

Carers News and Views

The Newsletter for Carers in Plymouth

Winter 2010



Happy New Year!

Welcome to our first newsletter of 2010! We hope you like the new name. Carers News and Views was chosen by a carer. We also hope that you had an enjoyable Christmas and New Year. It can feel a bit flat after all the festivities and the tinsel has come down, and that last packet of mince pies is looking a little forlorn.

Here at Carers Champions the team are looking forward to working with you again in 2010. We had a great 2009, ending with a hugely successful Carers Rights Day on 4 December. We want to keep improving our service and find new carers. Can you help us?

Could you be a Carers Champion?

If you know of any family or friends who care for others, and they are adults caring for other adults; then we want to hear from them. You as carers know better than most that many people struggle to care on their own, and don't know where to find help and information. Can you help us to help them? Tell them about us and we'll do the rest.

Unbelievably this is the third year of our service. Where did the time go? Thanks for all the positive comments you gave us in our last Satisfaction Survey and our Drop In Review. We also listened to your concerns and made changes which we hope you'll like. Carers continue to be at the heart of everything we do. We want to keep that theme going, so it's a great time to tell you about some exciting opportunities coming up for you to become more involved. Look inside for news about becoming one of our Carers Champions Ambassadors, and about the start of our new Carers Internet Forum.

If you have any bright ideas or suggestions or if there's something you don't like please tell us, then we can do something about it. For those of you with computers we hope you like the improvements we've made to our website, we want you to help us make it even better.

Have you a story to tell? Let us know and we might be able to post it on our 'Carers Stories' page. We welcome articles about your lives and experiences. Please email or post your articles to us and we may be able to publish them. Remember this is Your Newsletter!

Finally a big thank you to all carers for your support over the last two years. We hope that we can continue to provide a great service to you in 2010.

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If you would like receive this information in large print, Braille, audio or in a different language please contact us on 01752 211348 or e-mail carers@colebrookhousing.co.uk

Diary Dates and Opportunities...

Wednesday cosy corner drop in

Our recent Drop In Review highlighted that some carers wanted to bring the person they care for. Others wanted it to remain just for carers. Because of this and space limitations it was decided that the Drop In would continue at our offices for carers only. A venue where both carers and cared for can get together has

been arranged on the last Wednesday of each month. From Wednesday 31st March 2010 and on each last Wednesday of the month, carers will be able to meet at The Union Rooms at the top of Union Street between 11am and 2pm. Carers have been offered a 20% discount on food. The venue has full disabled access and is close to public transport into the City.

DIARY DATES and OPPORTUNITIES

FEBRUARY

1st and 15th

Does a member of your family have a memory problem? If so come along to a social morning Alzheimer's Society at the City Centre Memory Café 2.00 pm – 4.00 pm Abbey Hall, St Andrew's Church, Royal Parade, Plymouth

2nd

St Johns Ambulance Carers' Course: Granby Island Community Centre 10.00 am – 1.00 pm with free lunch.

2nd and 16th

Singing for the Brain, a singing group for people affected by dementia to enjoy a healthier, happier and less isolated life, with their carers. St Andrews Church, Abbey Hall, Royal Parade Plymouth 2.00 pm – 4.00 pm

3rd, 10th, 17th, 24th, 31st

Cozy Corner Drop In for Carers at 3 Woodland Terrace, Greenbank Plymouth from 11.00 am – 2.00 pm

3rd and 17th

For people with Memory Problems and their families/ friends - The Plymstock Memory Café – Social Afternoon Fortnightly 2.00 pm – 4.00 pm at Plymstock Community Centre, The Broadway, Plymstock.

