

This time of the year Councils are preparing the budget for the coming financial year. This year it is not easy to get a balanced budget. Adult Social Services and Children's services have a shortage of carers and social workers - which is the case nationwide. Using agency workers cost more than those employed directly. Please see below to see a promotion drive.

Our rural areas always seem at a financial disadvantage. SPARSE a national organisation representing rural authorities have over many years been working to persuade government that we need Fairer funding. Services cost more to deliver in a rural area. Yet as many of you will know the funding that goes straight to schools from government leaves Devon schools at a disadvantage to the tune of approx. £250 per child.

Chance for people out of work in Devon to become keyworkers

Proud to Care Devon has launched a campaign to recruit 2,000 more Care Workers urgently in the county, particularly in domiciliary care and care homes. The campaign is encouraging those looking for training opportunities to consider if their skills and values are suitable for a career in care.

Proud to Care is offering free one-to-one telephone support to find out if a job in care is right for you. You don't necessarily need qualifications or previous experience. What's important are your core skills, values and your attitudes towards working with people who need care.

Furthermore, thanks to the European Social Fund, there are free and flexible courses to support people to find the right role, or to take a step up, in health and social care. The courses are being offered by partners across Devon including Learn Devon, City College Plymouth, South Devon College, Exeter College and Petroc.

The Find Your Calling campaign aims to mobilise an army of new care workers in Devon, encouraging people with the right values and core skills to apply. The campaign calls for people to register their interest by completing a quick online form at www.proudtocaredevon.org.uk/findyourcalling/. Applicants will get a call back and the offer of free one-to-one support to find out if a job in care and health is right for them.

Need some help or advice?

The Proud to Care Devon Team are happy to help or offer advice. Please contact us if you have any questions about how you can help promote the campaign: proudtocare@devon.gov.uk

As you will know there is a Parish Review launched in Mid Devon and this could affect parishes as we know them. Parishes will have been contacted and I would urge all to comment with their thoughts during the consultation period – consultation started on 16th December for eight weeks. Parish Councillors know their parishes and boundaries better than others and now is the chance to voice any concerns you have. Further info can be parishreview@www.middevon.gov.uk or write to Parish Review, Electoral Services, Phoenix House, Phoenix Lane Tiverton EX16 6PP

I will be more than happy for you to copy your response to me. I will also be commenting during consultation.