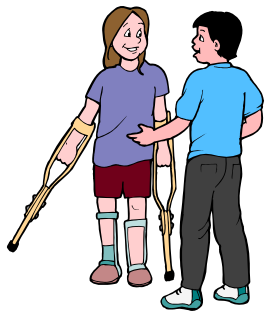
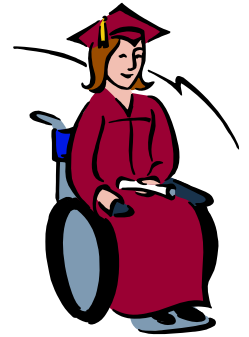


Special Edition Newsletter



Carers Champions Plymouth



Carers Champions Plymouth

August 2007

Dear Carer/Colleague

We are aware of the challenges to date around the changes to the Plymouth City Council Carers contract. We are also aware that some carers have strong feelings about having new organisations provide this service. We have found it difficult to read some of the misconceptions in the press because all we want to do is provide carers with a good service. Lots of information about Colebrook and Plymouth Age Concern will be available at our launch event on 5th October 2007 at Plymouth Pavilions.

I look forward to meeting you at this event and working with carers in the future.



Desanne McAllister
General Manager,
Colebrook Housing
Society Ltd

An introduction from ...



Councillor Dr David Salter, Cabinet Member for Adult Health and Social Care for Plymouth City Council talks about the new Carers service...

I write this as a former carer myself, conscious that carers can all too often struggle on alone, not realising that there is support available, or being defeated by the difficulties in obtaining it. In recent years I believe such support has been improving. I also believe we all want the pace of that improvement to quicken further.

One way of improving further has been to make sure that organisations providing care will in future have to compete for contracts to guard against any risk of being too satisfied with the status quo. The new three year carers' contract was awarded to Colebrook Housing and Age Concern's partnership in just this way. The process and the decision were completed before I took office in May, and because these arrangements are new they have naturally led to a range of comments. I therefore made sure myself that the new partnership has been chosen fairly and with proper consultation, and is committed to providing an even better service. Both Colebrook Housing and Age Concern have a vast amount of relevant experience.

As services develop, we want carers to be involved in shaping them on behalf of those with a variety of illnesses and disabilities. By regular and competitive review, Plymouth City Council's social care officers and I intend to provide you with the best support available for the resources we have, always being aware that you are the front line of caring and deserve nothing less than the very best for yourselves and for those you care for.

The Carers Champions Service

- Will be funded by Plymouth City Council - Adult Social Care for 3 years.
- The service will be Carer led and Carers will be activity involved.
- Carers will be consulted in a variety of ways – please read on to find out more.

The Carers Champions Service will be active from 3rd September 2007 and is based at:

Colebrook Housing Society Ltd
3 Woodland Terrace
Greenbank Road
Plymouth PL4 8NL

Tel/SMS: 01752 211348 Fax/Tel/Answerphone: 01752 211365

Email: carers@colebrookhousing.co.uk

Website: www.colebrookhousing.co.uk (currently being updated)

Carers' staff at Colebrook can be contacted Monday – Thursday from 9.00 am – 5.00 pm and Friday from 9.00 am – 4.30 pm or you are welcome to leave a message on the answer phone out of office hours and we will get back to you as soon as possible.

On the 5th October 2007 we will be having a launch event at The Pavilions. The launch will be in partnership with many other carers' organisations. (See page 10 for further details).

The Carers Champions staff team will be:

- **Lesley Gross** – Carers Co-ordinator (previously the Co-ordinator at Plymouth Carers Support Service – The Guild)
- **John McKenna** – Carers Advice and Outreach Worker (Colebrook)
- **Beverley Watters** - Carers Advice and Outreach Worker (Age Concern)
- **Liz Bell** – Clerical Administrator (previously the Administrator at Plymouth Carers Support Service – The Guild)

In addition to the Carers Team, carers will also be able to access advice and information at Drop In sessions from:



Mary Partridge: Welfare benefits and Money Advice worker (Colebrook)
- help with completing benefit applications/information about benefits and finance you may be entitled to eg Attendance Allowance, Direct Payments, and Carers Allowance.



Pat Harvey: Volunteer and Work Scheme Co-ordinator (Colebrook)
- identifying volunteers and linking them with placements/employment opportunities

Identifying Carers: A key purpose of this service will be to identify new and 'hidden' carers and we intend to be active in a number of public events to promote and maintain our carers awareness eg Carers week, Carers Rights Day, Annual Carers Conference, Respect Festival etc.

