



If you are a CARER who never wants to say

If Only I'd Known That

**this booklet & the
Carers Information Directory
is essential for you**

**One Carer's Experiences
By Susan Hartnell-Beavis**

Acknowledgement

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Please note: The following is one carer's account of their experiences. Services policies and benefits are subject to change. Therefore, the current situation may not be the same as reflected in this booklet. Please always refer to Dorset Direct on 01305 221016 for up to date advice.

To obtain further copies of this free guide, please contact Kerry Course on 01305 751160 or email csp@dorset.sja.org.uk

If Only I'd Known That

One Carer's Experiences

by

Susan Hartnell-Beavis

If Only I'd known that!

If only I'd known that is probably the saddest, but most frequently heard, cry from Carers.

I'm sure that if all those who have ever said it, synchronised their watches and, at a predetermined time, stood in the kitchen and whispered those words, the sound of their voices would echo through the land like a scream.

I'm a Past Carer, but I'm not past caring. That's why I'd like to make the title of this book so unnecessary that future Carers would scratch their heads and say they could think of no circumstances in which it would need to be used.

In the hope that I might be able to save you from having to seek out the advice and information that you need in your task, I would like to share my findings with you. This booklet records some of my own experiences and the contact sheet gives telephone numbers and addresses of those who are there to help you – and the person you care for – lead a happier and more fulfilling life.

What is a Carer?

I can identify, exactly, the time when I became a Carer, not instead of, but as well as, a loving wife. It wasn't on the morning after my husband's first stroke, when I realised that life was never going to be the same again - nor the way we had already planned to change it.

Nor was it after his second stroke a year later, when all the little advances he had made in speech and mobility, were set back to a slightly worse position than they had been on the first occasion.

No, it was eight years down the line and the changes had been so subtle - and, in a way so natural - that I hadn't been aware of the effect they were having. And then I realised that things were in a mess and I needed help.

It may not seem obvious, but until one has recognised oneself as a Carer – and I think the capital is important in this context – there is little to be done to help you that neighbours or a tot of whisky wouldn't do just as well.

For a long time I found the neighbours worked better than the whisky! They were kind, supportive and full of encouragement and praise. Their words, “We do admire you,” or “I don't know how you manage,” created a sort of halo that I rather enjoyed polishing. It became a matter of pride not to let their vision of me slip, so I struggled on.

But just a minute. Who was I caring for? It was my husband who, after a series of little strokes, was suffering from multi-infarct dementia, with symptoms similar to those of Alzheimer's Disease. If I was struggling, was I really doing the best for him? I may have been wearing the halo, but was he the martyr to my cause?

It wasn't until I recognised that I was a Carer that we were measured up and fitted with the full range of support that was available. My moment of truth came when we were on holiday in Scotland and I phoned my GP from there and cried, “**HELP!**”

On our return he arranged for a visit from someone who came as a social worker and left as our friend. I don't think I'm being unfair to her if I say that we learned a lot together. Because each person's needs are different, the solutions to problems are also unique. She, figuratively speaking, took out her tape measure and ran it over the two of us. She made it clear that her reason for being there was to produce a package that would suit us both and give my husband **and** me a better quality of life. Since then the system has changed a little and it will be a **Carers Case Worker** who would be called in to help. The title may be different, but they both carry the key that can unlock the door to a better future.

If you think you could be helped in your role as a Carer, phone **Dorset Direct on 01305 221016** and ask for an assessment.

By the time my husband died I think we had tapped well over 75% of the resources that were available to us. This meant that the last year of my husband's life was as fulfilled and dignified as it was possible for it to be and I can look back on it with a great sense of joy and gratitude.

Let's Talk Money

I know it's not done in polite circles but, when you're a Carer, it pays to talk about money. There are a hundred and one ways – and those are only the ones I know about – that caring for someone can be expensive, so it's worth finding out, as soon as possible, whether you are claiming all the allowances to which you are entitled.

Attendance Allowance for those aged 65 or over and is non means tested and **Disability Living Allowance** for the under 65s are like the keys to a Chinese puzzle. If you are successfully assessed for these, then there may be other benefits you can access. Mind you, they don't make it easy. The forms are thick and the questions, though written in normal, everyday language, are quite difficult to answer.

