

Carers News and Views

The Newsletter for Carers in Plymouth

AUGUST 2011



Hello again!

'What's this?' I hear you say, as you pull this magazine from the envelope, quickly detecting a new slimline Carers News and Views. It's true that we have had to cut down a little, but we hope that you will still find everything you expect in this edition. The reason behind the change is actually good news: we are reaching far more people than ever before and, in order to make sure that we have enough colour printed copies for new carers as well, we have had to make this compromise.

You will also notice that the deadline for articles is actually not far away – 26th August; this is necessary for the whole production process. We really do value your stories, poems, photos, hints and tips; please keep them coming in by post and email – we try to include as many articles as possible from carers. We are grateful to Karla Bowden, one of our younger carers, for sharing her inspiring story with us. This time we also have an interesting article about preventing falls; the risk of falls increases with age because of deteriorating vision, hearing, balance, strength and coordination. Side effects from medication, poor nutrition, and medical conditions (including diabetes and arthritis), can add to this risk. As if that's not enough, bone strength diminishes with age increasing the risk of broken bones resulting from a simple slip, trip, or fall. See page 5 for Sam's advice.

We enjoy meeting carers out and about and at our various groups; if you aren't in a position to leave the house very often, please do not hesitate to call us if you need any support or advice and we will do our best to help you.

Carers Champions Team



CALLING ALL CARERS AGED 18 – 30

Do you want to meet other carers of your own age? What support or training would help you in your caring role? Charlette wants to know the answers to these and similar questions so that Carers Champions can work with you and help make a difference.
Call Charlette on 01752 211348 or email carers@colebrookhousing.co.uk

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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...

CHANGES TO CARERS CHAMPIONS DROP IN

Every Wednesday Carers Champions have held the "Cosy Corner" drop in at our offices in Greenbank. Recently we have become a victim of our own success – the drop in is now so popular we have run out of space. Carers UK have kindly allowed us to hire their meeting room in **Virginia House** (Peacock Lane, Palace Street, Bretonside) so we are relocating the drop in there, **commencing August 10 2011**. Please note also the change in time: **10am – 1pm**. This weekly meeting will remain for carers only; we will therefore continue

to meet on the last Wednesday of each month at The Union Rooms pub allowing carers to bring family and friends – including those they support – with them. Carers Champions is a carer-led organisation and the decision to relocate the drop in to Virginia House has been taken after consultation with carers regularly using our drop in. However we would welcome further feedback from carers using our service to let us know what they think of these changes so please get in contact and let us know your thoughts.

DIARY DATES and OPPORTUNITIES

August

Date	Time	Event and Venue
1, 15	2.30 – 4pm	Carers' group at Harewood House, Plympton
3	11am – 2pm	Carers' Drop-in at 3 Woodland Terrace, Greenbank Road
10, 17, 24	10 am – 1 pm	Carers' Drop-in at Virginia House (see above)
11	11am – 3pm	Community Outreach Derriford Hospital foyer
19	11am – 2pm	Carers' Drop-in for at British Red Cross building, Crownhill
27	10 am – 4 pm	Healthy Plymouth event, Plymouth Piazza
31	11 am – 2 pm	Drop-in for carers, friends and family at The Union Rooms

September

5 and 19	2.30 – 4pm	Carers' group at Harewood House, Plympton
5, 12, 19, 26	10am – 1pm	Carers' Support Programme, Mount Gould LCC
7, 14, 21	11am – 2pm	Carers' Drop-in at Virginia House (see above)
8	11am – 3pm	Community Outreach Derriford Hospital foyer
23	11am – 2pm	Carers' Drop-in for at British Red Cross building, Crownhill
28	11am – 2 pm	Drop-in for carers, friends and family at The Union Rooms
30	9.30am – 3 pm	Older People's Day, Plymouth Guildhall

October

3 – 9	National Customer Services Week – come along to the Civic Centre to join in events and make suggestions about improving Plymouth City Council services. Look out for details nearer the time.	
3, 17	2.30 – 4pm	Carers' group at Harewood House, Plympton
5, 12, 19	10am – 1pm	Carers' Drop-in at Virginia House (see above)
13	11am – 3pm	Community Outreach Derriford Hospital foyer
21	11am – 2pm	Carers' Drop-in for at British Red Cross building, Crownhill
26	11am – 2 pm	Drop-in for carers, friends and family at The Union Rooms

If you would like information about any specialised groups in Plymouth, please call Carers Champions on 211348 and we will be happy to help you.

