

Help with your Council Tax bill

Council Tax Discounts

Your council tax bill assumes that there are at least two adults aged 18 or over living in your home. If only one adult lives there the bill will be reduced by a quarter (25%). If no one lives in a house then the bill is reduced by half (50%).

When assessing the number of adults living in a home there are some people that are "not counted". Adults "not counted" include some carers. To qualify as a carer you must provide care or support for at least 35 hours a week to another person who lives with you. This person must not be your partner, spouse or child under 18. The person cared for must also be entitled to certain benefits, such as the higher rate of Attendance Allowance, or the highest rate of the care component of Disability Living Allowance.

If there is more than one person in a household who cares for someone for at least 35 hours per week they could get more than one Carers Discount.

There are also other people "not counted" including people who are severely mentally

impaired (for example people with Alzheimer's disease or severe learning disabilities).

Disability Reduction Scheme

You may also qualify for a reduction in your council tax bill if someone (an adult or child) in your household is disabled and you have special facilities in your home.

Your home must have at least one of the following features which are essential, or of major importance, to the well-being of the disabled person:

- a room (but not a bathroom, kitchen or toilet) that is used mainly for meeting the needs of the disabled person, or
- a second bathroom or kitchen required to meet the needs of the disabled person, such as an extension or an extra room, or
- enough floor space for the disabled person who needs to use a wheelchair indoors.

If you think you may qualify for either or both of these schemes or would like more information contact the Council Tax team on (0191) 520 5501.

The Carers' Centre is open
Monday to Friday 9am-5pm.
Tel: 0191 567 3232

(Answerphone after 5pm)

Sunderland Carers' Centre, 12 Toward Road,
Sunderland SR1 2QF.

Email: info@sunderlandcarers.co.uk
Website: www.sunderlandcarers.co.uk

This newsletter can be made available in large print,
braille, audio and other languages.

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End the care crisis

50 charities representing older and disabled people, those with long-term conditions and their families (including The Princess Royal Trust for Carers and Carers UK) are working together to call for the Government to reform the social care system. On Tuesday 6th March they will hold a Lobby of Parliament. As part of the campaign Sunderland Carers' Centre will also lobby the city's MPs.

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.

Newsletter

Sunderland Carers' Centre

Sunderland NHS
Teaching Primary Care Trust

Sunderland
City Council



March 2012

Caring for Carers Awards 2012

Has a worker from health, social services, a home care agency, a voluntary or community project or another organisation been of particular support to you in your caring role? For example a nurse, doctor, dentist, optician, pharmacist, consultant, social worker, care worker, or a voluntary or community worker.

If so, this is your chance to say thank you by nominating them for the Caring for Carers Awards 2012. The awards aim to recognise workers who have made a real difference to the lives of carers.

All workers who have been nominated will receive a certificate and the winners will be presented with their awards during Carers Week in June.

This year we have changed the criteria and we will now not be able to accept nominations for workers from Sunderland Carers' Centre.

Carers on the mailing list will find a nomination form enclosed with this newsletter. Simply complete the form to nominate someone and return it to: 'Caring for Carers Awards', Sunderland Carers' Centre, 12 Toward Road, Sunderland SR1 2QF

If a nomination form is not enclosed please contact the Carers' Centre on 567 3232 or visit the website - www.sunderlandcarers.co.uk/awards.html.

The closing date for nominations is Wednesday 9th May.

The award winners are not chosen by the Carers' Centre but by an independent panel of judges. It would be helpful to the judges if you could give as much information as possible about how the worker has helped you in your caring role and why you think they deserve an award.

Please note nominations must be from carers only and the person you nominate must be a worker (not a young carer or other family member/friend). The worker must not work for Sunderland Carers' Centre.

For more information about the awards please contact Lisa Hall at Sunderland Carers' Centre on 567 3232.

Carers Week 2012

This year Carers Week is 18 - 24 June and the national theme is "In sickness and in health". Events and activities will take place in Sunderland to celebrate the week, including a carers' trip and the launch of the Sunderland Multi-Agency Carers' Strategy. More details will be publicised in the next newsletter.

New Training for Carers

The current round of Caring with Confidence sessions comes to a close at the end of April. If you missed out this time don't worry! More sessions will be announced in our May newsletter. In the meantime we are pleased to offer some new training opportunities to bridge the gap.

Understanding Dementia (Suitable for extended family and friends of someone with dementia)

If you are helping to support someone with dementia but do not think of yourself as the main carer then this session is for you. You may not even see yourself as providing care at all but in reality without your help the main person providing care would be unable to cope. This session gives you the opportunity to learn more about dementia and its stages so you can continue your vital support to your family and friends. It will be held on Monday 26th March, 11am – 2pm.

Build your emotional resilience! (Suitable for all carers)

The session looks at what affects our emotions and how adopting simple techniques can help us cope through those challenging times. It will be held on Monday 30th April, 11am – 1pm.

