

NEWS

CARERS

All the latest Carers information from around Rhondda Cynon Taf



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Issue 70 • Spring 2021

Happy@Home Grant

If you are a Carer aged over 18 you may be able to apply to access a one off payment, from the Carers Support Projects Happy@Home grant fund. The Happy@Home Grant should be used to enable the Carer to increase their wellbeing 'within 4 walls'. This means the purchasing of goods or services, that will enable them to achieve increased wellbeing, and/or feel more supported in their caring role.

The grant should be used to help support one of the following outcomes:

- Health and wellbeing
- Education
- Family relationships
- Reducing social isolation – developing inclusion
- A break from caring role

This grant is subject to the following key criteria:

1. Carers need to be aged 18 or over
2. Carers will need to be registered with RCT Carers Support Project (CSP)
3. Completion of the Happy@Home Application Form
4. The items applied for under the grant must contribute to one of the key outcomes set, and look to support the Carers and their caring role, whilst 'improving wellbeing within 4 walls'
5. The grant is limited to £300 per household

Grant applications will be accepted from 1st January 2021 to 26th February 2021.

For further information, or to obtain an application form, please call the Carers Support Project on **01443 281463** or email: CarersSupportProject@rctcbc.gov.uk



Better Roads Ahead

“ I am very proud of our young Carers who are fantastic young people. I'm often humbled and inspired in equal measures when I meet young carers and hear about their lives, juggling everyday things like school pressures alongside the additional caring tasks. Young Carers should be celebrated and valued for what they do. They are so mature and kind, I really don't know where families would be without them.

Being a young carer during the pandemic means that the opportunity to take part in things that provide a break from caring has been different or limited which adds to the difficulties. Honestly you have been super stars and I want to thank you from the bottom of my heart.

The Happy@Home Grant and Young Carer's ID card (see page 15), are steps in the right direction in recognising the impact of being a Carer and providing understanding, support and recognition that we hope will ease the burden of being a Carer. I look forward to seeing the benefit of this important work. Well done to everybody who is involved, but most of all thanks to our Carers. //

A message from Councillor Christina Leyshon, Cabinet Member for Childrens Services

Inside

Carers Support

Carers Events

Carers Corner

Young Adult Carers

Young Carers

Smalltalk

Events List



Express Yourself
Page 11



What's Occurred
Page 13



RHONDDA CYNON TAF

STAR EVENTS & ACTIVITIES



How to book onto Events and Activities

Our activities and events are becoming more and more popular, as a result, all of our events have been marked **Gold, Silver or Bronze**. Please see our event list on pages **22 - 26** to see which category each event falls under.

Please note you can choose **2 silver** and **limitless bronze activities and events**.

Places will be allocated on first come first served basis.

Our last booking day proved to be our busiest ever and places an unmanageable demand on the Carers Project Team. It's because of this that moving forward we will be trailing a new booking procedure.

Event bookings will open on **Wednesday 27th January 2021** and booking will be available between **10am and 5pm**. If you are unable to contact us between these times, you will need to contact the team the following day to confirm your booking.

On the initial booking day (27th January) events will be able to be booked by **TELEPHONE ONLY** by calling **01443 281463**. Email bookings will be accepted after this date. NO bookings will be taken via social media, including facebook.

Please note: where possible, email will be used for all correspondence so please check your email, junk/spam on a regular basis to check for updates from the Project.

Please be advised that our phone lines can be extremely busy, and we appreciate your patience when processing your booking requests. It would help us if you have the details of all of the events you would like to book in readiness for your booking phone call, in order for us to process your requests as quickly as possible and move onto the next Carer.

Please be advised that places for events are limited. We endeavour to make the booking process as fair as possible and aim to accommodate the wishes of all Carers, however owing to the demand on our events and training this may not always be possible.



Carers Connects

Dear Carers,

Come along, meet other Carers, share experiences and provide guidance & support to each other.

You will have the opportunity to discuss your concerns, or if you choose, just listen to others. This group is facilitated by the Carers Support Project Counsellor.

Look forward to seeing you.

From the Carers Connects Group.

Wish you were here!

For further information please contact:

Tel: 01443 281463

Email: CarersSupportProject@rctcbc.gov.uk

Join us on 2nd Tuesday
of the month
10am-11am
This group is held via
Zoom. Booking essential.



Say hello to our new Graduate Officer

Hey, I'm Rich, I'm 29 and originally from Hampshire, but now happily settled in Wales after completing a Bachelor's Degree in Criminology & Criminal Justice at the University of South Wales. I've worked in many different jobs previously, ranging from being a shop assistant to a supervisor to a youth support assistant,

and I am now looking forward to finding out as much as I can about social care and getting stuck in meeting everyone and finding out what matters to you in my new role. Hope to meet some of you soon and find out more about the amazing work you do!

Carers Cwtch is an informal friendly group for individuals who care for a family member, friend or neighbour. We meet on the second Tuesday of the month from 6:30pm-8pm.

Join us for a fabulous evening of games, quizzes, bingo and fun! You'll have the opportunity for a classic "night in" with other Carers.

So join us, have some time out, relax and have fun. Booking essential. The Group takes place via Zoom.

If you would like any further information, please call the Carers Project on 01443 281463

Carers Cwtch



It's good to talk

A free confidential telephone counselling service provided by qualified counsellors available to local Carers in Rhondda Cynon Taf.

Why Counselling?

The counsellors are trained listeners who can help you to look at options, consider issues in a different way and make decisions about how to manage your life in a way that works for you.

The aim is to help you find your own solutions to your problems and concerns, respecting you and your right to self-determination.

Who knows I have requested an appointment?

Only you, the project staff and the counsellor.

What does confidentiality mean?

The counsellor will not discuss your affairs with anyone. The only exception to this may be if the counsellor thinks there is a risk to you or to anyone else. This will be discussed with you at the time.

How many sessions will I have with the counsellor?

Initially you will be offered up to 6 sessions of up to 50 minutes. The vast majority of carers take sessions fortnightly however, under certain circumstances the frequency can be discussed with the counsellor. At present Counselling sessions are taking place via telephone only.

Is counselling right for me?

In the first session the counsellor will explain what to expect from the sessions and at the end you can decide if it is right for you. If not, the counsellor may suggest you access the monthly peer support group which is moderated by a senior counsellor or may suggest alternative organisations that might be of help.

What can I discuss?

Personal and caring problems are frequently inter-related and help with one will often help the other. You can talk about any areas of your life you are concerned about.

How do I make an appointment?

Contact the Carers Support Project on

01443 281463

Email: CarersSupportProject@rctcbc.gov.uk

Carers Leisure Discount

Carers of all ages and interests can access a world of leisure, social and relaxation opportunities with discounts worth up to 40%.

Rhondda Cynon Taf Council is offering all RCT Carers discount of up to 40% on Leisure for Life membership prices.

