

CARING MATTERS

Autumn/Winter 2018

A FREE Magazine for Carers in Dorset, Bournemouth and Poole

Know your rights as a carer

Each year Carers Rights Day brings organisations across the UK together to help carers in their local communities know their rights and find out how to get the help and support they are entitled to.

Carers Rights Day 2018 - Friday 30 November

IF YOU are one of the 6.5 million people who currently provides unpaid care for a family member or friend, what rights do you have?

SUPPORT

The Care Act 2014 states that if you care for another adult over 18 years of age then you are entitled to a carer's assessment in your own right.

A carer's assessment will evaluate what help, if any, the local authority can offer you.

To qualify you must be found to have 'eligible needs', meaning you meet the requirements of the national criteria. The council will reach a decision based on the information you give them.

If your local authority decides you are eligible for support, it is legally obliged to provide it. As long as you consent to assistance, a plan will be put together to determine how best your needs can be met.

Cont'd on P2



Where Joy's experience counts - page 3



Catching up with the world - page 9

Know your rights

as a carer (cont'd from front page)

The kind of help that might be made available to you includes:

- Access to technology where such services are unavailable
- Help with transport costs, where it is considered a necessity
- Help to improve your health and wellbeing (mental and physical).

AT WORK

Managing work and care responsibilities can be very challenging, so it's important to find out about your rights.

The law gives you 'statutory rights', which everyone has, and include:

- The right to request flexible working
- The right to time off in emergencies
- Protection from discrimination

FINANCIAL HELP

As an unpaid carer you may also be eligible for financial assistance. There is a range of benefits you may qualify for, along with Carer's Allowance.

If you are unable to work or your income is reduced due to your caring commitments, you may be able to receive further financial assistance to help with

day-to-day costs. These include:

- Council Tax Reduction – a reduction in your council tax bill of up to 100%
- Housing Benefit – a portion or all of your monthly expenditure if you rent
- Income Support – available for people on low incomes working between 16 and no hours per week
- Heating allowances – depending upon age and circumstances, the Winter Fuel Payment, Cold Weather Payment or Warm Home Discount can help with fuel costs during the winter months.

Not all carers can get help with health costs but if you claim certain benefits, or have a low income, you may be able to get help. You may get help paying for:

- Prescriptions in England (in Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland prescriptions are free for everyone)
- NHS dental charges
- Sight tests
- Vouchers towards the cost of glasses and contact lenses
- Travel costs.

You can find more information and get independent advice at www.carersuk.org or through their telephone helpline on Mondays and Tuesdays between 10am and 4pm - call 0808 808 7777.

.....
If you would like a summary of Caring Matters in a different language, a large format, Braille, or on tape, call 01202 458204 or email carersteam@bournemouth.gov.uk

Caring Matters is published jointly by the Borough of Poole, Bournemouth Borough Council (contact Carers Support Service, 01202 458204 for both) and Dorset County Council (01305 221016, Adult Access team) in partnership with NHS Dorset Clinical Commissioning Group (01305) 368900.

Your experiences can improve understanding for new NHS staff

WOULD you like to share your experience as a carer or user of an NHS service?

Why not join our NHS **Experts by Experience** programme?

You'll play a vital role, giving staff an understanding of your experience of the NHS, both the good and the not so good.

We are looking for people to share their insights and experience at our staff induction sessions.

You will support our trainer to facilitate a group discussion and deliver a 20-minute talk about your journey as a carer/ service user.

You'll be supported to write and present your story every step of the way.

Sessions are organised on a rota basis.

An involvement payment and travel costs are provided.

To find out more and receive an information pack, call 01202 443261.



I feel valued, I'm not isolated and I'm doing something worthwhile, says Joy

Expert by Experience, that's the grand title I sometimes go by, *writes Joy Ford (above).*

In reality I'm just an ordinary person, wife, mum and grandmother who has retired.

After a short break at home I felt the need to be doing something, I was still physically and mentally active.

