

Caring through change

Handbook to support unpaid carers



Introduction

Change is inevitable in caring. Sometimes it happens gradually, such as when a loved one's health declines, and sometimes suddenly, following a move into residential care or bereavement. Without clear guidance and emotional support, this period can for some unpaid carers feel overwhelming.

Caring for someone can be one of the most meaningful roles you can take on, but it can also be demanding and life changing. Unpaid carers often become experts in relation to their loved ones needs and wishes. For many unpaid carers, the caring role becomes central to daily life - shaping routines, relationships, and priorities. When that role changes or ends, the impact can be profound.

Every caring journey is different - some unpaid carers have supported a loved one for many years, while others have stepped into the role more recently - but whatever your experience, the impact of change can be significant.

Many unpaid carers will have spent years navigating complex health and social care systems, helping to get the right support for their loved one.

This handbook has been created to support you through these transitions - providing reassurance, practical advice, and ideas to help you. Not all parts of this handbook will apply to everyone - your caring journey is, of course, an individual one. You can dip into the sections that feel most relevant to your own experiences and circumstances.



What you'll find in this handbook

The handbook covers eight key areas, which can be found on the following pages:

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|---------------------------------------|--|
| 3. A new or changed diagnosis | 9. Residential care |
| 4. Anticipatory grief | 11. Dealing with a sudden (unexpected) death/loss |
| 6. Sharing care at home | 13. Bereavement |
| 7. Techniques to reduce stress | 15. Life after caring |

Each section includes practical tips and support, recognising that every carer's experience is unique. You'll also find a signposting section at the end, with details of local and national organisations that can offer further help.

Change can be difficult, but you are not alone. Whether you need time to rest, want to connect with others, or are ready to explore new opportunities, this handbook is here to try and help. Take things at your own pace, and remember: looking after yourself is just as important as caring for someone else.



If you live in Cardiff and need help you can contact:
Cardiff Carers Advice Line - 029 2023 4234 (select option 2)



If you live in the Vale of Glamorgan and need help you can contact: Vale Unpaid Carers Hub - 029 2192 1024



A new or changed diagnosis

When someone you care for receives a new or changed diagnosis, professionals often focus on the clinical needs of the person you look after, but the impact on you as a carer is also significant. Your emotions, routines and sense of security may shift very suddenly.

You might feel shocked or confused, and struggle to take in what you've been told while trying to stay composed for others. Over time, the reality of what this diagnosis means for your own life may begin to sink in. Your commitments may need to change, and this can bring feelings of grief for the life you imagined for yourself and for your family.

The impact can feel different depending on who you care for:

- If you're caring for a child, you may worry about their future and feel sadness for the experiences you hoped they would have. Many parents tell us that, at times, it can feel like you have to keep explaining your child's needs, repeating your story and being the one who joins the dots between healthcare, education and community services.
- If you support another adult, you might suddenly become responsible for managing your or their home, finances or employment changes, all while adjusting to a shift in your relationship and shared roles.
- If you care for an older person (e.g. a parent), the diagnosis may highlight their growing needs and bring the emotional weight of watching someone you've relied on decline, alongside concerns about how much more support you may need to provide.

No matter the diagnosis, living with uncertainty and carrying the emotional and practical load can be exhausting. It's important to seek support if you feel overwhelmed, rather than carry it all alone.

Throughout all of this, your needs matter just as much as the needs of the person you care for. Taking breaks and giving yourself space are key.

Lasting Power of Attorney (LPA) is a legal arrangement that allows someone you trust to make decisions on your behalf if you are no longer able to do so yourself. Having an LPA in place can make day-to-day caring easier, as it helps ensure decisions about health, care or finances can be made smoothly and in line with the wishes of the person you support. (for more details about how to apply for a LPA see signposting section at the end of this document).

Anticipatory grief: understanding and coping

Anticipatory grief is what someone may feel before losing someone, such as when a loved one's health declines. It is sometimes called pre-death grief. Many unpaid carers experience this when they know someone they care for has been diagnosed with a life limiting illness or may be approaching the end of life. It is a natural reaction to uncertainty and change.

Why does it happen?

You may experience anticipatory grief due:

- Changes in the person: Illness can affect their physical health, personality, and ability to communicate, making them seem different from the person you once knew.
- Loss of roles and routines: Caring responsibilities may alter your social life, work, and hobbies.
- Uncertainty about the future: Worries about pain, decline, and life after the person dies can feel overwhelming.

Many unpaid carers tell us that they feel a mix of emotions, including:

- Sadness and anxiety about the illness and what lies ahead.
- Fear of death and the changes it will bring.
- Anger at the situation or even at the person who is ill.
- Guilt, especially if you feel you are not doing enough or if you long for relief from stress.
- Hopelessness and helplessness when you cannot change the outcome.
- Loneliness, particularly if others do not understand what you are going through.

These feelings can fluctuate and may be accompanied by physical symptoms such as tiredness, sleep problems, and difficulty concentrating.



