

SOCIAL ACTIVITIES

Trying to make sure the person you care for does not get bored and frustrated because they cannot get out and about can be a problem. There are social groups and activities available for people with many different disabilities, which can help maintain an interest in life and a chance to meet other people. If both of you can lead some independent social life, it gives you both a welcome break, as well as something new and different to talk about.

For the person you care for

Day Centres are either run by *Adult & Community Services* or voluntary organisations and offer a mix of social and recreational activities.

Many **voluntary groups** dedicated to a particular illness or disability run social meetings. Contact your local library or *Worcestershire Association of Carers* for details.

Sheltered Workshops e.g. *Lifestyles Worcestershire* runs Workshops for people with disability.

Leisure based opportunities include social, music and sports activities. Here are some examples:

The Worcester Disability Sports Group meets weekly in Worcester for people with a physical and/or sensory impairment. Some voluntary organisations recruit volunteers and workers to enable people to follow social & leisure activities of their choice.

Leisure Link in the Wyre Forest area enables people with learning difficulties to extend their choice of leisure activities. *Gateway* leisure clubs for people with learning disability operate within Worcestershire too. You might also like to contact local Access groups for more information on these options; alternatively try *DIAL* or *Worcestershire Association of Carers*.

For you

It is important for you to try to keep up contact with your friends and to continue to enjoy any hobby or interest. If you want to try something new, ask your library for their list of local groups and organisations.

Carers Groups meet regularly in different parts of the county. These groups provide an opportunity to meet others in a similar situation. Many of the groups combine social opportunities with talks on relevant subjects. *Worcestershire Association of Carers* currently runs groups in Bromsgrove, Droitwich, Evesham, Inberrow, Malvern, Martley, Pershore, Stourport and Worcester for carers of all client groups. There are also groups for carers in Bewdley, Redditch and Tenbury .

In addition to these groups, there are groups for carers of people with mental illness, sight loss, dementia, learning disabilities, acquired brain injury, people who have had a stroke and children with a disability.

For further information, please contact *Worcestershire Association of Carers*.

Lifelong learning Many organisations offer opportunities to learn new skills, often computer based, There are 90 year olds now out there surfing the net and keeping in touch through e-mail!

The Open University runs a wide range of courses of varying lengths and standards.

Opportunities for Lifelong Learning may be accessed through the *Princess Royal Trust for Carers*, *Carers UK* Online Centres and your local library or college. Sometimes there are reductions for carers undertaking courses to enhance their learning and skills and some can be undertaken with the use of a computer at home,

or at a local centre. Courses may include counselling, homeopathy, creative writing, assertiveness, stress, childcare, arts, City & Guilds, GCSE's or A Levels.

Library at Home Service

This is available to those who are housebound and have no one able to go to the library for them. The choice of books is discussed and then items delivered and exchanged regularly. It also covers recordings. Carers' tickets, kept at the Library, are available if you have a friend who can go for you. Contact the *Worcestershire Library at Home Service* or ask your local library for details.

Talking newspapers/Talking Book service. Contact *Worcestershire Association for the Blind* for the different area services.

BIG PRINT *R.N.I.B.* produce a large print weekly newspaper, which carries the week's TV and radio listings. You can order a trial free issue.

Calibre Audio Cassette Library provide audio-cassette books for adults and children who cannot read ordinary print books because of a sight problem or other physical disability. They are sent with free postage.

It is not always easy to get respite for a break. But it is most important to mention your needs during your Carers' Assessment. Ask your Social Worker or the *Worcestershire Carers' Unit* about funding from the Carers Grant.