A friend told me about NHS Induction talks given by people like you and me, to new staff starting work with Dorset Healthcare University NHS Foundation Trust.

What does an Expert by Experience talk about? *(Please turn to next page)*

Working to meet carers' diverse needs

CARERS' experiences are many and varied, depending on circumstances, home situation, family commitments, geography and the needs of the cared-for person.

People often do not choose to become a carer but find themselves in this position. This may happen suddenly because of an accident or illness affecting a loved one.

It can also happen more gradually, perhaps as a long-term condition deteriorates to the point where the person cannot cope without their support.

Carers can be all ages, live in rural or urban areas and be male or female and find themselves caring for the short term or over many years.

The latest surveys of Dorset show that peer support, someone to talk to for information, expertise about a condition,

advice about navigating 'the system', or urgent help in a crisis, are the things that help them the most.

They also show how isolated carers can become and what they often must give up, including hobbies, leisure and even work commitments.

Dorset County Council is in the process of redeveloping the advice and support it offers carers which recognises and acknowledges the diversity among the caring population.

The council also recognises that many carers do not even recognise the term 'carer' and see themselves as spouse partner, parent, son or daughter or friend.

The council is working with the voluntary sector and health services to provide services that recognise carers' common needs and a single point of contact to help them find the support they need.

Doing something worthwhile

Cont'd from previous page

Well I'm part of a lovely team of people from all walks of life and various ages. We explain to all the new recruits what it's like to be either an unpaid carer to someone close to us, or as someone who uses the NHS services as a patient.

I have been a carer to a seriously mentally-ill relative. My narrative is hard to hear, but the feedback I get from the new staff is very positive.

I also talk about being a patient having come through two serious operations due

to cancer. We talk about the good, the bad and sometimes the funny moments, just explaining what it is like to be on the receiving end.

Why do I personally do it and what do I get out of it?

It's enjoyable to meet and talk to people of all ages.

I don't feel isolated, I feel I'm part of something. I look forward to catching up with another member of the Expert by Experience team as we work in pairs.

I feel valued and that I'm doing something worthwhile.

Come join us and sing your cares away



*There's a group that meets on a Monday,
It's a joyous and wonderful thing
It wakes us all up after Sunday,
Cos when we're together, we sing!*

*There are songs full of joy and of laughter,
There are songs, some are old, some are new
There are songs you can sing to the rafters
There are songs that are quiet and blue*

*But with Chrissie, our wonderful leader
You can always be sure of some fun
She will always give us a breather
To have coffee and biscuits and buns*

*You don't need to be able to sing
We just love to make plenty of noise
It fills our hearts up to the brim
And gives us a chance to rejoice*

*So if you fancy a chat Monday mornings
Want to sing to relieve all your cares
Then join us, come on, don't be boring
We're waiting to welcome you here.*

*In addition to all the above
And when Christmas time comes all too soon
The choir is open to invites
To sing anywhere that you choose (within reason!)*

*Give Chrissy a ring with your dates and your times
She'll try to fit you all in
Then we'll cheer you all up singing carols
With the joy only Christmas can bring*

*Please contact Chrissy on 07840 976584 or
email chrissy.hedge@hotmail.com*



A book of poems is raising money for dementia patients at the Royal Bournemouth Hospital to be spent on items like games used by volunteers working with the patients. The poems include:

Did You

*No-one came to see me today
I don't think they did anyway!
They might have done, I can't be sure,
I don't remember any more*

*If it was you, please come again,
And tell me what we said
I like to have a chat sometimes
When I'm confined to bed.*

'In their shoes' is selling well. It is available from the RBH PALS office, the hospital's charity shop (both near the main entrance) and the charity office.

Top tips to help you stay well this winter

WINTER conditions can be seriously bad for our health. This is especially true for people aged 65 or older and those with long-term conditions such as COPD, bronchitis, emphysema, asthma, diabetes or heart or kidney disease.