A Leisure for Life membership offers unlimited access to swimming, gym, classes and indoor sports at leisure centres throughout RCT. You can go as often as you like to whichever centre you like.

Discounted access can include pay-as-you-go or direct debit monthly membership.

What's more, it's really easy to join.

For more information
call the Carers
Support Project on
01443 281463



Carers Emergency Card

Do you worry about what would happen to the person you look after if you were suddenly taken ill or had an accident?



If the answer is YES then the Rhondda Cynon Taf Carers Emergency Card Support Service may help to ease your concern.

What is the Carers Emergency Card?

It's a credit size card that you can carry with you at all times. It's used as an instant source of identification in case of accident or sudden illness. The Carers Emergency Card is now available for online applications.

For more information or to apply online please visit:

[https://www.rctcbc.gov.uk/EN/Forms/CarersEmergencyCard/ RegisterforaCarersEmergencyCard.aspx](https://www.rctcbc.gov.uk/EN/Forms/CarersEmergencyCard/RegisterforaCarersEmergencyCard.aspx)

Please email

CarersSupportProject@rctcbc.gov.uk

or call **01443 281463**

to request a
hardcopy form.



Active Together

The Carers Project are working with RCT Sport to provide 'Active Together' sessions to our Carers. These will include a range of exercise classes including yoga, dance fit and much more! And what's best is, you don't have to leave your house!

Sessions will take place every Monday starting back on Monday 1st February, from 11am-12noon. All sessions are suitable for beginners and we'd encourage those new to the exercise world to join us. Sessions will take place via Zoom. Please see out booking pages for more information.

Get on your comfy clothes and join us for fitness, fun and friendship - lets get 'Active Together'.

Free Movies & Munchies Box for Carers

We all know that the last few months have been challenging and for those of us who have been unable to leave our home, this has been particularly challenging.

The Carers Project have put together 'Movies & Munchies Boxes' for Carers, which include a range of tasty snacks for all the family. So put on a movie, out your feet and munch your way through your Munchies Box.

To request a 'Movies & Munchies Box' free of charge, please contact the Carers Project on: 01443 281463 or email:

CarersSupportProject
@rctcbc.gov.uk

First come first served.

The packs will be delivered to your home address.



Crystals & Colour

Join our Crystals and Colour Workshop on Thursday 11th March 2021

You will learn more about the properties of some of the popular crystals, how crystals are thought to work in therapy and how to take care of them. As well as understanding more about colour, the chakras and how these energy therapies can help yourself and others. This popular course with crystal meditations will indulge your inner twinkle!

Book on from Wednesday 27th January 2021 by emailing
CarersSupportProject@rctcbc.gov.uk

(find out more on page 2)

CARERS SUPPORT GRANT FOR CARERS IN WALES

Carers Trust Wales is delighted to be working with Network Partners across Wales to deliver £1m of grants and services to support Carers who are experiencing hardship this winter.

The support fund will help to ensure that Carers across Wales are able to access grants (up to a maximum of £300) to help with anything from paying utility bills to buying a washing machine.

The new grant scheme will be delivered through Network Partners of Carers Trust ensuring that Carers in all parts of Wales can access emergency grants and services to ensure they stay safe, warm and connected this winter.

The purpose of the new fund is to ensure that unpaid Carers across Wales can access additional financial support to support their caring role. The fund will work in line with the three Welsh Government Ministerial Priorities for Carers:

- Supporting life alongside caring
- Identifying and recognising Carers
- Providing information, advice and assistance

The grant is now available for applications.

To find out more visit: <https://carers.org/>

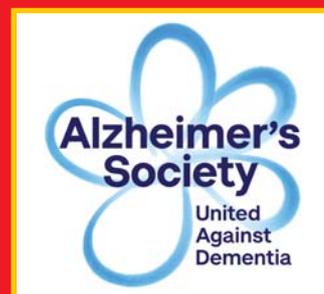
TURN2US

Turn2us helps people in financial need gain access to welfare benefits, charitable grants and other financial help – online, by phone and face to face through our partner organisations.

Visit: <https://www.turn2us.org.uk/>

Dementia Support

If you are worried about your memory, have a diagnosis of dementia or care for someone with a diagnosis of dementia, or are interested in what local support could be available to you, please contact the Alzheimer's Society on: **0333 150 3456** OR **03300 947 400** (Welsh speaking line)



Jelly Drops

Partnering with Jelly Drops to stop dehydration in dementia.

Jelly Drops are sweets containing 90 per cent water that can keep people with dementia hydrated. Alzheimer's Society is partnering with the Jelly Drops team through our Accelerator Programme.

Jelly Drops were invented by Lewis Hornby after his grandmother with dementia was sadly hospitalised with dehydration. Lewis went on to develop this innovative solution inspired by his grandmother.

Dehydration is a common challenge for older people, and especially those with dementia. It can contribute to premature deaths and years of reduced quality of life.

Memory problems mean someone with dementia can easily forget to drink enough water. What's more, the part of the brain that recognises you're dehydrated and sends a message to let you know you're thirsty doesn't always work properly.

Some medications and dementia-related illnesses can also make dehydration worse.

How do Jelly Drops work?

Jelly Drops are a hydrating treat that bring fun to what can often be a challenge for people affected by dementia.

Inspired by his grandmother's love for sweets, Lewis designed Jelly Drops so they are engaging and interesting to people with dementia.

These bright, tasty treats are over 90 per cent water, with added ingredients to make them even more hydrating. The drops attract the attention of people with dementia and the firm drop shape makes them easy to pick up.

A full box of Jelly Drops is the same as drinking three cups of water which is more than many people with dementia currently consume a day.

Find out more by visiting: <https://www.alzheimers.org.uk/research/our-research/jelly-drops-tackling-dehydration-dementia>

Ray of Light

Ray of Light Wales Cancer Support was set up in 2009, for and by people who are affected by the impact of a loved one's cancer and so have a very personal connection with how it feels.

We are a registered charity that provides emotional and practical help to those who are supporting or caring for someone who has been diagnosed with cancer.

What we do:

- Peer Support Group Meetings
- One to One Support
- Counselling
- Befriending
- Confidential Online Advice and Support
- Phone Help-Line
- Online Support Group
- Facebook
- Cancer choir – Ray of Light Warblers

We deliver a confidential service and a listening ear in a friendly, relaxed environment.

For more information call: **07971 349703**

email: sue@rayoflightwales.org.uk or visit: <https://rayoflightwales.org.uk/>

Sporting Memories

Tackling depression, isolation and loneliness through the power of sport.

We are Sporting Memories. We are dedicated to bringing together older adults to talk about and remember sport. We provide social and physical activities, too. At Sporting Memories Clubs, everyone finds fun, friendship and increased well-being.

The older adults who come to our online or community-based Clubs may be isolated, or living with low mood, dementia or other long-term conditions. Everyone has one thing in common: a love of talking about and remembering sport!

