

All-age, all-ability Creative arts workshops

The following workshops are being delivered in partnership between Adapt, Carers Northumberland and Northumberland Link:

Choppington	Welfare Centre – Textured pictures/cards	Tues 21 st July
Hexham	The Mart – Textured pictures/gift boxes	Wed 22 nd July
Blyth	Community Enterprise Centre – Textured pictures/gift boxes	Fri 24 th July
Berwick	William Elder Building, Castlegate – Gift boxes/model making	Tues 28 th July
Belford	Bellview Centre 33 West Street – Gift boxes/model making	Wed 29 th July
Alnwick	St James’s Church Centre, Pottergate – Gift boxes/cards	Thur 30 th July

Workshops are £8.00 per person (including lunch) and run from 10.30am until 2.30pm

To find out more or book by phone contact Jane on 01434 600599 or alternatively please fill in and return the tear off slip below with a cheque of £8.00 per person made payable to Adapt (North East)

Creative Arts Workshops

VENUE	DATE	ACTIVITY	Tick Preference
Choppington	21 July	Textured pictures/cards	
Hexham	22 July	Textured pictures/gift boxes	
Blyth	24 July	Textured pictures/gift boxes	
Berwick	28 July	Gift boxes/model making	
Belford	29 July	Gift boxes/model making	
Alnwick	30 July	Gift boxes/cards	

Name:

Address:

Tel:

Please let us know of any dietary or other requirements (e.g. Transport)

Please return to: Jane Coulson, Adapt (North East), Bluebird House, Haugh Lane, Hexham, NE46 3PU.



Carers Newsletter

Issue June 2009

In this issue:

Page 2-3

National News & Information

Page 4-5

Your Guide to a Carers Assessment

Page 6-8

Local News & Information

Page 9

Carers Northumberland Celebrates Carers Week 2009

Page 10

Health & Social Care Awards 2009

Page 11

Useful Information

Page 12

Activities



Carers Week 2009 – Highlighting the Incredible Contribution that Carers

Carers UK rightly point out the UK’s carers are quite literally indispensable. They save the economy an incredible £87 billion – the same cost of running the NHS.

Carers often face lack of recognition in all areas of their lives suffering more than they need to. They struggle with their finances (Carers Allowance at £50.50 is the lowest benefit of its kind), health, job, social life and general well being.

The aim of Carers Week is to highlight and celebrate the incredible contribution carers make, campaign for greater recognition and support for carers and inform those who are unaware of the services and benefits they are entitled to.

Inside this newsletter you will find a lot of information, some national and some local that is relevant to your caring role. We have tried to include as many topics as possible so that most areas are covered. You’ll find information on benefits, health, carer’s assessments, young carers, campaigning and lobbying and support, both national and local.

Remember, if you know someone who is struggling in a caring role, who may not even recognise themselves as a carer, it is important to pass on this information so we can help.

Carers Northumberland 0844 800 7354.

MPs Press Prime Minister on Carers' Benefits

Carers UK reported on 6 May 2009 that MPs met with Prime Minister Gordon Brown to urge him to make improvements to carers' benefits. Carers UK also attended the meeting and presented carers' concerns directly to the Prime Minister.

Issues that were raised by MPs included the need to overhaul carers' benefits, the disincentives caused by the earnings limit for Carers Allowance which means that carers lose their entire benefit if they earn more than £95 a week, and the overlapping benefit rule which means that people receiving a state pension cannot also receive Carers Allowance. They also asked whether more could be done to support those carers who wish to study.

The MP's stressed that carers need to see change now and wants to see a timetable for action.

The Government accepted that Carers Allowance is not fit for purpose, and has set out its intention to put in place measures by 2018 so that carers will not be forced into financial hardship by their caring role. However, despite the promise of a review, nothing has been forthcoming.

Emily Holzhausen, Director of Policy and Public Affairs at Carers UK added:

"The benefits system has to be overhauled for carers. They are saving the state a staggering £87 billion a year yet many are living in poverty and can't even afford to heat their home or pay bills. Government has recognised that Carers Allowance is not fit for purpose but carers cannot wait 10 years for Government to deliver. The time for action is now."