One of the problems is that one doesn't want to be disloyal to the person for whom the allowance is being claimed. This is especially true if it is someone one loves, as well as for whom one cares. For that reason it is a good thing to get help from a third party. Phone **Dorset Direct on 01305 221016** and ask for advice. Department of Works and Pensions will also help as will the Citizens Advice Bureau. Ask for advice on the benefits for which you qualify.

Do not assume that the assessment of your needs is done only once. It is important to remember that your circumstances may change. You may start with the lower rate of **Attendance Allowance** or **Disability Living Allowance** because care is provided only during the day **or** the night. If it becomes day **and** night, a claim can be made for a higher rate.

If you are under 65 (or 60 for women) and spend at least 35 hours a week caring for someone – and the person for whom you are caring is eligible for **Attendance Allowance** or **Disability Living Allowance Care Component (middle or high rate)**, then you may be able to claim the **Carers' Allowance**. This is the same amount that one might receive as a wife, through the husband's

state pension, but there are important differences. It is assessed as one's own income and taxed as such while, up to the age of 60, a wife's allowance on her husband's state pension is treated as his and taxed accordingly. Moreover, if one has been paying National Insurance contributions in one's own right these may, in some circumstances, continue to be paid if you are entitled to **Carers' Allowance**. This means that one has no gap in contributions, which is important for one's own future pension. It is always worth claiming these benefits, even after the age of 60. They are unlikely to be paid, but they may entitle you to claim other things, like **Council Tax Benefit, Housing Benefit or Pension Credit**. This is called an **Underlying Entitlement**.

Physical disabilities may be so severe that you need to adapt a room of your house specifically for the use of the cared-for person – or add an extra bathroom or kitchen. You may be entitled to a grant for these alterations; you may also be entitled to have your house put into the band below your present assessment for Council Tax. Severe mental impairment is yet another criterion for re-assessment of Council Tax. Ask for forms from your local Council Offices *and* liaise with your GP, who has to certify that the medical conditions are met.

I'm not an expert on benefits and can only tell you what I learned from my own experience. There is a lot of financial help available; the advice must always be to ask. Contact Dorset Direct, Job Centre or Citizens Advice Bureau but don't leave it too late or you'll be saying those dreaded words:

IF ONLY I'D KNOWN THAT!

Another thing which one should discuss is **Lasting Power of Attorney**. This is particularly important if there is the possibility of mental impairment in the future, but really should be considered by us all. None of us knows what the future holds, and this is a way of ensuring that our own wishes are taken into account, both financially and personally (e.g. what type of care one wishes to receive) if one is unable to make one's own decisions through incapacity. Those who have already granted Enduring Power of

Attorney to their chosen trustee do not need to alter these arrangements unless they want to extend the powers, beyond financial arrangements, to their personal care. Your local **Citizens' Advice Bureau (CAB)** can help you with this or speak with your solicitor.

It is important to consider this early because the person who is granting the power of attorney must be fully capable of understanding what is being done at the time of signing the forms. It cannot be done when mental capacity has already been lost and there are serious implications about who makes the financial and personal decisions for people who have not made this arrangement.

If the person you care for becomes terminally ill it is worth remembering that, if he/she has not been seen by a doctor after death, or during the 14 days preceding death, the coroner must be informed. Unfortunately the police will probably become involved too. This does not mean there are suspicious circumstances, but it may mean that the body will be removed from your care. If you can arrange regular visits from your GP – or if your GP records that death may be imminent, so that the Out of Hours Services know that there are unlikely to be suspicious circumstances if the death occurs during their watch - it should be possible to avoid this. Difficulties like this are most likely to arise at the weekend.

These are occasions when it could be too late to say:

IF ONLY I'D KNOWN THAT!

The Big Taboo

All Carers are like camels. No! It's not that they always have the hump! It's just that there's always one last straw that breaks them.

Mine was incontinence. There, I've said it – and I feel as naughty as if I'd said *knickers* in front of you all! Silly isn't it? But it's all those years of potty training, I suppose. First our own, then our children's and then, a step removed, our grandchildren's. We've been conditioned to feel that it's all a matter of self-control – and none of us likes to lose that. I'd tried to shut my eyes and my mind to it, but it wouldn't go away. I took all the precautions I could to avoid the problem and to hide the consequences if that didn't work. The drain on my emotional resources, especially when we were away from home, was enormous.