We also run campaigns and projects – and work in partnership with organizations. And of course without our dedicated volunteer teams, we could not do the work we do.

www.sportingmemoriesnetwork.com



Winter Warmer

Blueberry and Orange Crumble Muffins

- Cooking time: 25-30 mins
- Serves: 12

Ingredients

- 1 x 12 hole muffin tin, lined with muffin cases

Topping

- 45g Demerara sugar
- 50g Unsalted butter
- 65g Plain flour
- 20g Rolled oats



Muffin mix

- 300g plain flour
- 2 tsp baking powder
- Pinch of salt
- 80g soft brown sugar
- 220ml buttermilk
- 1 large free range egg
- 60g unsalted butter, melted and cooled
- Grated zest and juice of 1 orange
- 200g blueberries, fresh or frozen

How to prepare blueberry and orange crumble muffins

1. Make the topping. Rub the butter into the flour using your fingertips, then add sugar and rolled oats and lightly squeeze the mixture together with your fingers so there are smaller and larger pieces. Place in fridge while you make the muffin.
2. Place all dry ingredients and blueberries in large bowl and mix.
3. Combine melted butter, buttermilk, egg, orange zest, and juice in a jug and whisk together.
4. Pour wet ingredients over dry and using a wooden spoon, gently combine ingredients, don't overwork the mixture, a few lumps don't matter.
5. Fill the muffin cases, scatter the cold crumble mixture over the muffins and bake for 25-30 mins.
6. Cool in the tin for 5 mins then remove to wire rack to cool. Eat warm or cold.

Listening Ear

Staff at the Project know that now more than ever, our Carers need support, a listening ear, or simply someone to chat too. We want you to know that we're here for you.

If you would like to arrange a one on one chat with one of the team give us a call and we can arrange it for you.



Call Claire:
07880 044498



or Lyndsey:
07887 450717



Creative Carers

Are you interested in creative workshops for wellbeing? Do you care for someone with dementia? Why not find out more about the creative opportunities that could be available for you to enjoy.

Contact Eysyllt George on:
eyyllt.george@wales.nhs.uk for further information



GIG
CYMRU
NHS
WALES

Bwrdd Iechyd Prifysgol
Cwm Taf Morgannwg
University Health Board



prosiect cynnal y cynhalwyr

Nominate a Carer

What a year 2020 was. We know that Carers, probably more than ever, have come up against great challenges over the past year. We, at the Carers Project, have heard some amazing stories of resilience, perseverance and sheer determination from our Carers. This made us think – wouldn't it be lovely to recognise some of the amazing work you do!

So, if you know of someone, who you feel deserves special recognition, let us know and show them how amazing they are!

Contact: CarersSupportProject@rctcbc.gov.uk

What? When? Where? How? Why?

The last year has challenged us as a Project more than ever before. We are committed to continue to provide support to our Carers, and this has resulted in us needing to change the way that support is provided.

We are keen to get feedback from yourselves, the people we support, as to how we can help you in your caring role and help us to answer questions like what do you need, when do you need it and how you need it?

We would appreciate it if you could take 5 minutes of your time to complete our questionnaire, to enable us to adapt the Project and plan for the future in how we will support you as Carers.

To complete the questionnaire please visit:

www.RCTCBC.gov.uk/carersnews

If you would like to request a hardcopy, please call us on: **01443 281463**

Congratulations

One of our Carers, Maria, took part in The One Million Step Challenge for Diabetes. Maria single handily walked her way to not 1 but 2,061,079 steps...yes, over 2 million steps!...all to help raise awareness of Diabetes. How amazing! Well Done Maria, we are so proud of you raising awareness for such a great cause!

Maria enjoyed a well-deserved afternoon tea as part of the Carers Support Project, Carers Rights Day celebration. Yummy!



In our last Carers News we asked you to submit your creative art pieces on how you felt life has been living with COVID. Thank you for all of the Carers who sent us their amazing creative expressions. We've really enjoyed seeing them. Below are two submissions – we think you'll agree they are very moving pieces of creativity.

Life is what happens

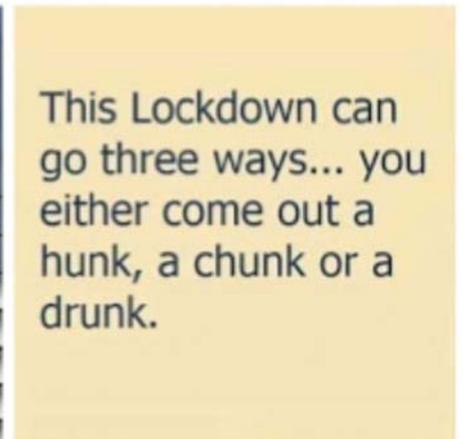
Daughter has needs
routines strictly kept
reasons to look forward
all structures are met.
Auntie is carer
relieves dad and mam
the 'C' word is mentioned
now auntie has gone
Confusion sets in
and mother just cries
gone is her sister
'my carer, my eyes'.
Oh! what's going on
dad's brother's now gone
pneumonia and heart failure
alone at his home.
Six weeks have gone by
a virus is here
born out of China
has travelled the world.
It's killing the old
and targeting weak
scaring us all
Hateful COVID19.
They're locking us down
the science and laws
only to exercise
can we venture outdoors.
Stay home - Stay safe
it's what we are told
and other diseases
are now put on hold.
Dad's home from work
son moves to his girl's
carer's stopped coming
keep the virus from here.

No furlough for us
we don't fit the bill
our savings are gone
but at least we're not ill.
Nan's by herself
we speak on the phone
food, care, medication
delivered to home.
The summer is hot
most gardens are new
holiday's cancelled
maybe next year.
Applauding the nurses
they take care of us all
sharing wine with the neighbours
over the wall.
Whatsapp is the saviour
for daughter and friend
innocent love blossoms
without holding hands.
We're opening up
after months sat inside
families, friends
are meeting outside.
They say it's not gone
stay two metres apart
masks must be worn
hand gel's in the car.
It's lockdown again
well, it is where we live
not the whole country
not yet, but it will.
Don't know when it's ending
don't know where we stand
life is what happens
when we're busy making plans.

Express Yourself



RCT Carer



Young Adult Carers



YACTY YAC

In the YACs we're often talking about wellbeing and how to cope when facing challenges. We're always looking for new things to learn, for opportunities which help us to develop new skills and insights, and we always have fun while acknowledging the highs and lows. I am amazed at how caring you all are and how you find new ways of coping and adapting. Covid-19 may have brought us new and unexpected challenges, but you are all adapting and getting the information you and your loved ones need to stay safe and well. None of you have to do this on your own because you're part of the YAC service where we Care and Support Each Other.

Lifelong Learning

There are many reasons why a young adult carer might not be able to go to college or university, or take up the opportunity of an apprenticeship. In any case, these options for personal and career development may not be the right ones for you.