What can help?

Talk about your feelings: Share with family, friends, or professionals. If this feels difficult, consider support groups or online communities.

Seek professional help: Counselling or talking therapies can help you process emotions and develop coping strategies. Local hospices often provide free support. If you need to talk to a professional make an appointment with your GP who can refer you to Primary Mental Health Support Services or Psychological Therapy. **(For urgent support, call 111, press 2.)**

Express yourself: Writing, creative activities, or listening to music can help release emotions.

Look after yourself: Maintain routines, eat well, rest, take physical activity and take breaks. Ask for help with caring duties and try relaxation techniques.

Prepare for the future:

Learn about the illness, discuss care wishes, and make practical plans. Creating memories such as photos or letters can be comforting.

While anticipatory grief is painful, some unpaid carers find it helps them prepare emotionally and practically for the future. It can provide opportunities to resolve past issues, share feelings, and make meaningful memories. It can help some unpaid carers to prepare for what to expect. However, even if you have grieved beforehand, the loss itself can still feel overwhelming.

Remember: anticipatory grief is common although everyone's experience is different. Be kind to yourself, seek support early, and focus on what matters most - your wellbeing and the time you have with your loved one.



Sharing care at home

Caring as a family

Sharing care as a family can give you essential breaks, reduce stress and prevent burnout. However, over time roles may shift due to health, work, distance, or changing relationships which may cause challenges to arise. When circumstances change, sometimes a family member may no longer be able (or willing) to continue their caring role.

If this happens:

- Acknowledge your feelings - it's ok to feel hurt, angry, or overwhelmed.
- Have an open conversation if possible, focusing on what the person can still offer, even if it's small.
- Seek support as soon as possible from professionals if reduced family involvement affects any care arrangement or your wellbeing
- Remember to request a review if you are in receipt of a care and support package from your local authority.

Caring alongside personal assistants or paid carers in the home (domiciliary care)

Paid care can play a vital role in supporting both you and the person you care for. It does not replace your role as an unpaid carer. In many cases, it can reduce pressure, provide specialised support, and allow time for a break.

This change can stir up a mix of emotions. You may feel guilty or feel you've let someone down by needing extra help, while also feeling relieved and grateful for the support.

Many unpaid carers tell us that they can experience these conflicting feelings at the same time.

It might feel uncomfortable having new and different paid carers visiting the home.

Talking to other unpaid carers who have experienced changes like these can help to understand and process your feelings.

Tips for sharing caring duties with paid carers:

- Try to have an open conversation with the paid carers or the care provider before the service starts
- Agree priorities, preferences, routines and responsibilities as early as you can
- Where possible, involve the person you care for in decisions
- Share essential information such as triggers, medication information or any safety concerns you have
- Raise issues early, if something is not working discuss it with the care agency
- If the local authority arranges the care, speak to them about your concerns
- If you arrange for your own care, contact The Care Inspectorate Wales for support raising your concerns

Techniques that may reduce stress and anxiety

Public Health Wales recommend short, regular mindfulness practices as part of daily routines to support mental wellbeing and resilience. This includes mindful breathing, gentle movement, and relaxation exercises.

Some examples are listed below:

Box Breathing (Calming Technique)

This technique can slow your heart rate and calm the nervous system and help reduce stress and anxiety.

- Sit comfortably and relax your shoulders.
- Inhale through your nose for 4 seconds.
- Hold your breath for 4 seconds.
- Exhale slowly through your mouth for 4 seconds.
- Hold again for 4 seconds.
- Repeat for 3–5 cycles.

Belly Breathing (Diaphragmatic Breathing)

This technique can help to improve oxygen flow and help you relax.

- Sit or lie down in a comfortable position.
- Place one hand on your chest and the other on your stomach.
- Breathe in slowly through your nose, feeling your stomach rise (not your chest).
- Exhale gently through your mouth.
- Continue for 3–5 minutes, focusing on slow, deep breaths.

Mindful Breathing

This technique can support mental wellbeing and reduce stress.

- Sit quietly and focus on your breath.
- Notice the sensation of air entering and leaving your body.
- If your mind wanders, gently bring your attention back to your breathing.
- Practice for 5–10 minutes daily.

Guided Imagery (Mindfulness Technique)

This technique has the potential to reduce anxiety and blood pressure.

- Close your eyes and imagine a calming scene (e.g., a beach or forest).
- Focus on sensory details: sounds, smells, and textures.
- Combine with slow breathing for 5–10 minutes.

Progressive Muscle Relaxation

This technique helps reduce stress by tensing and relaxing muscle groups in sequence.

- Sit or lie comfortably and take slow breaths.
- Starting at your feet, tense each muscle group for 5 seconds, then relax for 10–15 seconds:
 - » Feet and legs
 - » Shoulders and arms
 - » Stomach and chest
 - » Face and jaw
- Focus on the feeling of relaxation after each release.