Incontinence has all sorts of causes – and not all of them have to do with loss of control.

Urinary infections can be one trigger – this may also cause a change in behaviour, so it is always a good idea to check this out with one's GP, especially if it is a sudden-onset problem. But have you ever thought what it must be like to know that you want to go to the toilet but are not physically capable of getting there in time? Or if you get there the seat is too low for you to sit on? Or if you've got down there, there's no way you can get back up again? Or if your brain is giving your legs the wrong messages – as it does sometimes with people who have Parkinson's Disease or similar symptoms – and you can't turn round to sit?

If the person you care for has problems like this, contact **Dorset Direct on 01305 221016** and ask for an Occupational Therapy assessment and discuss with your GP. The solution may be as simple as fitting a raised seat or rails.

Of course there are other reasons for incontinence that **do** have their basis in loss of control, but even these can sometimes be cured. Most modern mothers will have been taught pelvic floor exercises after the birth of their children, but these can be just as

useful for men and women who have slight urinary incontinence, whether or not they have had children. It's sad to think of the number of people who hide this problem because they are ashamed – and it's not just a problem that affects the elderly – when a simple daily exercise might be all that is required. In fact I'm doing mine now, while I type!

If none of the above solutions fits your problem, there are a number of different options, continence pads being one of them. This may be an acceptable and convenient method, but for some it will mark, not just the loss of control, but a loss of dignity too. But all is **not** lost. Have you ever heard of a non-invasive catheter or sheath? No? Nor had I, but it transformed my husband's life – and mine.

Again, I'm not an expert, but I found a lady who was. She was our local Continence Adviser and she approached her subject with a delicate enthusiasm that removed all embarrassment. Look on the contact sheet for details of the one in your area.

Just think what solving this problem could mean to you – and to the person for whom you are caring. No more watching like a hawk for signs of discomfort. No more refusals of invitations because there might be an accident. Less washing. Less cleaning up. Less bad temper and tension between you both. Now.....

IF ONLY YOU'D KNOWN THAT!

Time for a Break

Most people who care for someone feel guilty if they wish they could have a break from their duties for a while. But have you ever thought – it might be the other way round? If the person you care for is at home, with only you for company, maybe **they'd** like a break!

When it was suggested that my husband should be assessed for a place at a Day Care Centre I felt dreadful. On the morning that I took him for the first time I wept. My sense of having betrayed him was such that I thought he would never forgive me.

Imagine my surprise when the volunteer driver who brought him home delivered a happier, livelier and more talkative man than I had known for some time. For three days a week he was with a group of people who knew how to stimulate him, both mentally and physically.

It wasn't that, after more than thirty years of marriage, there was nothing more for us to say to one another – we still had a very good relationship. But when dementia sets in, then the person who has to answer the same questions hour after hour, day after day, week after week, month after month – and sometimes year after year – is not always ready with a fresh answer or a merry quip! How wonderful to have a new audience, especially if you enjoy a good chat. The fact that I had a few hours to myself was a bonus. In the early days I really do think the major beneficiary was my husband. But as time went on, and the problems increased, the balance changed. However willingly one cares for someone, there comes a time when stress and loss of sleep sap one's own resources and one's own health can be in danger.

And if YOU fall ill, who's going to do the caring?

Since I stopped caring there is Dorset Carers in Crisis which is a service that provides up to 48 hours free care for the person that you are caring for, if due to an emergency you are not able to provide the usual care. To access this service you will need to

have had a carers' assessment by a Dorset County Council worker and be registered with the scheme. This service is available 365 days of the year. After the 48 hours the person you are caring for may need to purchase their own care.

In addition to Dorset Carers in Crisis there is the Short Break Service. Carers are entitled to 26 care hours a quarter. A domiciliary care worker will provide the care that the carer would normally give at any given time; this enables the carer to have a break from their caring role. The carer can book their own time off in a combination of hours to suit. This service is subsidised by Dorset County Council and is available once a carers assessment has been completed and you are registered.

