

Time for you

Time for yourself is an important part of looking after your own health, both physically and emotionally. But it may be making time for yourself, however short, can be difficult.

It does not always mean you or the person you care for having to go away from each other. There are a number of services, ranging from services provided in your own home, to day care for the person you care for, which may give you a short break. The Community Care Assessment and Carer's Assessment look at the type of support which Cheshire West and Chester Council have assessed you and the person you care for as needing, see Factsheets 4 and 5. Allowing yourself to take time off from caring may, in the long term, enable you to continue caring.

There are many benefits if you are able to get time to yourself however short:

- You might be able to do a physical activity to maintain or improve your own health.
- Having an activity outside of caring will enable you to meet other people. If you feel isolated and lonely, meeting other people may help boost your confidence.
- For the person you care for they may benefit from having a different person to talk to, or an opportunity to be with others.

As part of looking after your own health, try to make your doctor aware that you are a Carer and may have your own health needs. Many doctors' surgeries have a member of the reception staff known as a Carer Link. They will help to support you with appointments, signpost you onto different services and provide you with information about your entitlement to the annual 'flu jab. Cheshire Carers Centre works closely with doctors' surgeries to inform Carers of the services available to them. Check if your GP surgery has a Carer's Notice Board.

Using time for yourself

Cheshire Carers Centre provides a range of support and opportunities to help you have a short break.

The **Cheshire West Carers Fund** and the **Breakaway for Carers Fund** are financed through the government's Carers Special Grant and administered by Cheshire Carers Centre. Each of these funds has detailed guidelines providing information to help you make your application and further information about the amount of the awards and how they are made. The following information provides a brief outline of how the different funds may be able to help you.

Cheshire West Carers Fund may be able to contribute towards the cost of something, which in some way helps you have a break. Some Carers have had contributions towards the cost of:

- Short Breaks
- Pampering Days
- Recreational or social outings
- Driving lessons
- Help with gardening or decorating
- Essential household items e.g. a washing machine
- Gym membership

The Breakaway for Carers Fund can contribute towards a short break for Carers, to recharge their batteries away from their caring situation.

The Carers Opportunities Fund can contribute towards the cost of a course to enable Carers to develop new skills.

Vouchers for Relaxation are available from Cheshire Carers Centre. The vouchers worth £30.00 can be used towards the cost of relaxation and pampering therapies available from the four main colleges - Macclesfield, Mid- Cheshire, South Cheshire and West Cheshire Colleges. The students training in the Hair, Beauty and Holistic Therapies Salons provide the treatments and assist with the use of the facilities.

The Princess Royal Trust for Carers network, of which Cheshire Carers Centre is part of, also has grants available for Carers. These grants include help towards short breaks, driving lessons, learning and training courses and household emergencies. Through the network, Cheshire Carers Centre is also able to offer a limited number of places for a short break at Pontins Holiday Centre.

Cheshire Carers Centre provides a range of activities for Carers. In addition to those mentioned in the enclosed leaflet, look out for the following:

- Carers Week - a national event, held each year to highlight the role of Carers and to provide the opportunity for Carers to meet each other
- Carers Day (usually in June) to provide Carers with an opportunity for relaxation and an update on services from Cheshire West and Chester Unitary Authority
- Carer's Rights Day – a national event held each year, usually in December, to highlight services and benefits for Carers
- Information events highlighting different services available to Carers

The newsletter, issued three times a year, keeps you up to date with events and opportunities along with information on changes in benefits or legislation that are taking place.