

Sunderland Carers' Centre

Newsletter

November 2012

Carers Rights Day 2012 – 'Time well earned'

Caring means something different for everyone, but one thing that carers probably agree on is they cannot keep going on without taking a break.

To celebrate Carers Rights Day 2012 we would like to invite carers to the private view of a new photography exhibition 'Time Well Earned' featuring photographs by Daniel Dale. Daniel's photographs will give a fascinating insight to some of the hobbies and interests carers enjoy when they take those much needed breaks.

The private view will take place on Carers Rights Day, Friday 30th November, 12 noon to 3pm at 'The Place', Athenaeum Street, Sunderland, SR1 1DF. To attend the private view please book your place by contacting the Carers' Centre on 549 3768 by Wednesday 28th November and just drop in at the event any time between 12 noon and 3pm.

The exhibition will then be open to the public from Monday 3rd December to Friday 14th December. (The gallery is open 9am to 4.30pm Monday to Thursday and to 3.30pm on Friday). Carers can also pick up information about the 'Carers Breaks and Opportunities Scheme' at the exhibition. If you don't currently take time out from your caring role the scheme could be just the thing to get you started!

A Thank You from Ailsa

Thank you very much indeed to everyone who sent cards, generous words, good wishes and gifts when I retired – your kindness was overwhelming.

I am afraid I have been unable to reply to you all so please accept my thanks and apologies if you were among the people I did not manage to thank personally.

Knowing you all has been great and I will be thinking about you while trying to beat the garden into shape in Argyll.

Ailsa Martin



Pictured: Ailsa (fifth from left) with Andy Barraclough and Carol Cochrane from Carers Trust and the other North East Carers' Centre Managers.



NHS South of Tyne and Wear
serving Gateshead Primary Care Trust, South Tyneside Primary Care Trust and
Sunderland Teaching Primary Care Trust

Sunderland
City Council


carerstrust
a Network Partner

Christmas Closing Dates

Sunderland Carers' Centre will be closed from 12.30pm Friday 21st December until 9am Wednesday 2nd January.

If you feel stressed and need support during this time you could ring the Mental Health Matters Helpline tel: 0800 013 0626 from 5pm to 9am weekdays and 24 hours at weekends and Bank Holidays, or The Samaritans tel: 08457 90 90 90 anytime. You can also contact Sunderland City Council at any time over the holiday period tel: 520 5555. If you have a social care emergency outside normal office hours, on weekends or public holidays, you can contact the Out of Hours Service tel: 520 5515.

If you feel that you do need to speak to the Carers' Centre, staff have volunteered to monitor the answerphone on 27th, 28th and 31st December. Your message will be picked up and dealt with if it is urgent.

Dementia Carers – Your story matters!

Sunderland Carers' Centre is working in partnership with the Tyne and Wear Care Alliance and the 'Life Story Network' to offer carers of people with dementia an exciting opportunity.

The 'Life Story' project has been shown to make a valuable difference for individuals with dementia and their carers. The 'Life Story' project builds up a picture and a set of values and beliefs around the person with dementia by recognising their own stories and histories.

Carers are vital to the process as they know the person better than anyone else and it is this expertise that helps to record the information. The experience will not only help carers but it can be shared with paid care workers so the beliefs and values of the person needing care remain at the centre of any care plan.

If you are a carer and want to know more about 'Life Story' or want to sign up for the session on **Friday 16th November, 10.30am to 3.30pm** (at The Place, Athenaeum Street, Sunderland, SR1 1DF) please contact Kevin at the Carers' Centre on 549 3768 or e-mail kevin@sunderlandcarers.co.uk. Funds to help with transport and alternative care are available to help carers take part.

Hello from Alison, Hamna and Claire

Hi, I'm Alison Smith. I joined Sunderland Carers' Centre on 1st October to work alongside Jackson on reception and to assist in administration. I have worked in administration for approximately 30 years – working with voluntary organisations and for social care.

I have experienced caring for family members and understand how life changing this can be. My family have now grown and flown the nest so I am looking forward to the new challenges I am sure I will encounter working for Sunderland Carers' Centre.

Hello my name is Hamna Begum. I joined the Carers' Centre on 1st October as the BME link worker. I have past experience working with people from the BME community in voluntary and non-voluntary organisations. I will be the link that will inform and help people from the BME community city wide access the services provided by Sunderland Carers' Centre. I have experience on a personal level as a carer from the BME community, 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 helping the carers from the BME community, and I am here to provide the best level of support to the carers. I look forward to meeting all the 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.

Hello (again), I'm Claire Alderson. It's great to be back at Sunderland Carers' Centre after spending the last 18 months travelling around Australia, South East Asia and New Zealand.

I had a fantastic time, saw some incredible sights and even worked on a camel farm in Broome to earn some extra money along the way, however I missed the wonderful team and all of the amazing carers at the Carers' Centre and it is so exciting to be back working with Sunderland's young carers again.

Thank you for having me back!!!

Writing for Health

Would you like to try something new in 2013? We are hoping to develop a Creative Writing group for carers. Creative and expressive writing can be therapeutic and can help reduce stress levels, build confidence and help you 'find your voice and tell your story'. Putting it simply – writing can help us feel better. Previous experience of creative writing is not necessary and the sessions will be suitable for all literacy levels, so don't be put off if you feel you are not good at spelling or writing! If you are interested and would like to know more please contact Vera Maw at Sunderland Carers' Centre. Should enough interest be raised we will arrange a suitable date and time of the first session in the New Year.

Carers Bill Unsuccessful

The Private Members Bill (mentioned in the last newsletter) designed to improve the identification of carers and improve access to services to support carers has been defeated in Parliament.