Carers Northumberland was asked by BBC Newcastle if any of the carers registered with the organisation had felt let down by the benefits system in failing to provide financial provision for unpaid carers. A carer did volunteer and their situation was highlighted on the BBC Politics Show on Sunday 10th May. A full version of the interview can be seen on BBC i Player by visiting www.bbc.co.uk/politicsshow

Making the Most of pharmacies for Carers

Lloyds Pharmacy offers a range of services to make caring for someone a bit easier:

- Advice on medicines – side effects of medication & interactions with different drugs
- Medicines check up – medicines review for those who order repeat prescriptions from Lloyds
- Managing medicines – gives carers peace of mind and takes some of the pressure of managing daily medicines
- Express prescriptions service – carers collect prescription direct from pharmacy instead of GP

Visit www.lloydspharmacy.com or your local store.



Safer Driving for Life

- Do you live in Northumberland?
- Are you a car driver?

If you answered yes, free tuition and advice may be available to you to help reduce vehicle running costs, refresh driving skills and promote independence.

Adapt (North East) working in partnership with Northumberland Care Trust is pleased to offer a half day course to anyone residing in Northumberland. The course covers topics such as personal safety for drivers, winter driving, fuel economy, tyre and vehicle maintenance and driver refresher/ confidence issues. Training is delivered by a Driving Standards Agency Approved Driving Instructor.

For further information or to book please contact:

Edwina Little, Adapt (North East), Bluebird House, Haugh Lane Industrial Estate, Hexham, NE46 3PU

Telephone 01434 600599. Email: edwinal@adapt-tyndale.org.uk



Concessionary bus travel

Most people are aware that people aged 60 and over are entitled to free bus travel but they may not all realise that disabled people younger than 60 may also qualify for the National Concessionary Travel Scheme. Less people may be aware that **Northumberland Council provides Companion Passes to enable people who cannot travel alone to have a carer go with them free as well.**

The companion may be a carer, relative or friend of any age. To qualify for a companion pass, proof such as a note from a doctor that states that you are unable to travel alone must be supplied. Some doctors may charge for this service.

Further information and application forms can be obtained from Northumberland Council by ringing them on 0845 600 6400 or by going online to www.northumberland.gov.uk

Pontin's Breaks for Carers 2009

Pontin's are providing three Classic self catering apartments for Princess Royal Trust Network Members. Each apartment can sleep up to 4 people - 2 in the bedroom and 2 on a bed settee in the lounge.

A full entertainment programme is available with up to 50 free activities including live music, dancing and cabaret every evening. The breaks are Monday-Friday with availability at four parks in June, early July, September and October at:

- Southport, Ainsdale Beach, Merseyside
- Prestatyn Sands, North Wales
- Brean Sands, Somerset
- Camber Sands, East Sussex

Contact Carers Northumberland for more information.

Carers Northumberland Win Regional Health & Social Care Award 2009



Pictured above Stan Cooke Carers Northumberland Chair, Shirley Charlton Trustee, Cari Hook ADO South and Angela Tait Information Officer at the Awards Ceremony, Redworth Hall.

Northumberland Carers Steering Group, which included carers and professionals, worked hard to build upon and merge the two smaller projects of Carers Together and Carer Link to form a single generic Carer organisation for the whole county, Carers Northumberland. The enormous amount of work that went into developing and securing funding for the organisation was recognised as the steering group won the award in the category of Adopt, Adapt and Improve at the North East Strategic Health Authority Health and Social Care Awards ceremony held at Redworth Hall on Thursday 21st May.

Collecting the award Stan Cooke, chair of Carers Northumberland thanked all those who had contributed highlighting in particular the efforts of Michele O'Brien Carers Officer with Northumberland Care Trust and the strong partnership working between the two organisations.