Learning and personal development is lifelong, however. A lot of learning comes as part of being engaged in the University of Life. This learning can be very beneficial when we think of our future careers. We need to be consciously engaged in learning and in developing our CVs if we are really to gain the full benefits. Online learning has really grown and as come into its own during COVID, so there is no better time to think about doing an online course. There are lots of options that you can tailor to suit your needs and desires. If formation is available on the YACs FB page this includes Carer Uk and Prince's who have a really good understanding of the needs of carers. Let me know if you're starting a online and we will send you learning aids to help you make the grade.

Students

Starting student life is exciting, challenging and daunting all at the same time. The challenges have increased due to COVID, but I have been amazed at how YAC students have embraced uni and college life and at how hard you're working. We have YACs doing maths, drama and English lit. We have students whose courses and ways of studying are unrecognisable from when they started their course, as well as some who have bravely decided to stop studying for now and re-evaluate their options in the face of the new circumstances they now face. Whatever your experience, the YAC service can offer support.

All YAC students are able to engage in activities by Zoom. You have embraced the opportunity to support each other. From studying in Newport, Leicester, Abergavenny or Treforest, we are all just a click away and able to continue to care and support each other.

What has been very apparent to me when we meet up for a YAC student online event is just how resilient you all are. I think resilience, flexibility and adaptability is a fundamental quality that you need to develop as a Carer, given that you never know what's around the corner or how your day will pan out, and you must always be prepared to cope with the unexpected. These qualities are serving you well at present. All of the universities and colleges have a Welfare office and can provide information and support for Student Carers too.

Let us know what Uni life has been like for you and we will look forward to seeing you at the next YACs in Ed online session, or join us in one of the many YAC events.

Wellbeing

We are continuing our Wellbeing body, mind and spirit sessions with Lorna at Anavrin 'The Yogini Bear'. Lorna has faced her own share of adversity in life, but her positive attitude and calm approach has been inspirational to the YACs who have attended her mindfulness and wellbeing sessions. We have learned how to take a calming breath and how staying focussed on the present and listening to our bodies can help us manage stress, relieve our worries and just cope.

Our wellness sessions have been well attended and we have taken on board Lorna's personal philosophy of 'turning up for ourselves' on a daily basis. Lorna says that she makes time every day to focus on her wellbeing and she uses a range of calming techniques that help her keep positive, while being realistic and prepared to deal with the challenges of being a Carer. It's really helpful to learn from someone who practices what she teaches and who knows how to strike the balance between caring for others and promoting your own wellbeing. A big thank you to Lorna and we look forward to future wellbeing sessions with you!

What's Occurin'?

Wednesday 6th January from 7-9pm

New Years Resolution Night

A chance to recognise just how resilient we have been and how show how much we appreciate and care for each other.

YAC FEST

A week of Events to Kick start the Year on a positive note:

Tuesday 26th January from 2pm-4pm

Crafty Fest

Lest create our festival space

Wednesday 27th January from 12pm -3pm

Photo Shoot with Katie Artist/ photographer

Thursday 28th January from 7pm-9pm

Making Magic with invited Magician

Friday 29th January 7pm onwards

Music Night- Name that Tune

Friday 19th February from 6pm-7pm

Pets are Us

Bring your Pet and tell us why they are special to you and your wellbeing,

March (dates tbc) - Personal Development Workshop /Relationships / budgeting/ Career and education. We will also have a guest speaker, who will help us to explore issue that help us make the best of ourselves.

If you would like to attend, or if you have any further questions, please message Jackie on 07747 485840 stating 'count me in'.

What's Occurred

Halloween night was a chance for us to get creative and have fun. Our pictures say it all...!



RCT Young Carers Schools and College Award...



In Rhondda Cynon Taff we are always looking to improve things for Young Carers. Over the last six years we have continued to roll out the RCT Young Carers Schools and College Award. This Award is aimed at improving the identification and recognition of Young Carers in Education settings, as well as ensuring Young Carers get the support, information and guidance that they need. Each Secondary School and College Campus within RCT has a designated 'Carers Champion' who is the recognised key person to oversee that a Young Carers needs are identified and met within the Education Setting and to oversee the implementation of the Award. The Awards are structured units of work which are underpinned by different levels of certificates; Bronze Silver and Gold.

For Primary Schools, they are equally tasked of raising awareness of Young Carers but through a different unit of work consisting of five sessions, each exploring what a Young Carer is and how they can access support if required. This unit of work is elective.

There is no doubt that Young Carers continue to need the help, support and guidance from their Carers Champion - maybe now more than ever. We would like to highlight the significance of having such 'Carer Aware' roles within Schools as well as the importance of the continuation of their hard work and commitment. Beneath the layers of health and safety requirements linked to Covid their roles have continued regardless. We, at the Carers Support Project, would like to continue to express our thanks

and praise to all the Young Carers and Carers Champions throughout RCT we continue to make the Schools and College Award a success and to remind them that they are very much appreciated and thought of. Keep up the amazing work everyone & Thank You!

