

WORKING CARERS News

All the latest information and updates
for employees with caring responsibilities



workingcarers@rctcbc.gov.uk

Issue 1 | Autumn/Winter 2022

Welcome to a newsletter for RCTCBC staff juggling an unpaid caring role alongside working at the Council. This is our first edition and we hope you find it helpful.

If you have any suggestions about what you'd like to see next time please get in touch with us at: WorkingCarers@rctcbc.gov.uk

CARERS WEEK AT RCTCBC

We would like to say a massive thank you to everyone who came along to the new Working Carers Guidance and paid Carers Leave launch events during this year's Carers Week!

It was fantastic to have almost 80 members of staff join us across the two days. We would also like to say a huge thank you to Jane Healey and Catherine Reynolds from Employers for Carers (Carers Wales) for coming to speak to us. They gave a detailed presentation full of advice and tips about how to access support if you are caring and how you can support others too.

- [Presentation Slides from 'Supporting Our Working Carers' launch event](#)
- [Working Carers Guidance](#)
- [Carers leave wording and Request form in the Leave of Absence policy](#)
- [Staff intranet page "Your Caring Responsibilities"](#)

If you have any difficulty accessing any of these resources, please contact WorkingCarers@rctcbc.gov.uk

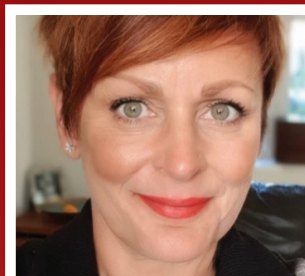
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Hear from other Carers

Carers Week Blogs in Wales (Carers UK)

Carers UK published a series of blogs written by carers during Carers Week. In these, carers in Wales share their experiences, thoughts, and ideas. Why not give these a read?



Tips for Working Carers Podcast and Article (Carers UK)

In this podcast, perfectly timed for a short tea break, Jane talks about her experiences juggling caring alongside working. She offers her advice and top tips for other working carers.



UPCOMING EVENTS FOR COUNCIL STAFF:

Carers Rights Day this year (Thursday 24th November) is a brilliant opportunity for us to come together but also to learn more about our rights in the workplace as unpaid carers. We will be holding two events: one virtual and one in-person during that week. We'd love to have you join us!

Carers Caffi @RCTCBC

Wednesday 23rd of November 2022 at 1- 2pm via Microsoft Teams

This will be a chance to meet up within a relaxed and supportive setting and have a chat with other carers who also work for the Council.

Carers Wales will be joining us to do a live Q&A and will be answering any questions you might have. This will also be an opportunity to have a chat about what workshops you would like to see in the future, and to speak to the Working Carers team.

Please feel free to bring along your lunch! We'd love to meet you.

Book your place via:

- "Your Caring Responsibilities" course page on RCT Source
- WorkingCarers@rctcbc.gov.uk

This session will not be recorded as we want people to feel comfortable to speak freely. If you prefer, you are very welcome to submit questions anonymously to be answered on the day to WorkingCarers@rctcbc.gov.uk



Carers Rights Day Celebration Event

In partnership with the Carers Support Project, we will be hosting an in-person day event for Council staff with caring responsibilities to attend, with activities, food and information stands. More details will be to follow, but please do save the date!

There will be information stands, professionals on hand to answer any queries and provide support, a range of fun filled activities on offer throughout the day, food and workshops aimed at supporting you in your caring role.

We will be joined by Employers for Carers and Carers Wales who will be running a workshop on your rights in the workplace during the day. They will also be available throughout the day to talk to you and answer any questions you might have. Why not come along and find out more?

Friday 25th November, 10.30am-2.30pm
at Llantrisant Leisure Centre,
Tir Meirbon Lane, Southgate Park CF72 8DJ

Email us at WorkingCarers@rctcbc.gov.uk to book your place.



Me Time

ONLINE SUPPORT SESSIONS (CARERS UK)

Carers UK's online support sessions include both information sessions and more therapeutic activity-based events.

They cover a wide range of different topics. They are also at different times so that hopefully there will be something you are able to attend.

Upcoming events will cover/include:

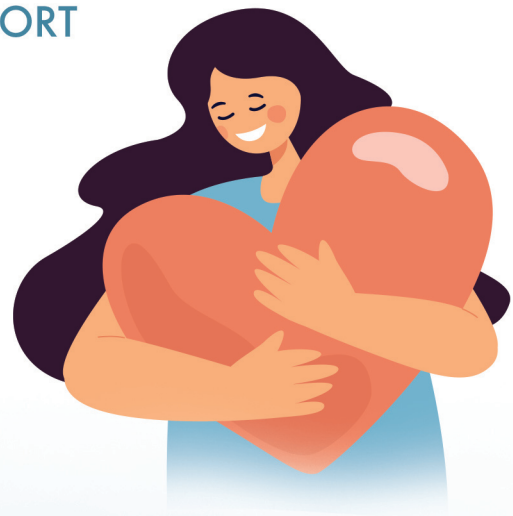
- Help with energy costs & disability related expenditure
- Digital Accessibility
- Laughing Yoga
- Aromatherapy
- Mindfulness
- Preparing for a Carer's Needs Assessment
- Nature & the 5 ways to wellbeing
- Making a complaint
- Alzheimer's awareness

On Wednesday 12th October, Carers UK are running a Creative Journaling session specifically for working carers from 7-8pm.

