

Hello from Helen, Joanne and Naomi

Hi, I'm Helen McAdam and I began work at the Carers' Centre as a Development Worker on a temporary basis in June 2011 and my post was made permanent in October 2011. I have past experience of working for social care and other voluntary organisations. I will be working in the West area of Sunderland and will continue to be the worker for the Carers Group held monthly at Pallion Action Group.

Hello my name is Joanne Scott. I joined Sunderland Carers' Centre 31st October 2011. I will be joining the CBOS team (Carers Breaks and Opportunities Scheme) alongside Karen Bailey and Sheila Scott. I will be advising carers in the Sunderland area about the scheme, facilitating the application process and assisting with the completion of the application.

I have personal experience helping my father care for my mother after a breakdown. I understand how life changing and a struggle it can be trying to get the support needed for your loved one. I'm looking forward to meeting all carers and promoting the valuable service the Carers' Centre has to offer. For the past 16 years I've worked in the Hairdressing profession. In that time I had many clients, some who were carers. I enjoyed being able to make them feel confident and good about themselves.

I'm looking forward to my new role at the Carers' Centre. Anyone wanting more information about the Carers Breaks and Opportunities Scheme can contact the Carers' Centre.

Hi, I'm Naomi Coulson and I joined the team at Sunderland Carers' Centre on 14th November 2011 as a development worker covering the East side of Sunderland. I previously worked for a charitable organisation as a Mental Health Carer Support Worker in South Tyneside, and before that I studied Occupational Therapy at university. I have gained valuable skills and experience which are transferable to the role of a development worker here at Sunderland Carers' Centre.

I have experience on a personal level as a carer, so I am aware of many issues and obstacles that carers are faced with and have to deal with. Through my personal experience I am passionate about working with carers, and I am here to provide the best level of support to carers that I can. I am enthusiastic to fulfill my role as a development worker and I am looking forward to meeting carers in the Sunderland area. If you think I can help or support you in your caring role please get in touch with me at the Carers' Centre.

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Prevent a fall

Having a fall in later life is a concern for many of us or as a carer, you may worry that the person you care for may fall. Many older people who fall do not report it to any health professional until they have an injury or fracture even though there are treatments and help available to reduce the risk.

How to prevent falls...

- Improve your strength and balance by keeping fit and healthy.
- Seek help if you have sight problems and hearing loss as they can both affect your balance and movement.
- Manage your medicines – certain medicines can affect your balance.
- Keep your home safe – look out for things which could make you slip, trip or fall.
- Keep your bones healthy - reduce the risk of injury or fracture if you fall, by having a healthy balanced diet and maintaining an active lifestyle; vitamin D (via sunlight and in your diet) is also important.
- Seek help if you have had a fall and are anxious about falling again.

For more information or advice contact Deborah Porter, Falls Specialist Nurse/Co-ordinator on 502 6912 or 502 6981. Also visit www.sunderlandcarers.co.uk/falls.html

Public Transport

James Third, Community Relations Officer at Nexus has offered to meet carers to discuss any issues, problems or suggestions they have about public transport in the Sunderland area. If you would like to be part of this consultation, please contact the Carers' Centre on 567 3232 and leave your contact details. We will get in touch with you with a date and time.

The Carers' Centre is open
Monday to Friday 9am-5pm.

Tel: 0191 567 3232

(Answerphone after 5pm)

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Newsletter

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Carers - start 2012 with confidence!

If you have already broken all of your New Year resolutions why not make a new one and take part in the latest round of Caring with Confidence sessions. The last round in Autumn 2011 was a huge success in Hetton and due to popular demand the sessions are heading back to Sunderland. The sessions continue to be rated very highly by carers and nearly all say they would recommend them to other carers.

One carer said "Caring with Confidence helped me to meet other carers who have the same sort of problems, cares and thoughts, enabling us to share and encourage each other. Before I started attending my confidence had hit rock bottom but the sessions helped me feel more confident and informed. The information they gave was helpful in finding out what services were available and where to get help. The sessions were so welcoming

and friendly and I made some wonderful friends who I still meet with regularly. I would definitely advise carers who haven't taken part in the sessions to do so as soon as they can; I wish I had done it years ago!"