The Bill was sponsored by a cross-party group of back bench MPs, including Washington and Sunderland West MP Sharon Hodgson, and a number of charities and employers. If successful the Bill would have placed duties on councils to ensure enough care and support services were available for carers, older and disabled people, and on education and health institutions to ensure that they had strategies in place to identify those who might be providing care but not getting the support they need to do so. In her speech supporting the Bill, Mrs Hodgson cited two local examples of carers struggling to cope with their responsibilities who had been helped after being identified.

Mrs Hodgson said "Carers – many of whom are very young – perform a vital service, both to the individuals they look after, as well as the whole country – they save the government from having to provide billions of pounds worth of social care, but in too many cases they are never even recognised as being a carer. This Bill would have brought about a step change in the support that carers get in Sunderland and across the country, something which is urgently needed. Despite this setback, I will continue to press the government to implement what we were hoping to achieve with this Bill – carers in Sunderland deserve nothing less."

Sunderland Carers' Centre is very disappointed this important Bill did not make it through Parliament. We will continue to work with our colleagues in health and education to offer any training and support to them so they know what services are out there for carers and the positive benefits these will have for their patients and students.

Meet and Greet Service

This article has been provided by City Hospitals Sunderland NHS Foundation Trust.

You may have heard of the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) within the hospital, a free independent service which offers advice and support to patients, carers and visitors. As a Trust, we want our patients to have a positive experience of the services we provide.

Following discussions with carers, it has been suggested that patients with disabilities and their carers would benefit from some additional assistance when they come to hospital for outpatient appointments, investigations or visiting. The Trust is keen to ensure that the patient pathway runs as smoothly as possible and if you feel that we can provide support and assistance, please contact PALS on the freephone telephone number 0800 587 6513, who will arrange for a volunteer to meet you on arrival to the hospital. This service is available between the hours of 9am – 4pm, Monday to Friday.

For example, if you are transporting the person you care for to the hospital and would find it easier to 'drop them off' at the entrance before parking the car, we will arrange for a volunteer to meet you and stay with them until you park the car and can meet up with them again. Or, if you are not sure where a particular department is, they can accompany you to the correct location.

In order to do this, PALS would need to know the date and time of your appointment, and what sort of assistance you require a few days beforehand so that the necessary arrangements can be made. If you think we can help, please give us a call on 0800 587 6513 or call the Co-ordinator of Volunteers direct on 569 9858.

Christmas Open Day and Fundraiser

Why not join us and kick start your festive season at our Christmas Open Day and Fundraiser taking place on Friday 7th December, from 10am – 2pm.

The Christmas elves have been busy again, weaving their crafting and baking magic to tempt us to bag a Christmas bargain or two! The Carers' Centre will be filled with music, good cheer and some nifty footwork from our very own group of Irish dancers! Feel free to drop in, enjoy a cuppa and soak up the festive atmosphere. No need to book, just turn up on the day!

New premises and garden officially launched!

Many carers and volunteers have visited and enjoyed the new Carers' Centre premises since we moved here in April. In late summer many of you even pulled on your wellies and got involved in the 'Flowerpot Gang' garden project! The feedback you have given us about the new premises and garden has been so positive and we wanted to give carers an opportunity to officially launch them both... and on Wednesday 29th August over 80 carers did just that!



Unfortunately the rain meant the much anticipated 'It's a knockout' competition had to be cancelled but steel band 'Pantastic' gave us musical sunshine with a brilliant set of songs to get everyone warmed up! The weather meant indoor activities were a big hit: Dot's 'Play your cards right' and Tommy's bingo were so popular there was barely enough room to squeeze everyone in!

Thanks to all the volunteers who helped out on the day including those who made sure we all had enough to eat and drink. Also thanks to Relish caterers for their kind donation towards the buffet lunch.

Warm Home Discount Scheme

The Warm Home Discount Scheme provides help for vulnerable people with their energy costs. You may qualify for the £130 discount if on 21 July 2012 (the qualifying date) you were either:

- aged under 80 and receiving only the Guarantee Credit element of Pension Credit (no Savings Credit)
- aged 80 or over and were receiving the Guarantee Credit element of Pension Credit (even if you get Savings Credit as well)

And all of the following apply:

- your name, your partner's name or your appointee's name is on your electricity bill
- you get your electricity from one of the energy suppliers participating in the scheme – Atlantic, British Gas, EDF Energy, E.ON, Equipower, Manweb, M&S Energy, npower, Sainsbury's Energy, Scottish Gas, Scottish Hydro, ScottishPower, Southern Electric, SSE, Swalec and Utility Warehouse

You do not need to call now to get your discount. The government will write to all those potentially eligible for the discount in winter 2012/2013, telling you if you need to take further action.

If you get a letter asking you to call the helpline to confirm if you can get the discount, you must call before 13 March 2013. If you do not call you will not be able to get the discount. If you have a general query regarding the scheme call the Warm Home Discount Scheme Helpline on 0845 603 9439.

Energy suppliers may also give a £130 discount to some other customers in vulnerable groups e.g. those on a low income with a disability, long term illness or those with young children. Each electricity supplier has different eligibility criteria they will use to decide who may get the discount. Contact your electricity supplier to find out more.

Transition

The next meeting of the Transition Support Group is on Thursday 29th November, 10.30am – 12 noon, at the Carers' Centre.

It is open to all carers of young people going through transition from children's services to adult services. Any queries please contact Eibhlin or Helen.

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.

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

Tel: 0191 549 3768

(Answerphone after 5pm)

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