This is an opportunity to get creative, relax, and connect with others outside of your work and caring role in a therapeutic, thought-provoking, journaling session.

You will learn about Creative Journaling and meet other working carers.

Carers UK's 'Me Time' Online Support Sessions Information and Sign-up Page



JOIN THE DISABILITY AND CARERS NETWORK!

As part of the staff network, you'll gain peer support from other staff members who have had similar experiences, find out about support available to you, and help advise the Council on how to improve the quality of working life for carers.

Meetings are every six to seven weeks and we would love to see you there!

If you are interested in joining or would like more information, you can get in touch at

DisabilityandCarersNetwork@rctcbc.gov.uk or
on **01443 444529**.



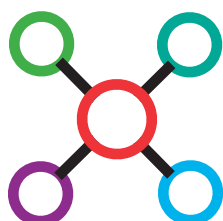
NEW ACCESS TO EMPLOYERS FOR CARERS DIGITAL HUB:

We are delighted to share that as a Council we are now members of **Employers for Carers** (Carers UK's business forum).

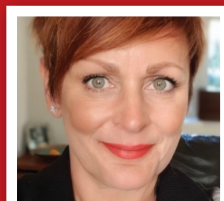
As a member, we have full access to resources on their online platform: Efc Digital.

Resources available there include toolkits, expert opinion pieces, policy news and essential guides, as well as e-Learning modules.

Sign up at <https://efcdigital.org/> using our membership code: EFC1968



"It's so important that carers are supported at work"



Jane Healey
Employers for Carers
Wales Hub Manager,
Carers Wales

During the pandemic there was something about Captain Tom on the TV that made me cry every time I saw him, what an amazing achievement to raise £32.8 million for the NHS.

It wasn't until I joined Carers Wales in August 2020 that I learned every single day, unpaid carers save the Welsh economy £33 million daily or £8.1 billion over a year. Now Captain Tom's achievement was amazing but, having been an unpaid working carer, I think we need to celebrate our value and what we contribute to the economy much more openly. We need to start with conversations about our care responsibilities.

I am passionate that the right support in the workplace is vital, after all 2 out of 3 of us will have care responsibilities at some stage in our lives:

"Two in three of us will care".

Currently 1 in 4 of us will be juggling work and care at any one time. Without the right support, our skills and experience could be lost from the workplace, or we could reduce our hours and forgo opportunities for development. The potential cost to organisations when we leave work or reduce our hours is huge, so not only are we valuable in the Welsh economy but to business too.

I never recognised myself as a carer and struggled for five years, what I was doing was just being a good family member, right? I didn't reach out for support and that had a detrimental impact on my own health and wellbeing. Most carers take two years to self-identify and then often only when they reach crisis. The earlier we can help people identify as a carer the sooner we can signpost to support, and there is support out there. We need to make talking about caring a normal conversation.

I am delighted that Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council have become members of Employers for Carers and look forward to working with the team and supporting staff. Having spent time during Carers Week with staff and colleagues at the council I know that there is fantastic support available, so do have a look and share with anyone who may be in need.



Live in RCT? Register with the Carers Support Project!

The Carers Support Project provides a wide range of services and events for unpaid carers living in Rhondda Cynon Taf. These range from days-out and regular support groups to counselling, discounted access to leisure services, and emergency cards.

Some of their recent events include trips to Drayton Manor and Chicago the Musical, Barbers & Butties, Jewellery Making, White Water Rafting and Chocolate Making Workshops at Rhondda Heritage Park as well as going to see Dinosaur World Live!

They also run services for young adult carers (18- 25-year-olds) and for younger school-aged sibling carers. There is always lots going on and we really recommend registering if you live in the area.

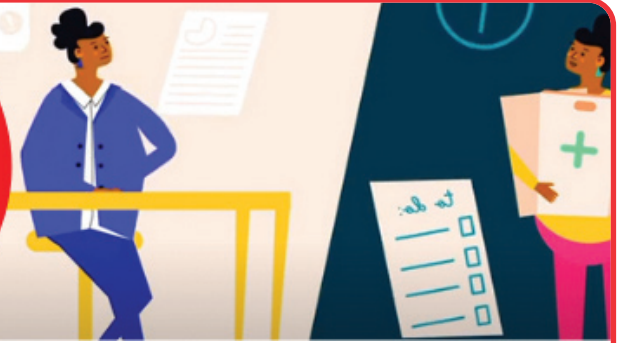
- **Carers Support Project's Services Leaflet**
- **Carers Support Project's Newsletter 'Carers News'**
- **Carers Support Project's Facebook Page**
- **Carers Support Project's Twitter Page**

To register with the project or if you have any questions, please email CarersSupportProject@rctcbc.gov.uk or call **01443 281463**.