9th

Carers Event: Devonport Regeneration Community Office, 38 - 40 Malborough Street Plymouth 10am to 1pm

MARCH

1st, 15th and 29th

Does a member of your family have a memory problem? Come along to a social morning: Alzheimer's Society, City Centre Memory Café 2.00 pm – 4.00 pm Abbey Hall, St Andrew's Church, Royal Parade, Plymouth

2nd

Reiki Taster Session: Cozy Corner Drop In: 11.00 am – 2.00 pm 3 Woodland Terrace Plymouth

2nd and 16th

Singing for the Brain: St Andrews Church, Abbey Hall, Royal Parade Plymouth 2.00 pm – 4.00 pm

3rd, 10th, 17th, 24th

Cozy Corner Drop In for Carers: 3 Woodland Terrace, Greenbank Plymouth from 11.00 am – 2.00 pm

31st

Carers Drop In: Wetherspoons, Union Rooms, Union Street from 11.00 am – 2.00 pm

3rd, 17th and 31st

Memory Café: Social Afternoon Fortnightly 2.00 pm – 4.00 pm: Plymstock Community Centre, The Broadway, Plymstock.

3rd, 10th, 17th, 24th

St Johns Ambulance Course: Morice Baptist Church, Ham 10.00 am – 1.00 pm with lunch.

10th

U3A University of Plymouth: People no longer in full time employment sharing creative and leisure activities: Cozy Corner Drop Inn, 3 Woodland Terrace, Greenbank

23rd

Living with Caring: Free Workshops for Carers: 11.00 am – 2.00 pm Cozy Corner Drop In, at 3 Woodland Terrace, Greenbank Plymouth

APRIL

7th, 14th, 21st, 6th and 20th

Singing for the Brain: St Andrews Church, Abbey Hall, Royal Parade Plymouth 2.00 pm – 4.00 pm

12th & 26th

Memory Café: 2.00 pm – 4.00 pm Abbey Hall, St Andrew's Church, Royal Parade, Plymouth

28th

Carers Drop In: Wetherspoons, Union Rooms, Union Street from 11.00 am – 2.00 pm

14th and 28th

Memory Café: Social Afternoon Fortnightly 2.00 pm – 4.00 pm: Plymstock Community Centre, The Broadway, Plymstock.

Carers' News and Views

Calling all carers in Plymstock

Do you live in the Plymstock area?

Are you interested in meeting up with other carers over a cup of coffee, to provide mutual support and maybe make new friendships? Angela Hannaford-Hill is keen to start a carers' support group, and would like to hear from you. Please contact Angela on: 01752 480301

Calling all carers who live in the Devonport area

Carers Champions are holding a Carers Event at the Devonport Regeneration Community Partnership's offices on Tuesday 9 February from 10am till 1pm. Please come along if you need any advice, information or support in your caring role. We'll be delighted to see you. (See Diary Dates).

Free holidays: 'Give them a Break'

'Give them a break' is a new Devon-based project offering free holidays to those in need. They provide self-catering holiday accommodation across the South West to charities that will benefit most. They will work with selected charities including Children's Hospices UK and Macmillan Cancer Support. This is a fantastic opportunity for these children and young people with their families to benefit from a short break or holiday. To find out more about the project visit: www.givethemabreak.co.uk



Carers Discount

Lloyds Pharmacy is offering carers 20 per cent off marked items in their pharmacy. This great offer expires on the February 28.

Do you support someone experiencing mental health issues?

When a friend or relative has mental health problems, it's not just their life that's affected. Your relationship and family life may also feel the strain. We are Plymouth Community Mental Health Carer Support Service. We provide an advisory and support service for families, relatives and friends of those with mental health problems. We provide:

- One to one support: This includes home visits or meeting away from the home, for example meeting for coffee in a café or somewhere else you feel most comfortable
- A monthly support group: Where you can also meet with other people in similar situations to your own
- Information about the diagnosis your friend or relative has and support in understanding the diagnosis.
- Telephone support and advice
- A monthly newsletter: containing lots of information around mental health diagnosis and carers rights. Carer's assessments are also available from Pam Pinder, Carers Support Worker. This service is available 8.30am – 4.00pm Mon – Thurs

Contact: Pam on: 07887711834 or email: Pamela.Pinder@plymouth.nhs.uk

Pamper yourself in 2010!

