

Speaking with one voice for all carers in Wigan borough

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WLCC continuing to support you during lockdown

As we enter this national lockdown, we want to reassure you that our services to carers will continue.

Following the recent government announcement, a national lockdown came into effect in Wigan borough and across the rest of the country on 5th January 2021.

In line with government and Wigan Public Health guidance and consultation, we are pleased to say that we are continuing to provide vital support to carers. Our aim at Wigan and Leigh Carers Centre is to provide the best service possible as well as ensuring our carers and staff are as safe as possible. Our building and services remain open to carers (by appointment only) for assessments, form filling and support sessions.

Our event and respite sessions, also remain in operation under government guidelines on numbers attending and are subject to prior booking.

Advice and support, by phone, email, online or by appointment. Carers Assessments, Welfare Support, Befriending plus much more remains available

Online; access to online activities, including our carer's socials and coffee mornings which now meet regularly on Zoom, providing a great opportunity for a friendly chat and virtual cuppa.

Register with us, we encourage you to register with Wigan and Leigh Carers Centre so you can access our services and receive support.

We look forward to hearing from you as we welcome families getting in touch to catch up through phone calls, emails and social media.

One outcome of the pandemic is an increase in the number of people who now have a caring role. If you're new to caring in Wigan (or you know someone who is), please be sure to get in touch. We are here to support all of Wigan's young and adult carers from the age of five upwards. Give us a call on 01942 705959 for advice or information or take a look at our events to see how they might help you.

If there are unpaid carers struggling out there, please reach out. You are not alone. Wigan and Leigh Carers Centre are very much still here for you.

Parent Carers Support Group launches

We are happy to announce that we will be starting a new group in the new year, our Parent Carers Support Group. This group will be a monthly get together for our parent carers to come together and support each other with all aspects and the challenges that come with caring for a child. To register your interest please call the centre on 01942 705959 and ask for Catherine Leyland or Jill Woosey our Carers' Case Officers who will contact you with further details. As parent carers, the knowledge we can share and also learn from other parent carers is invaluable. We can support each other and have tea, coffee and treats whilst doing so. We really look forward to hearing from you.



CarerSmart discount scheme

Do you know about the CarerSmart club available with the Carers Trust?

The free CarerSmart discount club offers you cash back, reductions, discounts and benefits on insurance, travel and high street shops and much more.

Joining is easy and free, once you're a member, you can benefit from a wide range of offers including:

- Cash back on shopping from numerous high street retailers.
- Best rates from energy providers.
- Reductions on insurance renewals.
- Discounts on holidays and travel arrangements.
- Reduced price lifestyle activities.
- Free legal advice services.

Find out more here: www.carers.org/grants-and-discounts/carersmart.



Struggling with IT? Try TechMates

TechMates is a free programme which connects Wigan residents with local digital mentors who can provide relaxed, friendly, one-to-one support over the phone. It is run by volunteers and council staff and was introduced in response to the covid 19 pandemic to prevent isolation for more vulnerable residents. Digital technology has become an essential part of everyday life, allowing us to stay in touch with loved ones, shop online, browse the internet, and use online banking. However, the more vulnerable and less digitally aware are being left behind.

TechMates mentors can help people:

- Learn how to use their device.
- Connect with family and friends through video conferencing.
- Build confidence shopping online.
- Keep safe online.
- And much more.



The programme can be tailor-made to help people gain the skills that really matter to them. It's vital that all carers have access to the support they need to embrace the power of digital in their everyday life.

Wigan borough residents can request help from TechMates via the website. If anyone needs help, the request form can be filled in on someone else's behalf as well.

To find out more visit: www.wigan.gov.uk/council/digital-wigan/index.aspx.

WLCC team attain RSPH certification

Wigan and Leigh Carers Centre were proud to present certificates of achievement to staff and volunteers.

Nicola, Danielle, Debbie and Norman all received their Royal Society for Public Health (RSPH) Level Two Award in Understanding Health Improvement, and are seen here being presented by WLCC Chief Officer, Angela Allison.



The aim of the qualification is to provide candidates with an understanding of the principles of promoting health and wellbeing and enable them to direct individuals towards further practical support in their efforts to attain a healthier lifestyle.

We also wish to congratulate Louise, Sandra and Ellan who achieved the same qualification.

Well done to you all, fantastic to see the team actively involved in improving the health of the working population in our community.

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Future training and events – Carers' survey

At Wigan and Leigh Carers Centre we want to facilitate greater levels of independence and choice which in turn would be of value to you and those you care for.

In order to provide the most relevant training and support to carers we would like to know what activities will benefit you through improved health and wellbeing.

We are therefore carrying out a brief survey to give you greater choice and control in important areas of your life such as health, access to support and the ability to tap into events and activities alongside your caring role.

To complete the survey please visit the News section of our website www.wlcccarers.com/news.