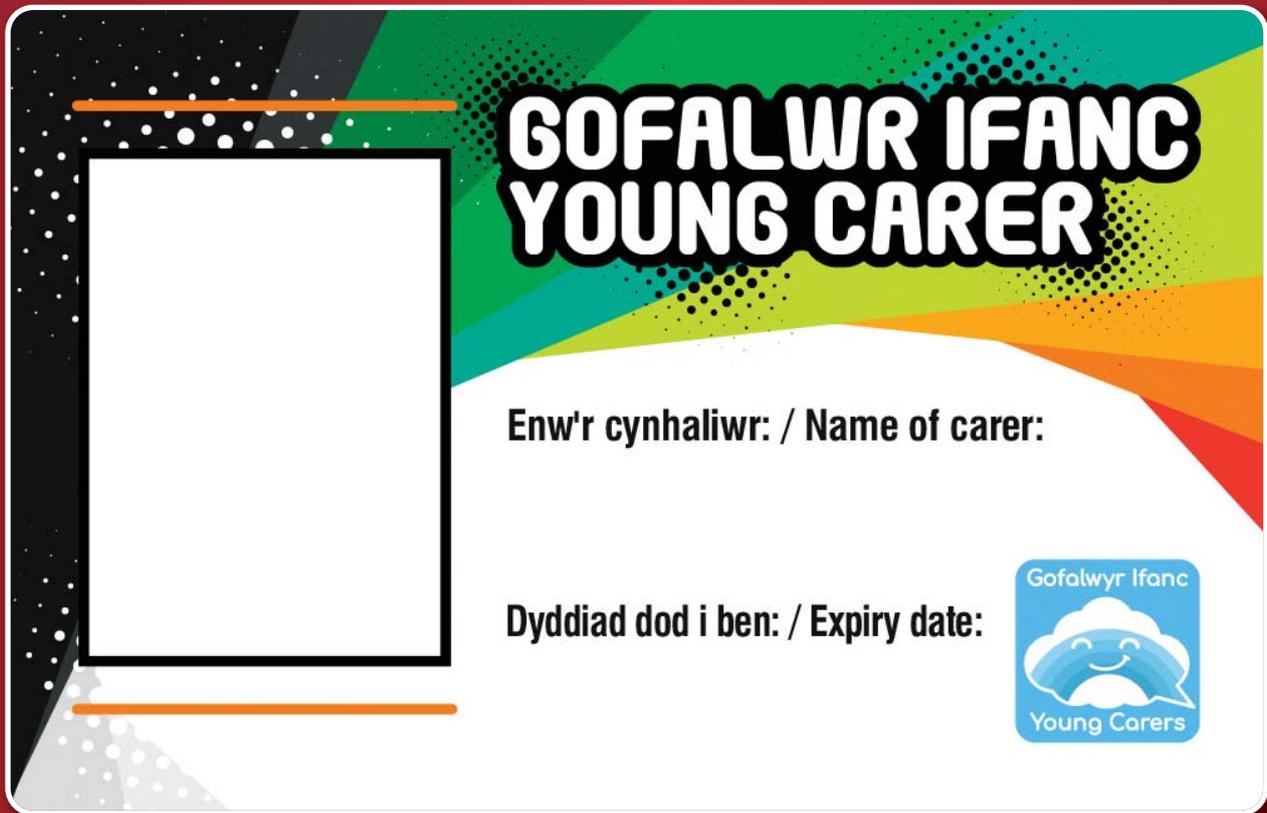


Resources available to Schools / College and Young Carers to raise awareness and learn more about the Young Carers Service.

You can also contact 01443 425006 to find out further information about Young Carers.

Rebecca Knight—RCT Young Carer School & College Award Assessor

Young Carers ID Card to be launched in Rhondda Cynon Taf



We are really excited to be launching the Young Carers ID Card Scheme in Rhondda Cynon Taf! Young Carers have been asking for an ID card to be developed for the last few years and so we hope that this new Welsh Government funded ID card scheme will help them to be identified, feel valued and receive the support they deserve.

The national ID card scheme has been developed as a partnership between Carers Trust Wales and all local authorities across Wales, working to test and develop a nation-wide approach to improving the experiences young carers have in health, social care and education settings.

The YCID or Young Carers ID Card will provide photo-identification for any young carer aged 18 or under who would like one. This will enable them to easily identify themselves to professionals without having to share personal details about their caring role. It is hoped that the card will give young carers the confidence to ask for help or understanding from professionals like teachers, doctors and pharmacists in a discreet way.

As we develop the scheme in Rhondda Cynon Taf, we hope that the ID card will also include access to local discounts and benefits in recognition of the significant contributions made by our local young carers.

We are at the early stages of developing the ID Card scheme and are currently trialing the process with the young carers who are already registered with the service and then plan to expand the roll-out in April. If you would like to find out more about the scheme, please contact the Young carers assessment and development worker on 07824496485 or youngcarerssupportteam@rctcbc.gov.uk



RCT Young Carers



RCT Young Carers project offers a service to Young Carers aged 5-18 years, who may be providing family care, giving emotional support or giving practical help. Lots of Young Carers feel good about what they do but some find it hard to join in with their friends or feel different to other Young Carers because of their responsibilities at home. Some Young Carers get tired and can't concentrate in school.

Support workers at the project help Young Carers by offering them opportunities through group sessions, one to one work and activities.

We offer advice, information, guidance, sign posting, practical and emotional support, skills development and confidence and self-esteem building. Having time out from their caring role, and having people they can speak to is vital. During school holidays, we organise trips and days out that are age and ability appropriate. We also offer young carers the chance to take part in forums which helps shape the future delivery of the service. All young people have an allocated support worker.

Rhondda Cynon Taff is a large county, and we work with young people all over Rhondda Cynon and Taff.

What we've been doing

Well we have been busy over the past few months. I know the service hasn't been what we normally offer however we have managed to support our young carers throughout this pandemic via virtual groups, phone calls, text messages and through Microsoft Teams and 1 to 1 sessions.

Throughout September and November, we have managed to get our groups back up and running. It was lovely seeing everyone back together in the same room at last. We followed all local guidance and restrictions to ensure the safety of staff, our young people and their families at all times. And we look forward to getting things back up and running again in 2021.

One of our Young Carers donated £300 to the project after her trip to Kenya was cancelled due to Covid. What an amazing gesture and everyone at the project are over whemled by her generosity. Well done Kacey-Leigh.



What we've been doing the last few months through Covid 19

- Virtual Pumpkin carving
- Virtual Group sessions / and face to face groups
- Virtual Games Nights
- Bingo
- Halloween and Christmas craft packages sent out
- Emotional Wellbeing visits and 1 to 1 sessions
- Halloween competition for the Best Pumpkin carving and best decorated house



Christmas 2020

Our 2020 Secret Santa Appeal's was amazing last year. All the staff at the project were overwhelmed by the generosity of the public, our families and friends, Rhondda Rotary to name but a few. Last year, we were also lucky enough to be supported by employees at National Resources Wales.



Photo above is our Young Carers Aloud Choir being presented with Christmas Gift Cards from Gareth Morris on behalf of himself and colleagues from Natural Resources Wales, who are a team from environmental executive agency of the Welsh Government. The projects been working closely with Gareth over the psat few weeks and we look forward to working with him and his colleagues in 2021.

All the staff would like to give a big shout out to all our Young Carers for the amazing job you've done caring for your loved ones throughout 2020, we know it's been hard for everyone over the past few months, however we are so proud of each and every one of you for carrying on the amazing work you have done throughout these challenging time's and hope your New Year is filled with health and happiness.

Upcoming

Lastly, we would like to wish all our Young Carers and Families, along with everyone who's supported the project throughout 2020 a very Happy New Year.



We are still here for you.....

Although times have been full of change and uncertainty, support for parents is still out there. We thought we would jog your memory about the wonderful support that's available across RCT and further afield.

Challenging Behaviour Support Group (CBS)

CBS based in Pontypridd began their journey in 2014 with a small coffee morning aimed at supporting parents whose children were displaying some challenging behaviours. Fast forward 6 years and their hard work and determination to help parents has led them to running an organisation providing early intervention and long term support for parents. They offer a vast amount of training workshops including;

- Early Bird Plus Programme
- Early Bird Teen Life Programme
- Nurture Programme: Parenting Puzzles
- Early Intervention Behaviour Programme
- The Parent Factor in ADHD

To find out more details about any of the courses visit their website www.challengingbehavioursupport.org.uk

CBS also offer 1:1 sessions with parents and every first and third Thursday hold their parent support group. (please note everything is currently via zoom).

As well as all that CBS have a facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/ChallengingBehaviourSupport>

And a parenting surgery with valleys kids and the Resilient Families Parenting Team every Wednesday at 1:00 via zoom.