Being cold can raise the risk of increased blood pressure, heart attack and stroke.

The cold and damp weather, ice, snow and high winds can all aggravate any existing health problems and make us more vulnerable to winter illnesses.

But there are lots of things you can do to stay well this winter.

Talk to your pharmacist

Feeling unwell? Don't wait – get advice from your nearest pharmacist.

At the first sign of a winter illness, even if it's just a cough or cold, get advice from your pharmacist, before it gets more serious. Act quickly. The sooner you get advice from a pharmacist the better.

Pharmacists are fully qualified to advise you on the best course of action.

This can be the best and quickest way to help you recover and get back to normal. If you can't get to a pharmacist yourself, ask someone to go for you or call your local pharmacy.

Make sure you get your flu jab

The flu virus strikes in winter and it can

be far more serious than you think.

Flu can lead to serious complications such as bronchitis and pneumonia and it can be deadly.

That's why the flu jab is free if you're aged 65 or over, or if you have a long-term health condition.

If you have young children or grandchildren they may also be eligible for a free flu vaccination.

And if you are the main carer of an older or disabled person you may also be eligible for the free flu jab.

Just speak to your GP or pharmacist. You can also find more information at nhs.uk/getflujab

Also, don't forget that if you're aged 65 or over, you are eligible for the pneumococcal vaccine, which will help protect you from diseases such as pneumonia. Ask your GP.

Keep yourself warm

Severe cold snaps can have dramatic effects on everyday life, especially for those people who are already vulnerable because of their age, illness or disability.

It's important for you as a carer to take care of yourself as well as the person you care for. These tips may help:

Stay active

When you're indoors, try not to sit still for more than an hour. Get up and walk around, make yourself a warm drink and spread any chores throughout the day.



Leaden skies and a wild sea whipped up by freezing winter gales - it's time to wrap up well against the cold.

Chair-based exercises and simply moving your arms and legs and wiggling your toes are helpful if walking is difficult.

Dress for the weather

Wear lots of thin layers – clothes made from cotton, wool or fleecy fibres are particularly good and help to maintain body heat. A hat is especially effective for keeping warm outdoors.

Wear shoes with a good grip to prevent slips and falls when walking outside. Always take a mobile phone with you when you go out.

- Heat your home to at least 18°C (65°F)
- Set your heating to come on just before you get up and switch off after you've gone to bed. If you can't heat all the rooms you use, heat the living room during the day and your bedroom just before you go to sleep

- Close curtains and shut doors to keep heat in the rooms you use most
- Get your heating system checked regularly by qualified professionals and keep your home well ventilated
- Get your electric blanket tested every three years and never use it together with a hot water bottle
- Do not use a gas cooker or oven to heat your home - there is a risk of carbon monoxide poisoning.

Keeping the heat in

- Fit draught proofing to seal any gaps around windows and doors
- Make sure your loft, wall cavities and water cylinder and pipes are insulated
- Draw your curtains at dusk to stop heat escaping from your room
- If you use oil heating, you might be interested in joining an oil club to save money. For more information visit www.citizensadvice.org.uk/oilclubs.

Contact the Energy Saving Advice Service (ESAS), which is funded by the government, for more free advice on how to reduce fuel bills and make your home more energy efficient.

ESAS can be contacted on 0300 123 1234 (9am to 8pm Monday to Friday).

Dorset charity provides laptops and tablets for carers

IN THE last four years, **Dorset Computers4Carers** has provided over 60 laptops and tablets for full-time carers.

Christine Edwards, administrator for the charity, said: 'When we started up DorsetComputers4Carers, we were worried about adding to carers' problems.

'If you haven't used a computer before, it can be just a box of mystery which comes up with strange responses when you try to get started. So, is it worth trying to get to grips with it? Many of our clients would say "yes, most definitely!"'

One of those is Sue, caring for her husband in a village near Shaftesbury.

