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Dunstable LU6 3DX

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Foreword from the CEO



Welcome to this Spring/Summer edition of our **VOICE** magazine.

I hope that you are all looking forward to enjoying the warmer weather. It is so lovely and heart warming to see the daffodils shooting and the trees and flowers in bloom.

In this issue you will see our regular features such as recipes, gardening, jokes, and cross word, along with an article all about Age UK Bedfordshire which you may not have known about us, information on Attendance Allowance and Help for Carers.

I hope you all have a lovely Spring and Summer with lots of sunshine and warm weather to enjoy.

Warm regards

Karen

Karen Perry
CEO, Age UK Bedfordshire

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Reg. Charity No. 1090535

Sadly Karen our beloved CEO passed away peacefully shortly after writing this following a courageous battle with cancer since 2005.



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What is Attendance Allowance?

Attendance Allowance (AA) is a benefit for people over State Pension age who need help because of illness, or where age restricts your ability to look after yourself properly, or someone to watch over them by night, because of physical or mental disability.

Entitlement is based on the help you need. AA is not taxable, is not based on National Insurance contributions, and is not means-tested, so you do not have to give details of your income or savings. It is paid on top of other benefits or pensions, except for Constant AA and War Pensioners' Mobility Supplement. It can be temporary help of permanent help. It all depends on your situation.

Who qualifies for Attendance Allowance?

To qualify for AA, you must fulfil all the following conditions:

- have reached State Pension age.
- satisfy one of the disability tests and have done so for six months (if you are terminally ill, there are special rules).
- not be subject to immigration control.

Conditions of entitlement

The disability tests; You can claim AA if you need help with personal care, supervision or watching over because of physical or mental disability. It does not matter if you live alone, with other people, or have a carer. Whether you actually get any help is irrelevant. What matters is that you need help. You do not have to spend AA on paying for care – it is up to you how you spend it.

Daytime disability conditions; You meet the daytime conditions if, because of your disability or health condition, you require help throughout the day in connection with your bodily functions such as eating, getting in or out of bed, going to the toilet, washing,

dressing and taking medication. Seeing and hearing are also bodily functions. For example, if you are visually impaired and need someone to read your post to you, or you are deaf and need help with communicating, this can satisfy the requirement for needing frequent help. Walking is a bodily function so needs arising from mobility problems, both indoors and outdoors, can be considered. For example, if you need help getting in and out of a car, using public transport, or require someone to help you get out and use a walking frame or wheelchair or store them after use. You may meet the condition if you need someone with you when on renal dialysis or you need continual supervision throughout the day to avoid putting yourself or others in substantial danger. Supervision may be needed if you are in danger of falling, you get confused, have fits or seizures or your condition deteriorates or relapses without warning.

Night-time disability conditions; You may meet the night-time conditions; if, because of your disability or health condition, you require prolonged (at least 20 minutes) or repeated (at least twice nightly) attention during the night to help you with your bodily functions. You may need help, for example, with going to the toilet, or getting in and out of bed. You may qualify if another person needs to be awake for a prolonged period or at frequent intervals throughout the night (generally at least three times a night) to watch over you to avoid putting yourself or others in substantial danger.



Making a claim

You can claim AA if you:

- call the AA Helpline on 0800 731 0122 and ask for a claim form or be sent to you or download a claim form from www.gov.uk/attendance-allowance/how-toclaim

If you call the AA Helpline, the claim form is date stamped. As long as you return the form in the envelope provided within six weeks, your claim, if successful, starts from the date you called.

When to apply; You normally need to have satisfied the eligibility conditions for six months before you can receive AA, although linking rules means this does not

apply if you have received AA within the last two years.

Terminal illness; If you are terminally ill, you can claim AA without the six-month waiting period under 'special rules' that make the application process quicker and simpler. You are treated as terminally ill if you have a progressive illness that is likely to limit your life expectancy to six months or less. It is impossible to say exactly how long someone will live and some people receiving AA under these rules live much longer than six months.

Filling in the claim form; The form is quite lengthy. We are, at Age UK Bedfordshire, experts in assisting people in the County to complete the application.



Going abroad

Temporary absence abroad AA can be paid for the first 13 weeks of a temporary absence abroad, if the overall period of absence is not expected to be more than 52 weeks. You can be paid up to 26 weeks if your absence is not expected to exceed 52 weeks and you are going abroad to be treated for an illness or disability that began before you left the country and the DWP agrees to pay you for longer. Hospital and care homes; if you receive AA and go into, or come out of, a hospital or care home, you should always notify the DWP as your entitlement may be affected.

AA in hospital; AA is payable for your first 28 days in hospital, if the cost of your care is met by the NHS or charitable funds.

If more information is needed after returning the form, your doctor or someone you mention on the form may be contacted to ask for more information.

