Millions are lost in unclaimed benefits in Northern Ireland - New research* shows a record number of carers are missing out on vital financial support due to a lack of advice.

Research shows that in Northern Ireland, 21,000 full-time carers are missing out on £65 million of unclaimed Carer’s Allowance. In the Southern area alone, over 4,500 carers are losing out over £4.5 million.

‘Carers face greater financial hardship with many giving up paid work to look after a loved one. Changes in financial circumstances can cause worry and anxiety. Benefits Carers are entitled to, are often overlooked due to lack of awareness, the pressures of caring and simply not having time to deal with these matters,’ explained Carers Matter Manager, Patricia Jordan.

‘We recognise the pressures Carers are under and work in partnership with Citizen Advice Bureaux offices to offer a free fast-track confidential advice service and benefits check throughout the Southern area. A CAB Adviser will help them to ensure that they receive all entitlements along with any grant funding such as the Family Fund and Community Care Grants. Many of our Carers have found that it has led to additional income,’ she added. ‘We are very grateful to the Citizen Advice Bureaux across the Southern Area for the priority help they all give to our carers. Financial worries and difficult form-filling are a big cause of stress for Carers.’

Jennifer Fearon, Manager of CAB Craigavon said, ‘The fast track process established by Carers Matter means that we can be more responsive to the needs of Carers, providing advice and help in a way and at a time that suits their caring responsibilities. This has been a very simple and successful process and the response from Carers has been very positive.’

42% of carers surveyed in Northern Ireland said they had missed out on financial support as a result of a lack of advice and information. Almost half (47%) of those had missed out for more than two years - resulting in the loss of thousands of pounds in income.

Lack of financial support and rising living costs were hitting carers hard:
- 33% carers in debt as a result of caring - 1 in 7 in debt over £10,000.
- 4 in 10 carers were cutting back on food (41%) and over half cutting back on heating (53%).
- A third were relying on overdrafts (33%) or credit cards (28%) to make ends meet.

Contact Carers Matter for a CAB appointment by contacting 028 4062 7581 or email reception@carersmatter.com

News

Befriending and Good Morning Service

The winter is a lonely time and isolating for older people in rural communities. A new Befriending and Good Morning Service from Loughshore Care Partnership will help this group with a free and confidential support service in the South Lough Shore area.

Local volunteers will spend an hour or two a week with their ‘befriendee’, or make a Good Morning call to them each morning.

For information contact, The Befriending Team
028 3885 1911 or befriendinginitiative@live.co.uk

Autism workshops for parents

Autism Services at The Acorns, Armagh are holding a “Make and Take” session, initially for parents and Carers of children who have received a diagnosis of A.S.D within the past three years.

Parents and carers can come along, meet other parents and make and take home useful tasks, visuals and schedules that are helpful to their children.

For further information on dates, contact the Acorns on 028 3836 6777

Welcome

A group of Polish and other European carers meet up in the Ethnic Minority Centre, Newry Town Hall for a chat and relax and help with their caring issues.

Join us for a coffee on the 2nd Friday morning in the month at 10.30-12.00.

We will meet on 14 Feb, 14 Mar, 11 April, 9 May and 13 June.

For more information contact hilary@carersmatter.com or 07920 407566 or Artur Kmiecik at ethnicsupport@newryandmourne.gov.uk on 028 3025 2544

What’s on

Take Time for Yourself

Three Week Programmes - in Newry, Craigavon, Keady & Dungannon.

This lovely three session programme is about taking time out for yourself, concentrating on your needs, looking after your health and having a couple of hours to relax and unwind.

The programme includes looking after your mental health, managing stress, learning new relaxation techniques and a final aromatherapy session.

Venue: Newry Library
Date: Thurs 27 March, 3 & 10 April
Time: 10.30am - 12.30pm

Venue: Keady Day Centre
Date: Mon 31 March, 7 & 14 April
Time: 10.30am - 12.30pm

Venue: Lurgan Library
Date: Thurs 1, 8, 15 May
Time: 10.30am - 12.30pm

Venue: Dungannon Library
Date: Tues 20, 27 May, 3 June
Time: 10.30am - 12.30pm

Mood Matters

Mood Matters is an award winning educational programme, developed and delivered by Aware Defeat Depression since 2000. The programme incorporates basic Cognitive Behavioural Therapy concepts, teaching participants how our thinking and behaviour can affect how we feel, physically and emotionally with self-help techniques.

It helps to deal with stress, low mood and depression and looks at the importance of looking after our mental health. Carers Matter are able to offer a FREE one-off Mood Matter session.