Don't forget our Reiki Taster Session at the Cosy Corner Drop In - on Tuesday 2 March from 11.00 am – 2.00pm. Hurry, this session is filling up fast! Phone us on 01752 211348 to reserve your place.

Carers' News and Views

So that we only send this newsletter to people who want to receive it, we would appreciate if you could let us know if you wish to continue receiving it. Please do so by ringing us on (01752) 211348

Major employers back carers

We have good news for working carers! Greater London Authority, Suffolk County Council and DEFRA are the latest employers to join Employers for Carers, the business forum which seeks to improve support for working carers. 1 in 7 people in the workforce is caring for someone. Employers for Carers, the group set up by Carers UK to promote the business benefits of supporting carers is now reaching over a million people through its membership scheme. They join other high profile organisations that include local authorities, NHS Trusts, and big businesses like BT and British Gas. Visit their website at www.employersforcarers.org

Do you want to join our CARERS FORUM?

Talking of the internet, we're looking for carers with computers who'd like to join our new email forum. We'd like you to give feedback on issues and events that affect carers' lives.

As we are a Carer Led service we want to involve you, and encourage you to participate in the planning and shaping of our service.

We understand that carers are very busy with many demands on their time. We hope this proposed forum would provide a way for you to participate as and when you can.

What do you think about being on an email forum? For example we may contact you for some feedback on a news story affecting carers, a carers' survey or to attend an event.

Would you be prepared to receive emails from us and give us some feedback? Please let us know by contacting us on 01752 211348 or emailing carers@colebrookhousing.co.uk

Do you want to be a CARERS CHAMPIONS AMBASSADOR?

Have you been helped by Carers Champions? Would you like to help us let other carers in the city

know about our services? Would you like to be an Ambassador for Carers Champions?

Two carers recently proposed this great idea. Being an Ambassador would simply involve wearing a small badge with our name and telephone number. If asked, carers would be able to explain who our organisation is and what we do. What do you think? Would you like to be involved?

Newsletter News!

We send out our quarterly newsletter to you all. It contains news, forthcoming events and lots of useful information. We hope you find it interesting. There are other times we need to contact you and let you know about events that are happening in between, that you may be interested in that are happening between the newsletter publication dates. It's very expensive to write to everyone and we have to be mindful of the budget. Therefore we are looking at other ways to provide this information. If you have a computer please check our website regularly. In addition to all the information that we put there, we'll be posting any news and information we hear about between newsletter publication dates. We'll also make this information available at our Drop In on Wednesdays.

We appreciate that some carers don't have access to the internet. Remember, we have a computer available to carers here in our Drop In. Computers are also available in many local libraries around the city. If you don't have a computer and would like to learn how to use one please contact us, and we'll try and organise some training to help you understand them, then you can join the wonderful world of the Web! We're always looking at ways of improving communication, so if you've any ideas please contact us on 01752 21348.

Our website address is:
www.colebrookhousing.co.uk/carers

Carers' News and Views

Hands2gether

Hands2gether provides services to those with disabilities specialising in learning disabilities and also includes carers and volunteers. We are based on the ground floor unit at 92 Christian Mill Business Park in Crownhill. We have been busy making improvements to make everyone feel welcome and safe. We're open two days a week (Tuesdays and Thursdays), increasing to five when we are able. The service is not intended to be a day centre, but a centre where giving choice to all that use it is paramount. It's hoped that many volunteers and carers' will help to run the service and share their experience skills and knowledge. In return they'll see the benefits of helping to enhance the lives of others, gain confidence and come into contact with others in the same situation.

Activities on offer include:

- pottery
- arts and crafts
- textiles
- card making
- jewellery making etc.

Hands2gether was formed to bring communities together. This can only be achieved by the community having ownership, and by people offering their skills. This could be in craft work, fundraising, admin, marketing, help within the committee, the web site, DIY etc. If you'd like to become involved we would love to hear from you. We are devoted to providing a service in a safe, un-crowded environment.