Decisions and payment

You are sent a decision on your claim in writing. AA may be awarded indefinitely or for a fixed period depending on your circumstances. If you are awarded it for a fixed period you are sent a renewal claim form, normally about four months before the end of the period.

Rates of payment increasing from the 1 April 2024. From April the award payments will be £72.65 lower rate and £108.55 higher rate.

If you disagree with a decision we can help you ask the DWP to reconsider its decision (called a Mandatory Reconsideration) and if you still disagree, you can then lodge an appeal with HM Courts and Tribunals Service. It is important to challenge a decision or get advice as quickly as possible because the time limits generally mean you must take action within one month of the date on the decision letter.

Payment of AA is normally paid directly into your bank, building society or post office account on the same day as your state pension is paid.. It can be paid to an appointee (someone acting on your behalf) or

someone with power of attorney if you are not able to act for yourself. You can choose to have AA paid with your State Pension or another social security benefit.

Change of circumstances

The decision letter includes information about your responsibility to inform the DWP of any changes in your circumstances that might affect your AA claim.

If your condition changes; If you receive lower rate AA and your condition changes and you think you may qualify for the higher rate, you can contact the DWP and ask for your case to be looked at again. We can assist you with this.

For help in making a claim for Attendance Allowance (AA) or any other benefit claim email us at enquiries@ageukbedfordshire.org.uk or telephone **01234 360510**. Our lines are often very busy so you may have to leave a voicemail. Please be sure to give your name and full telephone number including your STD code.

We do not currently charge for the help we provide in assisting you to make a claim, but as a local charity we are continuously underfunded and therefore always welcome donations from successful applicants.



Voluntary Trustees Recruitment

We wish to recruit new people to join our Board of Trustees.

Age UK Bedfordshire is an independent local charity, dedicated to making Bedfordshire a great place in which to grow old. Age is different for everyone and its challenges and demands are individual. At Age UK Bedfordshire we are many things to many people – a source of advice, information, companionship and practical support. We put the

interests of older people living in Bedfordshire at the heart of everything we do, helping them to achieve and maintain their independence and wellbeing.

Age UK Bedfordshire has been supporting older people across Bedfordshire for over 30 years, especially those who are frail, vulnerable or have no family living nearby.

We are looking for Trustees who have a range of skills and experience including leadership and senior management in areas such as the health

sector, social work, local government, financial, religion.

The Board of Trustees work with the Chief Executive at a strategic level to ensure the organisation is effective within its aims and objectives. The Board is made up of six Trustees who meet with the Chief Executive and Deputy Chief Executive, approximately every two months, to discuss the wider obligations and challenges of the specific sector in which we work.

The successful candidates would ideally be able to demonstrate:

- Being able to take joint responsibility with the Board and Chief Executive to ensure the charity complies with good practice and legal obligations.
- Through the Chairman and Treasurer, work with

the Chief Executive and their Deputy to ensure finance and resources are adequate for the needs of the organisation.

- Support the Chief Executive through the Chairman, in order for her to carry out the management of the Charity.
- Act with integrity and in the interests of the organisation and its clients and staff.
- Jointly with the Board, to take and give advice and guidance to and from the Chief Executive as required.

How to apply

Please contact the Chief Executives office to express an interest by sending an email to jo.rising@ageukbedfordshire.org.uk



What exactly does Age UK Bedfordshire do?

Some readers may be surprised to learn just how much Age UK Bedfordshire does throughout Bedfordshire each year.

Below we have tried to give a flavour of the work we do for and on behalf of anyone over 50 years living in the County and carers, relatives and interested friends of an older person.

In 2023 we visited 1075 mainly vulnerable older people across the County every single week, to help with their cleaning, cooking, shopping, gardening and as an added benefit gave "companionship" and often friendship too. This service helps older and often the more vulnerable older people to live in their own home for as long as they wish. Leaving our clients in a fresh, comfortable and safer environment until our next regular visit. The same home support worker every visit, the same trusted person, dusting, vacuuming, chattering, mowing the grass or trimming back the hedge, bringing a certain warmth and comfort, that often other "institutional visitors don't have the time to bring.

We enabled older people across the County to gain an average of over £75 a week. That is a huge amount of additional amount of money every week. This extra money brings peace of mind and a new found freedom to our clients. Allowing people to switch their heating on in the winter or a cooling fan on in the summer, to pay for a taxi so they can visit their GP, before they become too ill and need a GP home visit or worse, hospitalisation. It brings in money that allows an older person to eat properly, replace worn out clothing or to help keep their car on the road so they can

get out and about, visiting friends etc. It helps relieve social isolation by providing money to buy a drink in the local pub or have a meal out with friends or make phone calls without the fear of not being able to pay the bill. To check if you might be entitled to extra benefits just call us on 01234 360510, we will do the rest. Nothing could be more simple. There is a very good chance that we would be able to help you. One of the main benefits is NOT means tested either.