Venue: Lurgan Library
Date: Fri 28 February
Time: 10.30am - 12.30pm

Venue: Newry Library
Date: Thurs 13 March
Time: 10.30am - 12.30pm

Venue: Dungannon Library
Date: Tues 25 March
Time: 10.30am - 12.30pm

Health Matters for Carers

Sign up for this 4 session programme all about your health and wellbeing.

- Learn from the Pharmacy - services they can offer you - have your blood pressure and sugar levels checked.
- Learn from our Style Coach - how to dress to suit your shape on a budget
- Cook it - Looking after your own healthy eating when you are a Carer.
- Finally - Pamper Yourself - treat yourself to some therapy treats.

Venue: First Steps, Dungannon
Date: 24 March, 28 April, 19 May, & 16 Jun
Time: 3.00pm - 5.00pm

Venue: Newry Library
Date: Thurs 27 March, 3 & 10 April
Time: 10.30am - 12.30pm

Venue: Keady Day Centre
Date: Mon 31 March, 7 & 14 April
Time: 10.30am - 12.30pm

Venue: Lurgan Library
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Transforming your care

A new workshop from Carers NI and the Transforming Your Care (TYC) team aims to develop carers’ communication skills and give an insight into how they can influence decision makers under the new arrangements for health and social care provision - including what works for carers in terms of short breaks.

Venue: Banbridge District Enterprises
Date: Weds 12 March 2014
Time: 10.30am - 12.30pm

Contact Claire Phillips on 028 9043 9843 or email claire.phillips@carersni.org Booking is essential.
**Carer’s Summer Trip**

Join us for a delightful day trip away to relax at the wonderful National Trust House Mount Stewart on the shores of Strangford Lough. Enjoy Mount Stewart’s glorious setting; take a leisurely stroll in the gardens or a lakeside walk, a guided tour of the house and lunch in the Bay Restaurant. Browse in the Gift Shop and plant shop.

The subsidised cost of £20 includes travel, tour of the house and a two-course lunch. A number of coach pick-up points across the Southern area will be available.

**National Trust Members £15** on production of their membership card on the day. Booking essential with payment prior to the trip.

**Transport Buddy**

‘Transport Buddy’ run by Volunteer Now, aims to help the lives of disabled people who are nervous or reluctant to use public transport.

The scheme helps people 14 years and over with disabilities, who want to learn to travel safely and independently using a range of public and community transport. This will give them the freedom to get to and from school, work and social activities without having to rely on others.

Volunteer transport buddies will travel with trainees, until they have the confidence to travel on their own.

For more information on the service, or on how to become a Transport Buddy Volunteer, contact Jill Hunter on 07974 610120 or email buddytransport@volunteernow.co.uk

**Make joint caring easier with ‘jointly’**

Carers UK has launched a mobile phone app called ‘Jointly’, which is a tool to help families share and co-ordinate care for loved ones.

Of the 6.5 million carers in the UK - half juggle care with work and a third care for older relatives alongside raising children. Once downloaded, you can share ‘Jointly’ with an invited circle of family and friends. You can manage appointments, have medicine lists always to hand for emergency hospital visits and organise tasks and rotas of care.

For more information go to www.jointlyapp.com or download from the Apple or Google Play stores.

If you use this tool, please tell us what you think, reception@carersmatter.com

**Health and Information Morning**

Where do I get help?

Carers Matter will be hosting a Health and Information morning in Dungannon Leisure Centre on Wednesday 11 June at 10.00am - 12.30pm with advice and support for Carers.

Over 30 information stands will help to provide information for many Carers issues.

The Keeping Well Van can check blood pressure & blood sugar levels with cancer prevention advice & awareness.

To register telephone 028 4062 7581 or email reception@carersmatter.com

**Speak up for carers**

Would you like to make sure that Carers voices are heard?

The Trust would like to invite six Carers from across the Southern trust area who represent a range of Caring experiences, to join the Carers Reference Group.

If you are currently a Carer over 18 of someone assessed as needing a service from the Southern Trust and have experience of caring within mental health, physical or learning disability, older people, acute or children’s services, you can apply to join the existing Group who meet quarterly to help to discuss and participate in the design, planning, implementation and review of services to meet Caring needs.

For more information contact Patricia McCrink, Carers Coordinator SHSCT on 028 3083 4252 on email patricia.mccrink@southerntrust.hscni.net

Closing date is 26 Feb 2014.

**Home-Start**

Home-Start is a charity offering support and friendship to families, with at least one child under 5 (or pre-school), who are struggling to cope for whatever reason e.g. post natal depression, disability, illness, isolation, multiple births etc.

Each family is carefully matched with a fully trained volunteer (volunteers all must have parenting experience themselves), so that the support is tailored to the individual needs of the family.