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Working Carers Animation



In case you missed it! Working Carers Animation

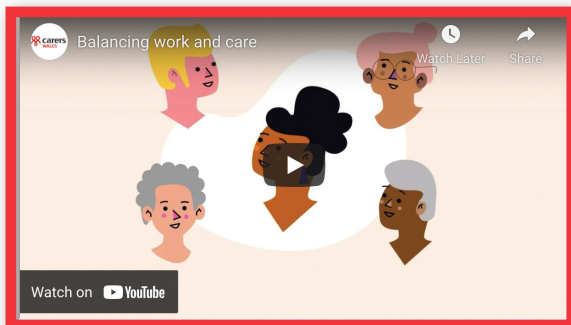
We found this video from Carers Wales moving and think it shares a valuable message about the importance of having support networks at work, especially before times of crisis.

You might want to think about using the RCT Working Carers Support Plan to have a supported conversation with your line manager about your caring responsibilities and how they impact on your work. This can help to get arrangements in place before things reach breaking point.

Find out more in the **Working Carers Guidance** on page 16.

You might also want to think about joining the Disability and Carers staff network (more info on page 4).

Working Carers Animation (Carers Wales)



jointly



If you attended the “Supporting Our Working Carers” launch events back during Carers Week, you might remember hearing a little about Carers UK’s Jointly application.

Jointly combines group messaging and to-do lists with other useful features, including medication lists, calendars and more. You can access it as a mobile app or online application. It costs £2.99.

Find out more at <https://jointlyapp.com/>

You can download it on the Apple Store or Google Play.



DISCOUNT CARDS:



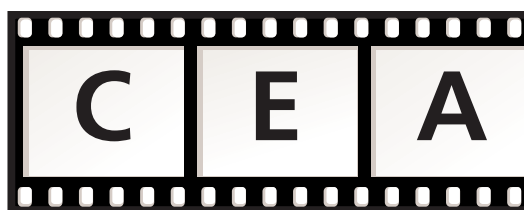
Save money with a
MAX card

MAX card

Max card is the leading discount initiative for looked after children and children with special educational needs and disabilities.

Families can use their Max Card at venues across the UK to get free or discounted admission. This includes Caerphilly Castle, Castell Coch, Tenpin Bowling, Bristol Zoo and many more!

Find out more at <https://mymaxcard.co.uk/>



Card



The CEA card is a national card scheme developed for UK cinemas. The Card enables a disabled cinema guest to receive a complimentary ticket for someone to go with them when they visit a participating cinema.

Over 90% of cinemas in the UK are part of the CEA Card Scheme.

Find out more at www.ceacard.co.uk
or call 01244 526 016.

HYNT card

HYNT card allows people with certain impairments or disabilities to bring a carer along free of charge to theatres and art venues across Wales.

Find out more at www.hynt.co.uk or call 01446 401744.



SPEAK UP AND GET SUPPORT!

We wanted to make sure you have a list of places you can go to be talk, particularly if you don't feel comfortable talking to people you already know.

It can feel really daunting, but it is so important to reach out, so you know that you are not alone and feel supported.

RCTCBC Staff Wellbeing Line:

The RCT Staff Wellbeing Helpline acts as a gateway to a range of support services including useful self-help guides that you can access at home.

Call **01443 424100** or email **WellbeingHelpline@rctcbc.gov.uk**

The Wellbeing Service has also produced a leaflet which gives an overview of other support available for staff members.

**Wellbeing Service
Leaflet**



Care first

Access to Care First for RCTCBC Staff

This service is FULLY CONFIDENTIAL and no personal information goes back to the Council.

Care First is available to all staff and can be accessed 24 hours a day, 7 days a week and every day of the year.

Staff can access the following support services:

- Phone counselling and information: Call **0800 174 319**.
- Online counselling and CBT: Visit **www.carefirst-lifestyle.co.uk** and use the username: rctc001 and password: **employee**

Carers Wales' Listening Support Service:

Carers Wales' Listening Support Service offers a series of phone calls with someone who understands the ups and downs of caring and who can provide a listening ear.

Whether you want to discuss some of the issues you are facing as a carer, or just want to chat, their friendly, trained callers are there to listen. How you use the calls is up to you.

Register for the Listening Support Service



**Caring for someone
in Wales?**

Find emotional support
with the Listening
Support Service in Wales

carersuk.org/wales/listen



News Roundup:

- **Updated Guide to all Cost of Living Financial Support for Older People, Care & Repair (August 2022)**
- **Fuel Support Extended to those receiving Carers Allowance, Welsh Government (July 2022)**
- **Diversity and Inclusion Team's Fourth Newsletter, RCT Council (July 2022)**
- **Vaccinations for Carers: Carers UK welcomes Unpaid Carers' inclusion in autumn COVID-19 vaccine booster programme, Carers UK (July 2022)**
- **Get help with the cost of living, Citizens Advice (June 2022)**
- **Support with living costs, Carers UK (May 2022)**
- **Report on experiences of unpaid carers caring for someone with Dementia, Carers Trust (2022)**

Any questions? Get in touch at **WorkingCarers@rctcbc.gov.uk**