 a year) given out on a first come, first served basis. DCC felt that was unfair to some carers. They are talking with carers about what should happen next. They will give us, and you, an answer before the end of the year.

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Will there be a Caring in Devon magazine?

DCC hadn't planned to keep the magazine. They are looking at other ways to keep in touch with carers.

Some carers have said the magazine mattered to them. It kept them in regular contact with the service, the carers' stories helped them feel less alone, and the news about activities helped them plan ahead. DCC have taken that on board and are talking with carers about what should happen next. They will give you an answer before the end of the year.

Will there be face-to-face carers' workshops and training?

Yes. DCC will be providing access to a range of digital training resources for carers. Age UK Devon is also planning a range of face-to-face workshops and training for carers. We don't have dates yet. We will share them as soon as we do.

How can I get benefits advice?

Citizens Advice Devon is funded to give unpaid carers advice on benefits and money.

To use the service you need a referral. You can get one by contacting the Caring in Devon Helpline (T: 03456 434 435 E: caringindevon@devon.gov.uk)

How do I register with Peer Support?

You can register by calling Age UK Devon on 0333 241 2340 or emailing peersupport@ageukdevon.org.uk or by contacting the Caring in Devon Helpline (T: 03456 434 435 E: caringindevon@devon.gov.uk) who will make a note of your expression of interest and pass your details onto us at Age UK Devon. If you are already registered with Devon Carers Peer Support Services then we have your information and will contact you.

Can I bring the person I care for to peer support groups?

No. Peer support groups are for carers only. They are a space for you, where you can talk openly and share experiences with other carers.

There are social activities where you can bring the person you care for.

If they have dementia, they can go to a Memory Café run by the Dementia Memory Cafe Consortium. You can find one near you at https://dmcc.org.uk/find-a-memory-cafe/

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How does the emergency planning tool work? And who can help me with it?

An emergency plan helps make sure the person you care for is looked after if something happens to you. We encourage all carers to make one, for your peace of mind.

If you already made a plan with Devon Carers, DCC have it. You don't need to do anything.

If you would like to make a plan:
1. Contact the Caring in Devon Helpline on 03456 434 435 or caringindevon@devon.gov.uk
2. They will send you the forms and a Caring in Devon emergency alert card.
3. Fill in the forms and send one back to DCC in the pre-paid envelope.

Once your plan is on the DCC system, if there is an emergency, the emergency services can ring the number on your Carers ID card to arrange support.

Do I have to pay to attend a peer support group?

No. Peer support groups are free.

Will you be running all the same peer support groups again?

We don't know yet. Age UK Devon is reviewing all the groups that ran before. We will contact people who went to them as soon as plans are confirmed.

Thank you for bearing with us while this is done.

Will you be running both online and face-to-face peer support groups?

Yes. We plan to run both online and face-to-face groups. Which groups will run is still being confirmed. See 'Will you be running all the same peer support groups again?'

I have a new idea for a group. Who can I contact?

That's great, Age UK Devon would love to hear from you. Please email peersupport@ageukdevon.org.uk

I'd like to volunteer for the Peer Support Project. Who do I contact?

Thank you, Age UK Devon would love to hear from you. Please email peersupport@ageukdevon.org.uk

I'd like to set up a peer support group for carers in my village or town. Can you help me?

Yes, Age UK Devon would like to hear about it. Please email peersupport@ageukdevon.org.uk and the team can talk through what is possible.

I care for someone under 18. Can I still join the Peer Support project?

We're sorry, no. The Peer Support project is for people who care for an adult aged 18 or over. It isn't available to people caring for a child under 18. Devon Parent Carers is a peer support service for parent carers in Devon. They provide peer support, parent carer skills workshops and a quarterly news letter. Please contact parentcarers@westbank.org.uk or call 01392 824752.

I live in Devon but the person I care for lives in Plymouth, Torbay, Somerset, etc. Can I attend your groups?

Yes you can attend peer support groups in Devon, however any signposting or local resources to support the person you care for will not be relevant to you. You can still benefit from the emotional support of the group but we recommend you also register with a caring service in the same region as the person you support.

Is there transport to peer support groups?

No, we don't provide transport. Age UK Devon's Information & Advice team can help you look at community transport options near you. Please contact 0333 241 2340 or infoandadvice@ageukdevon.org.uk.You could also join one of our online peer support groups.

How can I arrange for someone to look after the person I care for so I can attend a group?

If you need someone to support the person you care for, to allow you to have a break, please contact Care Direct Plus on 0345 155 1007.

Will the Time for You service, or something similar, be available?

Some partners in Devon still run Time for You, under a new name: Take a Break. It costs £10 per hour. For details, please contact Ottery Help Scheme on 01404 813041.

Caring in Devon is also looking at new replacement care and sitting services. They will tell you more when they know.

Have the same staff moved from Devon Carers / Westbank to Age UK Devon to run peer support?

Yes. On 1 November, the peer support service moved from Westbank Communities Health and Care to Age UK Devon. All the staff who worked on it moved across.

That means you still have the same experienced people, and the relationships you have built with them are not lost.

Useful contact details

Age UK Devon (now running the Carer Peer Support Service)

0333 241 2340 peersupport@ageukdevon.org.uk

Devon County Council's 'Caring in Devon' helpline

03456 434 435 caringindevon@devon.gov.uk

Care Direct Plus

0345 155 1007