We visited many older people every single week, who just cannot get out of their homes unassisted, to provide advice and support. Support that sometimes makes the difference between sleeping peacefully at night or sitting alone in a chair, with a cold cup of tea,

plagued by worry or fear. With more funding, we could easily treble the number, of course.

We provide secure long term employment to over 120 people throughout Bedfordshire. Many of our community workers have young families. Our employment terms, allow them to match work and family commitments. A proportion of our workers are past the historical retirement age, and through working for Age UK Bedfordshire have found a new important role in helping people in their community, and earning extra money for themselves and their families.

Every two hours of every day of every single week we see, in our local advice sessions older people who are worried and concerned. We provide advice and support that frees them of worry and fear.

We provide opportunities for dozens of volunteers, from all walks of life and of all age groups. We have retired school teachers, accountants, administrators and salespeople, who find new outlets for their vast wealth of knowledge and experience. We also have some volunteers who have found difficulty gaining employment, after long term illness. Their confidence shaken,

they slowly begin to realise that they do have valuable skills and eventually leave us and successfully get back into paid employment. Providing volunteering opportunities, provides a valuable service to the community in so many ways.

If you are interested in volunteering in our Bedford town centre office or being trained to assist older people in their own homes to complete Benefit Applications, or give advice on matters important to older people, please give us a call and we will send full details and an application form.

We provide free, impartial and comprehensive information and advice to 100 older people across the whole County every single week. Many of whom have severe memory loss, are carers for an older or often younger partner, have a physical disability, suffer from mental health issues, or are simply frightened out of their wits because they cannot afford to pay their heating bill, or their rent, or are being mistreated by family members or even suffering from institutional abuse. If you need help, don't call Ghost Busters, call **01234 360510** instead. We love to help people.



This is who we are and this is what we do, every week of the year. If you want to know more about our work, or support us by making a donation or volunteer for us, please call **01234 360510** and ask for Jo Rising.

Peace and love to you all

Bringing Compassionate *Care* Home



Personalised Care Plans:

Tailored to meet the unique needs of your loved one



Companionship:

From shared meals to walks in the park, we're there to provide company and support



Home Help:

Keeping the home environment safe, comfortable, and clean



Specialised Dementia Care:

Expertise in caring for individuals with dementia, providing them with the understanding and patience they need



Live-in Care:

A specially chosen Care Professional moving into their client's home providing companionship and practical support throughout the day

See how our care can make a *difference*

Get in touch today to find out more about our services and how we can help you feel more at ease.

At Home Instead, we see **every day** as a chance to make life better for the elderly

Our care is all about making your loved ones feel safe, happy, and looked after, just like **family** would

Our Care Professionals are your **friends** who make sure every need is met with a smile and every day is a good one

Home Instead Bedford
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Home Instead Luton & Central Bedfordshire
01582 742275

Margaret



As I look out of my window
I give a little smile,
To see the flowers in
my garden grow
They've not been
here for a while.
The weeds are gone,
the grass is cut,
(My gardener came today)
He's done such a lovely job!
... He came from Age UK



Now, earlier this morning
My home help lady was here,
We went for a short walk today,
Because the park is near!
She usually does my housework,
And we will chat with
a cup of tea,
I love to spend this time with her,
She's like a friend to me!



And when we got inside the park
We found a place to sit,
We watched the world pass us by
Just for a little bit!
The daffodils swayed in the wind,
The tulips joined in too,
The blossom in the trees is here,
The sunshine breaking through.
The people who were passing by
Seemed in a happy place,
Enjoying this moment, just like me,
In this glorious open space.



The birds, well they were singing,
The dogs were running wild,
The squirrels ran from tree to tree,
The ducks being fed by a child.
A group of boys played football,
Whilst their mums
took time to chat,
A couple were cuddling
on a bench,
(I remember days like that!)



My husband and I
would come here,
So, it was nice to reminisce,
The times we spent together here,
... Those times I really miss!
So, as I look out of my window,
I will give that little smile,
And watch the flowers in
my garden grow...
Because, they've not
been here for a while.

Helen Todd 25/02/2024

Great Days Out on the Marston Vale Line this Spring!
Trains run hourly Monday - Saturday including Bank Holidays



Full Timetable Running Again!
Hourly services Monday - Saturday including Bank Holidays

£1 Ticket Offer!
Any single journey just £1 for adults and 50p for children. Valid until 20th May. Railcard and Bedfordshire Bus Pass discounts apply

Bedford - Stroll along the Embankment & cruise the Great Ouse on the John Bunyan Boat. Discover parks, independent shops & cafes and the Higgins Bedford, John Bunyan Museum & Panacea Museum - **all free entry!**

Millbrook - Gateway to the spectacular Millennium Country Park at the heart of the Forest of Marston Vale. Pleasant walk or cycle ride on surfaced paths to the Forest Centre. Take your bike on the train – **no charge!** 10% discount for rail passengers in the Lakeside Café!