Residential care

If the person you care for moves into a residential setting, it may be expected, or it may be following a sudden change. Some unpaid carers tell us they feel a mix of emotions, with some experiencing strong feelings of guilt. These feelings are a part of the process and the residential care providers often work to make the transition easier for everyone.

Why this change can feel difficult

You may have spent years caring for someone and when that role changes, it can feel like losing a part of yourself. Some unpaid carers experience grief at no longer being involved in daily care, while others feel guilty for not continuing to care for the person at home and feel like they have failed.

Some unpaid carers feel guilty for experiencing relief that their loved one is in residential care and that the pressure of full-time caring has changed. These feelings are natural and do not mean you care any less.

At the same time, practical tasks such as arranging the move, speaking to professionals, and adjusting to new routines can add stress.

It's important to remember that being involved in their life, visiting regularly, and sharing your knowledge with care staff can help you maintain a meaningful role while prioritising both their wellbeing and your own.



Questions that may arise

- How will your loved one settle and adapt to their new surroundings?
- Can you still play a role in their life and stay connected?
- Will their health condition be understood?
- What might the future look like?

How residential settings can help

Staffing teams often work closely with families to make the transition as smooth as possible.

They should:

- Involve you in planning care so your loved one's routines and preferences are respected.
- Keep communication open and honest, so you always know what's happening.
- Offer emotional support and reassurance about the quality of care provided.
- Encourage visits and regular contact, so you can remain part of your loved one's life.

Ways you can stay involved

Your caring role doesn't have to end at the residential setting door. You can, if you want to, speak to the staff about:

- Joining in activities such as gardening, crafts, or outings.
- Attending family events and celebrations.
- Taking part in resident and relative groups or informal coffee mornings.

These opportunities can help you maintain meaningful connections and reduce feelings of isolation.

Looking after yourself

It's easy to put your own needs last, but your wellbeing matters.

You may want to consider:-

- Visiting the home and meeting staff before the move to ease anxiety.
- Sharing your feelings with someone you trust.
- When you feel able to, keep up with hobbies, routines, and social connections.
- Seeking mental health support if you need it - asking for help is a sign of strength.



Dealing with a sudden (or unexpected) death

The sudden death of someone you care for can, of course, be very distressing. Without time to prepare emotionally or practically, the loss can feel shocking and overwhelming. You may find yourself dealing with intense emotions, disruptions to daily life, and urgent practical tasks, often when decision-making feels especially difficult.

Understanding what has happened

After a sudden death, you may have questions about what happened and why. In some cases, the police or paramedics may need to follow certain procedures. If the death was unexpected, unexplained, or occurred outside a hospital, it may be referred to the coroner. The coroner's role is to understand the cause of death, and this may include a post-mortem examination (sometimes called an autopsy). This process can take time, and waiting for answers can be difficult, but you have the right to ask questions and be kept informed throughout.

Telling others

Informing other people about a sudden death can feel extremely difficult, especially when you are still processing the shock yourself. You may need to share the news with family, friends, neighbours, and people involved in the person's care, often sooner than you feel ready. It can help to tell just one trusted person first and ask them to pass the message on to others. There is no right way to have these conversations.

Impact

Sudden loss can trigger a wide range of emotions. Some people also experience physical responses such as shaking, difficulty breathing, or a sense of detachment.

Grief may come as deep sadness, or you may initially feel numb - the pattern varies for everyone. Feelings of guilt, confusion, or anger are also natural, especially if the circumstances were unexpected. It is also the case that for some people the impact of the loss may not hit them straight away.

Many unpaid carers experience "if only..." thoughts, replaying events or wondering if anything could have been done differently.



Social and practical impact

After a sudden death, familiar routines can disappear overnight, and contact with professionals or networks linked to the caring role may reduce or end. When that contact stops, it can feel deeply upsetting and lonely as though the people who once knew your situation have moved on, even though you are still trying to process what has happened.

Some unpaid carers receive prompt support, while others struggle to find clear guidance. Feeling unsure where to turn is common. Practical pressures may also feel overwhelming. Tasks such as registering the death, informing services, arranging a funeral, and managing finances often arise quickly. It is okay to ask for help and approach things step by step.

A sudden bereavement may affect financial stability. You may experience a drop in income after benefits end, difficulty returning to work, or unexpected costs. Support is available through welfare advice services, local hubs, and national organisations.

Physical and mental health impact

The effects of long-term stress and exhaustion may become more noticeable after caring ends. This is sometimes referred to as carer burnout. You may struggle with sleep, appetite, concentration, or have physical symptoms like fatigue or headaches. Feeling overwhelmed or withdrawn is a common reaction. Rest, support from others, and professional help - such as counselling - can make a difference.



Coping with bereavement

The death of someone you have cared for can be one of the most difficult experiences you will face. Whether the loss was expected or sudden, it can affect you emotionally, physically, and practically. Grief is unique to each person - there is no right or wrong way to feel, and everyone copes differently.