Why not pop in for a coffee and look around for yourself. Please contact Dave John on 01752 658784 leave a message if we're busy or email: Hands2gether@talktalk.net

Carers Strategy

Plymouth City Council previously did some consultation with carers and carers groups within the City and have now produced a draft Carers Strategy upon which they are seeking feedback from carers.

A meeting took place here in our Drop In on February

4 2009 when a consultant engaged by Plymouth City Council met with carers to obtain their views. A copy of the draft Strategy and a questionnaire inviting feedback is available on: www.plymouth.gov.uk/carerstrategy.htm.

A hardcopy is available in our offices. Owing to costs we are unable to distribute this with the newsletter. If any carers require this in any other format such as audio please contact us and we can inform Plymouth City Council. Plymouth City Council has given a deadline of end February 2010 for feedback to this draft strategy.

We are inviting carers to attend our Drop In on February 3rd to meet and discuss this Strategy. We will encourage Plymouth City Council to produce a clear action plan and communication plan for consulting carers in the forthcoming year.



'Living with Caring' FREE Workshop for Carers

Tuesday March 23 2010

11am – 2pm with Free Lunch

At Carers Champions, Cozy Corner Drop at 3 Woodland Terrace Greenbank

- Do you feel tired and stressed in your caring role?
- Are you juggling many things at once?
- Are you looking after yourself?

Come and find out how you can take a step back this New Year and explore ways of managing the day to day pressures.

Places are limited, and will be filled on a first come first served basis.

To book your place please phone us on 211348 or Email: carers@colebrookhousing.co.uk



Carers Events

Carers Rights Day a huge success!

We celebrated Carers Rights Day on Friday 4 December. Over a hundred carers attended our event in the Lower Guildhall. A big thank you must go to the twenty five organisations



from across Plymouth who supported us on the day. They provided carers with lots of fantastic information and advice, not to mention freebies!

John had an early start when he appeared on Radio Devon's Gordon Sparke's show, to talk about what was happening on Carers Rights Day and the work of Carers Champions.

The theme of this year's event was 'Looking after your income and pension'. Carers often miss out on vital benefits and National Insurance contributions, as they don't realise what they are entitled to. The Citizens Advice Bureau provided carers with some great advice about benefits and finances, and staff from Jobcentre Plus and Pluss were on hand to help carers who want to get back into work.

The Barbican Therapy Centre treated carers to some much needed pampering, and head and shoulder massages. Naomi from the Body Shop gave the ladies pre Xmas makeovers, and the free pasties disappeared quicker than you could say Carers Rights!

We asked carers what they would like from Santa. Here are just some of the replies:

A holiday! Time to relax! Pay carers allowance even if you get the state pension! A life! Not to stress myself out! Time out!

It was an enjoyable and busy day for all of us. The team ended the day tired but happy.

Now all we have to do is start planning for next year's event!

Hoe! Hoe! Hoe!

Carers enjoy christmas lunch with great views!

We enjoyed a fantastic day out at our Carers Christmas lunch on Wednesday 16th December. The venue was the unique setting of the Holiday Inn's Penthouse Restaurant. If there are more spectacular views in the whole of Plymouth we've yet to see them. Everyone enjoyed a



delicious lunch on a beautiful bright day, as the sun sparkled over the Hoe and Plymouth Sound. Fun and laughter were the order of the day. The tone was set early on by Gordon and Julie Campbell who entered the restaurant in magnificent matching 'bouncy' Santa hats! Many carers brought the family and friends they look after, and judging by the buzz of conversation and laughter echoing around the room, everyone had a great time. A huge thanks must go to the staff at the Holiday Inn for their helpful and courteous manner. They helped make the occasion a great success.

Satisfaction Survey Report

We have now finalised the survey, if you would like to see the results you can have them by email, or see it on our website at www.colebrookhousing.co.uk and click on carers or by post by calling: 01752 211348.

Local Services Update

Tailor Made Support – Fitting the bill 3 months on!