Although Sue's husband is severely disabled, he was able to drive, and so shopping and so on wasn't a problem.

However, after a health set-back, he had to stop driving, and as Sue had no licence, this made life very difficult.

Sue had used a computer in the past, and so she was very quickly able to shop, make appointments, contact friends and many other benefits with the laptop we gave her.

Tracy has been a full-time carer since the birth of her son, who has multiple disabilities needing round-the-clock care.

She had always found her old laptop so useful, that when it finally stopped

working, beyond repair, she was lost without it. The replacement we gave her meant that she could take up her old activities again.

'We had a request from Jim, who was caring for his wife who suffers from depression and psychosis,' said Christine. 'He was unable to leave her, and living in the countryside felt isolated and cut off.'

'He had never used a computer, and was nervous about doing so, so we provided him with a tablet, which, with its touchscreen, he found easy to use and very helpful.'

Christine said: 'We always try to get new users up and running with their laptop or tablet, but are very pleased to say that we have also teamed up with AbilityNet.'

AbilityNet provides trained volunteers who can help disabled people and older people get the most from their home computers, tablets and smartphones.

Christine added: 'If you would like to know more about us, please get in touch on 07931 804999. If you have a friend with a computer, have a look at our website www.dorsetcomputers4carers.org.



A garden party for the charity

Free help to get you connected to the web

STAY connected and cash in on free computer help. A group of trained volunteers is ready to help anyone wanting to use the internet where you can find information, advice and support as well as save hundreds of pounds a year.

The internet is where you can find the most up-to-date information, find out what help and support is available, keep in touch with friends and family, as well as make savings on things like insurance, gas, electric, holidays and eating out.

Many public services are also moving online, making it easier to do things like book a GP appointment and tax the car.

If you're new to using the internet or just need some guidance then there's lots of help available.

In Bournemouth, most of the libraries have sessions in the week to help people get online. In Poole, they have Computer Buddies who show you how to access online tuition, or help you to find a solution to your IT problem.

Superfast Dorset has more than 50 Digital Champion volunteers spread across the county. They can show people how to use a computer, tablet or smartphone. The help is completely free.

Mary Witt attended a session at Dorchester Library. She said: "I shall be



In touch with the world via a laptop

80 next year and I don't really want to be left behind, so I thought I must learn how to use a computer.

'It's great to have someone who knows what they are doing and helps you as much as possible. I'm enjoying shopping – there are a lot more shops online than in your high street.'

Digital Champion Paul Hobbins said: 'Both my car and motorcycle insurance renewals were due recently – a total of £1,095. I browsed the web using some comparison sites and some company sites.

'I was able to get slightly better car insurance for £50 less and an equivalent motorcycle insurance for £247 less. A cool £297 saving for an hour's work.'

If you could use some free and friendly help getting online ask at your local library for more information or call 01305 221048 and Superfast Dorset will answer any questions you have and book you on to a session near you.

'I don't really want to be left behind... I must learn how to use a computer...'

Mary Witt, aged 79

Plan ahead for emergencies

HAVING a plan in place can help ease your worries if you're not able to care for the person you look after in the future. This could be in case you experience a sudden illness or accident, or if you are delayed for a few hours getting to them.

It's a good idea to put together details about the person you care for and the care they require, and keep them in one place. This should include:

- The name, address and other contact details of the person you care for
- Who you and the person you care for would like to be contacted in an emergency
- Details of any medication the person you care for is taking and any ongoing medical treatment they receive
- Dates of appointments in a diary or calendar (keep somewhere visible).

You should let your emergency contacts know where to find the information and keep their contacts handy so that you or someone else can get in touch with them. Check the details regularly to make sure they are up to date.

Bournemouth and Poole Councils offer a free-to-join emergency back-up scheme under which you will be able to contact an emergency call centre 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. For more information and to join call 01202 458204.