This is the time to start talking about planned Respite Care and it is worth asking about it **before** you think you really need it. There are two reasons for this; if you leave it until you reach crisis point it may not be possible to arrange at short notice – and if you have short breaks from your caring you may delay the crisis. It is amazing how a few days without the strains of looking after someone can re-charge the batteries.

Although these short periods of respite do not infringe the rules for claiming Attendance Allowance they **must** be reported to the Benefits Agency. The first experience of Respite is not always a happy one. It's a bit like sending your child away to boarding school. For you there is an underlying sense of loss and guilt and for the one in care there is probably a feeling of rejection and abandonment. But, just as most children soon settle down at school and only pull at our heart strings while we're looking, so most people who go into Respite Care soon feel at home in a safe and loving environment.

If it is possible for respite to be provided in the same place each time it becomes less traumatic. The cared-for person will know the staff and they will know him or her. That is a great benefit to both sides.

I can never thank enough the professionals who helped to give my husband and me a better quality of life during his last nine months.

THANK GOODNESS I KNEW THAT!

Sharing the Caring

- Do you ever feel you've done ten rounds with Frank Bruno when you've finished getting the person you care for up in the morning?
- Do you ever wonder what it would feel like to go to bed just tired enough to sleep – not so exhausted that you lie awake for hours?
- Do you ever wonder why it's your neighbours who get all the winning smiles, while you just get the snaps?
- Do you ever feel like giving up?

Well don't, because there's help at hand!

You know the old saying, "You always hurt the one you love"? Well, when someone is afflicted by dementia, whatever the cause, this may become literally true.

It is not intentional, and quite often comes about because the person concerned is unaware of his or her own strength. But there is also an element of not needing to be as inhibited in one's behaviour with someone one loves or knows very well. You **could** take it as a compliment!

Of course dementia is not the only reason why there may be a problem. It may be physical disabilities that make things difficult. Perhaps cooking lunch is beyond the person's capabilities – or doing the shopping or the cleaning. Whatever the situation, there is a caring cavalry ready to ride in. They're called **Care Workers**.

Adult and Community Care Services can make an assessment of your needs, work out a package of care to suit you, or arrange with private agencies to supply the help.

This is not a free service, but it is charged on a means tested basis.

Bearing in mind that the person being cared for is probably getting Attendance Allowance – and that is paid to help provide care – then the charges should not be unreasonable. Direct payments are local council payments available for anyone who has been assessed as needing help from **Adult and Community Services**.

They are normally available if you are a carer aged 16 or over or a parent (including people with parental responsibility for a disabled child). Once again, to find out what may be available, contact **Dorset Direct on 01305 221016**.

Our **Care Workers** had all sorts of strategies for dealing with someone whose brain couldn't always process messages correctly. "Time to get up," wasn't necessarily followed by appropriate action, but "Race you to the bathroom!" produced an immediate response. "Shall we go through to the bedroom?" was an invitation often refused, but "Didn't someone give you a lovely new painting of a ship?" resulted in jumping up to give a delighted exhibition. It was a sort of "Take me to see your etchings" approach!

If legs had forgotten how to tuck themselves under the bedclothes in English, why not try German – a language my husband had

learned at university in Munich? And if things don't go quite according to plan – laugh. I heard fits of giggling coming from the bedroom one evening and saw my husband in bed, with one of his angels on top, legs and arms in all directions. She had, apparently, slipped on the floor. “It wouldn't have been so bad,” she said afterwards, “If he hadn't said, *Oh I did enjoy that!*” These carers were often the ones to get the praise, but they deserved it, for they did everything with care. They were part of our family for nine months and we shared lots of ups and downs.

That's the second time I've mentioned **Carers Case Workers**, so it's time I told you more about them.

This Could be You!

- **Wanting a break?**
- **Not sure if you're eligible for help?**
- **Need someone to talk to?**
- **Often feel isolated or lonely?**
- **Would like to know what help is available?**
- **Feel worried about the future?**

If you've answered “yes” to any of those questions, then it's time to contact your Carers Case Workers. They are available to help you specifically. Contact **Dorset Direct on 01305 221016** and they will put you in touch with one near you.

