

NEWSLETTER
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Gloucestershire

Carers

Hub

Winter Newsletter 2020

*Festive wishes to all
and welcoming 2021*



“Refer Today,
So You **Don’t**
Have to Worry
Tomorrow”



A MESSAGE FROM THE WELCOME TEAM

We would like to wish you all an enjoyable festive break and a happy and healthy start to 2021.

As 2020 draws to a close, we have been thinking about the changes that have happened this year and all the carers that have got in touch with us to get support, advice or guidance.

In March, as lockdown measures were announced, the Welcome Team, like most people, started working from home. Overnight, the team moved from speaking to carers in our office to supporting them from kitchen or dining tables, home offices or conservatories.

As a team, we quickly became accustomed to each other's homes, dogs, and children over virtual team meetings. Carers who have called us have had to experience hearing our children, animals and doorbells in the background of calls. If this has happened when we spoke to you, we thank you for your understanding.

We have made and received over 11,000 calls both to and from carers like you in 2020 so far, giving every one of them time to discuss their caring role, information, advice and guidance on various topics such as our Carers Emergency Scheme, finances, how to access groups, courses and local support.

We have sent out letters and 'Carer Aware' badges to many Carers so that they can show that they are a Carer. We have also signposted to local volunteers and county Covid-19 hubs and support services. If you would like any further information then please contact us.

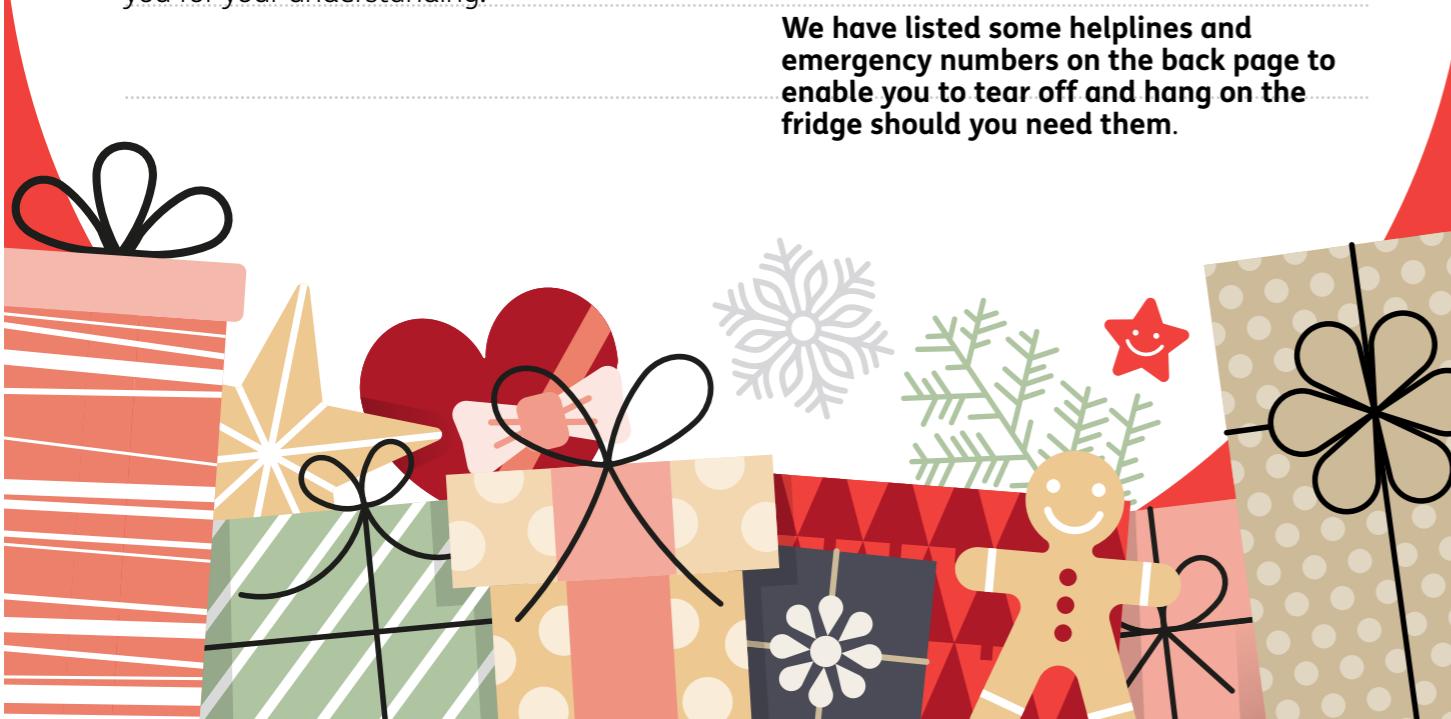
We have listened to people's experience of being a Carer in lockdown, the pressure and sometimes the loneliness that came with that too.