The award was dedicated to former carer and trustee of Carers Together and Carers Northumberland, Bill Dack who sadly passed away in April following a battle with lung cancer. It was Bill's vision many years ago that a single organisation would exist to support carers right throughout the county and he worked tirelessly over many years to contribute to the development of the carers' projects. He would have undoubtedly been very proud that both his and others efforts have been recognised at such level.



New rights for working carers

The vast majority of carers are of working age and around 3 million carers already combine work and care - this means that 1 in 7 people in the workforce is a carer. Carers UK research shows that a third of carers, not currently working, want to return to work if the right alternative care and flexible support was available.

Sadly around 1 in 5 carers give up their jobs to care with many ending up in poverty as they lose out on income and pensions. Since April 2007 around 2.6 million carers are set to benefit from a new right to request flexible working that is designed to help carers stay in work. This new right awarded under the Work and Families Act 2006 comes as a result of years of lobbying, campaigning and research by Carers UK.

Flexible working is about changing your working hours and conditions to better fit the realities of caring. This could be anything from altering your arrival and leaving times, to having access to a phone, or getting emergency paid leave. It might make your life a lot easier to work long days on Monday and Tuesday, and then do a half day on Friday. Many might expect their boss to be against this but research with employers has shown that those who support carers in their workforce have lower staff turnover, reduced recruitment and retraining costs, improved productivity and reduced absenteeism. The right to request flexible working has already been in place for parents of disabled children since April 2003 and research has shown that around 80% of requests have been granted by employers.

Carers UK have produced a booklet for carers called "Employees guide to work and caring". If you're a carer you can get a free copy by calling Carers UK publication line on 0845 241 0963 (local rate call - open office hours only) or visiting their website at

www.carersuk.org/Information/Workandcaring

Are you a working carer?

From 7th July the Carers Northumberland Information Line will be available every 1st and 3rd Tuesday of the month between the hours of 5.30pm and 7.30pm in addition to the normal hours of 10.00am and 2.00pm Monday to Friday

Tel 0844 800 7354

Alternatively you can e mail anytime info@carersnorthumberland.org.uk

Carers UK needs your help to compile 'Discrimination dossier'

Carers UK are gathering evidence to make the case for new legal protections for carers against discrimination. If you have been discriminated against or harassed as a result of being a carer, Carers UK encourage you to fill in an equalities survey at www.carersuk.org Following years of campaigning by Carers UK and the success of carer Sharon Coleman in the European Court of Justice, the Government announced in April that it intends to ban discrimination and harassment against carers, by protecting people who are 'associated with' someone who is disabled.

Carers UK are creating a 'discrimination dossier' to build evidence to make sure that these proposals become law.

How do I get help? Your guide to a Carer's Assessment

As a carer you have a legal right to an assessment of your needs. It is your chance to discuss with social services what help you need with caring. You can also discuss any help that would maintain your own health and balance caring with other aspects of your life, like work and family. Social services use the assessment to decide what help to provide.

Who qualifies for a Carers Assessment?

The law says you have the right to an assessment if you care for someone for 'a substantial amount of time on a regular basis'. You may be a carer living with or away from the person you care for, caring full time or combining care with paid work.

If you are over 16, you have a right to an assessment, even if the person you care for does not want to receive help from social services.

If you look after a disabled child you also have the right to an assessment.

What is the purpose of a Carers Assessment?

The purpose of a carer's assessment is to discuss with social services the help you need with caring plus the help to maintain your own health and balance caring with your own life, work and family commitments. The assessment can also be useful in:

- Exploring with a professional how you feel about caring
- Giving you information on benefits and support such as carers groups
- Deciding if you want to stay in or return to work and how to make this happen
- Looking at how caring may affect you in the future and what help you might need

How do I get an assessment?

You may be offered a carers assessment by your social services or, if not, can ask for one. You can also ask your GP or district nurse to contact social services for you. If the person you look after is in hospital, speak to a nurse and ask to be put in touch with a hospital social worker.

Is there anything I can do to help me prepare for my assessment?