You may experience a wide range of emotions, including sadness, numbness, anger, guilt, fear, or even relief. These feelings can come and go in waves. Some days may feel manageable, while others feel overwhelming. With time and support, most people find their feelings become less intense and they begin to adjust.

It's common for unpaid carers to feel a deep sense of tiredness after the person they cared for has died. This fatigue can be both physical and emotional, often linked to years of stress, disrupted routines, and a lack of self-care. Alongside grief, carers may experience exhaustion, sleep difficulties, and a loss of purpose. Allow yourself time to rest and recover, seek support and consider professional help if feelings of fatigue or low mood persist.

Talking about your feelings

Sharing how you feel can help you cope. You might choose to talk to family or friends, or you may prefer speaking to someone outside your circle, such as a counsellor or support group. Some people find comfort in remembering and talking about the person who has died. If you feel unable to open up right away, that's okay too, take things at your own pace.



Looking after yourself

Try to rest when you can, even if sleep is difficult. Eating regularly, staying hydrated, taking physical activity and maintaining basic routines like washing and taking medication are important for your wellbeing. If you notice yourself withdrawing or neglecting your health, reach out for help. Staying connected with others, even in small ways, can reduce feelings of isolation.

Understanding your emotions

You might feel numb at first, as if you are in a daze. Later, sadness may come in waves, sometimes accompanied by anger or guilt. You might question whether you could have done more or regret things left unsaid. Some people feel relief, especially if the person was suffering or if caring responsibilities were stressful. These feelings are common, but everyone's experience is different.

Practical and emotional support

Adjusting after a loss can take time. You may need help with day-to-day tasks or managing your own health. If you find yourself struggling to cope, consider speaking to a health professional.

Looking ahead

There is no set timeline for grief. When you feel ready, try to reintroduce activities you enjoy or explore new interests. Special dates such as birthdays or anniversaries can be difficult - planning ahead can help, whether that means spending time with others or marking the day privately. Life will never be quite the same, but it can still hold meaning and joy. Give yourself permission to take things slowly and to find moments of comfort and hope.

Remember: You are not alone. Support is available to help you navigate life after caring.

Practical matters

Registering a death – your local registration service will contact the next of kin once they have received the paperwork from the medical examiner. The family do not need to contact the Registration Service themselves.

If you were receiving benefits linked to your caring role, such as Carer's Allowance or the carer element of Universal Credit, you must inform the Department for Work and Pensions about your change in circumstances. You may also need to review housing arrangements or other financial matters. These practical steps are important, but there's no need to rush decisions about the rest of your life.

Life after caring

Life after caring often brings significant change. As you adjust, you might start to think about the future - whether that means taking time to rest, learning something new, reconnecting with your community, or returning to work. This new chapter is an opportunity think about what feels meaningful to you.

Rediscover interests and learn something new

You might want to refresh skills you haven't used for a while or explore new interests. Many former unpaid carers take courses for personal development or employment. Local Hubs and libraries, colleges, and community centres often offer part-time or evening classes in a wide range of subjects. Learning something new can boost confidence and help you meet new people.

Volunteering

If you feel ready to take on something new, volunteering can be a rewarding way to use your time and skills. It offers the chance to help others, stay active, and meet people in your community. Opportunities range from befriending older or disabled people to supporting charities with administration, fundraising, or specialist skills. Volunteering can also be a stepping stone to paid work or simply a way to stay connected and make a difference.

Returning to work

You may decide to return to paid employment or start something new. Begin by thinking about the skills you've gained – not only from previous jobs but also from your caring role. Organisation, problem-solving and communication are valuable in many workplaces. Consider what you enjoy and what you'd like to do next. If you're unsure, careers websites and local employment services can help you match your skills to suitable roles. They can also help you explore new career paths and connect with local employers.

Moving forward

Life after caring can feel daunting, but it can also be an opportunity to focus on your own wellbeing and goals. Take things at your own pace. Whether you choose rest, learning, volunteering, or work, this is your time to rebuild and rediscover what matters to you.



Useful services and support

Contact details accurate at time of printing August 2026

KEY

 Vale of Glamorgan services in green  Cardiff services in pink  National or regional