Carers can be very undemanding people and often do not realise they are a Carer. They don't like to bother their GPs and don't know they can contact **Adult Social Care** and **Community Nurses** without going through their doctor. They aren't even sure there's anything that can be done anyway, because they've never met anyone with problems quite like theirs. If you think this describes you, call **Dorset Direct on 01305 221016** and they will

put you in touch with your **Carers Case Worker** who is there to help.

Carers Case Workers can also provide information about all the services that are available through Care in the Community, or refer you for help from **Adult and Community Services**. They can suggest ways of getting a break from caring, perhaps helping to plan holidays for the **Carer** and Cared-for. They can put you in touch with your local Carers Support Group or refer you to The **St John Ambulance Carers Support Programme**. They can even point you in the right direction for dealing with legal aspects associated with caring for someone. They are mines of information – and they're free!

If you want information about opticians, dentists and chiropractors who are willing to do home visits, contact **Dorset Direct on 01305 221016 or Help and Care on 0300 111 3303**

Make contact today, get yourself put on the **Carers' Register** and you should never again have to say:

“IF ONLY I'D KNOWN THAT”.

My Husband's Cake Walk!

Those of you old enough to remember a jolly piece of music from by Debussy may think I've taken a liberty with the title of this chapter – and you're right. But you still don't know what I'm talking about, do you?

It's MOBILITY, and if you don't see what that's got to do with cake, I'd better explain.

Dementia can play funny tricks on the brain. It can sometimes tell a chap that his legs won't work – or that he can't put his feet out of the car – or that he can't walk through a doorway. No use anyone saying “Nonsense, of course you can!” Would you believe what someone else said, or would you believe what your own brain told you?

But if the brain learns that there's chocolate cake for tea, and it knows that tea is being served in the sitting room, then it had

better find a way of getting there – fast! And if the quickest way to get there is to stand up and walk, then that's what it will arrange.

Don't ask me how it does it, but it does. It works well with toasted teacakes, too, and I'm sure if you were to try it you would have success with Dundee cake or a nice lemon sponge.

But of course there are times when even these strategies won't work and more physical help is needed. You may need to access training to help you with this. Contact the St John Ambulance Carers Support Programme offering training in First Aid, Contenance Advice, Safer Handling, Stress Management, Falls Prevention and Ways to cope with Memory Loss in Older People call 01305 751160.

Contact Dorset Direct on 01305 221016 and the Occupational Therapy Department of **Adult and Community Services** can assess the needs of the person for whom you care and arrange for suitable help to be provided. This may mean having rails fitted through the house to give support and confidence; it may mean a walking stick or a Zimmer frame – or it may mean a wheel chair. These can all be supplied and increase independence, which is so vital. In Dorset there are two Daily Living Centres where you can receive expert advice on equipment and aids. Make an appointment at the **Greenwood Daily Living centre Dorchester 01305 257164** or at the **Hanham Daily Living Centre Wimborne 01202 843560**.

The **British Red Cross** can also lend a variety of aids designed to help you. (See contact information sheet.)

If climbing the stairs becomes difficult, then you may be able to get a grant to have a stair lift fitted, which maintains normality, especially for those who are used to going upstairs to bed.

If mobility outside the house is a problem, the **Blue Badge** scheme may provide extra help. Shopping or going to the dentist can be made easier if you can park right outside, or within a few yards of where you want to go. Contact **Dorset Direct on 01305 221016** and they will be able to help you to assess the capabilities

of the person for whom you are applying and fill in the form over the phone. I filled in my husband's form as honestly as I could, stating that he could walk about a quarter of a mile. "Yes, but how long does it take?" my GP asked, reminding me that there is no shame in asking for help. Remember, though, the Blue Badge is for the disabled person, not the chauffeur, so you can't park anywhere, leaving your charge sitting in the passenger seat while you go off to have your hair cut! If you do, be prepared for a £2000 fine.

One aid that I learned about too late, but which would have been very useful, is the car passenger swivel seat. It can be fitted to almost any make of car and swings right out to make it easier for someone with limited mobility or flexibility to sit down **before** getting into the car. I'm sure one of those would have solved another of our problems.

NOW IF ONLY I'D KNOWN THAT!

The Language of Love

Sometimes one of the most distressing problems a Carer has to face is when normal conversation becomes difficult. Direct questions seem to erect a barrier within the brain, which makes answering embarrassingly slow and perhaps even impossible. But if there are two or three people talking - and the subject interests the person you are caring for - it can produce surprising results. It is as though, when the brain is not being put under pressure, it is free to respond.