Events and Opportunities

'MUST HAVE' FREE CARERS SUPPORT PROGRAMME

Everyone we meet, who has been on this course for carers, has been full of praise about it. Not only does Emma Healey cover the topics thoroughly and sensitively in her straightforward manner; but also carers benefit from sharing tips and experiences and from feeling valued. Don't miss your opportunity to attend 'this enjoyable course' at Mount Gould LCC training room
Mondays September 5, 12, 19 and 26
Estover St John Area HQ
Tuesdays November 8, 15, 22 and 29
10am start closing with free lunch at 1pm
Call Emma on 01392 822646 or email emma.healey@devon.sja.org.uk



FREE SENSE TRAINING FOR CARERS OF DEAFBLIND PEOPLE

Ciprian Gimbuta is an Older Person's Partnership worker for SENSE – National deafblind and Rubella Association. Based in Exeter, Ciprian is offering training in Plymouth to organisations who may look after deafblind people especially older deafblind people. This awareness training includes deafblind communication, mobility and basic knowledge of technical aids. For more information call Ciprian on 07917813971 or email Ciprian.gimbuta@sense.org.uk

DROP-IN AT Highbury TRUST

The Orbit club at Plymouth Highbury Trust is available to anyone who has a learning disability; it opens during the day on Mondays and Thursdays. Our Drop-in centre is open every Friday to anyone who wishes to come along. Come and enjoy the facilities available. Contact Stuart Phillpotts 01752753717

PEOPLE AND PLACES – SOCIAL NETWORKING FOR PEOPLE WITH LEARNING DISABILITIES

People and Places is a secure and inclusive online social network and planning tool for local communities to use and benefit from. Find friends and chat to them, search for services, book activities and more. You can even do a training course to use this site. For more information: email Debbie.marshall@mypeopleandplaces.co.uk or call 01752 463865.

STROKE EXERCISE GROUP

Every Wednesday from 10 - 11.30am an exercise group is held for individuals who have had a stroke or have a neurological condition. These are run by two qualified physiotherapists at "The Reatch Centre", Taunton Avenue, Whitliegh. Sessions begin at 10.30am, giving you time to have a drink first and order lunch if you wish to stay after the exercises. A chance to have fun and exercise all in one!

For more information contact us on 782020 or 769063.

CARER AWARENESS TRAINING

Do you meet carers in your professional role? Carers Champions can help you to support them through free training to: raise awareness of the needs and issues that carers face; update knowledge on carers' legislation and rights; update knowledge of local resources and services.

Dates for this year:

Tuesdays 9.30am – 1pm

13 September, 11 October 2011, 15 November 2011, 13 December

For more information or to book a place please call Carers Champions on 01752 211348 or email carers@colebrookhousing.co.uk



Services for carers

SHARED LIVES SOUTH WEST (FORMERLY SWAPS)



.....is a charity with office bases in Cornwall and Devon, and also operating in Plymouth and Torbay.

We recruit, train, monitor and support family based carers who open their homes and their family lives to adults with care and support needs.

We have family carers who can offer someone a short break to let their carers have some time off, or as a holiday for the person themselves. This can be a regular or one off visit.

Some families also offer a home on a longer term basis. They will help the individual find useful and interesting things to do during the day, have a social life, keep in touch with family and friends, learn new skills and maybe fulfil their dreams.

To learn more look at the website www.swaps.org.uk or ring a member of the team on 01209 891888

CARERS' CARDS FROM PLYMOUTH CITY COUNCIL

A carer's card is automatically sent to carers following a Carer's Assessment or Carer's Review; it has a 12 month expiry date, indicating where and how carers can use it. Carers should receive a scheduled date for their review before the card expires, when the process will be repeated.

When carers show their card at any of the facilities below and complete an application form at the venue, they will be able to take part in activities **free of charge** throughout the year:

- Central Park Leisure Pool and Plympton Swimming Pool - swimming and aqua fit
- Mount Wise and Tinside Lido Swimming Pools swimming
- Mayflower Leisure Centre Gym, Badminton and squash
- Brickfields Leisure Centre Gym, Badminton and classes

Apart from swimming, **activities need to be booked in advance** and carers must always present their cards if they wish to gain free access.

To find out if you are eligible for a carer's assessment, call 01752 668000 or contact Carers Champions on 01752 211348 for more information.

CARERS' EMERGENCY RESPONSE SERVICE

Don't you always find that things go wrong at weekends or in the evening? The Carers Emergency Response Service (CERS) is a domiciliary care service designed to give 'peace of mind' to carers. If an emergency arises and you are unable to provide care to the person you normally care for CERS could step in at short notice anywhere in Plymouth City.

This is a service is free of charge for carers to access and should only be a short term solution until normal Plymouth City Council Brokerage functions are open, at which point the service will be handed over to adult social care. Periods covered include overnight, weekends and bank holidays, or a combination of these. Once handover is complete, the normal charging policy to the client will come into effect.