If you want to take part or just want to find out more why not come along to one of the 'Finding Your Way' introduction sessions on either Monday 20th February or Monday 27th February. The sessions take place at The Place, Athenaeum Street, Sunderland, SR1 2QF, from 11am to 2pm, with a buffet lunch. To book your place contact Sunderland Carers' Centre on 567 3232 or e-mail kevin@sunderlandcarers.co.uk

In the run-up to Summer 2012 the Caring with Confidence sessions will take place in Washington. Look out for the dates in future editions of this Newsletter.

Have your say on Carers' Strategy

Carers in Sunderland are being asked to get involved in creating a new Carers' Strategy for the city. As many carers know, there was a new national strategy for carers called "Recognised, valued and supported: Next steps for carers" at the end of 2010. Sunderland is creating a local version so that carers know what they should expect in the city, how services will be delivered and when.

Carers are invited to contribute their ideas on what is good at present, what else is needed and how it could be delivered most effectively. The information about what the strategy hopes to include and how to comment will be available on

Sunderland Carers' Centre website or you can have a copy sent to you by contacting the Carers' Centre.

After carers and the various bodies which carers interact with e.g. the NHS and the Council have made their comments and given their ideas and commitments a final draft strategy will be distributed for formal consultation. Look out for information on this in future Newsletters.

The consultation on the National Carers' Strategy had one of the biggest responses of any consultation. Please take this opportunity to ensure there is an equally good response to the Sunderland Carers' Strategy so that services really can try to meet your needs.

Carer Training for Professionals and Students

If you are a professional or student you may find it difficult or may not have enough time to attend formal training sessions about carers. Sunderland Carers' Centre has been involved in developing other training resources so the training can be accessed on-line and in bite-sized segments to suit you. They are a great way to see and hear from real carers talking about their own real experiences. Currently available on our website are the following training resources – go to www.sunderlandcarers.co.uk/profs.html

Carer Awareness Training

Carers discuss various themes including how caring has an impact on their lives and their health, how professionals can identify carers and how particular groups of professionals can support carers (GP's and Primary Care staff, Social Care Services, Hospital and Community Care staff). This training is available as a DVD or the video footage can be viewed on You Tube.

Carers' Perspectives on Assessment and Personalisation Publication

Sunderland University, Carers Association with South Tyneside and Sunderland Carers' Centre have worked in collaboration to produce this on-line publication. It includes background information about the personalisation agenda, legislation and strategies affecting carers as well as the current legal position with regard to carers, assessments and personalisation. It can be downloaded from our website and you can see and hear carers give their views on Assessment and Personalisation on You Tube.

Carers - Thank you! We would like to thank all of the carers who took part in the video recording for these training resources. Our experience shows that when professionals and students hear real experiences from real carers the training is so much more effective and memorable. Your equity cards are in the post!!

Trick or Treat Neet

At Sunderland Carers' Centre we organise an Annual party for carers to enjoy some 'time out' socially with different themes over the years and in 2011 we decided to organise a Halloween Party – aptly named 'Trick or Treat Neet'. The party was held on Thursday 27th October at Fulwell Firemans Club, from 7 – 11pm, with staff and volunteers 'spookably' dressed for the occasion!

Following a couple of 'fang-ing' problems, the event went well and 60 carers enjoyed a raffle, some scary tunes, and a fancy dress competition in which carer Vicky Donnigan claimed a £25 shopping voucher for best witch costume. There was also lovely food provided by local caterers Relish and this was funded via Gentoo. Maeve Cuthbertson, a former employee of the Carers' Centre came along with a Belly Dancing Troupe, and after a demonstration carers, staff and volunteers also had a go. A good night was had by all.