General support

Age Cymru Support for older people or their carers in Wales - advice, information and practical help.	030 0303 4498 enquiries@agecymru.org.uk www.agecymru.wales
Cardiff Council – Unpaid Carers Services Offers carers' needs assessments, advice on independent living, and access to local support groups and sitting services.	029 2023 4234 (select option 2 for the Cardiff Carers Advice Line) contactils@cardiff.gov.uk www.cardiff.gov.uk/carers
Cardiff Early Help If you are a parent carer, caring for a child under the age of 18, or a young carer who cares for an adult or a child.	030 0013 3133 ContactFAS@cardiff.gov.uk www.cardiffamilies.co.uk
Care'diff Cardiff Council communications, sign posting and support for unpaid carers.	029 2087 3419 CareDiff@cardiff.gov.uk
Care Inspectorate Wales The independent regulator of social care and childcare in Wales.	030 0790 0126 CIW@gov.wales www.careinspectorate.wales
Carers Trust Supports unpaid carers in Wales through information, advice and signposts to support from local network partners.	030 0772 9702 wales@carers.org www.carers.org
Carers Wales A membership organisation for unpaid carers, offering information, advice and resources.	029 2081 1370 info@carerswales.org www.carersuk.org/wales
Dementia Carers Count Advice, Information and support for unpaid carers of people living with dementia.	080 0652 1102 support@dementiacarers.org.uk www.dementiacarers.org.uk
Dementia Connect (Alzheimer's Society) Support for people affected by dementia	033 3150 3456 DementiaSupportLine@alzheimers.org.uk
Maggie's, Cardiff Practical and emotional support for people affected by cancer including families and unpaid carers.	029 2240 8024 cardiff@maggies.org www.maggies.org/our-centres/maggies-cardiff

Small Good Stuff Cardiff A directory of small, local care and support services.	Gemma Robinson (Cardiff Micro-Care Co-ordinator) 07977 782 447 gemma.robinson@cardiff.gov.uk www.communitycatalysts.co.uk/smallgoodstuff/subsite/cardiff
Unpaid Carers Information Service Patient Experience Team – Cardiff and Vale University Health Board.	029 2184 5692 pe.cav@wales.nhs.uk www.cavuhb.nhs.wales/patient-advice/patient-experience/unpaid-carers-information-service
Vale Community Liaison Service Connecting citizens with community, charity and voluntary support across the region.	GVS Broker (For people aged 18 to 60) 014 4674 1706 Age Connects Broker (for people aged 60+) accessible through Vale Community Resource Service 014 4670 4138
Vale of Glamorgan Council Carers Services Offers carer's needs assessments, information and advice for unpaid carers.	014 4670 0111 c1v@valeofglamorgan.gov.uk www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk/en/living/social_care/adult_services/Unpaid-Carers/Carers-Assessment.aspx
Vale Unpaid Carers Hub The Vale Unpaid Carers Hub is a one-stop-shop for unpaid carers living in The Vale of Glamorgan.	029 2192 1024 valecarershub@tuvida.org https://www.tuvida.org/vale-unpaid-carers-hub
Practical and benefits support	
Cardiff Council Hubs and Libraries Community hubs around the city where you can access council services, financial advice and support with employment.	029 2087 1071 www.cardiffhubs.co.uk
Cardiff Council Money Advice Service Guidance on benefit entitlements and one-off grants include Funeral Expense Payments, plus support navigating financial changes when caring ends.	029 2087 1071 AdviceHub@cardiff.gov.uk www.cardiffmoneyadvice.co.uk/benefits-and-income/help-for-unpaid-carers/
DWP / Carers Allowance & Universal Credit Use the GOV.UK portal to report changes to Carer's Allowance or Universal Credit once your caring role ends.	080 0731 0297 Relay UK (if you cannot hear or speak on the phone): 18001 then 0800 731 0297 www.gov.uk/carers-allowance
Lasting Power of Attorney Legal arrangement that allows people to act on behalf of others when they are unable to do for themselves.	If you need help, contact the Office of the Public Guardian : 030 0456 0300 customerservices@publicguardian.gov.uk www.gov.uk/power-of-attorney

Advocacy support

Advocacy Matters (Wales) Exists to promote the independent voice and protect the rights and choices of individuals with a disability through a range of advocacy and participation services.	029 2023 3733 info@advocacymatterswales.co.uk www.advocacymatterswales.co.uk
Advocacy Support Cymru Mental health advocacy charity.	029 2054 0444 info@ascymru.org.uk www.ascymru.org.uk
Age Cymru Various advocacy and support services.	030 0303 4498 www.agecymru.wales/our-work/advocacy
Cardiff & Vale Advocacy Gateway Commissioned by Cardiff Council and Vale of Glamorgan Council and managed by ProMo Cymru, they operate independently to support individuals eligible for advocacy support.	080 8801 0577 socialaction@promo.cymru www.cvag.cymru
Community Care and Wellbeing Service Can assist clients in making informed decisions, provide a holistic approach to meet their needs and formally advocate for their concerns.	029 2034 5294 info@ccaws.org.uk www.ccaws.org.uk/advocacy
Hub of Hope Mental health support directory.	www.hubofhope.co.uk
Llais Cardiff & Vale Region Gather views and experiences of health and social care, and put forward this feedback to be used by decision-makers to shape services.	029 2075 0112 cardiffandvaleenquiries@llaiscymru.org www.llaiswales.org
Mind Out Welcoming, affirmative and supportive advocacy service for LGBTQ+ people.	030 0772 9855 info@mindout.org.uk www.mindout.org.uk/get-support/advocacy

Mental health and emotional wellbeing

Big Moose A mental health charity offering free therapy and support.	www.bigmoosecharity.co
Cardiff Council Wellbeing Support Service 1:1 mentoring service.	029 2087 1071 wellbeingteam@cardiff.gov.uk www.cardiffhubs.co.uk/wellbeing/one-to-one-wellbeing-mentoring