- EMERGENCY PLAN:** www.dorsetforyou.gov.uk/carers-emergency-plan
LIONS: www.lions105sw.org.uk/district-projects/message-in-a-bottle/
KEYSAFE: www.dorsetforyou.gov.uk/keysafe-provider-directory
ICE: www.incaseofemergency.org/wallpaper/

Dorset County Council can provide an emergency care plan form, which you can use to record all the information. Call 01305 221016 or go online. See the website at the bottom of the page.

You can also use the 'Message in a Bottle' scheme to store basic personal and medical details. This Lions Club scheme is recognised by all the emergency services. For further information log on to their website (see below).



You could consider a secure key safe in which to keep a spare door key, only accessible with a combination code. For contact details of key safe providers contact your council (see pages 14/15) or go to the website below and search for 'key safe'.

It's a good idea to have an 'In Case of Emergency' (ICE) number on your phone. Then if something happens to you, ambulance, police or hospital staff can find out quickly who to contact.

You store the word ICE in your mobile's address book with the number of the person you'd like contacted, for example your back-up carer. If you have more than one you can list them as ICE1, ICE2, etc.

If your phone has a lock with a password, you can put ICE information on your phone's 'lock screen'. Consult your phone instruction manual or go to the ICE website (see below). (Cont'd on facing page)

A Lifeline to give you peace of mind

POOLE Lifeline provides two services to help give you peace of mind when you are at home and worried about falling.

The first is a Monitoring Service costing £3.62 per week. You will need keyholders, who can be friends, family or neighbours, who are contactable in case there is an emergency.

They can then go to your home and help if they can, or call a doctor or the emergency services if necessary.

There is also a Mobile Service where Lifeline holds a set of keys to your home at the secure Borough Operations Centre.

When help is needed a Lifeline officer will go to your home with the keys, so it's not necessary to have keyholders.

You could install a key safe at home, accessible by a code, as this makes a response even quicker. Lifeline does sell and install key safes if you are interested.

The Mobile Service costs £5.77 per week which includes Assisted Lifting after someone has had a fall.

.....
(Cont'd from facing page)

Carer's Allowance and emergencies

You can still get Carer's Allowance if you temporarily stop caring for someone.

If you can't provide care because you're ill or in hospital, you can continue to receive the allowance for up to 12 weeks.

.....

The service is for non-injured fallers only. It is not always possible to lift someone and the Lifeline officer will decide whether or not it is safe to do so.

If it is, we use a Raizer Chair, a simple battery-operated mobile lifting chair that helps a fallen person up to an almost standing position within a few minutes.

It is built around the person on the floor and as it raises them it becomes a chair that supports them until they can transfer themselves to where they want to be.

Last year we carried out 686 assisted lifts for non injured fallers. Below are a few comments from customers who received this service:

Mr B said: *'Thanks to the gentleman that came out and lifted her up with the Raizer Chair. She said he was very kind and helpful and wanted to thank him for all that he did. She really appreciates the service and thinks its great.'*



Mrs R thought the Raizer chair was *'marvellous'*



Mrs A said: *'Thank you for helping my mom when she fell and to your officer and the wonderful chair.'*



Mrs S said: *'Please also pass on our heartfelt thanks to your staff for all the many times they rescued dad from his floor and for their skill and professionalism at all times. It was hugely appreciated both by dad and the rest of our family'*

News for young carers

Poole Young Carers

In August, Poole Young Carers of all ages congregated at Merley House to celebrate the hard work they do every day, and the support they receive from the Poole Young Carers Service.

Activities included making bath bombs and soaps with Lush, crafting on the Honeypot Children's Charity bus, scaling new heights on the climbing wall and simply making the most of the outside space Merley House had to offer.

A feast of food and cake was enjoyed by all, and provided some much-needed energy for taking the day's festivities into the early evening.

The celebration was a perfect opportunity for young carers all of ages to come together, spend time letting their hair down and do what they do best – being young people!

.....

Bournemouth Young Carers have had some exciting activities and trips throughout the spring and summer.