At your carer's assessment or review you should be asked if you would like to be referred to this service; if you do, Allied Health Care LTD will then contact you to draw up a contingency plan. This service is not for use during normal working hours; Plymouth City Council has an 'Out of Hours Team' that deals with various emergencies (01752 346984).

Services for carers



CHANGES TO CLIENT CONTRIBUTIONS FOR NON RESIDENTIAL CARE

Carers Champions contacted the Client Financial Services Team (CFST) at Plymouth City Council when we heard about the effects of changes, which obviously impact hugely on savings for those who have to pay more now.

The CFST manager suggested that people could submit a request for reassessment about three months before capital is likely to fall below £23,250. The CFST will need to see bank statements etc for the past 6 – 12 months; they would look into any sudden decrease in funds – especially, for example, any large gifts to family members etc. For more information you can visit the website www.plymouth.gov.uk/payingforsupportathome.htm or call the CFST on 01752 307512 or 307560

FALLS – HOW CAN A CARER HELP MAINTAIN INDEPENDENCE?

A big 'Thank you' to Sam Cross, Manager of The Bone Health Consultancy, for this very useful article. www.bonehealth.co.uk

To avoid risk of falls, look for obvious environmental risk factors which could contribute to falling. These include trip hazards such as loose carpet or rugs; trailing electrical wires; slippery flooring or even pets. Poor lighting can also be the cause of a trip or fall. Regular eye tests; local exercise sessions that aim to improve strength and balance; maintaining a healthy diet and ensuring an adequate fluid intake (to keep hydrated and prevent dizziness) can all be beneficial. It also helps to replace ill fitting or 'sloppy' slippers with better fitting ones.

If you fall it is important to try to remain calm and not panic. If you are not in pain then try to get up by rolling onto your hands and knees and crawling to a sturdy piece of furniture, such as a chair or sofa. (You can use this to help you get up.) Once you are up rest for a while before standing up. If you feel pain then do not move; try to attract attention by banging on a wall, or

use your community alarm (if you have one). If you can reach a phone then call your family, or 999. If you can't get up and have to wait for help, then try to crawl to a more comfortable surface (softer carpeted area), and try to keep moving. If the person you are caring for has fallen and you are waiting for help, make sure that they are warm and as comfortable as the circumstance allows. Stay with them until help has arrived.

A USEFUL BUT NOT PARTICULARLY CHEERFUL PIECE OF INFORMATION:

The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) telephone service for the bereaved

This was introduced in March 2011; the Service collects all the information the DWP needs to know about the deceased, carries out a quick eligibility check to find out which benefits the surviving relative may be entitled to and takes claims for Bereavement Benefit and Social Fund Funeral Payments over the telephone.

The number to call is: 0845 606 0265



Carers contributions

MY STORY – KARLA BOWDEN



I am a carer for my Mum and my younger brother. I have been helping Mum care for my brother since he was little and have been a carer for my Mum for about five or six years since she had a stroke when I was about 14. She also suffers from arthritis and is now reliant on a wheelchair to get around. Together we both look after my little brother who suffers from a physical disability as well as autism and severe learning difficulties.

My little brother started going to Plymouth Music Zone (PMZ) about four years ago and I started accompanying him and have discovered a passion for music in myself. I became a regular at PMZ and have really got actively involved with their projects and got lots of support and training for myself.

I have learned to create music using a special programme on Apple Mac and I write music and sing and rap. A while ago I wrote some music for new mums experiencing

post natal depression and this was distributed through the NHS to mums as part of NHS support for them. In July 2010 I performed at a PMZ awards ceremony and won the Nick Thomas Memorial Award for my musical achievement which also recognises my commitments and caring role at home. I have recently undertaken a Sound Skills Course which I completed in March and have been told I successfully passed this course.

I am currently participating in a PMZ mentoring scheme and am working on doing four new tracks, I am able to use the studio for two hours a week to work on this. I am currently also working on doing a CD about my experiences as a young carer (I am 21), which I hope to make available through schools and other organisations supporting young carers, who I hope will relate to my music and experiences. I really enjoy being able to get together with other young musicians at PMZ and all of us making music together.

CHANGING PLACES

Standard disabled toilets do not meet the needs of all people with a disability – or their carers. People with profound and multiple learning disabilities, as well as other serious impairments such as spinal injuries, muscular dystrophy, multiple sclerosis or an acquired brain injury, often need extra facilities to allow them to use the toilets comfortably.

Changing Places toilets are different from standard disabled toilets with extra features and more space to meet these needs.

Each Changing Places toilet provides:

- The right equipment – a height adjustable adult-sized changing bench and a tracking hoist system, or mobile hoist if this is not possible.