Cardiff Mind Provides domiciliary and community mental health support.	029 2040 2040 admin@cardiffmind.org www.cardiffmind.org
Cardiff and Vale Recovery & Wellbeing College Provides free educational courses on a range of mental health, physical health and wellbeing topics.	029 2183 2619 Cardiffandvale.Recoverycollege@wales.nhs.uk www.cavuhb.nhs.wales/our-services/welcome-to-the-cardiff-and-vale-recovery-wellbeing-college
Community Care and Wellbeing Service Offers 6 sessions of counselling free of charge, followed by a donation of £10 per session for additional sessions.	029 2034 5294 info@ccaws.org.uk www.ccaws.org.uk/counselling
Marie Curie Provide care, support and information to people living with a terminal condition, their families and unpaid carers	080 0090 2309 support@mariecurie.org.uk www.mariecurie.org.uk
MIND in the Vale Provide information so people are aware of their rights and can make informed choices.	014 4673 0792 admin@mindinthevale.org.uk www.mindinthevale.org.uk
Resuscitation Council UK Support for anyone affected by cardiac arrest or delivering CPR	020 7388 4678 www.resus.org.uk
SilverCloud Free mental health and wellbeing programmes from NHS Wales (you can self-refer).	www.nhswales.silvercloudhealth.com/onboard/nhswales
Solace A service which supports unpaid carers looking after loved ones with a diagnosis of dementia or cognitive impairment.	029 2182 5636 029 2182 5644 www.cavamh.org.uk/directories/solace-cardiff-vale-uhb/
4 Winds Association User-led mental health charity offering peer support, training, and community-based activities.	029 2038 8144 contact@4winds.org.uk www.4winds.org.uk
Culture / religion specific support	
Asian Family Counselling Service Culturally sensitive and confidential phone or online based counselling service.	020 3876 8978 admin@asianfamily.co.uk www.asianfamilycounselling.org
Chaplaincy (CAVUHB hospitals) Spiritual, pastoral, and emotional support for patients, families and unpaid carers.	029 2184 3230 spiritual.careteam@wales.nhs.uk www.cavuhb.nhs.wales/staff-information/staff-benefits/support-networks/chaplaincy

Jewish Bereavement Counselling Service Bereavement support with understanding of cultural and religious traditions.	020 3468 7333 info@mbss.org.uk www.mbss.org.uk
Muslim Bereavement Support Bereavement support with understanding of cultural and religious traditions.	020 3468 7333 info@mbss.org.uk www.mbss.org.uk
Muslim Community Helpline Confidential listening service, practical help and information.	020 8904 8193 info@mbss.org.uk www.muslimcommunityhelpline.org.uk
LGBTQ+ support	
London Friend Charity supporting the LGBTQ+ community	020 7833 1674 office@londonfriend.org.uk www.londonfriend.org.uk
OUTpatients A patient-led organisation that understands what it is like to be a queer patient with cancer.	www.outpatients.org.uk
Pink Therapy Counselling directory for LGBTQ+ people.	www.pinktherapy.com
Switchboard LGBTQIA+ Support Line.	080 0011 9100 hello@switchboard.lgbt www.switchboard.lgbt
Support in relation to learning disabilities and neurodivergence	
Marie Curie Easy Read Information booklets in relation to terminal illness and bereavement.	www.mariecurie.org.uk/help/support/publications/easy-reads
Mencap A UK charity for people with a learning disability and their families and carers.	080 8808 1111 info@mencaptrust.org.uk www.mencap.org.uk/help-and-advice/health/wellbeing/dealing-bereavement
National Autistic Society Support, information and advice for people with autism and their families.	wales@nas.org.uk www.autism.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/mental-health/bereavement
Scope Charity working towards equality for disabled people.	080 8800 3333 helpline@scope.org.uk www.scope.org.uk/advice-and-support/financial-support-when-someone-dies

Hospices

City Hospice Offers palliative care in the community for people with life-limiting conditions.	029 2052 4150 info@cityhospice.org.uk www.cityhospice.org.uk
Hospice UK Information and support about hospice and end-of-life care.	www.hospiceuk.org/information-and-support
Marie Curie Hospice (Cardiff and the Vale) Specialist care and support for people living with a terminal illness, and support for their families and carers.	029 2042 6000 penarth.admin@mariecurie.org.uk www.mariecurie.org.uk/services/hospices/cardiff
Tŷ Hafan Children's Hospice Specialist care and support for children with life-shortening conditions and their families.	029 2053 2200 hospicereception@tyhafan.org www.tyhafan.org