Bletchley - **Bletchley Park** is just a few minutes walk from the station. **2 for 1 entry for rail passengers!**



Ridgmont - Home of Ridgmont Station Heritage Centre. Enjoy afternoon tea in the original Ladies Waiting Room, a guided tour of the Museum & browse in the Gift Shop! Circular & linear walks available. **Free entry!**

Open Wednesday – Sunday 10:00 – 4:00.
 Booking recommended for Tea Room – call 01525 287120
 Groups welcome all year by prior arrangement.

01234 832645 stephens@bedsrcc.org.uk
www.marstonvalecommunityrail.org.uk

Find us! on Facebook [marstonvalecrp](https://www.facebook.com/marstonvalecrp)
 Follow us! on Twitter [marstonvalecrp](https://twitter.com/marstonvalecrp)





Discover the Marston Vale Line! (Bedford – Bletchley)

The Marston Vale Line offers an opportunity to view some beautiful countryside at your leisure and there is plenty of history along the way too! The Line is the oldest in Bedfordshire dating back to 1846.

A full timetable has resumed - an hourly service Monday – Saturday and Bank Holidays. 17 trains run daily in each direction on a largely clockface timetable.

A special ticket offer is running until 20th May 2024 to celebrate the resumption of the full service. A single journey between any two Marston Vale Line stations is just £1 for adults and 50p for children. Railcard and Bedfordshire Bus Pass discounts (half price travel after 10:00 on weekdays and all day on Saturday & Bank Holidays) apply.

All of the three trains running on the Line have recently been refurbished with features including an accessible toilet & baby changing facility, visual & audio announcements, and CCTV & USB charging points throughout. Each train also has dedicated space for wheelchairs, pushchairs and cycles.

There are lots of options for days out for all ages. Check out our advert for details. There are many more ideas at <https://www.marstonvalecommunityrail.org.uk/days-out> where you can listen to our audio journey too!

Ridgmont Station Heritage Centre is the Jewel in the Crown of the Line. Just 20 minutes by train from either Bedford or Bletchley. **Free entry!** Explore the Museum, enjoy breakfast, lunch or afternoon tea in the Tea Room (**booking recommended – call 01525 287120**) and buy a souvenir from the Gift Shop.

Cyclists & walkers are welcome. There are a variety of circular & linear walks & cycle rides from the Heritage Centre. School and adult groups are welcome all year by prior arrangement.

**For further information please e-mail
stephens@bedsrcc.org.uk or call 01234 832645.**

**Find us on Facebook!
Follow us on Twitter!**

** www.facebook.com/marstonvalecrp
 [@marstonvalecrp](https://twitter.com/marstonvalecrp)**

Keeping Cool in a Heatwave

High temperatures and humidity can present a risk to our health – especially as we get older. Here are some helpful tips on how to stay safe during hot weather.

When you're out and about

- Try to avoid spending too much time outside or exercising during the hottest part of the day (between 11am and 3pm). Try and keep in the shade when you can.
- Wear a sun hat and carry a bottle of water with you.

- Light-coloured, lightweight cotton clothing keeps you cooler.
- Keep an eye on the forecast for any hot weather warnings or unseasonably warm weather.
- Make sure you apply sunscreen. You should use at least SPF 15 and apply it regularly. Make sure you don't miss any spots – it can be easy to forget bald patches, for instance. UV levels can still be harmful when it's cloudy out, so be careful even when it's not sunny.
- Talk to your optician about prescription sunglasses. Make sure any sunglasses you wear have a CE mark and UV400 label.

When you're at home

- Keep blinds down and windows closed when it's cooler inside than out.
- A damp cloth or a splash of water on the back of your neck can be better at cooling you down than a fan.
- Most medication should be kept below 25°C – so it might be best to keep it in the fridge when it's really hot.
- Check your skin every few months and keep an eye on any moles. If you notice any changes to their colour or shape, or if they bleed, don't hesitate to go and talk to your doctor.
- Drink plenty to avoid getting dehydrated, but avoid alcohol, and keep eating even if you're not feeling too hungry if you get too hot.
- Watch out for signs of dehydration, such as confusion, cramps, dark urine and feeling weak. You don't have to feel thirsty to be dehydrated.
- Be careful of heat exhaustion – the symptoms include headaches, dizziness, nausea and a fast pulse. If you feel unwell, lie down in a cool room, drink plenty of water, and cool yourself with a splash of water.
- Heat exhaustion could lead to heatstroke. Symptoms include falling unconscious and seizures. Call 999 immediately if you think you or someone else might have heatstroke.
- If you know it's going to be particularly hot and you think you might struggle, ask someone to check on you. Equally, check on others you think might struggle in the heat.