A social focus to activities at the start of 2021

This year Wigan and Leigh Carers Centre would like to start 2021 by offering extra social activities at the centre for carers to have more time to relax and get together to talk, these are in addition to our usual weekly coffee mornings on Mondays. A full training programme will start again in February and there will be a number of activities taking place out of the centre depending on restrictions.

Activities and social events for January 2021

- **Carers socials** Tuesdays and Fridays 10.00am-12.00pm and 1.00-3.00pm
- **Brand new Parent Carer group** Thursday 14th January 10.00-11.00am
- **Latin line dancing** Three week programme Thursdays 21st and 28th January, 4th February 10.00-11.00am
- **Mindfulness walks** Tuesday 19th January Borsdane Woods 10.30am, 26th January Haigh Hall, 10.00am

New Training for February includes: Beginner's guide to Zoom, RSPH Understanding Health Improvement Level Two Award and new dementia themed activity programme for carers and the person that they care for 'living with dementia'.

Coronavirus transport update

Greater Manchester is in national lockdown. For travel, this means that:

- You must stay at home and only leave the house for essential purposes, such as work, caring responsibilities, worship, shopping for essential items or exercise.
- If you do need to travel, stay local – avoid travelling outside the part of Greater Manchester where you live.
- Reduce the number of journeys you make and walk or cycle if you can.
- If you need to use public transport, you must wear a face covering unless exempt and follow guidelines – keep your distance from others, clean your hands frequently and use contactless payment if possible.
- If you are using public transport, plan ahead, allow extra time for your journey, consider travelling outside peak times and using quieter routes.
- Avoid car sharing with anyone from outside your household or support bubble.

If you're clinically extremely vulnerable, please check **latest government guidance**.



Final round of funding to access training February 2021

Wigan and Leigh Carers Centre in partnership with Wigan Council are able to provide funding of up to £200 for carers to access training or to pay towards training and up to £1,500 for community groups wishing to offer training for unpaid carers. Apply by 4.30pm on Thursday 4th February to dionne@wlcccarers.com. If you need support to complete the form or if you have any queries please telephone 01942 705959 and ask to speak to Dionne. Previous community group applications approved from the training grant recently include, reiki level 1, art workshops, accredited first aid training and stress management. Individual applications from carers awarded a training grant include funding towards advanced mindfulness training and print screen training course.

To obtain the relevant forms please visit www.wlcccarers.com/training-grant-information/.

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Carers and covid vaccination

We join Carers Trust, Carers UK and other carer organisations in welcoming the inclusion of unpaid carers in new covid vaccination advice, given by the government on 30th December 2020.

Published by the government's 'Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation', the guidance clarifies that **unpaid carers are one of the priority groups** for the Covid19 vaccine.

It recommends that carers who are in receipt of Carer's Allowance or are the main carer for an elderly or disabled person whose welfare may be at risk if the carer contracted covid, should be included in the Priority 6 category, alongside people with underlying health conditions. (Category 6 is classed as all individuals aged 16 years to 64 years with underlying health conditions which put them at moderate risk of serious disease and mortality).

What's important now is to ensure your GP knows you are a carer. You may want to get in touch with them to make sure you are registered. Some GP's have a form you can complete online, alternatively contact your surgery by telephone or email.



Volunteer and make a huge difference to carers

A small amount of time can make a real difference to the lives of young and adult carers in Wigan.

Volunteering with Wigan and Leigh Carers Centre provides a great opportunity to contribute in a positive way to carer's lives and for you to gain new skills and experience. Our volunteers are a huge part of the team, we simply couldn't do what we do without them.

The dedicated team of volunteers help to make telephone befriending calls, support groups or activities, deliver counselling, assist with IT or admin, plus much more.

We are always looking for new volunteers to join our friendly team, so if you would like to use your spare time in a rewarding way and make a difference to carer's lives, please contact Catherine Ellis, Volunteer and Befriending Coordinator on 01942 705959 or email catherine@wlcccarers.com.



Goodbye to Danielle

We recently said a fond farewell to Danielle, our fantastic social work student who has been on placement with Wigan and Leigh Carers Centre.

Danielle is studying for her Masters in the challenging and rewarding field of social work at Edge Hill University.

Whilst she has been on placement with WLCC she has delivered one-to-one support to carers, facilitated respite events for young carers, established a bereavement pathway and developed a student handbook - all throughout a global pandemic.

Chief Officer, Angela Allison says "Danielle has been an inspiration and brought youth, innovation and aspiration to the WLCC team. She will be an asset to any organisation in the future and I'd be delighted to welcome her to Team WLCC if the opportunity arose."

Training and Support Officer, Dionne Carroll says "It has been an absolute pleasure supporting Danielle whilst she has been with us on placement. She is an incredibly adaptable, hardworking and organised individual. I have enjoyed getting to know her and she has completed all the projects that she has been given with enthusiasm. I have no doubt that she will become an outstanding social worker and make a positive, significant difference to the lives of the people that she supports."