Bereavement and grief support

At a Loss Website detailing a wide range of bereavement support.	www.ataloss.org
Bereavement Support Service (Cardiff and Vale University Health Board) Support for bereaved people helping connect them to specialist sources of support.	029 2184 4949 Text: 07812 495281 / 07812 495329 Cav.Bereavementservices@wales.nhs.uk www.cavuhb.nhs.wales/our-services/bereavement-services
Calon Bereavement Chorus A new chorus to support those who are bereaved after having cared for a loved one with dementia.	07503 158 667 (Poppy) poppy@forgetmenotchorus.com www.forgetmenotchorus.com/forget-me-not-chorus-calonsupporting-those-who-are-bereaved-following-the-loss-of-a-loved-one-with-dementia
Cardiff Bereavement Service Council service providing information advice and signposting.	029 2054 4820 thornhillreception@cardiff.gov.uk www.cardiffbereavement.co.uk
Cardiff Critical Care Services Provides care for critically ill adult patients in the General Intensive Care Units based at the University Hospital of Wales.	029 2074 7747 www.cardiffcriticalcare.co.uk/bereavement-support
Compassionate Penarth - Compassionate Cymru Aim to help people access and offer information, care and support in a compassionate way within their communities. Our particular focus is on care and support at the end of people's lives, whenever that happens.	CompassionatePenarth@gmail.com www.compassionate.cymru/compassionate-penarth

Cruse Bereavement Support Bereavement support, information and advice.	080 8808 1677 Cardiff@cruse.org.uk www.cruse.org.uk
Dementia UK – Admiral Nurse Dementia Helpline Specialist advice for those living with dementia, their families and carers	080 0888 6678 helpline@dementiauk.org www.dementiauk.org/information-and-support/looking-after-yourself-as-a-carer/grief-bereavement-and-loss
The Good Grief Trust Find details about support cafes and specific bereavement groups.	hello@thegoodgrieftrust.org www.thegoodgrieftrust.org
GriefChat Connects people directly to specialist bereavement counsellors through a live chat programme.	015 2488 9823 info@griefchat.co.uk www.griefchat.co.uk
The Loss Foundation UK national cancer bereavement charity.	030 0200 4112 hello@thelossfoundation.org www.thelossfoundation.org
Macmillan Cancer Support A wide range of support for those affected by cancer. Online chat also available.	080 8808 0000 www.macmillan.org.uk/cancer-information-and-support/supporting-someone/coping-with-bereavement
My Grief My Way Online bereavement support package that can be worked through at your own pace.	www.mygriefmyway.co.uk
Ray of Light Cancer Support Telephone befriending, online support groups, as well as many in-person groups and activities within the communities across South East Wales.	07971 349 703 contactus@rayoflightwales.org.uk www.rayoflightwales.org.uk
Registration Service Vale of Glamorgan An inbox you can email with any questions or queries.	registrationservice@valeofglamorgan.gov.uk
Samaritans Provides a 24 hour a day phone line for those in crisis or who are feeling suicidal.	116 123 Welsh Language: 0808 164 0123
SSAFA the Armed Forces Charity Offers three support groups for bereaved Armed Forces families, providing events which facilitate peer support, a safe place to grieve for lost loved ones, and an opportunity for respite.	080 0260 6780 https://www.ssafa.org.uk/get-help/
Sue Ryder Online Bereavement Community.	www.sueryder.org/grief-support/services

Tell Us Once A service that lets you report a death to most government organisations in one go.	www.gov.uk/after-a-death/organisations-you-need-to-contact-and-tell-us-once
Wales Air Ambulance An after-care service that can be accessed by relatives of patients attended by the Wales Air Ambulance Team.	030 0300 0067 emrts.patient@wales.nhs.uk www.walesairambulance.com/our-impact/aftercare-support
Support for partners	
The Jolly Dollies A support network for women who have lost their life partners (annual subscription fee of £20).	www.thejollydollies.co.uk
WAY (Widowed and Young) Foundation Peer support for those under 50 when their partner dies.	030 0201 0051 www.widowedandyoung.org.uk
WAY Up Peer support for those in their 50s and 60s when a partner dies.	www.way-up.co.uk
Support after the death of a baby/child	
Child Bereavement UK Individual support sessions and group support for bereaved parents and families.	080 0028 8840 helpline@childbereavementuk.org www.childbereavementuk.org
Child Death Helpline A freephone service for those affected by the death of a child.	080 0282 986 www.childdeathhelpline.org.uk
The Compassionate Friends National charity providing peer support to bereaved parents, adult siblings and grandparents who have experienced the death of a child.	034 5123 2304 helpline@tcf.org.uk www.tcf.org.uk
Sands The helpline is for anyone who has been affected by the death of a baby and wants to talk to someone about their experience.	0808 164 3332 helpline@sands.org.uk www.sands.org.uk
Sibling Support Helpline managed by Child Bereavement UK's bereavement support practitioners - available for young people up to the age of 25 in the UK whose brother or sister has died, their families, and professionals.	080 0102 6175 www.siblingsupport.co.uk
Tŷ Hafan Family Wellbeing Team The expert family support team can provide tailored support to you and your family to help you work through your grief in a way that's right for you.	029 2053 2200 familysupport@tyhafan.org