The Easter holidays got off to a good start with a great day out at Avon Heath Country Park, where the young carers enjoyed a picnic followed by an afternoon of games, all finished off with a much-needed ice-cream.

A fantastic day at Hengistbury Head took place where our young carers got to take part in a Ranger Session which involved going on a bug hunt and trying their hand at pond-dipping.

A highlight of the holidays was an Easter Egg hunt at The Henry Brown Youth Centre – luckily the Easter Bunny had left lots for the young carers to find.

During the May half-term a group got creative and spent a day at the MyTime Centre on the Jurassic Coast.

They made some very impressive dinosaur heads and lanterns.

One of the most popular events of the year is the annual National Young Carers residential at Fairthorne Manor, now in its 19th year.

The feedback from the 30 local young carers who attended was extremely positive and everyone had a wonderful time mixing with young people from all over the country.

In June we were able to send some of our families on a well-deserved outing to Paulton's Park to celebrate Father's Day. Thank you to Bournemouth Lions for making this fun-filled day possible.

The summer holidays were particularly busy, with a varied programme for all our young carers.

We went bowling, spent an afternoon at Avon Heath, enjoyed a lovely day at Hengistbury Head creating art work with materials from the beach.... with one of our young carers even making a kite.

(Cont'd on facing page)

News for young carers

Dorset Young Carers have been very busy throughout spring and summer. We have been able to take the young carers on some fantastic trips.

Our older group had the opportunity to see the powerful, moving, educational and outstanding performance of War Horse at the Mayflower Theatre during the May half-term holidays.



Our younger group enjoyed a day at the MyTime Centre in Worth Matravers during May half-term, where they had great fun making lanterns

Sixteen young carers went to the Young Carers Festival weekend.

A great weekend was had, where they all attended a silent disco, firework display, outdoor cinema and much more.

There was a lot of fun and laughter with these amazing young people who

(Cont'd from facing page)

The trip to Ringos and the Alpine Adventure Park was a huge hit while our older group spent a great day at Harbour Challenge and had a go at kayaking and paddleboarding. A fantastic way to spend a record-breaking summer!

On behalf of our young carers and their families we would like to say a very big thank you to all the organisations who continue to support us.

had respite from their caring roles.

The Purbeck Youth and Community Foundation took 18 Dorset young carers and young adult carers to Perranporth for a four-day/ three-night stay to learn how to surf and see an outdoor puppetry performance at the Lost Gardens of Heligan.

Dorset Young Carers would like to say a huge 'thank you' to all the organisations who continue to support us and make these trips possible. So, thank you to:

Mytime for the activity days they offer

Purbeck Youth and Community Foundation for the surfing trip

The Leonardo Trust for funding the Festival trip

The Careline Appeal who funded the day to Marwell Zoo and the trip to see War Horse

Friends of Dorset Young Carers who continue to offer support on an individual basis and to larger groups.

Help and where you can find it



POOLE



BOURNEMOUTH

Social Services Helpdesk for any enquiry about Social Services for an adult:

call 01202 633902
text relay 18001 01202 633902
e-mail
sshelpdesk@poole.gov.uk

To make a comment or complaint about Social Services:

call 01202 261159
e-mail
comments.adultsocialcare@poole.gov.uk

Children's Social Services duty desk:

call 01202 735046

Poole on the web:

Find information about any Borough of Poole Service at

www.poole.gov.uk

Bournemouth and Poole Carers' Service

To find out about support for carers of people living in Bournemouth and Poole contact the Carers Centre:

call 01202 458204

e-mail
carersteam@bournemouth.gov.uk,

Drop in on Tuesdays between 2 and 4.