This year had been especially tough for Carers and many people have found themselves in a caring role that they didn't expect. The Welcome Team are here as the first contact to offer information, advice and guidance and to listen to concerns that Carers have about their lives.

We are available Monday – Friday 9am to 5pm, and extended hours on Tuesday and Thursday from 8am – 8pm.

Over Christmas, we are open Tuesday 29th December 2020 9am – 5pm, Wednesday 30th December 2020 8am – 8pm and Thursday 31st 9am – 5pm.

We have listed some helplines and emergency numbers on the back page to enable you to tear off and hang on the fridge should you need them.



Keeping busy over Christmas

Our Carer Community Facilitator Jodie has been actively sourcing activities which will run throughout the festive period and will be held between Christmas and New Year.



We are holding

SESSIONS OVER THE FESTIVE PERIOD

24th December 2020

2PM YOGA NIDRA

29th December 2020

1PM SEATED SAMBA

2PM FIVE WAYS TO WELLBEING

30th December 2020

11AM HOW ARE YOU?

31st December 2020

10AM HOW ARE YOU?

2PM YOGA NIDRA



Carers Rights Week of Activities

During the week of Carers Rights Day, we held numerous events which were attended by Carers virtually, in order to gain knowledge and skills to support them in their caring roles.

There were a number of sessions which included information on the Mental Capacity Act, Safeguarding, Care Act and much more. We also held a number of wellbeing sessions on mindfulness, Yoga, Yoga Nidra and wellbeing action planning.

All you need to do is book a place before the 24th December for the sessions running between the 29th and 31st December 2020. Each session is 1hour long.

We hope that by running these sessions virtually, people can join in with activities and feel less isolated.

Carers Hub



We have received amazing feedback about these sessions and look forward to seeing more Carers attend activities in the new year.

A number of the sessions were recorded so if you missed any of them, please get in contact with us and if there is a recording available, this can be sent to you via email. Email: Carers@peopleplus.co.uk

Wellbeing over Winter



Tired of being expected to learn new things? Have you found the 2020 lockdown's a strain within your caring role? You are not alone.

Within this newsletter we look at ways you can use your time to complete things you have already started, to make your life at home better.

It seems incredible to think that we are now ten months into a global pandemic and wearing a mask has become the new “norm”. Who'd have thought that we would have to manage staying away from those we love, avoid kissing our relatives and washing our hands until they are resembling a scratchy dry brillo pad.

And while support groups, meeting friends and exercise classes have become a thing of the past, this does not mean that we have to suffer – we can always find something to lift our spirits however small. Scientists have proved that by being thankful for what we DO have (a glass half full) can make an impact on our overall wellbeing and change our brain chemistry.

Periods of time in lockdown situations, could potentially become a game-changer where we have the luxury to think about our lives and what we can put in place to enhance them during that period and beyond.

JANUARY PLAN-UARY

Here are my tips on using January to feel better:

1) Identify two hobbies or projects that you are able to plan from home; January is ideal to create a new garden design for the coming year. What flowers bring you joy? What plants will bring more bees into your garden? You can buy Wildflower packs from £3.99 – there are over 600 seeds with over 20 species in each pack.

Carol H, a carer from Cheltenham decided to get a garden bench for her front garden because she was feeling so isolated during lockdown in 2020. She says, “The bench was a godsend during the Summer, neighbours would walk past and always chat (socially distanced of course). If I hadn't done that I would have felt very, very lonely indeed”



Keeping well in difficult times



“At the end of Lockdown, we are looking forward to opening the jar and seeing all the good things spread out in front of us.”

2) Start to think about your support network and who you can call on for a chat. Caring can be a busy and thankless task – however, chatting on the phone with a trusted friend can really boost the spirits. Try to make contact with one other person every day.

Anxiety, depression and other stress-related ailments are on the rise during COVID and by sharing how we feel, we can realise that others are feeling the same way. If you are not able to chat, why not design a card or write a letter to an old friend telling them your news and reminiscing on the times you had together. Making your friends laugh can make you laugh too. If you are struggling with loneliness the Hub is always here for you, **call 0300 111 9000** to talk to one of our friendly Welcome Tea.

