

Summer Wellness Guide for Carers 2023

Shropshire Carers Support Team



To help you through the summer months, we have created a wellness guide, so you have information at your fingertips!

Cost of Living Support

With energy bills and other costs of living rising steeply, households are feeling increasing financial pressures.

To make it easier for people to find out about the range of help available, please click [here](#) for information and help available from Shropshire Council and partner organisations.

Visit Martin Lewis - Cost of living payments 2023/2024 - [Money Saving Expert](#) to see if you qualify and understand the choices open to us.

If you are struggling to make ends meet, there is advice available to you.

Read [Worried about money?](#) to find out more about some options that may be available to you. Link contains various links to useful information.

- Shropshire Council Local Support and Prevention fund helps vulnerable people who are facing crisis or who may need to stay independent in the community. It is there to support short-term immediate needs – it is not a cash scheme; cash would only be given if there was no other way of meeting need. Read information on eligibility and how to apply [here](#)
 - [Shropshire Larder](#) provides a wide range of information and advice on maximising income, budgeting and debts and household bills.
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Keeping Safe & Well



Plan Ahead

It's that time of the year, Summer is (almost) in the air, so time to prepare for when the hot weather hits us by making sure it does not harm us and those around us.

The heat runs a risk of affecting anyone, but some people are more vulnerable to serious harm, those to consider are:

- Older people, especially over 75's.
- People who have serious health conditions, long term illness.
- People who live on their own or in a care home.
- People whose jobs mean they spend a lot of time outside.
- People who live-in high-rise flats.
- People who are homeless.
- People who find it hard to keep cool, such as babies and young people, bed bound or those with addictions.

It is important to think about what we can do to help eliminate risks, such as:

Stay Hydrated

- Drink plenty of fluids. If anyone struggles to drink due to nausea/illness, try drinking small sips at a time and gradually drink more. To encourage fluid intake, try to make drinking a social occasion such as 'having a cuppa'. Offer foods with higher water contents like soups, fruits such as melon, ice cream. A pharmacist will help with signs of dehydration and be able to recommend appropriate solutions and advice.

Stay Cool

- Stay indoors especially during the hottest times of the day – in the UK that's 11am to 3pm.
- Keep homes cool by closing curtains in rooms that face the sun. Consider moving to a cooler room, especially for sleeping.
- Turn off central heating, try to get air flowing through by opening windows when it is cooler.
- Check fridges and freezers are working correctly.
- Turn off electrical appliances when not in use as they generate heat.
- Never leave anyone in a parked vehicle with doors and windows closed.
- Walk in the shade. Look for bench under a tree in parks for some respite, or head for a café to cool down.
- Avoid physical exertion during the hottest times. If you can't avoid strenuous activity outdoors, try and limit to cooler parts of the day such as early morning or evening.
- Check latest weather forecasts either by radio, TV, [mobile app](#) or [website](#).
- Take fluids with you on all journeys.
- Take a cool shower/bath or body wash. Apply a damp cloth to your neck and other pressure points on your body.
- Look out for heat related illness such as heat exhaustion or heatstroke. For NHS information on how to notice the signs and where to get help, please click [Here](#)
- The Heat-Health Alert Service forewarns of periods of high temperatures – for information visit: [Met Office Heat Health Watch](#)

- Get help if you have any concerns by contacting your GP or NHS 111 for advice or **in an emergency call 999 for an ambulance.**

Stay Protected

- Wear a large, brimmed hat and cover up with suitable clothing and sunglasses. Keep lightweight jackets or scarves to hand so you're able to cover up areas of skin that is starting to feel warm or look red.
- Lots of us like to 'potter' in the garden when the sun is shining, therefore check gardens for uneven paths/potential hazards. You could organise for an alarm to available to vulnerable people to use to call for help if they do fall and can't get back up.
- Use a high factor sunscreen. Keep sunburn remedies to hand, pharmacies stock many products including 'natural' remedies that work well.
- NHS website advises the following for factor sunscreen (SPF):
 - o When buying sunscreen, the label should have a sun protection factor of at least 30 to protect against UVB and at least 4-start UVA protection. Ensure the sunscreen is not past the expiry date. For full information, including how to apply sunscreen, please click [Here](#)
- Ensure medication is stored at the correct temperature (read the storage instructions on the packaging).
- If you have lots of freckles or moles the risk of skin cancer is higher than average – take extra care and cover them up!

