

Parkinson's UK

Do you care for someone living with Parkinson's? Margaret Hunter is a new Parkinson's UK Information and Support Worker who can provide one-to-one information and support to people with Parkinson's, their families and carers in Sunderland via telephone or home visits. This includes giving information on issues such as benefits, links to local and other services, emotional support to deal with the fluctuating nature of Parkinson's and helping people to find their way through the health and social care maze. Contact Margaret Monday to Wednesday by phone 0844 225 9827 or email: mhunter@parkinsons.org.uk

There is also a wealth of expert information on the Parkinson's UK website at www.parkinsons.org.uk or through their free confidential national helpline on 0808 800 0303.

Website

The Carers' Centre Newsletter is published every two months and due to limited space we can only include a small amount of news and information. Please visit our website regularly to keep up-to-date with the work of the Carers' Centre and what is happening locally and nationally in terms of carers. The site is continuously updated and includes a latest news section; a calendar of groups and events; carers' surveys, petitions and consultations; and much more. We would also welcome your comments and suggestions. Visit www.sunderlandcarers.co.uk

Every effort is made to ensure that the information in this newsletter is correct. Sunderland Carers' Centre can accept no liability for errors and omissions and can not recommend products or services. Views and opinions expressed in this publication are not necessarily those of Sunderland Carers' Centre.

Autism and Transition Focus Groups

It is very important that carers have the opportunity to influence policy particularly concerning the support of people they care for and the support they need themselves in their caring role. With this in mind the Carers' Centre would like to host two regular focus group meetings – one for carers of children or adults with Autism and one for parent carers of young people aged 14 and above going through transition from children's to adult services.

The aim of the groups is to feed in issues, concerns, and areas of good practice which will then be fed into local multi-agency working parties in order to influence policy and service. Likewise information from the multi-agency groups can be shared at the focus groups. You do not need to have any specialist knowledge – your caring role is your expertise. You do not have to attend every meeting – just what you can manage. If you cannot attend a meeting but wish to contribute something you can phone your comments in.

If you would like to be part of one or both of these groups please ring the Carers' Centre on 567 3232 and tell reception which group(s) you would like to attend. We will then get in touch with you with dates and times of meetings which will not start until September. For more information contact Eibhlin Inglesby on the above phone number.

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

Tel: 0191 567 3232

(Answerphone after 5pm)

Sunderland Carers' Centre, 12 Toward Road,
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Email: info@sunderlandcarers.co.uk
Website: www.sunderlandcarers.co.uk

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Registered Charity No. 1118502

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Newsletter

Sunderland Carers Centre

Sunderland NHS
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July 2011

Carers Week 2011

Carers Week was 13 – 19 June. Sunderland celebrated with a trip to Whitby, a "Think Family" event, a personalisation workshop, the Caring for Carers Awards presentations, and information stalls at Boots, The Bridges and Sainsbury's, The Galleries. Thank you to all involved, especially Sunderland City Council, Northumberland, Tyne and Wear NHS Foundation Trust and The Co-operative Membership for their financial assistance.

Caring for Carers Awards

The Mayor, Councillor Norma Wright and Mayoress, Mrs Valerie Sibley presented the Caring for Carers Awards and certificates at a ceremony on Tuesday 14th June at the Stadium of Light. Sponsored by The Co-operative Membership, the awards give carers the chance to nominate workers who have supported them in their caring roles. There were three award winners.

Julie Johns, a district nurse from NHS South of Tyne and Wear - nominated by Valerie Simmons "Julie always made my husband feel at ease and made a point of including me in the conversation."

Steve Simpson, from The Stroke Association - nominated by Keith Podd "Before we met Steve we did not know where to start."

Councillor Peter Walker - nominated by Diane Kirtley for arranging drop kerbs to be placed outside her house. "This has made a tremendous difference to my life."



Pictured with the Mayor and Mayoress (from left to right): Councillor Peter Walker, Steve Simpson and Julie Johns.

Carers save £119 billion

New estimates by Carers UK and the University of Leeds show the care provided by carers is now worth £119 billion a year (£87 billion in 2007). Sunderland carers save £706.9 million. Also new research for Carers Week reveals that 4 out of 5 carers fear cuts to services. For more details visit our website www.sunderlandcarers.co.uk

Carers meet their MPs

Like many carers across the country you may have signed the 'Carers Poverty Alliance' petition. The petition was presented to 10 Downing Street during Carers Week and called on the government to recognise the huge financial sacrifice carers make.

As part of our local campaign, all three Sunderland MPs met some of their constituent carers at local meetings in Washington, Houghton-le-Spring and Sunderland on 20th May. The MPs listened to carers about their financial concerns and worries about welfare reform.