Tailor Made Support (TMS) has only been running since the beginning of September and already the word is getting out there. We provide a service where we deliver support that is 'Tailor Made' for each individual, to meet their needs. We have had a steady influx of new clients and we are glad to see people getting more personalised options for support.

Since TMS has started, the range of support we have been asked to develop to meet our clients' needs has been really quite interesting. Aside from helping people with their everyday support needs, enabling people to live independently and providing respite for carers, our work also involves helping people access social and recreational activities. In the past 3 months this has included supporting some of our clients to go swimming, walking, attending a disco, ten-pin bowling and even rock-climbing & abseiling!

We have also been busy networking around the city to develop a broad knowledge of what services and activities we can help our clients access. As part of developing our new service we held a competition to develop our 'TMS' logo. We had a number of strong entries, and in the end the panel of clients and TMS staff decided upon aspects of 3 different logos that were handed in. A graphic designer is now being tasked to bring these 3 different logos together!

If you would like more information or an informal chat about what services we may be able to provide, or what funding options are available including 'direct payments' or paying for your support privately, please feel free to ring:

Emma Sheer on (01752) 205210 alternatively find out more about TMS on the Colebrook Housing website www.colebrookhousing.co.uk

Making Waves!

'Waves' is a new one stop shop for information, advice and support for people aged over 50.

In a friendly, informal atmosphere we can offer information and advice on:

- Adult Social Care Services
- Access to Health Specialists

- Services to help you if you care for a relative, friend or neighbour
- Social and leisure opportunities
- Housing options and adaptations
- Volunteer opportunities
- Information on Welfare Benefits

...and so much more



Come and visit us at: 9 Frankfurt Gate, Plymouth City Centre, PL1 1QA, Phone:01752 674744, Email: wavesover50@btconnect.com

It's been an exciting and busy time for the Plymouth LINK!

A number of people have taken part in competitions and surveys that the LINK has been running and some lucky people have won £400 worth of High Street Vouchers. Thank you all for your contributions. If you want to receive the LINK newsletter and have chances to take part then contact us at the address below.



We need your feedback...

We need to know what you think of services for carers, so that we can work with them to help them improve. We'd like to know about your experiences in the last year, and also receive any feedback from you; but specifically about the following:

- Who signposted you to carers' services?
- Did your GP give you any information about Carers' Services?
- If you've had a Carer's Assessment, what was it like?
- If you've had support from Plymouth City Council Carers' Team what was it like?

You can send any feedback to us by phone, email, website or writing the freepost address on an envelope: Freepost Support Team, Unit 15, 237 Union Street, PLYMOUTH, PL1 3HQ.

Tel: 01752 202407

email: info@plymouth-link.co.uk



News from the South West Regional Bulletin on Health and Social Care

Government takes action on antipsychotic drugs and dementia:

A tough new action plan to tackle the over prescribing of antipsychotic drugs to people with dementia has been announced by Care Service Minister Phil Hope. Read more: swdc.org.uk/news/government-takes-action-on-antipsychotic-drugs-and-dementia/

New declaration enshrines acute care quality care for all:

In a first for the UK, mental health patient groups, NHS service providers and staff groups have come together today to launch the first national declaration for people with a mental health crisis.

Read more: www.swdc.org.uk/news/new-declaration-enshrines-acute-care-quality-care-for-all/

More help for Dementia Research

Scientists in the field of dementia research will get more help to access funding thanks to a new ministerial group, which will drive forward research into the causes, cure and care dementia. Care Services Minister Phil Hope announced on 6th November 2009.

Read More: swdc.org.uk/news/more-help-for-dementia-research/

Down's Syndrome and Dementia

The number of people with Down's Syndrome developing dementia is rising as life expectancy increases. Vern Pitt visits one of the UK's first homes to meet the needs of this group.

Read More: www.swdc.org.uk/news/adult-autism-bill-now-passed/

Anti Bullying 'Keeping Safe' Scheme Launched in Plymouth

The Keeping Safe Scheme was launched in Plymouth on 3rd December. Developed by Pluss and Devon and Cornwall Police, it aims to stop the bullying and abuse of people with learning disabilities in Devon, Cornwall and Isles of Scilly.