Danielle, we will all miss the fun-loving personality, and compassion and empathy you have brought to our team and the carers we support. Thank you and all the very best.



Young carers

Westerleigh Group support Young Carers

Howe Bridge Crematorium operated by the Westerleigh Group, have made a very generous donation of £500 to Wigan and Leigh Carers Centre #YoungCarers, raised through their metal recycling scheme.

The company has a strong ethos of supporting local people and communities wherever possible and the kind support to WLCC Young Carers is but one example of the organisation's commitment to the community.

With the consent of families, metals recovered during cremation are recycled and any money raised at each of the 34 crematoria and cemeteries nationwide are used to support local charitable causes.

Lindsey Edwardson, manager at Howe Bridge Crematorium said: **"We at Howe Bridge are honoured to be able to donate £500 to support Wigan and Leigh Young Carers, who do such fantastic work in the community to support children, young adults and their families. We hope our donation will help the Charity to continue to do its vital work."**

Peter Wild from Wigan and Leigh Young Carers met with Lindsey to officially receive the cheque and explain more about the work being done by our charity.

Peter said, **"We're hugely grateful for this wonderful support, particularly in these challenging times. It's fantastic that they recognise the positive work that we do in the community to help improve lives of young carers."**



Thank you so much to Lindsey and everyone at Howe Bridge Crematorium and Westerleigh Group for your continued support.

Young carer's film nights

In the weeks leading up to Christmas, Wigan and Leigh Carers Centre were delighted to host a number of Christmas Movie and Pizza Nights for young carers.

The young people that attended the event enjoyed a lovely evening, relaxing and watching a film whilst eating delicious pizza and treats.



Claire Thorpe, Support Worker for Young Carers says "they were such great events, to add a little festive cheer during these tough times. Young carer events help to build new friendships, develop skills and allow young carers to feel rested and relaxed. Young carers tell us they enjoy being with other young people in similar caring roles, knowing they're not alone and their voices are heard."

Wigan and Leigh Carers Centre are thrilled to hear such great feedback from the event and look forward to hosting new and exciting opportunities for young carers in the near future.

To find out about the range of services available to young carers please contact us on 01942 705959.

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Wigan and Leigh Carers' Survey: We value your views

We value the important role carers of all ages play in the lives of others and we recognise carers are a vital source of information about the services they require to assist in their caring role.

As a result we are pleased to announce we are conducting a survey so we can evaluate the delivery of our services and continue to learn from the experiences of carers in Wigan borough.

For those who complete the survey, there is the opportunity to win a £50 Amazon voucher as a thank you for sharing your views.

To complete the survey please visit the News page on our website: www.wlcccarers.com/news.



Why not volunteer for us?

To discuss our volunteering opportunities contact catherine@wlcccarers.com or ring 01942 705959.

Help and support with **food and medical supplies** for anyone living in Greater Manchester.



Bolton	01204 337 221	Mon to Fri: 8.30am – 5.30pm, Saturday: 9am – 1.30pm
Bury	0161 253 5353	Monday to Friday: 9am – 5pm
Manchester	0800 234 6123	Monday to Friday: 9am – 5pm, Saturday: 10am – 2pm
Oldham	0161 770 7007	Monday to Friday: 9am – 5pm
Rochdale	01706 923685	Monday to Friday: 9am – 5pm
Salford	0800 952 1000	Monday to Friday: 8.30am – 6pm Saturday: 9am – 1pm
Stockport	0161 217 6046	Mon to Thu 9am – 5pm Friday 9am – 4.30pm
Tameside	0161 342 8355	Mon to Wed: 8am – 5pm, Thursday: 8am – 4.30pm, Friday: 8.30am – 4pm
Trafford	0300 330 9073	Monday to Friday: 8.30am – 5.30pm
Wigan	01942 489018	Mon to Fri: 9am – 5pm, Sat and Sun: 9am – 12 noon

Greater Manchester Textphone 07860 022876

Messages will be responded to by the next working day

I AM A CARER



Carer identification letter

Do you have any difficulties 'proving' your identity as a carer? Some people are worried about having to prove they are a carer during the pandemic in order to travel and demonstrate they are exempt from certain restrictions.

If you have experienced any difficulties providing support to the person you care for, we can help.

Working with the government and the NHS, Wigan and Leigh Carers Centre have created a Carer Identification Letter for our registered carers to prove they are carers. It can be used in settings such as shops, hospitals or when travelling, and explains that you are a carer, and why the person you care for needs your essential support.

If you would like a Carer Identification Letter please contact us on 01942 705959. Alternatively, email us at info@wlcccarers.com.

Our 24/7 Helpline



You can now call the number below, free of charge.

The helpline is open every day, 24 hours a day.

0800 953 0285

We are here to help you during this tough time - please reach out to us if you need us.

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