If you require any more information or would like to hear how to become a volunteer, contact Home-Start on: Armagh & Dungannon: 028 8778 9489 Newry & Mourne: 028 3026 6139 Craigavon: 028 3834 5357
# Outreach and Support Groups

## Newry and Mourne Support Groups

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Group Description</th>
<th>Date/Time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Newry</td>
<td>Altnaveigh House (opposite TESCO's). Carers Coffee Morning</td>
<td>4th Monday, 10.30am - 12.00pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kilkeel</td>
<td>Seashell Centre for parents of children with Autism</td>
<td>Last Thursday, 7.30pm - 9.00pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mayobridge</td>
<td>Women's Group, Mayobridge Convent</td>
<td>2nd Wednesday, 7.30pm - 9.00pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mullaghbawn</td>
<td>HUGS parents support group, Women's Family Health Initiative</td>
<td>Last Wed 11am - 1pm, 2nd Wed 7 - 8pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newry</td>
<td>WITAMY Polish and European Carers, Newry Town Hall</td>
<td>2nd Friday, 10.30am - 12.30pm</td>
</tr>
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## Outreach

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<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Group Description</th>
<th>Date/Time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mullaghbawn</td>
<td>Women and Family Health Initiative</td>
<td>By appointment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kilkeel</td>
<td>Kilkeel Health Centre, Drop-in Session</td>
<td>4th Monday, 3pm - 4.30pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newry</td>
<td>Daisy Hill Hospital, Drop-in Session</td>
<td>Thurs 20 Feb, 24 Apr, 19 Jun, 10 - 12.30pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cullyhanna</td>
<td>WALD Centre, Cullyhanna</td>
<td>By appointment</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

## Armagh and Dungannon Support Groups

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Group Description</th>
<th>Date/Time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Armagh Carers</td>
<td>Armagh Hotel, Coffee Morning</td>
<td>1st Friday, 12noon - 1.00pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clogher Carers</td>
<td>The Rathmore</td>
<td>3rd Monday, 8.00pm - 10.00pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dungannon-U Matter</td>
<td>First Steps Women's Centre, Dungannon</td>
<td>3rd Monday, 3.00pm - 5.00pm</td>
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<th>Date/Time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Armagh</td>
<td>Centre for Independent Living</td>
<td>By appointment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coalisland</td>
<td>Western House, Coalisland</td>
<td>By appointment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coalisland</td>
<td>The Library, Coalisland</td>
<td>2nd Thursday, 10.00am - 12noon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dungannon</td>
<td>First Steps Womans Centre, Dungannon</td>
<td>3rd Monday, By appointment</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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## Craigavon and Banbridge Support Groups

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Group Description</th>
<th>Date/Time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ballyward</td>
<td>Ballyward Church Hall</td>
<td>3rd Tuesday, 11.00am - 1.00pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Men's Group</td>
<td>Carers Matter, Banbridge</td>
<td>2nd Tuesday, 2.00pm - 4.00pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brownlow</td>
<td>SHARE Parents Support Group - children with disabilities</td>
<td>2nd Tuesday, 10.30am - 12noon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lawrence town</td>
<td>Lawrence Community Centre</td>
<td>4th Monday, 7.30 - 9.00pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lawrence town</td>
<td>Lawrence Community Centre</td>
<td>3rd Monday, 7.30 - 9.00pm</td>
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<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Group Description</th>
<th>Date/Time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Craigavon</td>
<td>Craigavon Area Hospital, Drop-in Session</td>
<td>Thurs 20 Feb, 24 Apr, 19 Jun, 10 - 12.30pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Portadown</td>
<td>Portadown Health Centre, Drop-in Session</td>
<td>1st Thursday 10.00am - 12noon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lurgan</td>
<td>Citizens Advice Bureaux, Lurgan</td>
<td>By appointment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gilford</td>
<td>Gilford Community Centre</td>
<td>By appointment</td>
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## Carers Service with Citizens Advice Bureaux

Carers Matter offer a Carers FAST-TRACK Appointment Service for benefit checks and advice through Citizens Advice Bureaux. We can offer Carers Clinics at the following Citizens Advice Bureaux venues across The Southern Trust areas: Newry, Warrenpoint, Kilkeel, Crossmaglen, Mullaghbawn, Armagh, Dungannon, Keady, Aughnacloy, Banbridge, Rathfriland, Lurgan and Portadown.

## New Outreach Centres

New Outreach Centres are now running across the Southern Trust area in Coalisland Library, Craigavon Area Hospital and Daisy Hill Hospital.

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Outreach Centre
Support Group

Carers Matter is a registered charity and a company limited by guarantee. Company No: NI 050419. Charitable No: XR36252.