3) Be grateful. No matter how hard, there is always something to be grateful for. If the person you are caring for sleeps through the night for once or someone offers to bring your shopping to you, gratitude can bring perspective even in the darkest times.

Jessica M, one of our parent carers has started a “Blessings Jar” which she keeps in the kitchen for the whole family. Whenever something good happens they write it down and place the piece of paper in a large jar. “The jar is so important to us as a family because we can see that there are good bits to lockdown which we would have otherwise not noticed and this keeps us going.

4) Be kind to yourself. You are doing your best every day. It might not feel like it but every day you are looking after someone else and making sure they are comfortable. Take a moment to acknowledge how wonderful you are and tell yourself that you deserve a treat and then go and treat yourself to your favourite food, or bubble bath or something that you fancy.

5) Move – moving shifts energy. It is easy to stay in one place and very hard to get motivated when we feel depressed. Therefore, by moving, we can shift our energy into something that is more productive and fresh.

The Gloucestershire Carers Hub offer Samba and Yoga online and an exercise bike for the home is always a good way to keep fit without leaving the house.

by Katie Bifulco, Dip. Couns,
Health and Wellbeing Advisor, Gloucestershire
Carers Hub

YOU'RE WELCOME

You're Welcome is an inclusive online directory where Gloucestershire-based organisations can list their activities and events for free. Founded by Barnwood Trust, it has been updated and relaunched by Active Impact to enable users to search for things to do by their location in the county, hobbies and interests and any specific requirements they might have.

Listing on the You're Welcome website enables organisations to reach a wide community of disabled and non-disabled people who may not otherwise find out about them and the great things they have to offer. Whether people are looking for family friendly sports activities in Stroud or dog friendly walks with good physical access, this is a great platform for people to find out about what's on in Gloucestershire that works for them.

Organisations can sign up to share their activities for free on the site which also gives them access to a community forum where they can share more about what they do, information about funding and support, tips on best inclusion practice and the friendly You're Welcome team to talk things through and answer any questions.



Sign up at <http://yourewelcomeglos.org> or email hello@yourewelcomeglos.org if you want to talk to one of our team.

We'd love you to help more Gloucestershire residents find out about this new, community based events and activities directory by sharing it with families and individuals, putting our website and social media links into any newsletters or information packs you give out and also by signing up and getting involved.

You're Welcome Gloucestershire is for everyone in the county to find fun things to do and connect with people where they live.

New Year – Small changes – New you activities

We all know that with a new year comes sometimes unrealistic new year's resolutions.

We have come up with a new way of setting resolutions by looking at smaller changes you could make to improve your wellbeing this new year. This will help with achieving small goals without having to apply too much pressure on you to succeed.

We have outlined steps for you to follow so that you have a visual resource to refer back to. This will support you in making changes ready for the new year. You can keep it on the fridge or on a door – put it somewhere you can see it as a reminder of what you wanted to achieve.

For this activity you will need a piece of paper, any piece will do and a pen.

Take 5 minutes out of your day to sit and compile your objectives.

Draw around your hand on the piece of paper. It doesn't need to be a piece of art but it can be if you would prefer.

Each finger will represent one of the 5 ways to wellbeing which are:

- Connect
- Be Active
- Keep Learning
- Help Others
- Take Notice

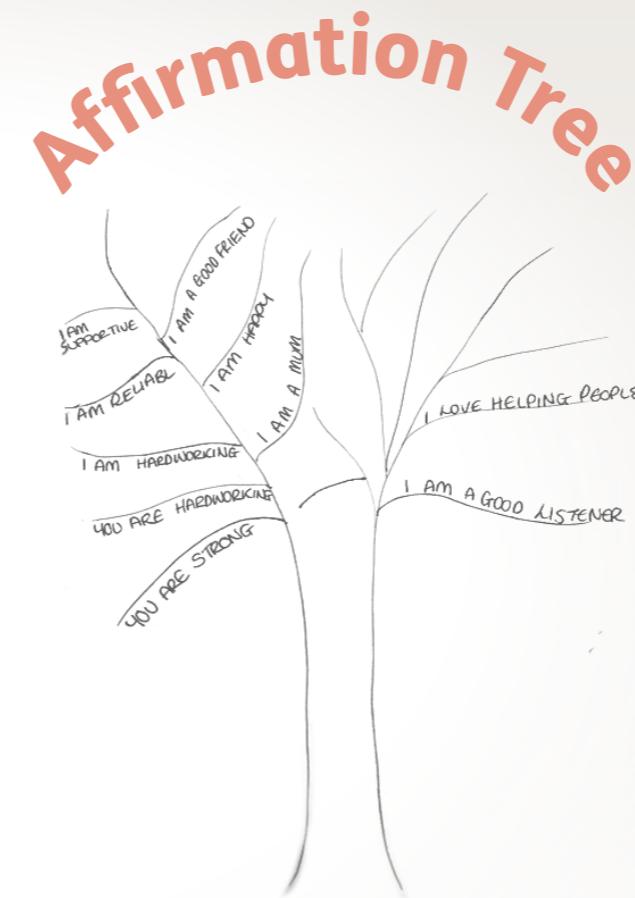
Within each finger, write one thing you want to change or improve this year to support in managing your wellbeing. It can be as big or as small as you want it to be but make it achievable for you.