The Police will work with local communities to identify a range of retail establishments and services that would be willing to offer help to people who may be suffering abuse and victimisation within the community.

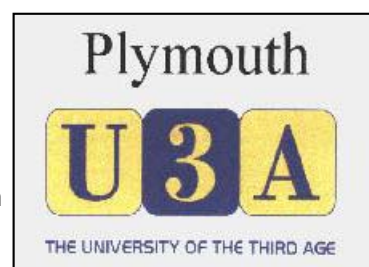
The Police in Plymouth have signed up 86 retail establishments across the city, in every neighbourhood.

It is hoped that the Keeping Safe Scheme will help people with learning disabilities to feel safe and welcome in their local communities.

Plymouth Branch University of the 3rd Age

Drop In March 10 2010

A representative from Plymouth U3A will be coming to the Drop In on 10th March 2010 with information for carers about their activities.



The U3A is a self help organisation of like minded people who are no longer in full time employment sharing creative, leisure and learning activities. These include antique collecting, architecture, film appreciation, gardening, local history and archaeology, music, theatre and writing.

Please see www.u3a.org.uk for more info about U3A nationally. A lunch will be provided so please come along and find out more. (See Diary Dates)

Special Feature

My Lifeboat!

Carers Story by Gordon Campbell

At times life deals some very cruel blows. I was just passed my first birthday when my father died, leaving my dear mother, bless her, with three sons, another son due within months and living in a strange environment and people; Scotland my father's birthplace and also mine and my younger brother, (my other two-brothers were born in Plymouth—thus the expression “two homes two aways”). After the birth of my younger brother, mother decided to take us all back to Plymouth to be near her parents and family. How she coped I do not know but somehow she managed. Lucky for my brothers and myself, and due to my father's Naval Career, we were fortunate to be placed in “The British Seamen's Orphans Boy's home in Brixham, Devon until the age of 11 years, when we were placed in “The Royal Naval Hospital School” Holbrook, near Ipswich, until reaching the age of 15, when you had the choice to join the Royal Navy or not.

I joined the Royal Navy on October 1948 and served in various ships and shore establishments until my retirement on 6th May 1975. During this period “the light of my life” appeared, darling Violet, we married in 1963 – having three children, two girls and one boy, during our married life. Poor Julie was, born on 2nd December 1967, and suffered epilepsy and mental health problems.

In 1969 I was serving onboard HMS Eagle in the Mediterranean when the Captain received an urgent signal to get me back to the UK and to the hospital. I was flown off the Aircraft Carrier, landing at the Royal Naval Station, Yeovilton and was taken to Freedom Fields Hospital – saw a Doctor and signed the necessary forms for him to operate upon Julie, and gave moral and loving support to my darling Violet. Over the years Violet and I took great care of Julie and, when my darling Violet did not recover from a kidney transplant operation, the full burden of caring for Julie was mine.

Over the years I have had many problems and struggles with Social Services. It is one “battle” after another with the one local authority or Social Services.

The turning point for me occurred during Julie's assessment in June 2008 when I was informed I could have a Care Worker. Then a phone call and a visit in August 2008 by Angela MacBlain who put me in touch with Carer's Champions, and my first visit to my home by John McKenna a lucky choice being ex-navy. We chatted and chatted and all my worries and problems just floated away. Over the past years I have been helped or advised by persons at Carers Champions and have enjoyed the “drop in” visits and chin wag with other Carers.

My lifeboat? Yes Carers Champions took me onboard and gave me all the care, companionship and worthwhile advice.



Training for Carers & Professionals

St John Ambulance - Carers Support Programme

St John Ambulance Devon, in partnership with Carers Champions and Plymouth City Council, are offering a free course for carers.

The course includes practical first aid skills, modules on stress management, medicines, safe moving and handling, preventing falls, coping with dementia – and more!