When we were first married, my husband and I hardly needed to speak to understand one another. We were so in tune that we used a sort of shorthand, supplemented by smiles and laughter. It was, I suppose, the Language of Love.

The deterioration in his language skills was gradual, with the occasional step change when he suffered an ischaemic attack.

Towards the end it was this ability to understand our shorthand that was lost. Unless things were said with textbook use of syntax and grammar they meant nothing to him. It was useless for me to say, "But you **know** what I mean", because he didn't. Where once we had used so few words to express so much, now we used many words to explain the simplest things.

But his mind was still very active. Luckily he retained his sense of humour (which is not always the case!) and his quick wit often showed through in the puns he could produce with amazing speed and regularity. It was this "inspirational" speech that gave me an idea.

We had moved from Scotland 10 days before my husband's first stroke, which meant he had no local 'scientific' friends, so I asked the Institute of Physics whether they knew any retired members who lived locally and who would be willing to come and talk with us over lunch or tea.

They sent out letters to several members with postcodes close to ours and within a few days the first reply came - though the writer pointed out that he was 92 and nearly blind! Undaunted, we invited him and his wife for lunch. From the moment they arrived we knew it was going to be a success. By the end of their visit we felt we had always known one another and my husband's ability to join in had been exactly as I had hoped.

This taught me two lessons. The first is that we sometimes have to find unusual ways to solve problems. Secondly, we Carers often don't like to ask for help, assuming that friends and neighbours will be too embarrassed by the changes that are taking place. However, in my experience people really do want to help, but don't know what they can do. If invited they respond willingly and feel privileged to be involved. In the end six members had the courage to take up the challenge of re-engaging my husband in normal life and our social calendar became very full, with great benefits to both sides.

The purpose of this chapter, therefore, is to encourage you to seek out help, whether from professionals, volunteers, family or friends and sometimes even strangers. With their support, life for you and the person you care for can be made less stressful and more rewarding.

IF ONLY YOU CAN REMEMBER THAT!

Carers Information Directory

Age UK free helpline- 0800 169 65 65

Providing direct help to over a million older people each year through our local services.

Local Offices

Blandford Forum- 01258
458250

Bournemouth- 01202 530530

Bridport- 01308 459847 office

Bridport- 01308 424357
welfare

Christchurch- 01202 488311

Dorchester- 01305 269444

Ferndown- 01202 895252

Gillingham & Shaftesbury-
01747 853966

Lytchett Minster & Upton-
01202 622744

North Dorset- 01258 473038

Poole- 01202 666195

Verwood- 01202 821954

Weymouth- 01305 761828

Wimborne- 01202 849945

Age UK Handy Van Service- 0845 0261055

Alzheimer's Society

Dementia National Helpline- 0845 300 0336.

Dorchester- 01305 259740

Poole- 01202 716393

Blandford Community

Bournemouth- 01202 309084

Hospital- 01258 456541

Anchor – Home improvement agency

Weymouth & Portland 01305 785340

Christchurch, Purbeck, East & North Dorset- 01202 862765

Benefits Enquiry Line- 0800 882 200

British Heart Foundation Helpline- 0300 330 3311

Advice about all aspects of heart disease

British Red Cross- 0845 331 5000

Equipment Hire

Poole 01202 699453

Christchurch 01202 484074

Ferndown 01202 892772

Dorchester 01305 215951

Care and Repair- 01305 252405 (West Dorset)

Email: b.ruthven@westdorset-dc.gov.uk

Care Line- Assistive technology

Magna- 01305 251642

Purbeck- 01929 558455

24 hour emergency alarm monitoring service for elderly and vulnerable people. 24 hour 365 day. Provide emergency cover via pendant etc)

Carers Direct- 0808 802 0202

Free advice and information to help you make decisions about your support needs and the needs for the person you are looking after.

Carers Support Programme St John Ambulance-

01305 751160 / 01202 635912

Free support and training by Registered Nurses for carers.

Carers UK Carers line- 0808 808 7777

Improving carers' lives through research, information and campaigning

Carers link- 0300 111 3303 Help line run by Help and Care.