Connect

- Message, call or email a friend more regularly
- Meet up with a friend for a socially distanced walk or coffee (should restrictions allow) or make it virtual more regularly
- Use online platforms to explore coffee mornings, information sessions or courses

Be Active

- Take a short walk each day
- Take part in a virtual class to be more active
- Dance in your kitchen to your favourite song



If you would like to try another activity, make an affirmation tree.

Make sure you have 5 – 10 minutes to sit with a piece of paper, a pen and some time to reflect. You don't have to do it as a block, you can come back and add to it at any time.

Draw a tree, it can be as magnificent as you want to make it but make sure your tree has branches.

Once you have drawn your tree, start to think of positive affirmations about yourself. (An affirmation is the act of confirming something to be true.)

You could think of things like:

- I am friendly
- I am able to stay calm in a crisis
- I am a Carer
- I look after someone daily and ensure they are kept safe and well

Keep adding to it, take time to reflect on the type of person you are or what you do on a daily basis. Once your tree is complete, display it somewhere and remind yourself to notice it and read the affirmations back to yourself especially if you are having a bad day.

Going Digital and learning how to access the internet



Using a computer:

www.learnmyway.com/subjects/using-your-computer-or-device

Using a touchscreen:

www.learnmyway.com/courses/using-a-touchscreen/

Using email:

www.learnmyway.com/courses/using-email/

Creating spreadsheets:

www.learnmyway.com/courses/creating-spreadsheets/

Video calling:

www.learnmyway.com/courses/video-calling/

Socialising online:

www.learnmyway.com/courses/socialising-online/

Online safety:

www.learnmyway.com/subjects/online-safety/

Finding a job online:

www.learnmyway.com/subjects/finding-job-online

Managing your money online:

www.learnmyway.com/subjects/managing-your-money-online/

Whatever you decide to add to your wellbeing hand is up to you. Once you achieve one, celebrate it however you see fit. You are doing an amazing job. Take time for you and think about you.

If you or someone you know needs to improve their digital skills but can't attend face to face courses, there are over 30 free online courses available at www.learnmyway.com/subjects



Try something new - Ukulele Playing

Why you should play a ukulele

Taking up the ukulele, at any time of life, will improve your well-being and widen your social network.

1. Wellbeing

Physical

Ukuleles are usually used as accompaniment to songs and singing is good exercise. It makes you breathe deeply and use your vocal chords. If you suffer from shortness of breath, regular singing will tend to improve the condition. Playing will also improve the strength and suppleness, of your hands. Your left hand is exercised by fretting the strings and moving around the fretboard while fingerpicking makes your right-hand work.

Mental

Learning any new skill will help to keep your mind active and alert and learning any musical instrument has its benefits. With a ukulele, co-ordination is required and improved in the interplay between left and right hands as you master different strumming patterns and chord changes. Then there is the pleasure and satisfaction of mastering a new piece or technique and the enjoyment of repeating it.

Social

Although you could be a closet player, most players get more satisfaction and pleasure from playing with others and there are (in normal times) many clubs in Gloucestershire where ukulele players get



together and have fun. It is essentially a social and sociable activity and ukulistas (ukulele players) and their clubs are universally tolerant, warm and welcoming.

2. Cost

There are not many musical instruments with the flexibility and range of the ukulele which are as inexpensive. You can get an adequate beginner's instrument for as little as £50.00 but if you buy a cheap instrument expect to replace it with something better as you improve and become more discerning.