Vitamin D

- One of the most essential vitamins for helping maintain good health. Vitamin D helps our body absorb calcium to strengthen our bones, helps our immune system amongst other boosts.
- Spending time outside soaking up some Vitamin D stimulates your skin cells – just 15 minutes outside each day gives us the sunshine we need to reap the benefits.

Stay Active

- Whilst we need to mitigate health risks during hot summers, it is still important to remember physical activity helps to promote and boost our mental health, fight obesity, and enhance fitness and improve sleep. Summer activities to take part in could be:
 - o Exploring a park or nature reserve, keeping an eye out for shady areas for respite.
 - o Go for a walk around your neighbourhood.
 - o Cycle ride – take plenty of fluids.
 - o Visit to the beach, ensuring appropriate clothing and sunscreen is to hand.
 - o Swimming.
- Leisure safety advice can be found [Here](#)

Stay Protected against insects & bugs

- Keep doors and windows closed as much as possible.
- Avoid wearing too much perfume/aftershave.
- Avoid wearing dark colours or floral designs as they attract wasps.
- Try to wear long sleeves and trousers to protect from bites.

- Throw out rubbish regularly and don't leave food out uncovered.
- Usually when an insect bites us, removing the sting and washing the area with soap and water helps to reduce itching and swelling.
- Applying an ice pack or cold cloth and taking simple antihistamines may also help reduce symptoms.
- A range of insect repellents are available in local pharmacies.
- For NHS advice and information, please click [Here](#)

Pets

- Bring your pets indoors with you to protect them.
- Consider wetting animals down if they appear to hot or give them a damp towel to lie on. Give outdoor animals plenty of fresh water, leave the water in a shaded area.
- Put ice cubes in their water bowl.

Stay on the lookout for others

- Keep an eye on isolated, ill, elderly or very young people to make sure they are able to keep cool.
- Ensure babies, young people and the elderly are not left alone in parked cars.
- Check on neighbours, family and friends.

To conclude, staying healthy and safe while still having fun during the summer only requires a little forward planning and awareness to ensure you're able to enjoy trouble free days.



Staying Connected

It is important to stay socially connected with friends, family and support mechanisms especially if we are isolated. Humans are naturally social creatures, and our lack of social interaction can have a significant impact on our mental and physical health.

Staying connected can help us stay healthy, reduce stress and improve our wellbeing. Covid 19 has meant that so much of our connection with others is now digital, over a phone, zoom or WhatsApp call. While this can't replace human contact, it is a way that we can remain connected to other people and the wider world.

Being digitally confident can improve how we connect with family, friends and organisations who can support us. If you would like more information or access to learning, short courses to support you are available to learn more about computer skills for all or just refresh your knowledge while building confidence.

[Shropshire Council Digital Skills](#) page gives details of different courses and sites to learn more and gain confidence in using the internet.

Try [Learn my Way](#) for courses on internet safety, online shopping and video calling.

[Get Safe online](#) gives information on how on stay safe online.

[Digital Skills for Shropshire Citizens](#) - Help to get online and use the internet safely for over 65's.

Informational Support

As a carer it can be difficult to know where to find information that is current and, importantly, correct. Perhaps you are new to caring and don't know which way to turn. Whatever the reason here are some ways that you can keep yourself informed.

Shropshire Carer Support Team – friendly Carer Support Practitioners who can provide information, personalised for you. Just contact our information line to find out how we can help. Tel: 01743 341995 Mon – Fri 9.00am till 5.00pm or email: Shropshire.Carers@shropshire.gov.uk

Shropshire Carers Register is a way that you can keep up to date with what's going on, both locally and nationally. The Carer Register is a means of sharing important Information quickly to you by whichever method suits you best i.e., text, email, or letter. With enrolment to the register, you will also receive a carer ID/emergency card, emergency plan template and free five-part email course delivered by Mobilise online support for carers. Carers can de-register at any time by notifying Shropshire Carers.