Community Alcohol and Drugs Advisory Service

North and South West Dorset- 01305 265635

Continence Advisory Service

East Dorset- 01202 443111 via GP referral

North, South & West Dorset- 01305 259978 -Carers can self refer

Counsel and care- 0845 3007585

Advice and information to older people, their relatives and carers.

Cruse – www.crusebereavementcare.org.uk

Dorset Area- 01305 260216

Bereavement care to promote the well-being of bereaved people.

Citizens Advice Bureau- www.citizensadvice.org.uk

Confidential advice including benefits.

Citizens Advice Rural Dorset Service

Rural Outreach Advisors are able to visit people in their homes to give advice on a number of issues.

Bridport- 01308 456594

North Dorset- 01747 825286

Christchurch- 01202

Purbeck- 01929 552464

488442

Sherborne- 01935 815305

Dorchester- 0845 2310400

Weymouth- 01305 770325

East Dorset- 01202 857103

Daily Living Centres for Independent Living-

Information and advice on disability products, national and local suppliers, organisations and services.

Greenwood Dorchester- 01305 257164

Email: greenwoodcentre@dorsetcc.gov.uk

Hanham Centre Wimborne - 01202 843560

Disability Living Foundation- 0845 1309177

Help and advice for older and disabled people.

Direct Gov. – www.direct.gov.uk

Public services in one place

Dorset Association for the Disabled

Services and amenities for people with a disability.

Dorchester- 01305 266969

Verwood- 01202 814069

Christchurch- 01202 485558

Wimborne- 01202 884616

Dorset Cancer Care network NHS - 01202 850631

Cancer care Dorset offers advice, information and support to anyone diagnosed with cancer.

Dorset Diabetic Eye Screening- 01202 854432

Dorset Energy Advice Centre- 01202 469907

Providing free and impartial advice on saving energy in the home, grants available.

Dorset Fire and Rescue Service- 01305 252600

Offers information on free Home Safety Checks and smoke alarm fitting. DFRS can offer you help and advice to keep you safer in your own home.

Dorset Listening Project- 01305 859134
Counselling service for older people.

Dorset Loo Guide – available from local Tourist Information Centres.

Dorset NHS Primary Care Trust- 01305 368900
Providing community health services to Dorset including mental health

Dorset Direct- 01305 221016
Help and advice from Adult Social Care Services.

Dorset Emergency Care Service- 0845 600 10 13
Out of hours medical help.
Life threatening situations and falls call 999

Dorset Carers in Crisis- Call Dorset Direct for an assessment of your needs in the event of sickness or an emergency when you require back up.

Equality and Human Rights Commission- 0845 604 6610

Epilepsy Action Helpline- 0808 800 5050
Office Phone: (0113) 210 8800 Email: helpline@epilepsy.org.uk
Web: www.epilepsy.org.uk

Help and Care Handiworks PLUS- 0300 111 3303
East & North Dorset and Purbeck

Headway

Help and advice for families following a head injury

East Dorset- 01202 606560 **West Dorset-** 01305 257990

Help and Care Carers Support- 0300 111 3303

Telephone helpline, free information & support sessions, and other events in Dorset. Short break service for Carers on behalf of Dorset County Council. www.helpandcare.org.uk

Home Care Community Opticians- 01935 813800

Home visit specialists. Covering Dorset, South East Somerset and West Hampshire.

Huntington's Disease Association- 01425 627960

Regional Care Advisor

Leonard Cheshire- 01823 443674

Leonardo Trust- 01202 698325

Providing funds for Dorset carers break.

Macmillan Cancer Relief

0808 808 00 00

Mencap- 0808 808 1111

The voice of learning disabilities

Message in a bottle- Lions Club- 0845 833 4745

Motability Car Scheme- 0845 456 4566

Motor Neurone Disease- 08457 626262

www.mndassociation.org

Multiple Sclerosis Society- 0808 800 8000

www.mssociety.org

Nordcat- 01258 472164- Transport scheme North Dorset

Nordiss- 01747 821010

North Dorset Disability Information Service also covers West Dorset.

NHS Direct- 0845 46 47

www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk

Non-urgent information and advice on health issues.