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JACK'S ASHES

A new play by
MATT BANES & TIM MARRIOTT

"163 to win.
We've got this!"



★★★★★
Compelling, heartfelt
& humorous
The West Australian

★★★★★
Perfect balance of
humour & heart
South Western Times

THURSDAY 16TH MAY

Performed by **TIM MARRIOTT**
BBC's *The Brittas Empire*

CHRIS DEAN PRESENTS

THE SYD LAWRENCE ORCHESTRA

MAGIC
MILLER

SATURDAY 25TH MAY



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Green Fingered Grandma

Spring is in sight, which means it's time to prepare the garden for the season ahead.

There are plenty of jobs to keep you busy in March, from sowing and growing to pruning and tidying back shrubs and hedges. We've put together our list of different ways to prepare your garden for spring and summer.

Lawn care

- After a long autumn and winter season, it's a good chance that your lawn will need to be revived for spring.
- For established lawns, it is recommended to mow them during mild dry weather and when the grass has begun to grow. For the first cut of the year, raise the blades higher than your usual cutting height, approx 0.5cm.
 - It's always a good idea to straighten your lawn edges to ensure a neat and tidy look - use a half-moon iron or spade along with a straight board for a guide.
 - If you have any moss in your garden, use a spring-tined rake to remove this from the lawn - this will help the grass grow healthier.
 - Use a lawn fertiliser mix to give your lawn some much-needed nutrients - this can help make your grass greener and tougher for the season ahead.

Start on your summer flowers

Early spring is a great time to plant summer flowering bulbs. Plant tubers or frost tender bulbs as per the packet instructions - think dahlias, lilies, begonias and gladioli. March is also the perfect time to start sowing the bedding plants for your borders and summer pots. We particularly love sweet peas, delphiniums, sunflowers, marigolds, poppies, petunias, and cosmos – bringing

country cottage flowers to the garden and attracting pollinators. It's also the perfect time to plant any new roses, shrubs and climbers that you might want to introduce to the garden this year.

Start sowing your fruit and vegetables

As the weather starts to get warmer, it's time to begin sowing early crops of vegetables and fruit, so grab your gardening gloves and tool set!

- March is the perfect time for sowing tomatoes, aubergines, sweet peppers, and chillies in pots indoors.
- You can also start an early crop of carrots under fleece or cloches.
- Onions and shallots can be planted.
- As soon as the soil starts to warm up, you can sow parsnips – it might seem too early, but they have a long growing time and are slow to germinate.
- Now is the time to start planting early potatoes.
- Plant strawberries several weeks before the last frost – keep these in hanging baskets to protect them from slugs.
- In the greenhouse, you can start on lettuces, celery, French beans, peas, mangetouts and sweet peas – but keep these protected from hungry mice.



Invite the birds into the garden

Breeding season for birds has started, and it's important to keep putting out feed for garden birds. From seeds and fat balls to ensuring they have plenty of fresh drinking water, it's a great way to encourage nature into the garden. Ensure you protect flowers and vegetable crops with netting, as they might pinch these instead.





Prune climbing and bush roses

February or March is the best time to prune most roses, however, check your rose species for more specific timing. Use secateurs to make clean cuts, clearing dead or diseased stems and removing any poorly flowering or old stubs that are not producing new shoots. Ensure that your cuts are no more than 5mm above a bud. Top Tip: Take particular care to slope your cuts downwards away from buds, as this ensures water doesn't collect on the bud.



Have a general tidy-up

- Sweep up any fallen leaves left over from autumn and add these to your compost pile.
- Tidy any weeds that might have germinated - the more you remove now, the less you'll have to do during spring and summer.
- Repair any broken flower beds and borders.
- Declutter and clean your shed and greenhouse - keep everything neatly organised. It makes life much easier during spring and summer. Hang up your garden accessories somewhere that you have easy access to.

Fund Raiser thank you

Age UK Bedfordshire would like to thank Amelia Pryor for her fund raising. Amelia aged 8, daughter of one of our staff members, raised an impressive £30 by selling cakes at her school and also gained the Brownies 'I've been fund raising' badge. Well done Amelia!

To everyone at Age UK Bedfordshire

I have raised £30 for you by selling cakes at school. Thank you for helping older people and paying my mummy so she can buy me sweets.

Amelia wrote a lovely letter to Age UK Bedfordshire to accompany the donation:

Amelia visited the Age UK Bedfordshire office to present her fund raising donation.