You may find this checklist useful in preparing for your assessment:

- Housing
- Health
- Work
- Other Interests

Carers Northumberland Celebrates Carers Week 2009



Carers Northumberland celebrated Carers Week 2009 by hosting its annual Carers Support Awards Ceremony. Held on Thursday 11th June at Woodhorn Museum, Ashington a number of people were recognised for the invaluable contribution that they make to carers carrying out their caring role. The following shows the nominees and winners in the 5 designated categories:

Employer: Wansbeck CVS (Anne Lyall).

GP: Dr J O'Neil (Kathleen Longstaff); also nominated Union Brae Surgery (Terry White), Dr G Dunbar (Joyce Middleton),

Care Manager: Binta Jamea (Barbara Donaldson); also nominated Andrew Ball (Sonia Sellars), Evelyn Stephenson (Pamela Diggie), Mike Rudd (Barbara Donaldson), Deborah Porter (Doreen Barrass), Gill Reid (Kathleen Dack), Joan O'Brien (M Nelson).

Local Business/Charity: Wansbeck CVS Shopping Project (E Carrigan, M Carr); also nominated Mental Health Matters (Barbara Donaldson), Grovewood House (J Davidson).

Care Worker: Margaret Holness (Graham Storer); also nominated Gwen Davidson, Paul Smith (Angela De'Travernent), Paula Minery (Barbara Donaldson), Sharon Reed (Yvonne & Melvin Batey), Angela Ions (Annabel Littlewood), Margaret Weatherstone (Leslie Clark).

Many congratulations to all nominees, your work is really important in improving the lives of carers in Northumberland.

Also...

Carers Northumberland also hosted a number of relaxation events, skills sessions and information displays in hospitals around the county as well as chartered a boat for its very own river cruise.

Over 30 carers enjoyed the journey which took them upstream from Newcastle's Quayside and took in the sights of the Northumbrian countryside. This gave carers a great opportunity to come together, take a break and chat with others in a different environment.

A great day was had by all.

.....STOP PRESS.....STOP PRESS.....

Following the announcement this week that Northumberland County Council is consulting on proposals to close Day Centres for older people by the end of this year, Carers Northumberland is keen to gather and present the views of carers as part of that consultation.

If you care for an older person who uses, has used, has chosen not to use, or may use day care services, **we want to hear from you now.** Either speak to your local Development Officer, ring the Information Line (0844 800 7354) or email us on info@carersnorthumberland.org.uk to tell us what this proposal will mean for you.

Carers we need **YOUR** involvement

Would you like the opportunity to tell the 'story' of what your life as a carer is really like?

We know that many carers feel that few people, including professionals, understand the day to day reality of what it means to take on caring responsibilities. Carers Northumberland have been asked to find carers who would be prepared to talk to care managers at one of their training sessions in different venues across the county. Any travel and additional care costs would be paid for and you would receive full support from a Carers Northumberland member of staff to guide you through the process.

Several carers have already volunteered but Carers Northumberland would like to identify more. Talking about your experiences is an excellent opportunity to ensure that your carer voice is heard – and you can have the satisfaction that this will contribute to improving future services for all.

Contact Kate Whitehead on 01668 219951 for further details or to submit your story either e mail

katewhitehead@carersnorthumberland.org.uk or post to Bell View Resource Centre,

33 West Street, Belford, NE70 7QB.



Asperger's Book Available to Lend

Louise Lee cares for her daughter who has Asperger's Syndrome and was concerned at the lack of understanding about the condition. Louise approached the Care Trust with an idea of providing reading material for carers especially about living with the condition and ways of coping.