We are also keen to work with existing carer support groups and help develop more of these if there is a need. Carers Champions staff will be happy to help you find places to meet, provide administrative support to your meetings if you wish and can support you in fundraising bids for projects of your choice eg social events. If you would like a member of the team to come and meet your group, please get in touch.

Drop In Opportunities: There will be a number of opportunities for carers to meet people, to share news, and meet other carers.

Initially Drop Ins will be held at:

- River View, Mount Gould on the last Thursday of each month, starting on Thursday 27th September 2007 from 1.30 pm – 3.30 pm.
- Cozy Corner Drop In every Wednesday at Colebrook Housing Society, 11.00 am to 2.00 pm: some free street parking available local to the office. The first Drop In will be on Wednesday 12th September 2007. Eventually this drop in will be monthly but replaced by other drop ins citywide.
- Elspeth Sitters House, The Barbican. Weekly starting on Monday 17th September 2007 from 10.00 am – 12.00 pm.
- Astor Room, William and Patricia Venton Centre, Mount Gould. Fortnightly starting on Wednesday 19th September 2007 from 10.00 am – 12.00 pm.
- William Venton Centre, Plymstock. Fortnightly starting on Tuesday 25th September 2007 from 2.00 pm – 4.00 pm.
- Local Care Centre, Mount Gould. Fortnightly starting on Friday 12th October 2007 from 10.00 am – 12.00 pm.

We recognise it is often difficult for carers to find time for themselves so we are keen to hear your ideas and feedback and will use this to ensure we set up Drop In sessions which are accessible to you as much as possible and in localities throughout the city.

Carer Advice and Outreach workers: Thank you to carers and Plymouth City Council staff who recently helped us recruit 2 new outreach staff to the Carers Team:

John McKenna
(Colebrook - based at Carers Champions – tel 211365)



Beverley Watters
(Age Concern - based at Mount Gould Local care centre – tel 434708)



Both staff will work closely together to ensure carers receive the best advice and support about the services they need.

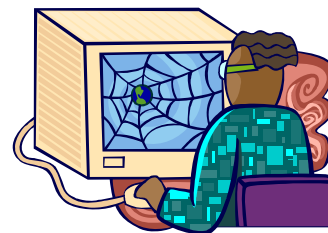
As well as attending selected Drop In sessions, Outreach staff will be available for some daytime and evening appointments at your home if this is needed. We also know that sometimes carers simply need time with someone to talk about how they are feeling, and outreach staff will be happy to listen.

Advice and Information sharing: this is a key element of the Carers Champions service and carers will be able to access information through:

- Friendly drop in sessions where you can meet other carers and share experiences.
- Access to resource areas and information within our main offices eg at Colebrook Head Office, we hold a wide range of leaflets and information and carers can also access internet information from this point. Similarly, Age Concern hold a number of useful fact sheets on site and can use these as a starting point in response to your questions.
- Contact with staff who are aware of local and national resources and have an understanding of the issues you may experience in using these. Carers are welcome to raise queries in any way comfortable to them ie through Drop Ins, by requested 1-1 appointments, via telephone, emails etc and if we are not best placed to help carers we will signpost and support them to use other services eg Simply Counselling, respite, support, befriending, forums etc.
- At least a quarterly newsletter to keep you informed of carers events in the City, information relating to carers issues e.g. finances, employment, carers services etc as well as reporting progress on national carer campaigns and carers rights. Your contribution to the newsletter is very important and we welcome any information you would like to include eg publicity for your support groups, your views, news on social events etc. Access to Colebrook's Newsletter via drop ins which will also have a 'carers update section'.



- Our website at www.colebrookhousing.co.uk is currently being updated to include information on the Carers Champions service and we hope that before too long, carers will be able to view this for up to date events information, links to other useful websites eg Carers UK. In time, we hope to also develop this as a place where carers can post feedback about their experiences of services and share ideas and suggestions.



- Informal and formal training opportunities for carers eg we can help you find guest speakers to attend your support groups, assist you in finding training relevant to your needs, and we can also help you access some free places on training courses eg Learning Disability awareness, Epilepsy, Emergency First Aid. Let us know what you need.

Carer awareness training: we welcome any carers interested in becoming involved in the delivery of carers awareness training to professional in the future as we feel you as carers have relevant and insightful experiences to share.