'The group was very open and friendly – I felt able to ask questions when normally I am too intimidated'

The course starts at 10am and closes with a free lunch at 1pm. For further information or to book a place, please contact Emma Healey at St John Ambulance Devon by ringing 01392 822 646 or email emma.healey@devon.sja.org.uk



Carers Awareness Training for Professionals

Do you have contact with Carers? These workshops provide the opportunity to learn more about the lives of carers and the issues they face everyday. You'll also hear first hand experiences directly from carers.

Participants will gain an insight into:

- Carer's day to day issues & longer term difficulties.
- The Law & Carers Assessments
- Diversity.
- The work of Carers Champions and other local resources and voluntary organisations.

Workshops are FREE and places are limited so please call 01752 211 348 or e-mail carers@colebrookhousing.co.uk to book.

Expert Patients Programme (EPP) at Plymouth Guild

A free course for people living with long-term health conditions. The Expert Patients Programme is an NHS

funded course, that provides opportunities to people who live with long-term condition(s) to develop new skills to manage their condition better on a day-to-day basis, leading to an improved quality of life. The course at Plymouth Guild is run over six consecutive weekly sessions of 2½ hours each week and is free. Each week, two volunteer tutors lead 8-16 participants through structured course material such as relaxation, diet, exercise, breaking the symptom cycle, managing pain, fatigue and depression, medication usage, and communication with health care professionals.

People who have completed the course have reported that it has helped them to manage their conditions and treatment more effectively in partnership with healthcare professionals, and they feel more confident and in control of their life. Come along to the Carers Drop in at the Carers Champions at 11am on Wednesday February 24 2010 and meet with Jan White, Expert Patients Programme Co-ordinator for more information and details of course dates, or contact the EPP office at Plymouth Guild, Ernest English House, Buckwell Street, Plymouth, PL1 2DA, Tel 01752 201766.

New Training Course for Carers!

'Caring with Confidence' is a new programme for carers of people with dementia that aims to help them develop their caring knowledge and skills. Sessions include 'Caring and Coping', 'Caring and Resources' and 'Caring and Communicating'. The sessions will enable carers to gain confidence in their caring role and in dealing with professionals and service providers.

Carers are invited to attend one of the preliminary sessions in the New Year to gain a picture of what the programme entails, and to pick which sessions are most relevant to them.

The course is free - transport and a sitting service can also be arranged if needed. Further information is available from Pauline Rooks at the Alzheimer's Society on 01752 255 399 or from Paul King on 07590 002 598.

If you are interested in attending these opportunities, but are concerned about leaving the person you care for at home, you may be eligible for a sit-in service funded by the Carers Grant. For more details please call Carers Champions on 01752 211 348.

Influencing local & National Services...

National Family Carer Network

The National Family Carer Network supports carers of people with learning disabilities. It recently contributed to the consultation on Shaping the Future of Care Together, the government Green Paper. This sets out the government's plans to reform the care and support system for adults in England and Wales.

Family carers of people with learning disabilities differ from most other carers, in that their role is likely to continue for decades, as a learning disability is a lifelong condition. They often lack a voice because of the longevity and demands of their caring role. These family carers increasingly include people with a learning disability, who are family carers in their own right, caring for children, partners, parents, parents or friends.

The Family Carer Network consulted with its members, and their response to the Green Paper is based on information and views from member groups, organisations and family carers, caring for an adult relative who has a learning disability. These included family carers who themselves have a learning disability. In their response they concentrated on issues of particular relevance to family carers of adults with a learning disability.

The respondents emphasised the lifelong commitment of most family carers of adults with learning disabilities, which can extend into their eighties and nineties. It is therefore important that the role of these families is also debated and discussed further in the development of a National Care Service.

To view a copy of the response, contact:
National Family Carer Network
c/o HFT, 5/6 Brook Business Park
Emersons Green, Bristol BS16 7FL
Tel: 01883 722 311 Or email: info@familycarers.org.uk

Funding News and More!

Carers Champions and Colebrook Housing Society have been doing a lot of work behind the scenes to support Carers. We thought we'd tell you a bit more about it and keep you informed.