Sharon Hodgson, MP for Washington and Sunderland West, said "Carers contribute so much – not only to the people they care for, but also in saving the government billions in care costs. It was great to meet the carers today and to listen to their experiences and issues around poverty, which I will be taking back to Westminster with me. Public awareness and appreciation of the hidden army of carers has been steadily growing over the last few years, and in these tough economic times, it is vital that they get the support they need to carry on caring for their loved ones but also have quality of life for themselves."

Bridget Phillipson (pictured), MP for Houghton and Sunderland South, said "I know from meetings I have had in my constituency and my constituency surgeries that carers provide an invaluable service to loved ones and save the taxpayer billions on services that would otherwise have to be provided by the state. We have a higher than average number of carers here in my constituency and I know that many of them are concerned that the government's proposed benefit changes might leave them living in poverty. I am here today to listen to their concerns and to reassure them that I

will do all that I can to ensure they receive the support they need."

Julie Elliott, MP for Sunderland Central, said "Carers provide an invaluable service without which our NHS and Social Services would be pushed to breaking point. It's within all of our interests, therefore, to ensure that the carers themselves are adequately looked after."

Carer, Marie Jackson attended the meeting with Julie Elliott at Sunderland Carers' Centre. Marie really found the meeting useful and said "I had a particular problem I wanted to discuss at the meeting. I was grateful to Julie because she knew my problem was time sensitive and she followed up on it really quickly."

If you want to keep up to date with news about the petition look out for updates in the newsletter and on our website www.sunderlandcarers.co.uk

Personalisation

Want to know more about personalisation? Carers Week saw the first session of a new course to help carers understand "personalisation" – a change in social services' way of working to enable people and their carers to have support which helps them to achieve a fulfilling life.

This was part of the piloting of the course so that it can be tuned to make sure that it is valuable to carers. The carers who attended got a lot out of it and had ideas for improvements.

Although a national course there is a strong local element. For Carers Week this was delivered by Pippa Corner, Head of Personalisation at Health, Housing and Adult Services. Pippa left carers feeling that the new ways of working would bring real benefits.

To find out more please contact the Carers' Centre on 567 3232.



Think Family

Sunderland Carers' Centre and the Parent Carer Council run events to ensure we have the right topics at the front of our agenda when working to improve services for carers and their families. A "Think Family" Event on Thursday 16th June at the Stadium of Light was very well attended by parent carers, young carers and professionals. Grandparent carer, Diane Coats introduced the day and the guest speakers were Pippa Corner, Head of Personalisation, Health, Housing and Adult Services and Meg Boustead, Head of Safeguarding, Children's Services. Steve Fletcher, Strategic Manager for Disabled Children joined Pippa to sum up the event.

Carers were asked what families wanted to make life better for the whole family. The emphasis was on improvements which would benefit the carer, young carer or the person with the disability/illness and what mattered was that it would make a difference for the whole family. It was heartening to have so many carers and professionals listening to each other and see that services really do want to meet the needs of families as a unit. We discussed the short break statutory duties as well as the revised carers' strategy.

Everyone involved in organising the event is determined to use the comments and ideas from the day to shape policy and services. Thank you to all who attended and contributed.

Cuppa, Chat, Cakes, Crafts!

Thank you to everyone who helped raise £576 towards our new premises at the Carers' Centre Open Day in May. Following the day's success, we would like to invite all carers to drop in to the Carers' Centre for a little bit of 'me' time on Monday 12th September, 10.30am – 12.30pm. Sit back, relax, chat and enjoy a well deserved cuppa! To raise funds for the new Carers' Centre building, cakes, crafts and handmade cards will also be on sale. We look forward to seeing you then, no need to pre-book! In the meantime, if you would like to make a donation please contact the Carers' Centre on 567 3232 or call into 12 Toward Road.

Whitby Trip

It was a grand day out. Whitby has a wonderful friendly atmosphere and when the sun is shining as it did on the day it offers the opportunity to either sit, relax and watch the world go by, or wander through the old streets or along the busy port-side full of colourful boats unloading their catches. And of course you must treat yourself to the award winning fish and chips.

New Beginnings Group

Here is some of our group on holiday in the Isle of Wight. Everyone enjoyed the excursions. The hotel was very good and the atmosphere so relaxing. We were lucky with the weather. After a dodgy start the sun shone the rest of the week. Everyone asked where are we going next? The New Beginnings Group is for past carers to be able to start to socialise and make new friends who are in the same situation. If you would like information about the group ring Dorothy on 548 6064.

