



# CARING TOGETHER IN BELFAST

SPRING 2023

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## Carer Support Service

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Web: <https://www.belfasttrust.hscni.net/services/carers-services>



# WELCOME

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## Dear Carers

**Welcome to the latest edition of the Carers Newsletter, which provides an up-date on a range of information and supports relating to caring in Belfast Trust.**

In this edition, we share a range of information on some of the work that the Trust has been undertaking to support carers. We recognise that the cost of living crisis has severely affected carers. The Carer Support Service and other organisations have collated useful information into one place to help households to access a range of supports which are available across Belfast. We hope that you will find some useful information in this edition to help in your role as a carer.

As part of the Carer Support Service, many of you will participate in the monthly activity programme. The activity programme provides a range of options from yoga to fitness, cooking to craft through to meeting other carers to chat over a cuppa. If you haven't joined a session, we encourage you to check out what is available.

We have also been reviewing what you like about the monthly programme and what you would like to change. We welcome your ideas on what you would like to see and invite you to continue to share your feedback on the activity programme.

2023 will be a busy year for the Carers Support Service. We have started to develop the new Carer Strategy for 2023 onwards. Your voice is important and we have asked you to get involved to help identify priorities and actions. Using the information collected from carers and others who support carers our next step will be working with the 'Carer Network' to produce the new draft Carers Strategy. This will be published during Carers Week 5 - 11th June to allow for a period of public consultation. Our plan is to launch the new Carers Strategy in Autumn this year.

Our work in the Carers Support Service continues to focus on you as a carer and supporting your needs. We work to raise awareness and assist you to access services and support. We encourage carers who are undertaking regular and substantial care and support of individuals to engage with the Trust to request a Carer Assessment to help explore what would help you. We hope you enjoy this edition.

### New 5 Year Carers Strategy

In Belfast Trust we are renewing our plan which sets out how carers are supported. We are calling this plan 'Caring Together in Belfast 2023 onwards'.

Carers have been at the centre of this work and working through the Carers Network, we have shaped four priorities.

This plan will set out how we will:

- **Help to reach more carers** by getting carers to recognise that they are carers and raising awareness of information and supports available
- **Support carers to navigate** Trust services to ensure carers can access the right information and support at the right time
- Work with carers to help them in their caring role by **protecting their health and wellbeing**
- **Share information better** by improving how we communicate with carers

It is important to us that we hear from as many Carers as possible to ensure future support services are shaped by Carers. Throughout March, we have invited carers to input into the new plan. We have hosted a number of engagement events and connected with carers via the Carer Information List on-line or by hardcopy via a freepost postcard. The period for inputting into the plan's content closed on 20th March.

All responses will be collated and we will work with the Carer Network to shape the draft Strategy. Watch out for your invitation for the draft Carer Strategy launch in Carers Week and we hope you will join us at this important event.



Some of our Carer Network members and Trust Staff at a Strategy development workshop in December



## CURRENT CARER SUPPORT

The Carer Support Service's monthly activity programme enables carers to get involved in a range of activities. Check out the current support available and hear from carers who have participated in sessions.

### IMPORTANT MESSAGE

In the newsletter, we share details of the Carer Support activity programme which is up-dated monthly. Please telephone and ask for a programme to be sent out to you if you're not online.

**For all activities advertised you MUST pre-book your place.**

#### **How to register:**

You can register for all activities online at <https://belfasttrust.hscni.net/service/carers-activities/> or contact the team at -  
E: CarerSuppSvcs@belfasttrust.hscni.net or T: 028 9504 2126

### Introduction to the Carer Support Service

- Are you a carer who is new to our service?
- Do you want to find out what the Carers Support Service can offer you?

You are invited to join the Carer Information and Support Officers at a monthly information session and find out what Information and support is available to help you as a carer including:

- current carer supports
- carer assessments
- other helpful information

The monthly sessions are held on the first Tuesday of the month at 11am to 12pm and these alternate between online and face to face. If you are a new carer or have just joined the Carer Information List and want to find out more, join us at:

Tuesday 4th April - online

Tuesday 2nd May - Face to face: Duncairn Arts Centre (note change of time 1pm to 2pm)

Tuesday 6th June – online

## Carers Connect Café

Am I the only one going through this?