The Care Trust agreed with the idea and has provided funding to Carers Northumberland to purchase a range of books all chosen by Louise and the following books can now be loaned to carers:

- Advocacy for Adults with Autism Spectrum Disorders – A Guide (J Parsons)
- Aspects of Asperger's (M Brown & A Miller)
- Education & Care for Adolescents & Adults with Autism (K Wall)
- Not Stupid (A Kennedy)
- What Did you Say? What Do you Mean? (J Welton)
- How to be Yourself in a World That's Different (Y Yoshida)
- Why Does Chris Do That? (T Attwood)
- Freaks, Geeks and Asperger's Syndrome (L Jackson)
- Health Care & the Autism Spectrum (A Morton-Cooper)
- Living With Autistic Spectrum Disorders (E Attfield & H Morgan)
- Survival Strategies for People on the Autism Spectrum (M Fleisher)
- Blue Bottle Mystery (K Hoopmann)
- A Strange World – Autism, Asperger's Syndrome and PDD-NOS (M F Delfos)
- Autism & Asperger's Syndrome (P Howlin)
- Making Sense of the Unfeasible (M Fleisher)
- Baj & the Word Launcher (P Victor)
- The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night Time (M Haddon)
- Asperger's Syndrome & Difficult Moments (B Smith Myles & J Southwick)
- Can I tell you about Asperger's Syndrome? (J Whelton)
- DVD's available – Autism & Me, Outside In and Autism: Behind an Invisible Wall

Call 0844 800 7354 if you would like to loan any of the above

- Time
- Feelings
- Relationships
- Dealing with emergencies and unplanned events
- The future

What will happen at the assessment?

Usually a social worker or a member of social services will carry out the assessment. A meeting may also be needed with your GP or nurse if a lot of care is required. You can ask to talk confidentially to the person carrying out the assessment, without the person you care for being present.

What will happen after the assessment?

It is important that you are able to make an informed choice about how much you do or want to take on in the future as a carer. When social services decide what help and services to provide they have to take into account the results of both your carer's assessment and the community care assessment of the person you care for. They will summarise this in a care plan for the person you look after – a copy will be given to both of you.

Local authorities are required to set out how they make decisions about whether or not to provide services. These are termed eligibility criteria. The needs identified in the assessments are compared against their eligibility criteria. If the needs of the person that you look after match these eligibility criteria, the local authority must provide services to meet their needs. You can obtain a copy of their eligibility criteria by phoning your local authority and asking for their Better Care, Higher Standards Charter.

Useful Telephone Numbers

You can ask to see a care manager by calling one of these local social care general contact points. They will take the call but may ask a specialist team to call you back for more information. You can also ask at your GP practice.

If you live in:

- Amble, Alnwick & Rothbury area 01665 603411
- Berwick, Belford & Wooler area 01289 334000
- Blyth Valley & Cramlington area 01670 542930
- Tynedale area (including Ponteland) 01434 611941
- Morpeth, Bedlington, Ashington, Newbiggin, Widdrington, Lynemouth, Ellington area

If the person you look after is under 65 years 01670 528236

If the person you look after is over 65 years 01670 536406

Northumberland Carers' Guide will help you prepare for a carer's assessment and contains a lot of useful information and contacts. To obtain a copy of this please contact Carers Northumberland on 0844 800 7354.

What is Transformation all about and how will it affect you?

You've probably heard about "Putting People First" which is the shared agreement between Government, Local Government and their partners for the transformation of adult social care. One of the main aims of this agreement is to give more choice and control to the person you care for over the services and support available. The say you have is really important too.

"Transformation" is the term used to describe the process of changing social care from a system where there is access to the services in existence, to one where the support is tailored to individual needs and will vary from person to person. So the transformation will be to "Personalisation". This means that both you and the person you care for will be actively involved in choosing the best solutions for your situation.

We want to ensure that this choice and flexibility is not at the expense of your time as the carer. Carers Northumberland is here to give you a voice because transformation will affect your role and access to services. The Care Trust is looking to us to represent your views.

A transformation team has been established by the Care Trust and they are planning a number of reference groups to involve people more. If you are interested in participating in helping Carers Northumberland to pave the way for transformation please get in touch with me, **Jean Worth**, on **01668 219951**.

Are you a Parent caring for a child with a disability?

Action for Children IN – PACT (Information Northumberland – Parents and Carers Together) provides a single point of contact for advice and support to families of children with disabilities in Northumberland.

