

25. Caring Responsibilities

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

How can I manage my caring responsibilities?

Caring for an adult

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

Caring for a child

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

Caring in general

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

Local Resources:

Resource	Contact
<p>Carers Hub Plymouth Enhanced carer support service for unpaid carers aged 18 or over.</p>	<p>Carers Hub Plymouth Guild House, 156 Mannamead Road, Plymouth, PL3 5QL 01752 201890 Mon – Fri 9am – 5pm</p>
<p>Age UK offers help to carers. Please contact for more information.</p>	<p>Age UK Plymouth For more information, please contact: 01752 256020 enquiries@ageukplymouth.org.uk Mon – Fri 9am – 5pm</p>
<p>Carers UK (Plymouth) Charity to help and support carers to get the best for the person they care for.</p>	<p>Carers UK (Plymouth) Virginia House Centre, Peacock Lane, Palace Street, Bretonside, Plymouth, PL2 3RY 01752 204369 local 0808 8087777 advice line advice@carersuk.org www.carersuk.org Mon – Fri 10am – 4pm</p> <p>Monthly meetings for young carers 1st sat of the month. 10:30am to 12:30pm</p>
<p>Fun & Freedom Club – Young Carers</p>	
<p>Crossroads (Southwest) Respite care for carers.</p>	<p>The Olive Carers Centre St Edmunds, Victoria Park Road, Torquay, TQ1 3QH 0845 4500350 www.crossroads.org.uk Mon – Fri 9am – 5pm covers Torbay area</p>
<p>Kernow Young Carers (Cornwall) Working with children and young people to make the caring role a more positive experience by offering support, information, guidance, activities and trips.</p>	<p>Helford House May Court, 3 Milestone Business Park, Cornwall, TR4 9LD For more information or to have an informal chat, please contact: 01872 321486 kernowyoungcarers@actionforchildren.org.uk Mon – Fri 9am – 5pm</p>
<p>Barnardo's Plymouth Commissioned by Plymouth City Council to provide support to young carers and their families across the city.</p>	<p>Unit 112 City Business Park Somerset Place, Stoke, Plymouth, PL3 4BB 01752 564572 b.y.c.s.@barnardos.org.uk Mon – Fri 9am – 5pm</p>
<p>Benefits Advice For help and advice regarding benefits you may be entitled to as a patient or as a carer. This is a free, confidential service available with our in house benefits advisor – Denise Martin</p>	<p>The Mustard Tree Macmillan Centre Level 3, Derriford Hospital, Plymouth For more information please contact 01752 430060 or come in and speak to an Information Officer</p>
<p>The Cinnamon Trust A charitable organisation that has 4,500 registered volunteers across the UK. They may be able to help you find pet care if you have to go into hospital or are too ill to care for your pet</p>	<p>The Cinnamon Trust 10 Market Square, Hayle, Cornwall, TR27 4HE www.cinnamon.org.uk 01736 757900</p>

Local Resources continued:

<p>Livewell South West: Panic This workshop aims to break down some of the myths surrounding panic and help you to manage your panic attacks.</p> <p>Mindfulness Mindfulness practice can help you develop the ability to deal with life's pressures. Mindfulness meditation is a skill you can develop and a form of self-awareness training that helps you get to know yourself more fully, think more clearly and in the present moment.</p> <p>Managing Anxiety This one hour workshop provides information on the psychological and physical symptoms of anxiety and strategies to manage this including breathing, goal setting and cognitive behaviour therapy</p> <p>Managing Low Mood This one hour workshop provides information on the psychological symptoms of low mood as well as providing strategies to manage this</p> <p>Managing Stress This one hour workshop introduces the symptoms of stress and how the body responds, and provides simple strategies to manage this</p> <p>Sleep Feel, Feel Well Introduces ways to support restful sleep</p>	<p>Livewell South West: To book a place on any of the 1 hour workshops please call: Tel: 01752 435419 or Email: plymouthoptions@nhs.net</p>
<p>Mustard Tree Cancer Support & Triangle Drop In Centres Ask questions, share concerns, offers a range of services including benefits advice. Support, advice and information for cancer patients and their carers</p>	<p>Mustard Tree, Derriford Hospital: Monday to Friday from 9am to 5pm 01752 430060/01752 431468 Kingsbridge: Tuesdays 10am to 4pm 01548 852349 Liskeard: Thursdays 10am to 4pm 01579 373500 Tavistock: Fridays 10am to 4pm 01822 615935</p>
<p>Pauls Place B&B in North Devon for young adults bereaved, life limiting illness or carer. Parents of a child with terminal or life threatening illness, needing fulltime care or have lost a child. The grant from Pauls Place can cover the cost of accommodation for up to a week.</p>	<p>Pauls Place enquiries: Tel: 01271 891076/07793 980760 Applications must be made by a Health Care Professional</p>

National Resources:

<p>Crossroads – Caring for Carers A national charity devoted to providing respite support for carers (there is a charge for this service)</p>	<p>www.crossroads.org.uk 08454 500 350</p>
<p>The Carers Trust Provides information, advice and support services to carers</p>	<p>www.carers.org 0844 800 4361</p>
<p>Home-Start UK Offers support, friendship and practical help at home to families with at least one child under five who may be experiencing difficulties in their family lives due to illness or other reasons</p>	<p>http://www.homestart-southhams.org.uk/ email:- homestart.shpt@gmail.com The Plympton Hub, Avon House 163 Ridgeway Plympton Devon PL7 2HJ 01752 346039</p>
<p>The Red Cross Home from Hospital service Provide care on discharge (shopping, collecting prescriptions etc.)</p>	<p>18 Wellington Square KA7 1HA 01292 263 946 http://www.redcross.org.uk/What-we-do/Health-and-social-care/Independent-living/Support-at-home</p>
<p>The RSPCA Provides help with pet sitting and local services.</p>	<p>www.rspca.org.uk</p>
<p>St. John's Ambulance Offer a free carer's support programme providing skills and knowledge to help you in your caring role.</p>	<p>www.sja.org.uk</p>
<p>Macmillan – Where to Signpost Cancer Carers Macmillan provides information and practical and emotional support for carers of people with cancer</p>	<p>Comprehensive information online at: macmillan.org.uk/carers Macmillan Support line: 0808 8080000</p>

Further information:

<p>Macmillan booklets: – Available free from the Mustard Tree Macmillan Centre</p>
<p>Do you look after someone with cancer MAC15037</p>
<p>Caring for someone with advanced cancer MAC11623</p>
<p>Looking after someone with cancer MAC5767</p>
<p>Working while caring for someone with cancer MAC11688</p>