To find out more you can email: info.cbs2014@gmail.com

Telephone: **01443 492624** or **07562 223697**

FASD Rhondda

Managing Anxiety in a pandemic

FASD Rhondda support families who care for someone or who is undergoing diagnosis of foetal alcohol syndrome. They offer emotional support to families and a much needed safe space to 'offload'. FASD Rhondda also gives children and young people an opportunity to mix with others facing similar challenges. Due to the pandemic FASD Rhondda has been holding parent carer zoom meetings and they plan to continue these on the last Wednesday of the month from January 2021. Hopefully when restrictions are lifted FASD will return to offering family group four times a year and monthly parent/carer coffee mornings.

As well as parent carer support groups FASD Rhondda keeps families up to date with any relevant information regarding FASD including the new NICE guidelines which will be used for future diagnosis and have been supporting the Cwm Taf Morgannwg health board with their plans. For all up to date information, follow FASD Rhondda support group on Facebook or twitter or email: fasdrhondda@gmail.com

The Newsletter for the Rhondda Cynon Taff Parent and Carer Network

Caring for children with disabilities and special needs aged 25 and under

Follow your Dreams

Follow Your Dreams is a registered charity based in Pontyclun, Rhondda Cynon Taf, supporting children and people with learning disabilities throughout Wales and England through its membership scheme.

During the Pandemic, FYD have been delivering hundreds of activity sessions ranging from arts and crafts to quizzes, afternoon tea and bingo. They have sent out just over 6000 activity packs to help during the lockdown. They have also gifted over 60 tablets and Chromebooks to help families get online and better connected.

Currently FYD are running the following sessions:

- Every Sunday at 3pm, a creative workshop with Dave from KeyCreate.
- Mondays 2pm is Dance with Zack Franks.
- Wednesday at 1pm is Wellbeing Wednesdays.
- Thursday at 1pm is our LifeWise session focusing on learning new skills and friendship
- Friday at 6.30pm is Party Time with Dj Jay as seen on CBBC. and 8pm is Bingo.

You can see some of their activities on the you tube channel here: <https://bit.ly/fydplaylist>

All activities are free of charge through their membership scheme. Membership costs just £15 per year, however there is a hardship scheme for those who may find it difficult to pay this, especially if they have been affected by the Pandemic. For further information, email info@followyourdreams.org.uk or you can find them on facebook

www.facebook.com/followyourdreamscharity, on twitter [@tweetfyd](https://twitter.com/tweetfyd) or Instagram [@fydcharity](https://www.instagram.com/fydcharity)



The Autism Directory

The autism directory is a comprehensive directory of autism related services, products and autism friendly businesses in our local area and beyond. With categories on Health, personal support, education, therapies, living support, money and legal, recreation, travel, work and much more it really is a website with a wealth of information for you and your family.

The Autism Directory Help Hub

Contact the autism directory by phone, email, social media or pop into their office for personal and confidential support for a wide range of issues such as PIP, diagnosis, employment, education or any other type of support that is needed.

How to contact the autism directory.

Email: hello@theautismdirectory.com

Tel: **01443 844764**

Facebook: [/theautismdirectory](https://www.facebook.com/theautismdirectory)

Twitter: [/AutismDirectory](https://twitter.com/AutismDirectory)

Address: **Unit 21, Business Development Centre, Treforest, Pontypridd, CF37 5UR**



The Autism
DIRECTORY



Save money with a **MAX** card

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

The scheme was set up to make days out more accessible and affordable for families. You can have discounted entry into lots of attractions including go air trampoline park, Caerphilly castle, castell Coch, Jump, Tenpin bowling and further afield Drayton Manor, Alton Towers, Legoland and go ape.

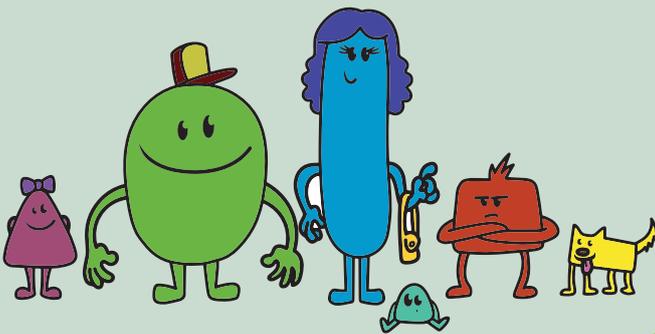
The MAX card usually costs £2.50 plus vat however the carers project are offering MAX cards to parent carers who are currently registered with us free of charge. To find out more contact Lyndsey on **01443 281463** or email CarersSupportProject@rctcbc.gov.uk

RCT Resilient Families Service

Managing Anxiety in a pandemic

Family life is full of rewards but also challenges along the way. If you feel that you and your family could do with some extra support regarding a particular issue or if you are feeling a little overwhelmed with family life, the resilient families service may be able to help. Part of children's services, the resilient families service uses a swift, effective, consistent, bespoke approach to deliver early intervention support to families.

To find out more or to self-refer for support contact **01443 425006**.



Easter Fun

Easter Fun Bunny Boxes

Hop in to spring with our Family Easter Fun Bunny Boxes. Get your paws on one of our Eggciting Easter craft boxes. They are full of fun and games for the whole family. There'll be Easter Egg hunts, Easter crafts and of course chocolate! Guaranteed to put a spring in your step. Simply good old fashioned family fun. So hop like a bunny and get yours today!

Please note boxes are limited and will be given on a first come first serve basis. You can request your box from booking day onwards (Wednesday 27th January) however boxes will be distributed in March.

Email: CarersSupportProject@rctcbc.gov.uk

Tel: 01443 281463



Two pieces of advice for Easter:

1. Don't eat too much chocolate
2. There's no such thing as too much chocolate

TURN2US

Turn2us helps people in financial need gain access to welfare benefits, charitable grants and other financial help – online, by phone and face to face through our partner organisations.

Visit: <https://www.turn2us.org.uk/>

Financial support for families

The Covid 19 pandemic has brought with it many challenges including financial hardship for many. See below some useful information regarding funds that may be available. Please be aware that grants have different criteria families must meet to access them, so they may not be available to all families.

The Family Fund

We help families across the UK who are raising a disabled or seriously ill child or young person aged 17 or under. You can apply to Family Fund if:

- You live in England, Northern Ireland, Scotland or Wales
 - You are the parent or Carer of a disabled or seriously ill child or young person aged 0-17 who lives with you
 - You are currently living in the UK and done so for at least six months, or three months if your child is less than six months old. You are eligible to work and apply for public funds
- Your child is not in Local Authority care
 - You have evidence of entitlement to any one of the following:
 - Universal Credit
 - Child Tax Credit
 - Working Tax Credit
 - Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance
 - Income Related Employment Support Allowance
 - Income Support
 - Housing Benefit
 - Pension Credit.
 - Your child or young person has a high level of additional support needs arising from a long term disability or disabling condition or a serious or life limiting illness. By long term we mean lasting or likely to last 12 months or more. You must meet all Family Fund eligibility criteria in order to be considered for a grant.