We offer

- Support groups
- Parent Carer Professional Forum
- Support for parents with information and resources
- Training and information sessions for parents and carers
- A voice for parents in planning services in Northumberland
- Support to parents wishing to set up parent led support groups
- Representation of parent's views and opinions on strategic groups
- A comprehensive information service including statutory voluntary services



Telephone 01670 857816

Carer Activities

As a carer what would you most like to do, but don't get the opportunity?

A day out, cinema trip, social get together? Carers Northumberland are in the process of arranging a programme of events and activities so that carers become more socially active and less isolated.

Please tell us the sort of activities you would like to take part in by contacting Carers Northumberland on

0844 800 7354

Carers Northumberland Survey Results

In December last year we sent out a survey with our newsletter to try and find out how carers feel about their role, to help us develop services that meet their needs and determine how what we do impacts on carers' lives. *A big thank you to everyone who took part.* This is a selection of information those who participated in the survey told us.

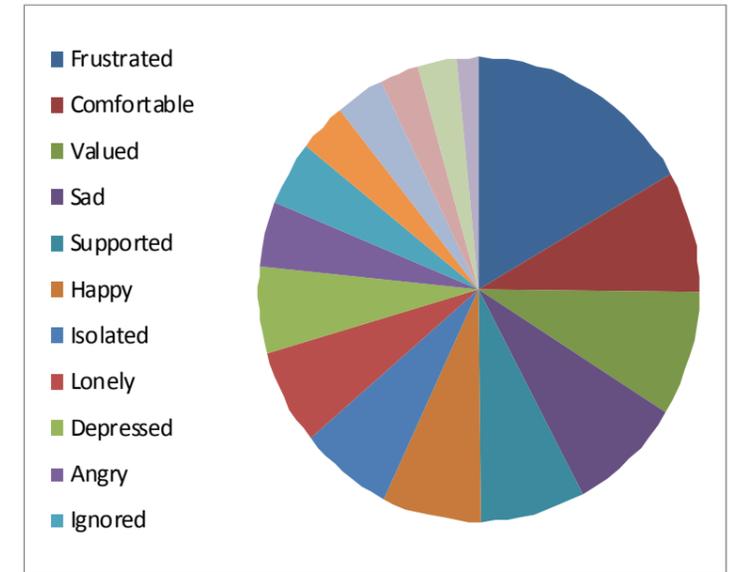
When we asked carers how they feel about their role 27% indicated positive feelings, 25% felt negative and the remaining 48% indicated they had a range of positive and negative feelings.

We asked carers to choose words they felt best described how they feel most of the time. The chart on the left shows the results.

64% felt mostly negative, 36% mostly positive.

When we asked what are the best and worst things about being a carer it was clear that all the carers who participated in the survey put the person they care for first most of the time and that their own health and wellbeing is a lower priority for them.

We hope that in the coming months we can develop services, activities and events that will support carers to put themselves first now and again, take care of their own health and wellbeing and not feel guilty about making time for themselves, all of which will help them continue to care more effectively.



Carers Northumberland Welcomes New Staff Member

Helen Chown joins Carers Northumberland as Young Carers Project Lead.

So who am I? I have worked in the care field for nearly 9 years in a variety of ways. I trained as a paediatric nurse in Bristol before working as a deputy hostel manager at a residential Steiner school for children and young people with profound and multiple learning disabilities.

I've also worked with a voluntary organisation in Camden, London, identifying family carers of people with a learning disability and conducting a consultation with them around supported living services, and more recently I worked as Regional Family Carer Partnership Coordinator (covering the North East, Yorkshire & Humber) with Mencap.

I am really looking forward to the opportunities and challenges that the Young Carers Project lead post will bring and hope that I'm able make a positive difference to the lives of young carers in Northumberland. I truly believe that young carers will be able to have a voice in Northumberland and be the main driving force behind the finalising of the Young Carers' Strategy and future support services.

I'm extremely eager to get on with the job, so please get in touch with any comments or ideas you may have and also let young carers know that I'm here if they'd like to get in touch.