Good News from the National Autistic Society

The Autism Bill has made it through its last parliamentary stage, and will now become the Autism Act 2009. The first ever disability-specific law for England. The Act will guarantee a future Adult Autism Strategy that will introduce a range of legal duties to improve local services.

The National Autism Society will continue to campaign until the strategy makes a real difference to people affected by autism. For further details please visit; www.autism.org/autismact2009

Plymouth Age Concern Advocacy Service

Are you over 50? Do you want someone to speak up for you? Talk to Plymouth Age Concern Advocacy Service.

Many older people feel unable to speak for themselves. This can leave them feeling out of control of their lives, this includes Carers. A new service called Plymouth Age Concern Advocacy Service aims to give people back their voice and confidence by:

- offering support, advice and information
- help with housing problems
- attending doctors and hospital appointments with you or on your behalf, if there is an issue with your treatment or understanding what is being said
- attending case conferences and meetings with you or on your behalf for example with Social Workers, Police, Consultants and Solicitors
- liaising with families and carers, Community Mental Health teams, legal representatives etc

You can contact us by telephone on 01752 318037 or you can just pop into Elspeth Sitters House, Hoegate Street, Plymouth, PL1 2JB. You can also ask your social worker or any other professional to make a referral for you. Our office opening times are 9.00 – 4.30 Monday to Friday.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Influencing Services...

Local Funding

We've been contracted by Plymouth City Council to deliver a new training package to enable staff who work with people with learning disabilities to be more aware of carers' needs, when their son or daughter moves to a home of their own.

Regional Funding

We've submitted a bid for funds to expand our successful carers' awareness training programme. This will focus mainly on NHS staff. We're also submitting a partnership bid to Comic Relief for a mental health project. This will involve working with Carers Champions to help carers improve and maintain their mental health and wellbeing.

Lottery Grant

Do you enjoy reminiscing? are you interested in Plymouth's heritage? do you have memories and experiences to share with others including young people and Plymouth's different communities?

We're applying for a Heritage Lottery Fund grant, so that carers can participate in an educational heritage project. Heritage needn't be older history, it could include opportunities for new heritage. What ideas do you have? Would you like to be involved? The most likely project would involve older carers sharing their memories with younger people, and then record these in a book or DVD. Contact us on 01752 211348.

Ecominds

Colebrook's new 'Tailor Made Support Service' is submitting a small bid to a project called Ecominds. The aim is to reduce stigma in mental health and improve environmental spaces. There will be an opportunity to employ someone who has/is experiencing mental

distress/ill health. It will also benefit the Carers Champions Drop In; and improve outdoor space for Carers and Carers' Groups.

BME Needs

Carers Champions have been advocating for some time to fund a BME (Black and Minority Ethnic) Carers Worker. We submitted a bid to the Equalities and Human Rights Commission. Unfortunately we weren't successful. We'll continue to campaign for funding in this important area.

Campaigning for Carers

Colebrook Housing Society will always support Carers Champions to speak up for Carers Rights and needs, including needs that we cannot meet at present. These are often termed 'unmet needs.'

We'll support carers to provide feedback to Plymouth City Council, and try and make it easier for you to speak up. Plymouth LINK is an organisation that helps people to get their voices heard by Health & Social Care services. They can be contacted at:

LINK, Unit 15, HQ Building, 237 Union St, Plymouth PL1 3HQ, Tel: 202407

We'll keep an eye on how Carers Champions Service is doing and will always record 'unmet needs' when carers tell us. We'll also let key people in the Council know about them. Many issues that carers' raise are being included in the new 'Carers Strategy for Plymouth', which is due out in 2010.



Next issue out in April 26 2010
Deadline for articles is April 4 2010

Disclaimer: We reserve the right to select and edit articles submitted. The opinions expressed in this newsletter do not necessarily represent those of Carers Champions. Although we do our best to ensure information is accurate, we are not liable for any incorrect information or errors contained within.



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The Newsletter for Carers in Plymouth

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