Dates for Your Diary



Maundy Thursday
28th March

Good Friday
29th March

Easter Sunday
31st March

Easter Monday
1 April

St Georges Day
23 April

May Bank Holiday
6 May

Spring Bank Holiday
27 May (Whitsun)

Fathers Day
16 June

Summer Solstice (Longest Day)
20 June

Summer Bank Holiday
26 August

British Summer Time Ends
27 October (clocks go back one hour)

Halloween
31 October

All Saints Day
1 November

Guy Fawkes Night (Bonfire Night)
5 November

Armistice Day
11 November

Remembrance Sunday
10 November

Winter Solstice (Shortest Day)
21 December

Christmas Eve
24 December

Christmas Day
25 December

Boxing Day
26 December

New Years Eve
31 December

Caring for Carers

If you look after a partner, relative or friend who's disabled or ill due to physical or mental health, you're a carer – even if you don't think of yourself as one. There is emotional, practical and financial support available.

Financial support for carers

Caring for someone can lead to money worries, especially if your caring role means you have to give up work. But there may be financial support available to help you and put your mind at ease.

Can I get help from my local council?

You're entitled to a free carer's assessment from your local council. Following the assessment, the council then decides whether you're eligible for help. They may decide that you're eligible for a carer's personal budget to help you with your caring role.

To get started, ask your local council for a carer's assessment.

Am I entitled to any benefits?

Carer's Allowance is the main welfare benefit to help carers, worth £81.90 per week (April 2024). To be eligible for Carer's Allowance, you must:

- spend at least 35 hours per week caring for someone, whether or not you live with them
- care for someone who receives the higher-rate or middle-rate care component of Disability Living Allowance, either rate of Personal Independence Payment daily living component, any rate of Attendance Allowance, or another relevant benefit
- not be in full-time education or earning more than £139 a week (after tax and expenses)

How do I claim Carer's Allowance?

There are a couple of ways to make a Carer's Allowance claim. You can:

- call the Carer's Allowance helpline on **0800 731 0297**
- claim online via GOV.UK

After you submit your claim, you'll receive a decision in writing that will tell you if you have been awarded Carer's Allowance and from what date.

Looking after yourself as a carer

Over time, caring can really take its toll. It's vital that you take time to look after yourself as well as the person you care for – not just so you can carry on caring, but so you have the energy to keep doing the things you enjoy.

Speak to your GP

If you're finding caring tiring or difficult, it might help to tell your GP you're a carer and discuss the impact that this is having on your health. They'll be able to offer you advice and support.

You may also be entitled to additional health services – such as a free annual flu jab – if the person you care for has a serious or ongoing health problem.

Arrange some respite care

Respite care provides care and support for the person you care for whilst giving you a much-needed break from caring. Respite care might involve at-home care for the person you care for over an afternoon or taking them to an activity centre for a day.

Respite care: having a break from caring

It's important to take a break from care if you need one. This is known as respite care – find out how you arrange respite care and how it may affect your benefits.

How do I arrange respite care?

In some areas, respite care is provided as a result of your carer's assessment, while in

Stay healthy and well

Although it can be difficult, try to make sure that you eat a healthy diet. If you're struggling to eat enough, try eating something that you fancy – it's better to eat something, rather than nothing.

Staying active and getting enough sleep are also important parts of staying healthy and well – they help your mind as well as your body.

others it's provided through a needs assessment for the person you look after. If your assessment or the assessment for the person you care for shows you need respite care, the local council should provide it.

You might be able to get financial support from the council to

What is respite care?

Respite care is the term used for services that enable you to take a break from caring. A respite care service is provided to the person you care for, to temporarily replace the care you would otherwise give them.

Respite care can come in many forms. What works best will depend on your circumstances and those of the

person you care for. It might be a home care service for the person you care for, for example to allow you to go out in the evening, or a temporary stay in a care home to enable you to take a longer break, such as a holiday. Arrangements could be made for the person you care for to attend an activity group or day centre once a week, to give you a regular break from caring.

help you take a break, but respite services are means-tested so you or the person you care for may have to contribute towards the cost.

Will a break from caring affect my benefits?

If you have time off from caring, there are special rules to decide whether you'll continue to receive Carer's Allowance. The basic rule is that you can continue to receive your Carer's Allowance for up to four weeks in any six-month period if you have a break from caring.

However, the rules are complicated, so you should get specialist advice from the Carer's Allowance Unit.

If you're receiving any other benefits which include extra amounts for caring, these may be affected if you have a break from caring.

What to do when your caring role changes or ends

If your caring role changes or ends, you may experience many different emotions. There may also be some practical and financial changes that you need to consider.