Read more about the Register and join [Here](#)

[Mobilise Shropshire](#) - an online support for carers that offers information, tools to check eligibility for carers allowance and blue badges, weekly emails on key local and national updates, facilitated Face book, where carers can support each other, email course, 1:1 support call, coaching programme, website live chat and virtual cuppas.

[Shropshire Choices](#) - has a range of information on all aspects of health and social care plus a link to the [Shropshire Choices Support Finder](#)

Emotional Support

If you are feeling low this summer, please reach out and speak with someone.

Shropshire Carers Support Team – we offer a listening ear. By talking through your situation, we can establish your needs and help you to reach solutions that assist you to move forward. Tel: 01743 341995 Mon-Fri 9.00am till 5.00pm.

[Shropshire Mental Health Support](#) - offers a wide range of support from groups, Calmer Café and telephone support.

[Mobilise Shropshire](#) - if you are feeling really low, [we offer free calls](#) with our carer support team. A friendly ear, the opportunity to get clarity around muddled thoughts, or simply just to connect.

SHOUT - You don't need to hide behind a smile.... you can talk with SHOUT over text 24/7, it's a free service available to everyone in the UK and it won't show up on your phone bills. And when you text there's a trained volunteer at the other end

to talk with you – silently, by text message – until you feel calmer. Why not look at SHOUT's [Little book of coping skills](#) a booklet with plenty of tips and techniques you can try to help you feel calmer and you can refer to it at any time.

Samaritans – if you need someone to talk to, Samaritans listen, without judgement and without telling you what to do. Call 116 123 for free, anytime of the day or night, 365 days a year.

Samaritans Self-help App - keep track of how you are feeling and get recommendations for things you can do to help yourself cope, feel better and stay safe in a crisis.

Tangible Support

Shropshire offers a wide range of support to help you through the summer months. Please see information below on the support available.

Shropshire Carers Support Service – our dedicated team is here to support you offering help and advice. Our support line is available from Monday to Friday 9am-5pm Tel: 01743 341995 or you can email us at shropshire.carers@shropshire.gov.uk.

Shropshire Choices Support Finder 2023- a directory designed to give individuals, carers and families access to quality local information including means of local transport; support in communities; staying safe, activities and groups and information on finding a care facility/paying for care/carer services/staying independent.

Shropshire Community Directory gives you information on where you can find help including benefits, groups, community transport, health and social care and housing.

Mobilise Shropshire - is an online service for unpaid carers, which brings together the collective knowledge, wisdom and expertise of unpaid carers. Mobilise offers a range of information and opportunities to join their facilitated Face book, where carers can support each other, Virtual cuppas, 1:1 support via a phone call and website live chat.

Self-Care

Eating a Healthy Diet

Eating a balanced, nutritional diet is essential to keep your body strong and helps to maintain your physical and emotional wellbeing. When tired and stressed it can mean you eat less well, and this weakens your body and immune system.

A healthy diet can help to protect you from a range of health conditions including heart disease, Stroke, type II diabetes and some cancers.



Good nutrition is important in aiding recovery following an illness or medical treatment when the body needs more energy.

The link [8 tips for healthy eating \(NHS\)](#) gives practical tips on the basics of healthy eating.

The link to [Healthy Eating](#) provides some ideas on how to plan, enjoy and stick to a healthy diet.

The Eatwell guide is a good visual guide to healthy eating and the proportions of each food group to include in your diet. [FINAL MAR23 \(bupa.co.uk\)](#)

A good community resource is the [Shropshire Larder](#) which gives details of Community Food Projects throughout Shropshire and handy tips on cooking on a budget.

It is important to keep up your fluid intake but avoid too much fluid before meals if you are struggling to eat. It is also worth looking at your medication as some can interfere with the body's ability to absorb nutrients if you are losing weight. There are several different reasons why appetite may be lacking, including ill-fitting dentures, poor oral health, problems with chewing, loss of taste and smell. You should consult your health care professional on any problems with your diet.

Keeping Physically Active

We all know that staying active is important to our health and well-being. Here are some ideas for ways to stay or get active over the weeks ahead. Remember to follow the guidelines for keeping well in hot weather.

Standing up – important for our health

There is increasing evidence that, unless you are a wheelchair user, sitting down too much can be a risk to your health. To reduce our risk of ill health from inactivity, we are advised to exercise regularly and reduce sitting time.