Carers Champions Monitoring Group: this group will meet regularly to check out how the service is progressing and to ensure we are delivering the service we said we would. If you are interested in becoming a member of this, please let us know.

In addition to this, Carers Champions is a carer led service and we aim to be open to your feedback, views, opinions, ideas and suggestions for improvement – in coming months, we will often actively ask you for this information, but you are also welcome at any time to talk to staff and/or use suggestion boxes available on all Drop In sites.

Social events, support to achieve quality in your life: as carers we know you often invest a lot of your own time and energy looking after others and carers can become isolated and tired – Carers Champions staff are here to listen and support you in looking after your own health and well being and we will be very happy to support carers in setting up social events of their choice.



Involvement of Carers

Ways that Carers can be involved in Carers Champions Service

Here are some ideas about ways that we would like to involve you as carers in this new service.

➤ Involvement in recruiting for any new staff

Any posts related to the carers service or new posts that we get funding for – we will always want to have at least one carer involved in this recruitment – so you can help choose the staff.



➤ Involvement in Monitoring Group

We are intending to set up a group to monitor performance on the Carers Champions Service. We want carers to be well represented on this group and help influence and determine the design and delivery of the service.



➤ Involvement in determining what future services you will need

You will be able to do this in a variety of ways. Involvement in group feedback, individual feedback, suggestion boxes, feedback from annual satisfaction surveys, via your newsletter etc.



➤ Becoming part of Colebrook's Management Committee

If you are interested in becoming part of this please contact Desanne McAllister on 01752 205210 or email her at dmcallister@colebrookhousing.co.uk.



➤ We will seek regular feedback from Carers

In order to influence strategic planning of carers services locally and nationally.

➤ Involvement in deciding what training and support carers want and need.

➤ Involvement in deciding and delivering training to professionals to enable them to better understand what life is like for carers.

➤ Access to carers Drop In sessions from a variety of citywide locations if you wish.

➤ Helping us decide your priorities in relation to funding bids.

These are just some of the ways you can get involved, and at our launch event you can tell us about other ideas/suggestions you may have.

Partnership Working

Colebrook and Plymouth Age Concern want to work with all partners in the City to ensure that the carers of Plymouth receive a good quality service which delivers what carers need and want. A service which will:

- Work together directly for the benefit of carers in Plymouth.
- Clearly support carers to influence the future planning of carers' services.
- Work with partners to avoid duplication and any wasting of resources.
- Ensure carers are fully consulted in their services and ensure carers are listened to by people who commission (purchase) services for carers.

We are happy to work with:

- Individual carers.
- Small and big groups.
- Volunteer agencies.
- Help new groups set up support groups etc as needed.
- Help support groups find funding/do partnership funding bids.
- Black and Minority Ethnic Groups/Cultural Community Groups.
- Partners in private business sectors.
- Partners in Plymouth City Council – Children and Adult Services.
- Partners in Primary Care – doctors, nurses, community nurses, chiropodists and any professional who works with carers.
- Small community groups/community centers.
- Education and leisure facilities.
- National organizations – Carers UK, Princes Royal Trust for Carers.

Basically, anyone who wants to enable carers in the caring role and ensure that carers are supported with their own needs and aspirations as well as for the person they are caring for.



If we all work together, we can be more effective. If you are interested in partnership work with carers, then we are interested in you.

For further information contact: Adelle Culver on 01752 205210 or email her on aculver@colebrookhousing.co.uk.

Logo Competition Launch

Let's get Creative!

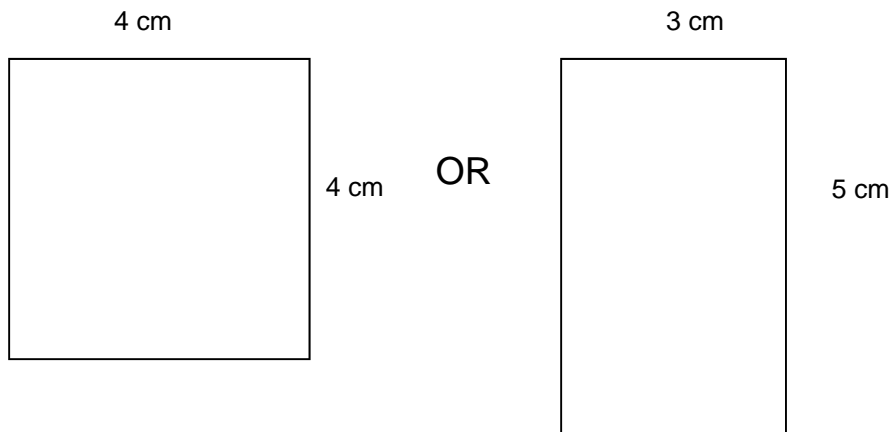


Dear Carer

We are inviting you to design the logo for the Carers Champions Plymouth Service. This logo will then be put on all our leaflets and publicity materials. We want a carer to design the logo. The competition is launched as of now and will run until the end of October 2007.