Both sessions take place at 'The Place', Athenaeum Street, Sunderland, SR1 1QX. To book your place on either session please contact Sunderland Carers' Centre on 567 3232 or e-mail kevin@sunderlandcarers.co.uk.

Local Theatre Company Play

Open Clasp Theatre Company have offered to bring their play 'Swags and Tails' to Sunderland. The play is about older women who are facing the difficulties of growing older and the challenges that are faced by carers and care workers in the face of radical cuts to services. The play is set in the Thatcher era but the themes are very relevant to today. Open Clasp are well regarded both locally and nationally.

The play is scheduled for Wednesday 21st March; provisional timing 1pm to 2.30pm. Venue to be decided. We are hoping to offer tickets to this play to carers for free or for a very small charge.

If you are interested in coming along please ring Sunderland Carers' Centre on 567 3232 and give your name and contact details and we will get back to you with more information.

Carers' Centre Survey

Thank you to all those carers who gave their time to take part to our carers' satisfaction survey. We received a very good number of responses from carers. Your views and comments are very helpful and we will use them to help us improve the services we provide.

Carers Week Survey

The national Carers Week survey is now open. The theme is "In sickness and in health" and the findings will be published in Carers Week. The aim is to find out from carers:

- How does caring impact on your health and wellbeing?
- How much have the cuts to local services impacted on your health and wellbeing?
- What could really make a difference to your life as a carer?

The survey is available online – visit www.surveymonkey.com/s/carersweek2012. If you do not have internet access and would like to take part please contact Lisa Hall at the Carers' Centre on 567 3232.

What a grand morning

A grand morning we had at Sunderland Carers' Centre's Coffee Morning in December. We raised £400 for our new premises. The total overall for all three coffee mornings is a fantastic, £1500 which will buy new furniture. A big thank you to all the staff and volunteers who donated their time in helping to organise this event. Many thanks to all the carers and visitors who came to support us.



Volunteers – courageous risk takers

Reverend Dr Simon D Mason, the Chaplain for South Tyneside and Sunderland, at Northumberland, Tyne and Wear Trust gave a very good sermon at an event for World Mental Health Day about the qualities a volunteer needs in order to be of service to others.

The Carers' Centre asked Reverend Mason if he would write a condensed version of what he said so that we could include it in our newsletter. Reverend Mason writes:

Inspired by the prospect of preaching at Sunderland Minster for World Mental Health Day I chose the passage from Mark about the group of friends who make sure their pal who's paralysed gets to Jesus (chapter 2, verses 1-12).

This story demonstrates the power disabled and able bodied people have when they get together to make something happen. Through our faith stories we know Jesus can forgive and that he can heal. Yet knowing that and acting upon it are different. The able bodied friends who carried their disabled companion had more than knowledge they were also courageous risk takers.

This preparedness to take a risk was based on a solid foundation for they were also organised and committed to the immediate task in hand which was to get their pal to where he needed to be – the place where he could be seen for who he was, which was also the place where he could begin to be healed.

Volunteers for the service users of Sunderland Carers' Centre also need these virtues of courage, risk taking and clear purpose. It's these qualities which mark out people who are dedicated to the service of others in need. God bless you.

Disability Hate Crime

Hate crime happens when someone dislikes another person because they think they are different. Sometimes hate and prejudice happens against people with disabilities.

If you are a victim or if you witness a hate incident you can report it confidentially day or night on Freephone 08000 778 378.

Sunderland Carers' Strategy

As mentioned in our last newsletter carers in Sunderland are being asked to get involved in creating a new Carers' Strategy for the city.

A new national strategy for carers called "Recognised, valued and supported: Next steps for carers" was published at the end of 2010. Sunderland is creating a local version so that carers know what to 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.

One of the ways to share your views is by completing an online survey. You can find a link to the survey on our website – visit www.sunderlandcarers.co.uk and go to the consultations page. If you would prefer, another way of sharing your views is by contacting the Carers' Centre on 567 3232 and we will make sure your views are passed on to the Council.

The consultation ends on Friday 30th March 2012. Please do have your say so that services really can try to meet the needs of carers.

Get active for 2012!

We are delighted to be working with The Community Outreach team of 'Active Sunderland' to work with groups of carers over a 6-8 week period to deliver fitness activity taster sessions.

Over the next couple of months the team will be guests at various Carers' Centre groups so carers get the opportunity to find out more about what is on offer. The Active Sunderland team deliver a variety of activities dependant on the group's skill levels and requests (for example, if the group is interested in dance then dance based exercise will be provided). The aim of the taster sessions is to introduce the group to activities which are available in the city so that they can continue with them once Active Sunderland is no longer working with the group.

If you don't attend any Carers' Centre groups but would like to find out more information about Active Sunderland go to www.activesunderland.org.uk or call (0191) 5614713.