The [UK Chief Medical Officers' Physical Activity Guidelines report](#) recommends breaking up long periods of sitting time with activity for **just 1 to 2 minutes**.

If you spend a lot of time at home in a chair, can you regularly get up and stand for a brief spell, walk round the room, swing your arms and do something that involves moving your body just for a few minutes?

Many adults in the UK spend around 9 hours a day sitting. This includes watching TV, using a computer, reading, doing homework, travelling by car, bus or train but does not include sleeping.

If you are interested to find out more here is a link to further information and advice <https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/exercise/why-sitting-too-much-is-bad-for-us/>

Physical activity is vital for health whatever our age. Find information here on the benefits of physical activity, and how much activity you need to do. The link below also gives ideas for keeping active in your daily life, opportunities to join local exercise groups, sport or free activity.

<https://www.shropshire.gov.uk/public-health/healthy-shropshire/healthy-lifestyles/>

Walking is one of the best ways of taking exercise and improving your health and fitness.

Walking for health groups are available all over the county. They offer graded walks and there is something to suit everyone, regardless of age or ability. They are a great way to enjoy being outdoors, meet new people, make friends and have fun!

Physical activity can help improve many medical conditions, but please check with your doctor first before attending a walk if you are not sure of the effects of activity on your condition.

<http://www.shropshiresgreatoutdoors.co.uk/walking/walking-for-health/>

Walk with me – walking can be creative and fun as well as good exercise. you are invited to go for a walk outside, around your house and garden, or in your mind. You can document your walk in a variety of creative ways, or simply enjoy using your imagination by using the Walk with me guide. Find your local walking for health [here](#)

One of the key benefits of walking is being outside in natural daylight to help with vitamin D.

Daylight is good for our physical and mental health and can improve our sleep patterns.

Managing Your Mental Health

While blue skies and warmer weather can often be uplifting, we can still be negatively affected by lack of support, depressing news every time we switch the TV on...all contribute to lowering our mental and emotional wellbeing.



Keeping a mood diary is a mindful activity that can help us track what is making us feel better and what is bringing us down. When you see a pattern emerge you can take steps to avoid or prepare for situations which cause you anxiety.... conversely, it means you can do more of what makes you happy too.

It is helpful to get outside if we can, especially if the sun is shining, so that we soak up as much vitamin D as possible. When we can't get out, we can still enjoy some of the benefits of being outside by trying virtual forest bathing (an ancient Japanese process of relaxation). Being calm and quiet and observing nature whilst breathing deeply can help boost our health and wellbeing in a natural way. Research has shown that viewing images of the forest can still cause changes in the brain and body that makes us feel more relaxed.

Try some virtual [forest bathing](#) and see whether it improves your mood.

There are several online sites that can help us to improve our mental wellbeing. [Togetherall](#) – a safe online community where people support each other anonymously to improve mental health.

[Shropshire Mental Health Support](#) offers a wide range of support from groups, Calmer Café and telephone support.

[Shropshire Council bereavement support](#). A service to support Shropshire residents who are experiencing and suffering from bereavement and loss. The offer is open to anyone who has been bereaved by either a recent death or previous loss. The Bereavement Support Service is operated by Shropshire Council and community voluntary partners Samaritans, CRUSE, and Severn Hospice and CRANE counselling. If you or someone you know could benefit from this service, please call **0345 678 9028** for further information and access.

Importance of Play

It is important for us to include some fun in our lives. Play is not just for children. Researchers are finding that play for grown-ups can be an important means of reducing stress, stimulating creativity, improve connections with others, improve memory and maintain wellbeing.

Play is healthy and fun and there are many ways and different types of play e.g., adult colouring books can be very relaxing, playing fetch with your dog, going for a bike ride, doing some knitting. There doesn't need to be a point to the activity other than having fun and enjoying yourself.

When you do get a little bit of time maybe you could try suggesting a board game, or game of cards, or charades, or start an online quiz with friends instead of sitting in front of the TV.

[Good Things to Do at Home](#) – has some ideas of fun things you may like to try.