Support for sudden death

Care for the Family A national charity which aims to promote strong family life and to help those who face family difficulties.	029 2081 0800 mail@cff.org.uk www.careforthefamily.org.uk/bereavement/sudden-and-traumatic-death
The Lullaby Trust Support and advice for those affected by the sudden and unexpected death of a baby or child.	080 8802 6868 support@lullabytrust.org.uk www.lullabytrust.org.uk
Sudden Unexplained Death in Childhood UK Support and information for anyone affected by sudden unexplained death in childhood.	078 8035 0942 info@sudc.org.uk www.sudc.org.uk
2 Wish Provides immediate and ongoing bereavement support for families, individuals and professionals affected by the sudden and traumatic death of a child or young adult aged 25 or under.	014 4385 3125 info@2wish.org.uk www.2wish.org.uk

Support for those bereaved by suicide

Facing the Future A service provided by Samaritans, set up to provide support for those bereaved by suicide.	ftf@cls.org.uk www.facingthefuturegroup.org
Jacob Abraham Foundation Aims to help prevent suicide through direct intervention with vulnerable people, raise awareness on mental health/suicide issues, promote positive mental health and support people bereaved through suicide in South Wales.	029 2240 4736 contactus@jacobsfoundation.org.uk www.jacobsfoundation.org.uk
National Advisory and Liaison Service (NALS) Cymru Confidential support for people affected by suicide or a suspected suicide	07880 350 942 info@sudc.org.uk www.sudc.org.uk
Survivors of Bereavement by Suicide Peer-led support for people bereaved or affected by suicide.	014 4385 3125 info@2wish.org.uk www.2wish.org.uk

Volunteering and new purpose	
Adult Learning Cardiff Provide courses suitable for learners of all abilities within the Cardiff area.	029 2087 2030 www.adultlearningcardiff.co.uk
Cardiff U3A Provides opportunities for retired and semi-retired people to learn and socialise.	07544 289 434 groups@cardiffu3a.org.uk www.cardiffu3a.org.uk
C3SC Cardiff Volunteer Centre Provides drop-in sessions across Cardiff for volunteer placements, support, and local networking.	029 2048 5722 / 07973 725 569 volunteer@c3sc.org.uk www.c3sc.org.uk/volunteer
Community Volunteering Team and inclusion activities (Cardiff Wellbeing Support Service) Signposting for community activities and volunteering opportunities.	029 2087 1071 volunteer@cardiff.gov.uk www.cardiffhubs.co.uk/volunteering
Get Back on Track These FREE courses are funded by the Welsh Government and designed to support eligible individuals to return to employment and maximise their job opportunities.	014 4673 3762 palmerstoncentre@valeofglamorgan.gov.uk www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk/en/working/adult_and_community_learning/Get-Back-on-Track/Get-Back-on-Track.aspx
Glamorgan Voluntary Services Information for volunteering and other opportunists in the Vale.	014 4674 1706 www.volunteering-wales.net
Into Work (Cardiff Council) Provides employment, training and digital support to individuals actively seeking work or looking to upskill.	029 2087 1071 intoworkadvice@cardiff.gov.uk www.intoworkcardiff.co.uk
Menter Caerdydd (Welsh language activities) Provide a range of in-person and online activities, educational classes and fitness sessions for adults.	029 2068 9888 www.mentercaerdydd.cymru/en/adults
The Open University Flexible distance learning and online courses.	030 0303 5303 www.open.ac.uk
Vale of Glamorgan Adult Community Learning Provides a wide range of lifelong learning opportunities.	014 4677 3831 www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk/en/working/adult_and_community_learning/Adult-Community-Learning.aspx
Volunteer Cardiff City-wide volunteering platform with hundreds of opportunities to support numerous causes.	volunteeringcardiff@cardiff.gov.uk www.volunteercardiff.co.uk

We know that many people who support a family member or friend don't always think of themselves as carers, and that recognising yourself in this role can take time. For this reason, we've included a simple definition of an unpaid carer, to help you decide whether this support and information may be relevant for you, now or in the future:

An unpaid carer is a family member, partner, friend or neighbour who provides care for an adult or disabled child who cannot manage without support due to illness, disability, mental health issues, or addiction.

**This handbook has been co-produced with unpaid carers.
We would like to thank everyone involved for their contributions.**



**BWRDD PARTNERIAETH
RHANBARTHOL
CAERDYDD A'R FRO
CARDIFF & VALE
REGIONAL PARTNERSHIP
BOARD**



**GIG
CYMRU
NHS
WALES**

Bwrdd Iechyd Prifysgol
Caerdydd a'r Fro
Cardiff and Vale
University Health Board



Bwrdd Iechyd Prifysgol Caerdydd a'r Fro
Tim Iechyd Cyhoeddus
Cardiff and Vale University Health Board
Public Health Team



compassionate



garedig



This document is also available in Welsh.

