**Are You a Carer?**

If you give unpaid help and support to a family member, friend or neighbour who would not be able to manage without you, you are a Carer. The person you look after may have a physical or learning disability, be ill or frail, have mental health problems or misuse drugs or alcohol. They may be a child, partner, parent, friend, or neighbour, and they might live with you or elsewhere. As a carer it is important to ensure your good health and wellbeing too

**Being a carer is an important and valued role in the community.**

The surgery appreciate that caring can be up to a 24 hour, 7 day a week responsibility and it can take a great toll on your own health because it is can be very demanding and isolating. Whatever the situation **Central Surgery wants to ensure they look after your health and wellbeing and it is important that you make your GP, and members of practice staff aware of your situation so they can give you the support you need**. The practice will register your being a carer on your notes and, if the person you care for is also a patient at our surgery, on their notes too. There are forms in reception you can use to register as a Carer. These are within a Carers Welcome Pack.

The surgery has a **Carers Champion** team who is there to support you with accurate information, flexible appointments, check-ups for your own health, and prescriptions. You are entitled to an annual health checks.

They can provide a listening ear and additional support and information on respite care and your entitlement to benefits by referring you to other voluntary organisation who support carers, including the main county carer’s Charity **Carers in Hertfordshire**  who can offer you:

A ‘**Carers Assessment**’ – by Health and Social Care – the Carer Champion/Practice staff would refer you to Carers in Hertfordshire who would help you with this. Other support from this Charity includes:

**Information and Advice:**

Whether you need help understanding benefits or accessing services, or longer term advice to support you in your caring role, Carers in Hertfordshire , Carer Support Advisors can be reached on **01992 586969**, email them at contact@carersinherts.org.uk or visit their website [www.carersinherts.org.uk](http://www.carersinherts.org.uk). They offer a Carer Planning service – talking to you about what would help you the most, which may include getting a break. They offer specific support for people caring for those with dementia, drug and alcohol issues, mental health problems, learning disabilities, as well as parent and young carers.

**Support Groups:**

There are several Carers in Hertfordshire support groups in the County. Having the time and space to talk to other people who look after someone and understand what you are going through can help you feel less isolated, gather useful information and have some time to yourself to relax and chat.

Carers in Hertfordshire have a group in **Bishops Stortford called the Carers Hub**. They meet on the first Tuesday of each month at 10.30am in the Methodist Church, Wesley Hall, South Street. There are speakers, coffee and friendly get together chat. If you are interested to learn more contact them on the email or website addresses above or their phone number.

**Caring with Confidence:**

These are free training courses for carers, covering all aspects of caring, including dealing with stress and emotions, balancing caring with a life of your own and maximising your income whilst caring. There are special courses for those caring for people with dementia.

Not only are these courses practical and informative, they are a great place to meet others in the same situation as you, where you can share experiences.

**Learning and leisure:**

Various learning and leisure opportunities are regularly offered in Bishops Stortford, but suggestions for specific courses are welcomed either directly, or via the Bishops Stortford Hub.

**Young Carers:**

Young people who help look after someone in their family and take on responsibilities normally handled by an adult. Carers in Hertfordshire’s **Young Carers Service** supports carers, aged 8-18, and their families to make sure their caring responsibilities don’t stop them from having the same opportunities, and a social life, that other young people enjoy. Further information is available on their website:  [www.ycih.org](http://www.ycih.org/).

**Having a voice:**

Carers in Hertfordshire run local and county events and forums where you can have your say on local services, what’s working and what needs improving and give your views to decision makers in Health and Social Care. Coming together makes the voice of carers stronger and helps make real changes to services.

To register as a carer please either contact the Surgery and ask to speak to Sharon or click on the following link and enter your details.

https://www.centralsurgerysawbo.nhs.uk/your-record/keep-us-up-to-date/register-as-a-carer-form/