If the person you care for needs more help Getting more help at home

If the condition of the person you've been caring for deteriorates and you're no longer able to provide all the care that they need, then it's time to think about arranging a different system of care.

The person you look after may require more support than you have the time or energy

to give. Ask their local social services department to assess, or reassess, their care needs.

Their changing health needs may entitle them to more services and support at home than before. Get a carer's assessment for yourself too, as you may be entitled to extra support.

Thinking about moving

If the person you care for needs more intensive care, they may need to consider the possibility of moving into sheltered housing or a care home.

This is a big decision and you should both take the time to look at all the options available to you. Think about other types of housing that may be suitable, such as extra-care sheltered housing.

Reach out and ask for help

Don't feel like you need to do everything yourself. If you have relatives who live nearby, try to be honest with them if you need help or want to share the caring responsibility.

You're entitled to a carer's assessment from your local council, too – this can help identify support available for you to help you in your caring role.

Looking after yourself

If the person you cared for has moved into a care home this may have been a difficult decision, and perhaps you feel you've let down the person you were looking after. Remember, you're only human and there are limits to the care you can provide at home.

Looking after your money

If you find you're still spending a lot of time caring for the person, you may still be entitled to a carer's assessment. You also still have the right to request flexible working.

Once the person you care for stops getting disability benefits (usually four weeks after they move into the care home), you'll no longer be entitled to Carer's Allowance.

If you received a carer premium or addition with means-tested benefits, this will continue for an extra eight weeks after your Carer's Allowance stops.

This could be a good time to get a benefits check.

Find time for yourself

Doing something enjoyable or relaxing can be very helpful when you have a caring responsibility.

If you're able to, make time for something like an exercise group or an evening class. Taking part in an activity you enjoy will give you the opportunity to do something for yourself – it's important that you have your

own interests and make time to pursue them where you can.

Your local library may provide information about social activities, events, education and courses.

But even if you don't have the time for an activity or class, simply taking ten minutes whenever you can to have a cup of tea or get some fresh air can really help.





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Chicken Parmesan

serves 4

Ingredients

- 2 large, skinless chicken breasts, halved through the middle
- 2 eggs, beaten
- 75g breadcrumb
- 75g parmesan, grated
- 1 tbsp olive oil
- 2 garlic cloves, crushed
- half a 690ml jar passata
- 1 tsp caster sugar
- 1 tsp dried oregano
- half a 125g ball light mozzarella, torn

Method

1. Halve 2 large skinless chicken breasts through the middle then place the 4 pieces between cling film sheets and bash out with a rolling pin until they are the thickness of a £1 coin.
2. Dip in 2 beaten eggs, then 75g breadcrumbs, mixed with half of the 75g grated parmesan. Set aside on a plate in the fridge while you make the sauce.
3. Heat 1 tbsp olive oil and cook 2 crushed garlic cloves for 1 min, then tip in half a 690ml jar passata, 1 tsp caster sugar and 1 tsp dried oregano. Season and simmer for 5-10 mins.
4. Heat grill to High and cook the chicken for 5 mins each side, then remove.
5. Pour the tomato sauce into a shallow ovenproof dish and top with the chicken.
6. Scatter over torn pieces of half a 125g ball light mozzarella, and the remaining grated parmesan and grill for 3-4 mins until the cheese has melted and the sauce is bubbling.

Serve with vegetables or salad and some pasta or potatoes.



Berry Oat Crumble Tart

Ingredients

- 150g plain flour
- 120g oats
- 120g caster sugar
- ½ tsp baking powder
- 150g cold butter, grated
- 1 tsp vanilla extract
- 125g raspberries
- 125g blackberries, large ones halved
- 125g blueberries
- 1 lemon, zested
- 2 tbsp cornflour

Method

1. Preheat your oven gas 4, 180°C, fan 160°C. Grease a 23cm loose bottom cake tin with butter.
2. In a large bowl, mix together the flour, oats, caster sugar and baking powder until well combined. Add the butter and rub together with your finger until you have a coarse lumpy crumb.
3. Set 175g of the mixture aside for the topping and firmly push the remaining crumb evenly into the prepared loose bottom cake tin to form an even base.
4. In a bowl, toss together the raspberries, blackberries, blueberries, lemon zest and cornflour until well coated, and spoon evenly over the crust.
5. Scatter the reserved crust loosely over the top of the berries, leaving gaps for the berries to bubble through. Bake for 40 mins until golden and crisp. Allow to cool completely before removing from the tin and cutting into slices.

Serve with vanilla ice cream or fresh cream.

Feeling Lonely? Feeling low Or worried?

These feelings are not just a normal part of ageing.