Resources

There is a wealth of ukulele resources available on the internet and most of them are free. YouTube hosts lots of ukulele tutorials and lessons. Here is one that I find particularly useful: GotAUkulele.com Barry Maz, the owner and proprietor of the site is well respected and highly valued in the ukulista community. Check his reviews before buying an instrument.

There are too many clubs in Gloucestershire to list them all. There are (at least) 4 in Gloucester with more in Cheltenham, Churchdown, Coleford and Stroud.

They are not meeting physically during Covid-19 but many of them are running online sessions using Zoom.

Please contact stephen.moore@peopleplus.co.uk for more information.

YouCan Adult Carers

Over the past few months, we have been running a new programme for Carers in Gloucestershire called YouCan Adult Carers.

The aim of the programme is to build the knowledge and skills of Carers and also form a peer support group for Carers to join in with and establish lasting relationships that they can take away from the course.

The programme has been a great success with positive feedback being given throughout the sessions and following completion of the course. The programme itself has 4 sessions each lasting 2 hours.

The carers said they have enjoyed talking to others as it has reduced isolation and given them information and advice around their caring role.

We have a new YouCan starting in January. Should you wish to join, please contact us on 0300 111 9000 or email carers@peopleplus.co.uk

To book on the next YouCan Adult Carers in January please contact carers@peopleplus.co.uk



YouCan Adult Carers

Join YouCan our four session programme for Carers and Parent Carers to gain knowledge and skills to support them in their caring role.

The next programme will run on the below dates;
14th, 21st, 28th January 2021 and 4th February 2021
11am - 1pm

Session 1 - YouCan Know Your Rights

What being a Carer means, discover your rights and see what the Gloucestershire Carers Hub has to Offer

Session 2 - YouCan Be Positive

Explore local services which can offer you support as a Carer, steps to protect your wellbeing and how to remain positive

Session 3 - YouCan Overcome

Learn steps on how to communicate with professionals effectively, overcoming difficult situations and communication

Session 4 - YouCan Do It

Plan for the future, explore peer support, what can you do next

You will need to be able to attend all 4 sessions

To book your place on the YouCan Programme call 0300 111 9000 or email carers@peopleplus.co.uk

YouCan CRAFTS

This year we launched YouCan Crafts in December; this included sending out craft starter kits to Carers for them to complete their Christmas crafts together **from 7pm - 9pm over 4 sessions every Tuesday for 4 weeks.**

The first craft session was a great success and all of our Carers made some beautiful Christmas Wreaths. In future weeks, they will be making Christmas cards and tree decorations.

Craft sessions have been well received by everyone over the course of 2020 and we wanted to make sure the love of craft and combination of YouCan's peer support element can be continued into the festive period.



We are planning on continuing with YouCan Craft in the new year starting with 4 weeks of 'try something new' and then with Easter Crafts.

If you fancy taking part in the sessions, email you expression of interest to Jodie.moor@peopleplus.co.uk

A treasure-trove of history just around the corner from The Gloucestershire Carers Hub

We're delighted to have this opportunity to introduce ourselves to you.

For those of you with long memories, we used to be called Gloucestershire Records Office and we are located in what was the old Kingsholm Council School building, in Alvin Street. The building has recently been enlarged and improved to provide a spacious, light and completely accessible space.

What do we do?

We are a part of Gloucestershire County Council and our main purpose is to look after the 'documented history of Gloucestershire and South Gloucestershire'. We currently hold an estimated 10 million documents on around 11 miles of shelving. Our earliest document dates from the 12th Century and we are collecting new material every day.

Many people will remember learning about the Great Plague at school – we know about this from records which survive from that time. We are busy documenting the experience of people living in Gloucestershire through a time of 'plague' (COVID 19) so that future generations can have a first hand, reliable record of this highly unusual time and understand what it was like.

So – we collect and store records relating to Gloucestershire – sometimes we also need to repair these documents to make sure they will last. They are stored in climate-controlled, special strong rooms which are secure, cool and free of pests like silverfish who like nothing better than to feast on a piece of old parchment. We also look after modern, digital records.

Collecting, storing and conserving are just part of the story, though. Just as important is our commitment to sharing this wealth of information for which we are privileged to be the custodians. Anyone can join the archives and have access to this treasure, and it's completely free. We can't loan out documents as a library can,

because most of what we keep is unique and irreplaceable, but anyone can come and look at documents in our comfy research room. They just have to agree to abide by the security measures we have in place to make sure our documents are safe.

What could you do?

People use archives for many different reasons: sometimes old documents can be used to settle disputes over rights of way or other kinds of legal wrangling.

