



# Sunderland Carers Centre Guide To: Self-Care for Carers

You may not think of yourself as a carer. But if you look after someone, who couldn't manage without your support, because of their long-term illness, disability or frailty then YOU are a carer.

Over 32,000 people in Sunderland identified themselves as having a caring role in the Census (2011). However, there are likely to be more people who haven't identified that they have a caring role, they just go about their daily business without really thinking about the vital role they play. At Sunderland Carers Centre we believe it is very important for carers to recognise their caring role, so they have access to the right information advice and guidance, and if appropriate support, at the time they feel is right for them. If you feel we can help you, or someone you know please contact Sunderland Carers Centre on 0191 5493768 for free confidential information, advice and guidance.

## What is Self-Care?

Self-care is general prevention and taking action to look after yourself. Everyone can benefit from a combination of self-care and self-management with the right support, information and guidance.

**Below are our top tips to self-care: For support further information, advice and guidance with the tips below, just give us a call or contact us via email ([contactus@sunderlandcarers.co.uk](mailto:contactus@sunderlandcarers.co.uk)) or website [www.sunderlandcarers.co.uk](http://www.sunderlandcarers.co.uk)**

## Look after yourself

The demands of a caring role can make it difficult for carers to look after their own health and wellbeing. Remember we **must** take time out to look after ourselves so that we can continue to take care of our loved ones.

## Talk to other carers

At Sunderland Carers Centre we run monthly peer support groups enabling you to take a break and have the chance to meet other people in the same situation as yourself. Don't feel isolated; you are not alone.

## Seek Information and advice

At Sunderland Carers Centre we believe it is important for carers to understand what support is available to them in their caring role and which services are available to support your loved one. Having this information at the correct time in your journey can prove vital.

## Look to the future and plan

Apply for the Carers Emergency Card. The Carers Emergency Card Scheme is operated by Sunderland Care and Support and forms part of their Telecare Service. Sunderland Carers Centre facilitates the completion of Carers Emergency Card forms on their behalf and supports carers to plan for the future and any possible emergencies. The aim of the scheme is to provide carers and

the person they care for the opportunity to plan for any emergencies, where the carer is unable to care, including who the carer would like contacting. The scheme is recognised by Sunderland City Hospitals and the Emergency Services. On completion of the Carers Emergency Card form (which we can help you to do), please return to Sunderland Carers Centre in the freepost envelope provided and we will register you with Sunderland Care and Support. Once registered, you will receive a pocket-sized card to keep with you. The card will have a telephone number to call in an emergency. There will also be a unique reference number on for people to quote when contacting Sunderland Care and Support. The unique number links to your personal details that are held securely by the Telecare Service.

### **Message in a bottle** sponsored by your Local Lions Club.

This is a voluntary scheme for anyone living at home, who might be reassured to know that essential information would be readily available to the Emergency Services should they suffer an accident or sudden illness. The scheme ensures that vital information is available not only to identify you, but to advise of relevant illnesses, allergies, medication and contact addresses.

How does it work? In the bottle there is a green sticker to display within the home. Place the sticker somewhere visible, such as the inside of your front door. In the event of an accident or incident, within the home, the first emergency service on the scene will be alerted to the bottle in the fridge by the label on your front door.

How to apply - Sunderland Carers Centre have a supply of bottles available.

### **Ask for a Carers Assessment**

Sunderland Carers Centre carry out Carer's Assessments on behalf of Sunderland City Council (for adults looking after other adults). The Carers Assessment is a great way for you to think about your own self-care, as the focus is all about achieving and maintaining your own well-being and balancing this with your caring responsibilities. These caring responsibilities can be those that you have now or those that you may have in the future. However much you think you are coping with your caring role a Carers Assessment can help give you some focus to put the necessary things in place to ensure your self-care doesn't get forgotten about. You can ask for a Carers Assessment even if the person you care for refuses or does not receive any services themselves.

### **Think about your finances**

We know that caring can have an effect on finances. If you would like a benefit check, our Carer Contact Team can carry this out for you by using the benefit calculator on our website. We can do this over the phone or an appointment can be made for you to come into the Centre to do this. Of course, you can access this yourself via our website <http://www.sunderlandcarers.co.uk/benefits-calculator/>

To complete a benefit check you will need: -

- Details of all your income. This will include benefits, tax credits, earnings from employment, State Retirement Pension and occupational pensions
- If you are married, in a civil partnership or living with someone as a couple, you will need details of your partner's income as well. We need to know this as your benefit entitlement will be assessed as a couple
- Details of how much money you have in savings, investments and other capital
- How much your annual Council Tax bill is and whether you get any discounts, reductions or exemptions
- Details of your rent or mortgage payments

- Information about anyone else living with you, such as grown-up children. Are they in employment or on benefits? What is their income?
- Whether anyone receives Carer's Allowance for looking after you or anyone else in your household.

For help to complete benefit forms, Citizens Advice Bureau hold monthly appointments here at the centre for carers. However, we can also signpost you to the nearest organisation to you that can help depending on where you live in the City. Please give us a call.

### **Tell people you are a carer**

Inform your GP Practice that you are a carer. All GP Practices have their own carer register. Once the GP Practice is aware you are a carer they can offer you extra support, annual health checks and free flu jabs.

**As we know it is very important for carers to look after their own health and wellbeing, we encourage all carers to take advantage of the additional benefits offered by the Practices.**

### **Talk to your friends and family**

They may not be aware you are looking after someone or indeed of the level of care and support you provide. They may be able to support you and help you have time out from your caring role.

**Remember It is ok to ask for help!**