Who's there to help?

What will I do in an emergency?

I feel isolated

I feel stressed

How can I look after myself?

I feel anxious and guilty

I'm so tired

Who will help me?

I don't like to admit it, but I'm struggling

I have so many questions

Meet up with other carers for a cuppa, cake and chat, join us – a warm welcome awaits you



**Where:** 2 Royal Avenue, Belfast BT1 1DA

**When:** Last Friday of every month

**Time:** 10.30am to 12pm

This session is hosted by the Trust Carer Information and Support Officers.

## MONTHLY INFORMATION SESSIONS

Each month we host an on-line Information Session on a different topic to help and support carers. Organisations who provide support for carers are invited to host a session for you to link in to. The sessions may help you to find out about carer related issues, information and supports available for you as a carer and also provide information about the condition of the person(s) you support.

Should you not be able to link in to the on-line session, these will be recorded and will be available after the session for you to watch at a time and place that suits you.

The recorded Information Sessions can be found on the Trust website page:

Carers' Services | Belfast Health & Social Care Trust ([hscni.net](http://hscni.net))

Check out the sessions taking place in Spring



**Alzheimer's Society**

April: Alzheimer's Society

Tuesday April 18th 11am – 12pm

The Alzheimer's Society provide a range of supports for carers who are looking after someone with dementia. Join us at this session to hear about the support services that Carers can access. This includes the Carer Information and Support Programme (CrISP) which provides support and up-to-date relevant information in a group environment, where carers can share experiences and find out about local and national services that can offer support. Feedback from carers who have attended CrISP have found the programme really helpful, as it helped them to understand dementia and meet with other carers.

*help is at hand...*

**CANCERlifeline**

May: Cancer Lifeline

Thursday May 11th 11am - 12pm

Cancer Lifeline provides a range of services including carer specific counselling and complementary therapies and carer information sessions.

Carers who live in the North Belfast area or who are supporting someone affected by cancer in the North Belfast area can avail of this support. Join us at this on-line session to find out more about Cancer Lifeline's support services for carers.

## CURRENT CARERS SUPPORT

### Carers Support Service - Listening Support

Carers, if you are presented with new issues and not sure where to turn for help. Or want to check what else is available to support you, you can book a one to one telephone appointment with one of our Carer Information and Support Officers.

What other sources of help are available for me

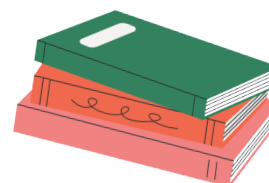


### Book Club



Join us on-line

Share your love of books, stories and more, on the **first Friday of the month @7pm** for lively and fun discussions... plot, genre, characterisation and more.



### SUPPORT FOR CARERS BELFAST



Carers Information Pack

We are currently up-dating our Information Pack with the input of carers. It provides a range of information which is given to carers when they register with us, to help them to identify support available.

The hard copy pack will be up-dated and an on-line information platform will be developed and shaped by carers. This will mean that carers will be able to access all relevant information in one on-line location.

#### Remember:

You MUST pre book for all activities online at <https://belfast-trust.hscni.net/service/carers-activities/> or contact the team at E: [CarerSupSvc@belfasttrust.hscni.net](mailto:CarerSupSvc@belfasttrust.hscni.net) or T: 028 9504 2126



## CURRENT CARERS SUPPORT

### A special restorative retreat day to the Drumalis Centre in Larne

The Drumalis Centre is set in a stunning, serene peaceful location. We offer a Carer Retreat - a day to focus on yourself; meet other carers who understand how you feel and participate in relaxation activities.

Featuring:

- A one to one treatment e.g. a massage
- Group relaxation opportunities
- Tea and scones on arrival and a lovely lunch
- Transport to and from Belfast City Centre for carers (if required)

**Numbers are restricted for this support activity - it is firstly reserved for those carers who are new to our Service and carers who have not accessed the online support programme or had the opportunity to attend before.**

Maureen, a carer, recently attended a Drumalis Retreat and shares her experience:

Instructions for pick-up by the bus were very clear and concise. It was a bitterly cold winter morning, the gritters were out the night before and temperatures had plummeted to -1 degrees. To their credit the Carers Team persevered despite the poor weather and the event went ahead. Our bus journey flew as I chewed the ear off my companion!