Care Direct provides information to help people find the services they need:

call 01202 454979
minicom 01202 454874
email
caredirect@bournemouth.gov.uk

in person call at the office. Mon-Fri

[Town Hall Annex, St Stephen's Road, Bournemouth, BH2 6EA.](#)

To make a comment or complaint about Social Services:

call 01202 458953
e-mail
socialcarecomplaints@bournemouth.gov.uk

Children's Services:

Multi-Agency Safeguarding team (MASH)

call 01202 458101

Bournemouth on the web:

Find out about any Bournemouth Borough Council service at

www.bournemouth.gov.uk

and Fridays between 10 and 12 at [St Ambrose Cottage, Alumhurst Road, Westbourne, BH4 8ER.](#)

Carers Support on the web: go to www.CRISPweb.org to find local support and to join the Carers Information Service online.

Help and where you can find it

Social services for carers are provided by the local authority where the cared-for person lives.:

- Bournemouth Borough Council
- The Borough of Poole
- Dorset County Council (for the rest of the county).



DORSET

To find support for young carers call:

BOURNEMOUTH:

Sarah Norris
call 01202 456230,
email
Sarah.Norris@bournemouth.gov.uk

POOLE:

Maggie Harris
call 01202 261550,
email
m.harris@poole.gov.uk

DORSET

call 01305 225677
email
youngcarers@dorsetcc.gov.uk



OUT OF OFFICE HOURS:

This service provides emergency cover and access to essential Social Services when the daytime offices are closed. It covers Poole, Bournemouth and Dorset adults and children and is open from 5pm to 9am Monday to Thursday, and from 4pm on Friday to 9am Monday, as well as Bank Holidays.

Call 01202 657279

DORSET support to carers is available from several sources.

If you, or the person you care for, is already in contact with Adult and Community Services, you can speak to your social worker or care manager for further information and advice.

Each local office has a carers' caseworker who is there to support carers.

If you are not receiving any support from Adult and Community Services, and are not sure what to do next, contact:

The Adult Access Team, Dorset Direct, 01305 221016,
email adultaccess@dorsetcc.gov.uk.

or write to: [Adult Access Team](#), Dorset Direct, Dorset County Council, County Hall, Dorchester, Dorset DT1 1XJ.

To register as a carer go to www.dorsetforyou.gov.uk/carers

Improving access to primary care

PRIMARY care* appointments in Dorset are now available between 8am and 8pm seven days a week, including bank holidays.

Appointments can be booked either by your local GP practice or by the 24/7 urgent care number 111.

When you call 111 you will be assessed by a member of the team. If you need it, you may be offered a face-to-face appointment at a time and place that suits you.

Your practice can also make you an appointment. This may not be with your usual GP, but you will see the most appropriate health professional to suit your needs. This may be a local GP, nurse or advanced nurse practitioner.

The additional appointments are part of the Improving Access to General Practice Services (IAGPS) programme which will make primary care easier to access.

It is anticipated that these changes will mean fewer people using services inappropriately – for example attending their local emergency department (ED/A&E) when they could be treated more effectively elsewhere.

Dr Forbes Watson (pictured) is a local GP and Chair of NHS Dorset Clinical Commissioning Group.

He said: 'We want people in Dorset to get the best healthcare they can, and with this improved access we are confident that we are better able to offer the right care in the right place at the right time.'

'For example, if you work in Dorchester and are registered with a practice in Weymouth, you may not be able to see a GP during working hours and may put off getting help.

'Now you can contact the surgery and they could make an appointment at the Weymouth Urgent Treatment Centre in the evening.

'By doing this you would be able to get the help you need on the same day, avoiding the potential of becoming more ill or having to seek help elsewhere.'

'We hear a lot about NHS services coming under increased pressure, so we are really pleased we can offer this service to everyone in Dorset.'

'We hope that we can make a real difference to people who need to access care, along with helping to alleviate some of the pressure and demand that the health system is experiencing.'

For more information on what is available, speak to your local GP practice or visit www.staywelldorset.nhs.uk.



***Primary care services act as the 'front door' of the NHS and include general practice, community pharmacy, dental and optometry (eye health) services.**