Sunderland Carers' Centre would like to thank the following for the evening and donating to the raffle in order for us to fundraise – if we have forgotten to mention anyone, we apologise profusely: Gentoo (Aspire Fund), SAFC, Relish, Fulwell Firemans Club, Beamish Museum, Pure Bliss Beauty Salon, Olympia Beauty & Fitness, Morrisons (Seaburn), Boots, The Red Lion (Boldon), Disabled Motorists Federation and thanks to a number of carers themselves who donated gifts for prizes. £254 was raised and this will go towards paying for furniture in our new premises.

We hope to arrange another social event for carers later in 2012, in addition to the other activities and outings we organise, and would welcome any comments or suggestions.



Carers' trip to Liverpool

My name is Margaret and I am a domestic cleaner and volunteer at Sunderland Carers' Centre. In October 2011 eight carers and I had a lovely five day break staying at the Adelphi Hotel in Liverpool. We also had the opportunity to visit Chester and Southport. This was funded through the Carers Breaks and Opportunities Scheme.

All of the carers were isolated or unable to have a break other than with a group of people in a similar situation. All of them give high levels of emotional as well as physical support to the people they care for. This often leaves them mentally and physically drained with feelings of depression and low mood. This holiday gave them a break from their everyday routine at home allowing them to relax and enjoy the excellent facilities the hotel had to offer. It gave the carers a great opportunity to meet new friends, socialise and share experiences.



We all had a fabulous time and would like to thank the Carers Breaks and Opportunities Scheme for making this possible.

An Ode to the Carers' Centre

Sixteen years ago today
A lowly housewife came this way
She had to face the world alone
Her husband in a nursing home.

A cup of tea was duly brought
A ginger biscuit quickly sought
Time was given for her tale of woe
She didn't know which way to go.

Let us help you was their reply
Come now there's no need to cry
Regular meetings we'll arrange
Very soon you won't feel strange.

So that is how the journey began
And how the years just ran and ran
No longer with the future to fear
She decided to become a volunteer.

And that is how it is today
All because of that decisive day
She plucked up courage to knock on the door
Of the Sunderland Carers' Centre.

Vera Loraine

Become a volunteer

Would you like the chance to get out and do something different and help others at the same time? Are you considering getting back into employment but want to gain some experience and skills first? Volunteering at Sunderland Carers' Centre may be just for you.

If you could spare a couple of hours a week or even only a few hours once a month we would welcome your help as a volunteer. It would be an opportunity to support us in our ongoing work to help other carers in Sunderland. You may have lots of skills we can use, or you may not even realise some of the skills and experience you have which would be of benefit in assisting us.

One of the big tasks we need to do every couple of months is to put the newsletters into envelopes ready to be posted out. We are looking for people to help. This would mean coming in one morning or afternoon every couple of months. At the moment it takes staff and volunteers a few days to do it, but as they say, "many hands make light work". Whether you are a carer or ex-carer this would be a great chance to socialise and chat with others whilst helping the Carers' Centre. We will keep you supplied with coffee and biscuits and pay any travel expenses.

If you have more time to spare there is a range of other volunteering opportunities available. To find out more or to offer your help with the newsletter please contact Lynda Irving on 567 3232.

Included in this newsletter is a poem by Vera Loraine, a former carer and one of our long-standing volunteers. It is thanks to Vera's invaluable help over many years that carers have been able to receive their newsletters and other mailings so quickly. Join Vera and be a volunteer!

AGM 2011

The Annual General Meeting of Sunderland Carers' Centre took place on Tuesday 18th October at the Stadium of Light and was attended by 125 carers and friends from other agencies. The Mayor of Sunderland, Councillor Norma Wright, welcomed members, carers and guests and gave the opening remarks. The guest speaker was Andrew Cozens CBE, Vice Chair of The Princess Royal Trust for Carers, and Strategic Advisor at the Agency for Local Government. Andrew spoke about future changes in health and social care. If you were unable to attend you can watch footage on our website – www.sunderlandcarers.co.uk/agm2011.html