This was my first time in Drumalis, I really didn't know what to expect. We arrived to a very warm and friendly welcome from Susan (Carers Service), Maura (Manager Drumalis) and other staff. Hot drinks and scones were on tap.

We were smoothly guided through the programme of events by Jacqui and Susan (Carers Service). Gentle Chi Me movement was humorously facilitated by Barbara from the Health Development Team. That eased us into the day, undoing some creaks and tension in the joints and muscles. Relaxation was the



Some carers relaxing and having fun at Drumalis Centre in Larne

theme of the day with everyone given a lovely treatment of reflexology or shoulder and head massage. A varied menu selection was on offer and I wasn't disappointed! I thoroughly enjoyed Maura's informative guided tour of the beautiful and historic Drumalis building. It's one of a kind and well worth exploring. It was too wet to explore the grounds and views but sure that's for another time.

I thoroughly enjoyed all elements of the day in Drumalis, the staff care towards us and the company of other Carers. I would highly recommend it to all Carers. We give so much of ourselves that it is important to allow ourselves to be nurtured too.

The Drumalis Retreat is hosted every 2 months

#### Dates for Spring/Summer 2023:

- Thursday 20th April 2023
- Thursday 8th June 2023
- Tuesday 29th August 2023

## CARERS EVENTS

New upcoming support activity in the pipeline: We asked you 'what else would you like us to provide', you told us; we listened and responded....

### Singing is good for you!

We continually ask carers what they would like to see being offered as part of the Carer Support Programme.

A number of carers mentioned that they would be interested in joining a carer's choir. In response we sent out a poll to our online carers and had an exciting response.

#### Breaking News.

After Easter, we will be piloting our new singing activity! It will take place on a Tuesday morning, commencing May 2nd, the exact time and venue will be confirmed when you register your interest. A Choir Lead will help all abilities to join in. Even if you think you can't sing – come along and try it out.

Details will be advertised via the Carer Information List **but if you are not on-line, give us a call** and let us know if you are interested and we will keep you up-dated.

### 14 Health Benefits of Singing

1. Reduces stress
2. Improve mood
3. Lowers blood pressure
4. Improves breathing
5. Reduces perceived pain
6. Boosts immune system
7. Improves sense of rhythm
8. Promotes learning in children
9. Forges comforting memories
10. Promotes communal bonding
11. Provides comfort
12. Motivates
13. Empowers people
14. Promotes well-being

## Gardening for Wildlife Workshops



Gardening, being in nature and surrounded by wildlife, are often activities that can provide us comfort, peace and quiet. Join us for a series of workshops that will provide opportunity to come together with other carers, build friendships and connections, as well as learn about nature and wildlife. The Carer Support Service, in partnership with Ulster Wildlife, plan to bring carers a monthly (from April to September inclusive) face to face Gardening for Wildlife workshops.

The monthly sessions will start in April on a Thursday afternoon and the workshops will take place in South Belfast. Workshops will be led by an Ulster Wildlife experienced facilitator. In week 1, carers will discuss and shape the sessions to meet the collective interests of the group. The sessions will:

- Be practical
- Allow you the opportunity to learn new skills to use at home

#### Topics may include how to:

- build a bird box for our feathered friends
- plant to encourage more wildlife into your garden
- divide herbaceous pollinator plants and watch them multiply

We look forward to you joining us from 1pm to 2.30pm on the last Thursday of the month in Ormeau Park.





Carers Week is an annual campaign to:



- Raise awareness of caring, highlight the challenges unpaid carers face and recognise the contribution they make to families and communities.
- Help people who don't think of themselves as having caring responsibilities to identify as carers and access much-needed support.

This year we will once again schedule activities across the week, to highlight the vital role carers play in our communities and draw attention to just how important caring is.

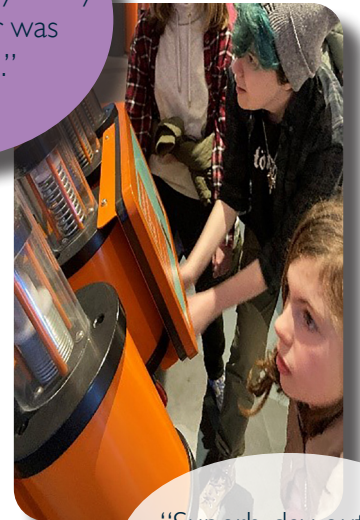
## Family Fun Days

The Carer Support Service hosts family days to enable families with caring responsibilities to spend some quality time together.