We all feel down from time to time, no matter our age. But when these feelings are persistent, talking to someone can be helpful. If you're feeling low, anxious or just not your usual self Bedfordshire NHS Talking Therapies can help. You can seek advice from your doctor or self-refer to Bedfordshire Talking Therapies on: [01234 880400](tel:01234880400) or visit our website: www.elft.nhs.uk/bedfordshire-talking-therapies



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Charlie Chuckles

Q. A man is walking in the desert with his horse and his dog when the dog says, "I can't do this. I need water."

The man says, "I didn't know dogs could talk."

A. The horse says, "Me neither!"

Q. Why can't you hear a pterodactyl go to the toilet?

A. Because the "P" is silent!

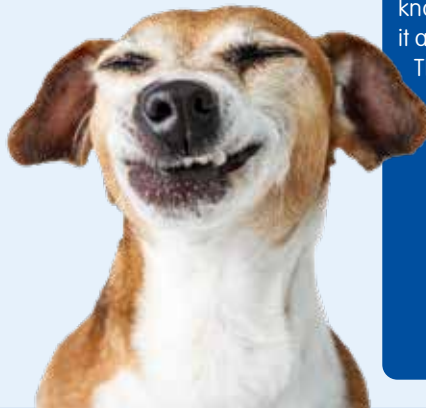
Q. Why should you have a dog if you also have a teenager?

A. So someone in the house is happy to see you.

Did you hear about the dyslexic man walks into a bra?

I couldn't believe that the motorway police called my dad a thief.

But when I got home, all the signs were there.



A man is sitting at home when he hears a knock at the door. He opens the door and sees a snail on the step. He picks up the snail and throws it as far as he can.

A year later, there's another knock at the door. He opens it and sees the same snail.

The snail says, "What was that all about?"

My wife and I took a long, leisurely drive out to the country and pulled over to fill up our car's fuel tank and tyres. She was surprised to see that the station had a fee to fill the tyres and asked me, "Why in the world do they charge for AIR?!" I responded, "Inflation."

Doctor, Doctor, I can't stop singing the 'Green Green Grass of Home'. He said: 'That sounds like Tom Jones syndrome'. 'Is it common?' I asked. 'It's not unusual' he replied.

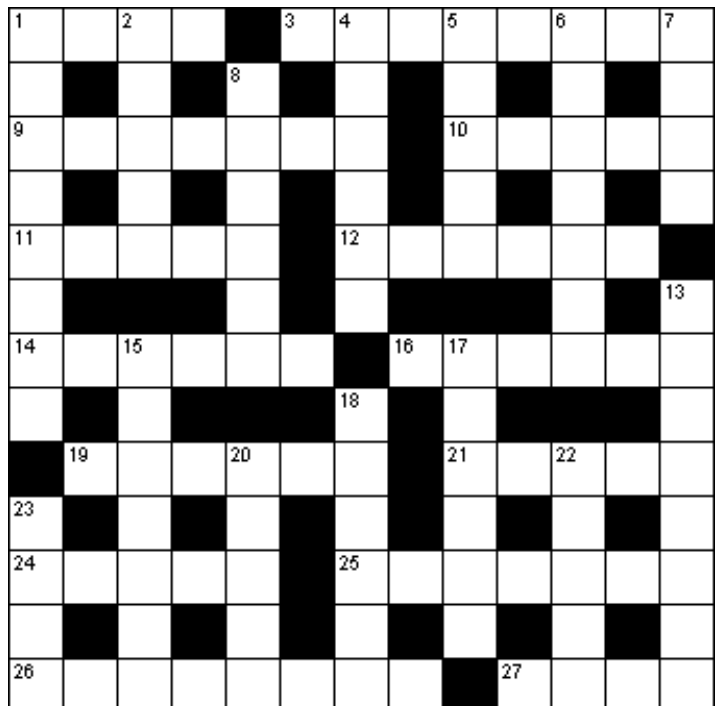
Crossword

Across

- 1 -- Sharif, film star (4)
- 3 Seen briefly (8)
- 9 Seer (7)
- 10 Shakespearean lover (5)
- 11 Settees (5)
- 12 Garb (6)
- 14 Equipment (6)
- 16 Disappear (6)
- 19 Language of the Middle East (6)
- 21 Bart Simpson's father (5)
- 24 Colour of military uniforms (5)
- 25 Contrition (7)
- 26 Fiddle-faddle (8)
- 27 In those days (4)

Down

- 1 Contrary (8)
- 2 Distant in manner (5)
- 4 Deadly (6)
- 5 Deserve (5)
- 6 Japanese warrior (7)
- 7 Let fall (4)
- 8 Sculptor's tool (6)
- 13 Baker's dozen (8)
- 15 Sure (7)
- 17 In one's own house (2,4)
- 18 Nuts from an oak tree (6)
- 20 Newly-married woman (5)
- 22 Merriment (5)
- 23 Related (4)





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Crossword Answers



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