If you would like to ask any questions or discuss this before you make an application, please visit:
<https://www.familyfund.org.uk/>

RCT Access and inclusion service - Engaging Families

Rhondda Cynon Taf are delighted to introduce the new role of Family Liaison Officer (FLO) to their Access and Inclusion Service.

What is the role of the Family Liaison Officer?

The Family Liaison Officer's role is to promote the educational partnership between families, school and the LA through effective communication and where there is disagreement to assist in finding a successful outcome.

How the FLO works?

If you have any questions, worries or concerns about your son/daughter's access to education or changes to the current SEN system the FLO is here to support you.

Who will benefit?

Parents, carers, and learners. Anyone who may need that extra bit of support, information and reassurance that their voices and concerns are being heard by the Local Authority.

The access and inclusion service will be holding a Parent Carer workshop on Tuesday 16th March. See events calendar for more details.



If you would like to get in touch please contact

Kelly Allman - Family Liaison Officer, Ty Trevithick, Abercynon, CF45 4UQ
Telephone: 01443 744333 • Email: kelly.allman@rctcbc.gov.uk

Carers Support Project events, activities and workshops for Spring 2021

Event/Activity/Workshop	Venue, Date & Time	Information
January 2020		
<p>Chatterbox - our regular coffee morning held on the 1st Tuesday of every month. Make your own cuppa and join us for some craft and a good old chat in this friendly informal group.</p>	Virtual Tuesday 5th January 10:00am – 11:30am	Bronze. Carer Only Booking required for access code. 
<p>Carers Connects - join this peer support group and meet other Carers, share experiences and provide guidance and support to other Carers. You will have opportunity to discuss your concerns if you choose or just listen to others.</p>	Virtual Tuesday 12th January 10:00 – 11:00am	Bronze. Carer Only. Booking required for access code. 
<p>Carers Cwtch - join us for a fabulous evening of fun and games! You'll have the opportunity to have a 'night in' with other Carers in a light hearted atmosphere.</p>	Virtual Tuesday 12th January 6:30pm – 8:00pm	Bronze. Carer Only. Booking required for access code. 
February 2020		
<p>Active Together - a new virtual class provided by RCT Sport. Each sessions will have its own unique theme and we'll be guided by you. Suitable for all ages and abilities. Join us, get fit and have a laugh along the way.</p>	Virtual Monday 1st February 11:00am – 12:00pm	Bronze. Carer & Cared for. Booking required for access code. 
<p>Chatterbox - our regular coffee morning held on the 1st Tuesday of every month. Make your own cuppa and join us for some craft and a good old chat in this friendly informal group.</p>	Virtual Tuesday 2nd February 10:00am – 11:30am	Bronze. Carer Only. Booking required for access code. 
<p>Active Together - a new virtual class provided by RCT Sport. Each sessions will have its own unique theme and we'll be guided by you. Suitable for all ages and abilities. Join us, get fit and have a laugh along the way.</p>	Virtual Monday 8th February 11:00am – 12:00pm	Bronze. Carer & Cared for. Booking required for access code. 
<p>Carers Connects - join this peer support group and meet other Carers, share experiences and provide guidance and support to other Carers. You will have opportunity to discuss your concerns if you choose or just listen to others.</p>	Virtual Tuesday 9th February 10:00am – 11:00am	Bronze. Carer Only. Booking required for access code. 

Event/Activity/Workshop	Venue, Date & Time	Information
February 2021 (Continued)		
<p>Carers Cwttch - join us for a fabulous evening of fun and games! You'll have the opportunity to have a 'night in' with other Carers in a light hearted atmosphere.</p>	<p>Virtual Tuesday 9th February 6:30pm – 8:00pm</p>	<p>Bronze. Carer Only. Booking required for access code.</p> 
<p>Night Night, Sleep Tight Workshop - Does your child have sleep issues? If so this may be the session of your dreams. We are lucky to offer you a fantastic opportunity of attending a sleep workshop hosted by leading sleep consultant Louise Goncalves. In the words of Louise "sleep is not a luxury it is vital to so many aspects of our well being"</p>	<p>Virtual Thursday 11th February 11:00am – 12:30pm</p>	<p>Bronze. Carer & Cared for. Booking required for access code.</p> 
<p>Active Together - a new virtual class provided by RCT Sport. Each sessions will have its own unique theme and we'll be guided by you. Suitable for all ages and abilities. Join us, get fit and have a laugh along the way.</p>	<p>Virtual Monday 15th February 11:00am – 12:00pm</p>	<p>Bronze. Carer & Cared for. Booking required for access code.</p> 
<p>Active Together - a new virtual class provided by RCT Sport. Each sessions will have its own unique theme and we'll be guided by you. Suitable for all ages and abilities. Join us, get fit and have a laugh along the way.</p>	<p>Virtual Monday 22nd February 11:00am – 12:00pm</p>	<p>Bronze. Carer & Cared for. Booking required for access code.</p> 
<p>Come Dine with Claire - join Claire and cook up a creative treat for you and your family right from your own kitchen. Step aside Nigella, Gordon, Jamie – RCT Carers are moving in! All ingredients will be provided.</p>	<p>Virtual Tuesday 23rd February 11:00am – 1:00pm</p>	<p>Silver. Carer Only Booking required for access code.</p> 
<p>Parent Carer Workshop - Managing Challenging behaviour - Outside Education presents a virtual workshop aimed at supporting children and young people with ASD who may be displaying challenging behaviours. One not to be missed.</p>	<p>Virtual Thursday 25th February 10:00am – 11:30am</p>	<p>Bronze. Carer Only. Booking required for access code.</p> 