"We had a great experience and it was very well organised."



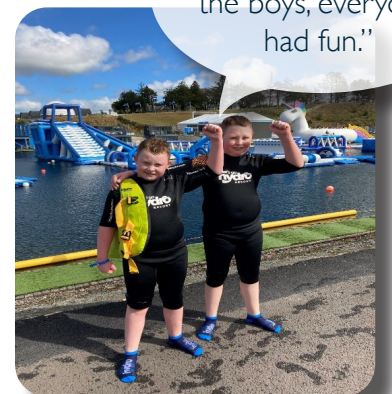
"Spending quality family time together was wonderful."



"Really great family day. Our family has had a lovely day together. Thanks for the great lunch."



"Superb day out for the boys, everyone had fun."



"It was perfect. Our first event. Thank you so much."

Some of the images and comments captured at our most recent Family Fun events in W5 and Let's Go Hydro.



## FOCUS ON: Self Directed Support

### Self Directed Support (SDS): A carers Guide

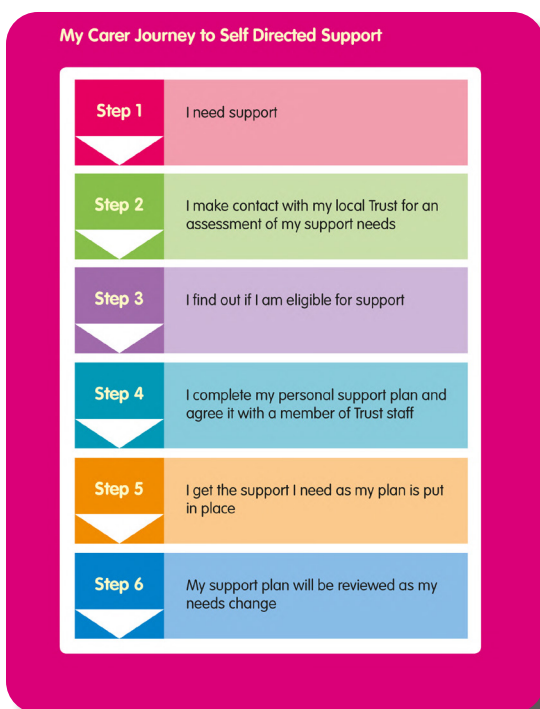
This article will provide information on:

1. What is Self Directed Support (SDS)
2. How can SDS benefit you as a Carer and those you care for
3. The support you can receive to help you manage SDS

SDS is for anyone who gets social carer support (social care funding) that is paid for by a Health and Social Care Trust – an allocated budget. SDS puts you in control, the budget can be taken as any one of the 4 options below:

- Direct Payments
- Managed Budget
- Trust Arranged
- Mixture of all three above

In order to determine if you are eligible to support as a carer you will need an assessment of your support needs, which is your legal entitlement as a carer.



Following the assessment, if you meet the eligibility criteria for social care funding, you will have the opportunity to complete your individual Support Plan. This will be based on the support needs identified and must be agreed with the member of Trust staff.

Further Information on Self Directed Support for carers can be found on [www.belfasttrust.hscni.net](http://www.belfasttrust.hscni.net)

### Support with the practicalities of SDS

In January this year the Carer Monthly Information Session was hosted by the Centre for Independent Living NI (CILNI).



CILNI works across Northern Ireland to promote the principles of independent living.

As part of their work, CILNI provide support to both service users and carers who are undergoing an assessment process in relation to their support needs and the practical management of a personal budget.

To support the management of a Direct Payment, carers may wish to link with CILNI in relation to the services they offer:

- Assistance to identify your support needs
- Information on independent living, Direct Payments and SDS
- Advice and training on organising your support and being a good employer
- Payroll Services to help with managing money

CILNI's Advice and Advocacy service is funded by the Department of Health and the service is open and freely available to all those that need it. Find out further information on the range of CILNI's services at [www.cil.org](http://www.cil.org) or T: 028 9064 8546.