Quite often, we have academic researchers getting in touch to look at material for books or papers they are writing. But most of the people we see are researching the history of their house, or the company they worked for, their village, or (most often of all) their own family.

Gloucestershire Family History Society

The highly skilled volunteers from Gloucestershire Family History Society have their own space in our building. If you want to start researching your family or have already started and hit a roadblock, they will do their best to help you. Websites like Ancestry UK and FindMyPast are free to use here (and at some libraries) and family history research is also something you can do from home. We think we can offer carers and the people they are caring for a rich and rewarding experience. Please get in touch with us if you would like to arrange a visit.

You'll find our website at:
<https://www.heritagehub.org.uk/>
 You can call us on **01452 425295**
 or email:
archives@gloucestershire.gov.uk

When you come to visit us, you will find a friendly, welcoming staff many of whom are Dementia Friends.

Our job is to help people explore the records we hold, and we really love doing this.



Winter Gardening Tip

Now is the time to fill your bird feeders with bird food and watch the birds come to feed.

Why not use this activity as a way to spend a few minutes each day focusing on nature and your surroundings.

You can make a very simple bird feeder from a plastic drinks bottle, some dowel or stick, a piece of string and some bird seed.

Here's how to do it.

1. Make two small holes on opposite sides of the bottle about a third of the way up, big enough to push your dowel or stick through, the stick needs to fit snugly in the holes.
2. Push one of your sticks through both holes to form your perch for the birds.
3. Make a few very small drainage slits in the bottom of the bottle.

4. About 4cm above the perch, use your scissors to make a hole on both sides of the bottle (these will be the feeding holes).
5. At the neck of the bottle, make two small holes opposite each other and thread through your string and tie a knot.
6. Pour your bird seed into the bottle, screw on your lid and hang up your bird feeder!
7. Send your picture into us at Jodie.moor@peopleplus.co.uk We would love to see your creations.



Other Garden Jobs

Prune your roses from November onwards through to March. This will encourage flowers to form next year.

Plant bare root roses, hedging and trees before the weather gets very cold. Trim back perennial plants to tidy them up and add a garden compost or leaf mould mulch around the base.

Make your own Leaf Mould Here's how to do it.

- 1: Rake up some leaves from your garden, you can run a lawn mower over them to speed up the decomposing process.

- 2: Using a large strong bag, black bin bags are great for this, fill your bag with the chopped leaves and sprinkle with water to add moisture to the decomposing process. Tie the top securely.

- 3: Cut some small slits around the bag and place the bag somewhere safe remembering to turn and shake the bag every month or so to help add air to the decomposing process. Occasionally check for moisture and add a sprinkle of water if required.

- 4: After around 6-12 months you will have some finished leaf mould, be patient it takes time!

- 5: Use your leaf mould to dig into your beds to improve the soil and help with water retention or use as a mulch around your plants.

Alternatively, all the above can be done in a small heap somewhere in the corner of your garden rather than using the bag method. Happy leaf mould making!

If you planted kale last month in your beds and borders, it's now time to protect this from pigeons feeding on the leaves over winter. Cover with some netting, a cloche, or some garden fleece.

Keep 'dead heading' those winter pansies you planted out during the Autumn to keep them flowering in the coming months.

Happy winter gardening, we would love to see your gardens to share in our next newsletter. You can email them to Jodie.moor@peopleplus.co.uk

Christmas Helplines



We have included the numbers shown below should you need support during the Christmas period or if you need someone to talk to. There are also numbers which you can use in case you find yourself in an emergency situation.

Over Christmas we are open **Tuesday 29th December 2020 9am – 5pm,**
Wednesday 30th December 2020 8am – 8pm and **Thursday 31st 9am – 5pm.**

If you need support during this time call us on 0300 111 9000 or email
carers@peopleplus.co.uk

**There are also other organisations open over the festive period
should you need any information or support:**

Silverline – **0800 4 70 80 90**

Samaritans – **116 123**

Gas Board – **0800 111 999**

Power-cut - **105**

Water Board – **0800 783 4444**

Non-emergency Police number **101**

Emergency situation **999**

Healthcare advice **111**

Covid-19 testing **119**

We wish you a happy and healthy beginning to 2021.

Remember you are amazing.



We are planning some excellent things for the new year including exercise classes, wellbeing sessions and exciting outdoor projects so keep an eye open for more information!

We are always excited to see Carers ideas and suggestions so if you have any, please get in contact with us on 0300 111 9000 or email carers@peopleplus.co.uk