Event/Activity/Workshop	Venue, Date & Time	Information
March 2021		
Active Together - a new virtual class provided by RCT Sport. Each sessions will have its own unique theme and we'll be guided by you. Suitable for all ages and abilities. Join us, get fit and have a laugh along the way.	Virtual Monday 1st March 11:00am – 12:00pm	Bronze. Carer & Cared for. Booking required for access code. 
Chatterbox - our regular coffee morning held on the 1st Tuesday of every month. Make your own cuppa and join us for some craft and a good old chat in this friendly informal group.	Virtual Tuesday 2nd March 10:00am – 11:30am	Bronze. Carer Only. Booking required for access code 
Virtual Escape Room – Peaky Blinders Online - Tommy, Arthur, Polly and John are attending business matters in London leaving the bookies vulnerable. Major Campbell has caught wind of this and is planning to raid the bookies. As new members of the Peaky Blinders, Tommy has instructed you to find anything which incriminates the Shelby family and destroy it before Campbell's men arrive.	Virtual Thursday 4th March 10:30am – 12:00pm	Silver. Carer only Booking required for access code. 
Active Together - a new virtual class provided by RCT Sport. Each sessions will have its own unique theme and we'll be guided by you. Suitable for all ages and abilities. Join us, get fit and have a laugh along the way.	Virtual Monday 8th March 11:00am – 12:00pm	Bronze. Carer & Cared for. Booking required for access code. 
Carers Connects - join this peer support group and meet other Carers, share experiences and provide guidance and support to other Carers. You will have opportunity to discuss your concerns if you choose or just listen to others.	Virtual Tuesday 9th March 10:00am – 11:00am	Bronze. Carer Only. Booking required for access code. 
Carers Cwtch - join us for a fabulous evening of fun and games! You'll have the opportunity to have a 'night in' with other Carers in a light hearted atmosphere.	Virtual Tuesday 9th March 6:30pm – 8:00pm	Bronze. Carer Only. Booking required for access code. 
Crystals and Colour - you will learn more about the properties of some of the popular crystals, how crystals are thought to work in therapy and how to take care of them. As well as understanding more about colour, the chakras and how these energy therapies can help yourself and others, this popular course with crystal meditations will indulge your inner twinkle!	Virtual Thursday 11th March 10:30am – 12:30pm	Bronze. Carers only. Booking required for access code. 

Event/Activity/Workshop	Venue, Date & Time	Information
March 2021 (Continued)		
<p>Virtual Escape Room - Prison Break - You're in the prison cell previously occupied by Terrence Swift at HMP Standfast. Terrence had planned his escape but the night before his attempt he was moved to another facility. His master plan for escape is ready for you to execute, you just need to work out what he had planned and break out within 60 minutes!</p>	<p>Virtual Monday 15th March 10:30am – 12:00pm</p>	<p>Silver.  Carers only Booking required for access code</p>
<p>Active Together - a new virtual class provided by RCT Sport. Each sessions will have its own unique theme and we'll be guided by you. Suitable for all ages and abilities. Join us, get fit and have a laugh along the way</p>	<p>Virtual Monday 15th March 11:00am – 12:00pm</p>	<p>Bronze.  Carer & Cared for. Booking required for access code.</p>
<p>Parent Carer workshop - Understanding Special educational needs. - Are you struggling to tell the difference between your EHCP's, ALP's and IDP's. Are you fed up of not understanding all of the jargon when trying to get the best for your child. To find out more join Andrew Brazier from RCT access and inclusion for this short but useful workshop.</p>	<p>Virtual Tuesday 16th March 11:00am – 12:30pm</p>	<p>Bronze.  Carer & Cared for. Booking required for access code</p>
<p>Active Together - a new virtual class provided by RCT Sport. Each sessions will have its own unique theme and we'll be guided by you. Suitable for all ages and abilities. Join us, get fit and have a laugh along the way.</p>	<p>Virtual Monday 22nd March 11:00am – 12:00pm</p>	<p>Bronze.  Carer & Cared for. Booking required for access code.</p>
<p>Lifestyle with Lynds - Spring is a time of transformation so join Lyndsey on this monthly challenge 'steps for the soul'. Throughout the month you will set your own goals and be part of a group that will motivate and encourage you to get out and get active.</p>	<p>Virtual Tuesday 23rd March 10:30am – 11:30am</p>	<p>Bronze.  Carer & Cared for. Booking required for access code.</p>
<p>Active Together - a new virtual class provided by RCT Sport. Each sessions will have its own unique theme and we'll be guided by you. Suitable for all ages and abilities. Join us, get fit and have a laugh along the way.</p>	<p>Virtual Monday 29th March 11:30am – 12:30pm.</p>	<p>Bronze.  Carer & Cared for. Booking required for access code.</p>
<p>Busy with Becs - Join our Becs for some spring themed crafting and an opportunity to expand those creative fingers and minds! All craft items will be provided before hand.</p>	<p>Virtual Tuesday 30th March 2020 11:00am – 12:30am</p>	<p>Silver.  Carer Only. Booking required for access code.</p>

Event/Activity/Workshop	Venue, Date & Time	Information
April 2021		
Care to Care - join us at this workshop, where we will explore self-care techniques that are aimed at trying to help us look after ourselves as Carers. Learn how to manage anxiety, increase confidence and self-esteem and get some tips and how little changes can mean big changes to our wellbeing.	Virtual Thursday 1st April 10:30am – 12:30pm	Bronze. Carer & Cared for. Booking required for access code. 
Active Together - a new virtual class provided by RCT Sport. Each sessions will have its own unique theme and we'll be guided by you. Suitable for all ages and abilities. Join us, get fit and have a laugh along the way.	Virtual Monday 5th April 11:00am – 12:00pm	Bronze. Carer & Cared for. Booking required for access code. 
Chatterbox - our regular coffee morning held on the 1st Tuesday of every month. Make your own cuppa and join us for some craft and a good old chat in this friendly informal group.	Virtual Tuesday 6th April 10:00am – 11:30am	Bronze. Carer & Cared for. Booking required for access code. 
Active Together - a new virtual class provided by RCT Sport. Each sessions will have its own unique theme and we'll be guided by you. Suitable for all ages and abilities. Join us, get fit and have a laugh along the way.	Virtual Monday 12th April 11:00am – 12:00pm	Bronze. Carer & Cared for. Booking required for access code. 
Carers Connects - join this peer support group and meet other Carers, share experiences and provide guidance and support to other Carers. You will have opportunity to discuss your concerns if you choose or just listen to others.	Virtual Tuesday 13th April 10:00am – 11:00am	Bronze. Carer & Cared for Booking required for access code. 
Carers Cwtch - join us for a fabulous evening of fun and games! You'll have the opportunity to have a 'night in' with other Carers in a light hearted atmosphere.	Virtual Tuesday 13th April 6:30pm – 8:00pm	Bronze. Carer & Cared for. Booking required for access code. 
Active Together - a new virtual class provided by RCT Sport. Each sessions will have its own unique theme and we'll be guided by you. Suitable for all ages and abilities. Join us, get fit and have a laugh along the way.	Virtual Monday 19th April 11:00am – 12:00pm	Bronze. Carer & Cared for. Booking required for access code. 
Carers Wellbeing – what do we mean by wellbeing? How can we look to increase our own wellbeing? Join us at this workshop and look at how stress, anxiety and life circumstances can affect our wellbeing and learn coping skills to help best manage your own personal situations.	Virtual Thursday 22nd April 10:30am – 12:30pm	Bronze. Carer & Cared for. Booking required for access code. 
Active Together - a new virtual class provided by RCT Sport. Each sessions will have its own unique theme and we'll be guided by you. Suitable for all ages and abilities. Join us, get fit and have a laugh along the way.	Virtual Monday 26th April 11:00am – 12:00pm	Bronze. Carer & Cared for. Booking required for access code. 