Entries will then be judged by the Carers Champions Workers and a small panel of carers.

The logo will need to be able to fit onto an A5 leaflet, so when produced it will need to fit inside a box which is no bigger than:



The prize for the winner will be £25 of Marks and Spencers vouchers to treat yourself with.

All entries welcome but entries must be from carers or the people they care for.



Carers Champions

We are a support service to help adult carers of adults in Plymouth – whether you care for a friend, relative or neighbour in a caring role. We are here to help and support you!

This service will be available from September 3rd 2007

Colebrook Housing Society in partnership with Plymouth Age Concern will be providing the

'Carers Champions Plymouth'

Please come along to the launch of our new service on

**Friday 5th October at
The Plymouth Pavilions
11am until 3pm.**

*For more information, please contact us at
3 Woodland Terrace, Greenbank, Plymouth
PL4 8NL, 01752 205210
enquiries@colebrookhousing.co.uk*



Carers Groups

Mental Health Family Members (Carers) Support Service

Provided by Plymouth Primary Care Trust

Many family members/carers identify the need for the following information:

Help on how best to care - How best to deal with unusual behaviour - How to cope with the effects of mental illness - Information about the illness, medication and any side effects. Where to obtain information in the community, ie benefits, housing, employment and voluntary sector agencies that may be able to assist you. This information and support can be provided for you through this service.

What about YOU!

If you feel that you would like to talk to someone who has experience and an understanding of caring for someone with a mental illness, or to reduce the feelings of isolation experienced by many carers, help in coping with the stress and pressure of trying to support your relative in the community especially at times of a crisis, or for any other reason linked to your caring role.

The following services are available for you:

- One to one support **includes home visits or meeting away from the home ie meeting for coffee or a place of your choosing.**
- Information upon request.
- Telephone Support.
- Monthly Support Group: **we have speakers attending on various topics relating to the interest of carers or services available. Where you can also meet with other family members in similar situations to your own.**
- Monthly Newsletter: **containing various information related to carers rights/mental health and news relating to changes in mental health law and legislation/local events and services within the Plymouth area.**
- Sign Posting **and referring to other services available in the community.**

For further details contact Pam Pinder Tel: 07887711834

Email: Pamela.Pinder@pcs-tr.swest.nhs.uk

Website: www.pamshouse.pwp.blueyonder.co.uk

P. A. M.S. (Positive Attitude To Multiple Sclerosis)

P.A.M.S. is a very friendly group for people living with MS and their carers. We meet once a month at Clearbrook Village Hall to support one another, share experiences and inform ourselves about the latest research and developments in Multiple Sclerosis. Group members also meet monthly in various local Pubs for "lunch and laughter". P.A.M.S. is an independent group facilitated by Jackie Burt - Social Worker, Plymouth City Council and Philippa Knox - Speech Therapist, Plymouth Primary care Trust. See our website: info@pams-ms.co.uk

New Deal for Carers

Consultation website

The Department of Health has launched a website as part of a nationwide consultation exercise to engage carers in a debate about "What would make a positive difference or improve your life as a carer?" Carers are encouraged to visit <http://www.newdealforcarers.org> and post their ideas on the website. The website will be live until mid-September 2007.

Other information on carers' services and New Deal can be found at: http://www.plymouth.gov.uk/homepage/socialcareandhealth/adultsocialcare/care_rsupport.htm

What's on in Plymouth

For information regarding events etc in and around the City then please check out Plymouth City Council's website at: <http://www.plymouthdiary.co.uk/> and also <http://www.plymouth.gov.uk/homepage/leisureandtourism/whatson.htm>

Feedback Sheet

Name: _____

Contact Details: _____

Organisation/Group (if applicable):

Please give us feedback on this newsletter, what you liked, what you didn't. What do you want to see in future newsletters?

Are you interested in getting involved in the design, delivery and monitoring of this service? Please tell us what might help you do so?