- Enough space –adequate space in the changing area for the disabled person and up to two carers; a centrally placed toilet with room either side for the carers and a screen or curtain to allow the disabled person and carer some privacy.

- A safe and clean environment – a wide tear off paper roll to cover the bench; a large waste bin for disposable pads and a non-slip floor.

In Plymouth these can be found at Drakes Circus Shopping Centre, Highbury Trust, Devonport Library and St Budeaux Community Centre. There will be more when the Plymouth Life Centre is opened. For more information you can visit the website:

www.changing-places.org

Support for carers

PLYMOUTH AND DISTRICT CREDIT UNION (FORMERLY HOPE CREDIT UNION)

Credit unions are community savings and loans organisations. You can save money with the credit union and after a while, take out loans against those savings. They are a much cheaper option compared with “doorstep lenders”

who charge huge interest and help those who may have difficulty getting credit from other lenders.

Colebrook Housing Society (Carers Champions' parent organisation) has been working with this credit union for several years, encouraging clients, staff and volunteers to join. If you would like to join or find out more, please call the Social Inclusion Manager Mary Partridge on (01752) 211348. Alternatively, you could have a look at the credit union's website (www.pdcu.co.uk) or phone them on (01752) 301871 for more information.



BUYING WITH CONFIDENCE

We ran an article about this in an earlier newsletter; nevertheless, it is always good to remind ourselves to be wary when buying goods or services. Plymouth City Council launched the Buy with Confidence approved trader scheme last year. Since then the scheme has grown and is now increasing consumer protection by providing a list of Trading Standards approved traders. Look out for the Buy with Confidence logo; or you can find a trader to trust by visiting:

www.buywithconfidence.gov.uk or by ringing Consumer Direct 08454 04 05 06 or by ringing 01752 304141 and requesting a list of current Trading Standards approved traders.



REDUCTION IN WINTER FUEL PAYMENTS

The Government is reducing winter fuel payments to 2008 levels. The household rate will drop for winter 2011 from £250 to £200 (under age 80) and £400 to £300 (age 80 and over).

Winter fuel payments are a universal benefit paid to claimants age over the pension credit age (this is currently age 60 and 6 months, but is gradually increasing to 66 by 2020).

PLYMOUTH FOODBANK

If you know a person or family in financial crisis, Plymouth Foodbank may be able to help them. Based at The Crown Centre, 28 Manor Street, PL1 1TW, this community project also welcomes volunteers and donations.

For more information call 01752 254981 or email plymouthfoodbank@yahoo.com

FUNDING FOR PEOPLE IN NEED

Very often we meet people who need something in particular to help them or the person they support, but they cannot afford it. Depending on circumstances, people may be able to apply for funding through the Social Fund (0845 603 6967) or for a Disabled Facilities Grant, for which you would need a Social Care Assessment through Plymouth City Council (01752 668000). Sometimes, however, there may be financial support available elsewhere; the internet is a good place to start. If you don't have internet access, you can visit your local library and search for disability grants, for example. Here are a couple of examples to start:

Elizabeth Finn Care (www.elizabethfinncare.org.uk)

Telephone: 020 8834 9200

Turn2us (www.turn2us.org.uk)

Telephone: 0808 802 2000



Have your say...

CARERS AMBASSADORS

Carers Champions are looking for carers who would like to volunteer to become Carers Ambassadors.

This role could involve:

- Going with staff and other volunteers to events where you would talk to carers and tell them about the services that could support them
- Telling your story as a carer to people who attend our Carers Awareness Training
- Attending Carers Ambassadors meetings which discuss carers' services in Plymouth and feed into the Carers Strategic Board where decisions are made about future services
- Writing articles for the Carers Champions newsletter or website

If you become a Carers Ambassador you would be able to access training and support; your volunteer expenses

(such as travel costs) would be paid and you would have the opportunity to gain new skills.

If you are interested in becoming a carers ambassador, please contact Mary Partridge (Social Inclusion Manager) on 01752 211348.



WHAT CONCERNS YOU?

Carers Ambassadors represent **all** carers, whether caring for a child or young adult, a partner, friend or an older person such as a parent, and whether caring for someone with a Learning Disability, a physical illness or disability or someone who lives with a mental health condition. We recognise that carers are always learning and overcoming various challenges, especially as circumstances and services continue to change.

We want to hear from you! We represent carers at the Carers Strategic Partnership Board meetings, where

issues that affect carers are discussed. Your general opinions, comments and ideas are very important and we can share them with people who can make a difference – although, of course, we cannot take on individual grievances etc. As Carers Champions coordinate the Carers Ambassadors meeting, you can pass your thoughts to us through them (Call 01752 211348 or email carers@colebrookhousing.co.uk).

Next issue out NOVEMBER 2011
Deadline for articles is AUGUST 26 2011

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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