Helpful Websites to Stay Well This Summer

- Shropshire Council - <https://shropshire.gov.uk/stay-safe-and-well-this-summer/>
- Age UK - <https://www.ageuk.org.uk/>
- NHS Live Well - <https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/>
- Local Food Bank Directory - <https://www.shropshirelarder.org.uk/emergencyfood>



Holidaying

Trying to plan a holiday/break, even if for just a few days, can be very challenging when we are in a caring role, but experience shows us that it can make a huge difference. A holiday/break is a great way to reduce stress, our health benefits enormously as we feel better, sleep well, our mood is lifted, and motivation restored.

Mobilise Shropshire - an online service for unpaid carers, which brings together the collective knowledge, wisdom and expertise of unpaid carers offers fantastic information – The Carers' Guide to Respite Services. In this guide there is information and links relating to:

- Simple solutions that might work
- Funding for breaks, holidays, and respite services
- Holidays that are free for carers
- Holidays that are free for those we care for
- Holidays and breaks that are suitable for those we care for to go without us
- Holidays and breaks that we can have together with the person we care for
- Overcoming our own personal barriers
- How is Carers Allowance affected if I take a break?

You can access this valuable information [Here](#)

Mobilise also offer an interesting read – A Change is as good as a rest, which reports on the benefits 'having some respite and fun' has on carers. You can access a copy [Here](#)

Carers Trust Holidays section on their website offers a wealth of information on grants, respite for adults and young carers, disabled people, and carers – to access this information, please click [Here](#)

The Respite Association – a small charity that provides short term assistance by funding respite care for people with disabilities, long term physical or mental health conditions and those that are terminally ill in order that their unpaid carer can be allowed to take a much-needed break. For further information, please click [Here](#)

Disability Grants – a fabulous resource for parent/carer of a disabled child or adult. To access this information, please click [Here](#)

Disabled Access Holidays – resource for disabled people around the world, for information, please click [Here](#)

Other Useful Websites:

[Disabled Holidays](#) is a travel company that offers a selection of accessible holidays from self-catering to all-inclusive deals in the UK and abroad. Most of the accommodation is wheelchair accessible. They can also arrange for the hire of disability equipment at the holiday accommodation.

[Enable Holidays](#) are a tour operator that offers a range of accommodation suitable for people with limited mobility in various locations both UK and abroad.

[Tourism for All](#) is a charity specialising in helping people to find accessible holiday information, including accommodation. They operate a membership scheme with a small annual charge.

[Revitalise](#) is a national charity providing short breaks and holidays for disabled people and their carers.

[Dementia Adventure](#) specialise in holidays for people with dementia and their carers, friends or families.

[AccessAble](#) - gives you information on accessible places to visit

[Rail Discount for Carers](#) – a benefit provider for carers, which is also available to their families.



Top Tips – Be Ready for Summer!

Use the helpful check list below and tick the boxes so you know you are.

	UK is prone to very changeable weather – keep your eye on the weather forecast. Visit Met Office (the national meteorological service for the UK) to help you plan ahead.
	Keep yourself hydrated.
	Eat well, live well - For more details about healthy living visit: NHS Live Well Advice
	Keep simple antihistamines at home for hay fever and bites.
	Make sure your mobile phone is fully charged before leaving the house.
	Have spare batteries ready - hearing aids and remote control for the TV.
	Make sure you have enough of your repeat prescription medication and consider ordering a refill early if hot weather stops you getting out to collect it. Check if your pharmacy offers a prescription delivery service.
	For motorists – is your car summer ready? Check your tyres, change the oil more frequently, check your battery, take bottles of water on the journey. Make sure your mobile phone is fully charged before the journey.
	Remember – never leave your pets in the car and keep them out of direct strong sun and ensure they drink plenty.
	Have an emergency contact number sheet where it is visible so that you can phone immediately to get support. Download our template below to complete your own emergency care plan.

* Please print off if you do not have a printer, your local library will print for a small charge

EMERGENCY CONTACT LIST	Supplier/Company/Contact	Name & Telephone Number
	First Point of Contact (Shropshire Council)	03456 789044
	Emergency Contact	
	Emergency Contact Gas supplier	
	Gas Supplier	
	Electricity Supplier	
	Water Supplier	
	Electrician	
	Plumber	
	Local Pharmacy	
	GP practice	
	NHS 111	