Older Peoples Mental Health Teams

Blandford- 01305 361745

Shaftesbury- 01747 851625

Bridport- 01308 426291

Sherborne- 01935 815598

Christchurch- 01202 858158

Weymouth & Portland- 01305

Dorchester- 01305 250861

762505

Patient Advice Liaison Service- (PALS) 01305 361285

Parkinson's Disease Society- 0808 800 0303

Supporting people affected by Parkinson's

Partnership Older Peoples Project- 01305 225920

POPP - Improving quality of life for older people

Princess Royal Trust for Carers- 0844 800 4361

Information, advice, discussion and support for carers.

Radar Key Scheme- 020 7250 3222

Disability toilet key system available from Tourist Information Centre's / Age Concern and www.radar.org.uk

Re-Map- 01747 826424

Custom made equipment for people with disabilities

Rethink- National advice service 0207 840 3188

Helping those affected by severe mental health illness recover.

Richmond Fellowship- 01202 466430

Supporting carers of people with mental health difficulties.

Samaritans- 08457 90 90 90

Providing 24 hour confidential, non judgmental support

SSAFA- 01202 882318

Help and support to those who serve or used to serve in our Armed Forces and their immediate family.

Short Break Service- 0300 111 3303

Sitting service funded by Dorset County Council managed by Help and Care.

St John Ambulance- 01305 751160

Carers Support Programme - free training, support and advice.

Stroke Association- 020 7566 0300

Support to stroke survivors and their families.

For local groups - 0845 3033 100

Wheelchair Service

North & South West Dorset 01305 261210

East Dorset 01202 892874

Repairs - 01425 470003

Wheelchair Hire

Active Mobility- 01305 213141 or 01305 774422

Red Cross- 0845 331 5000

Promoting Good Nutrition – An Information Guide on how to build yourself up and reduce the risks of malnutrition.

Carers often report difficulty feeding the person they care for, lack of mobility and general ill health may cause people to lose interest in eating. Carers also may find themselves being too tired to cook a proper meal.

To stay well we need the right fuel.

Appetites, tastes and ability to eat may change as we get older or through ill health.

How do you as a carer recognize when something is wrong?

- Has your relative been losing interest in meals, surviving on tea and biscuits?
- Can they eat normally? Do they have ill fitting dentures or a sore mouth? Do they have difficulty swallowing certain foods, such as meat? Issues to be investigated by your Dentist or GP.
- Has your relative had a recent illness infection, surgical wound? They may need increased calorie intake at this time.
- Does your relative have difficulty using cutlery, is it painful to move around to get food or fluid?
- If you don't live in the same house, check, is there food in the fridge or larder?
- Do their clothes look loose? Are there changes to their skin and hair? Are they tired or sleepy?

These physical changes as described can indicate a poor diet; they may also indicate a serious medical problem. Seek medical advice.

“An Information guide on how to build yourself up and reduce the risks of malnutrition” is available from Dorset County Council, Catering Services, Adult and Community Services Directorate 01305 225934 or www.dorsetforyou.com. Copies are also available from Dorset LINK on 0300 111 0102 or email anne.dimmick@helpandcare.org.uk

The free Carers Support Programme offers you the opportunity to meet other carers, share experiences, and ideas whilst learning about:

- First aid
- Coping with the dementias and memory loss
- Managing continence and falls prevention
- Safer moving and handling
- The carers role and accessing support

This unique programme is led, developed and delivered by experienced registered nurses. Four sessions conducted from 10am – 1pm over four weeks, each session is followed by a free lunch.

Contact details are available in the directory.

Registered Charity No 1077265/1



Your voice on local health and social care

Dorset LINK is hosted by



Make a Change with Dorset LINK

Have you ever wanted to speak up about a health or social care service in Dorset but not known how? It might have been to offer an opinion on how things could be improved, or talk about an experience – good or bad.

Dorset LINK wants to hear what local people have to say. We would like to know:

- What worked well?
- What didn't work well?
- What could make it better?

Dorset LINK will use the information that you provide to influence changes so that the care we receive is improved for the whole community.

Register with us for regular newsletters and updates.

Get in touch today and together we can a make change

Call: 0300 111 0102

Web: www.makesachange.org.uk.

Email: contact@makesachange.org.uk