

# Caring Matters

The newsletter of Carers Northumberland Summer 2012



**Northumberland Carers Conference**

**Male Carer's Event**

**New! Carers Northumberland**

**Excellence Awards**

# Welcome...

Welcome to our Summer 2012 newsletter, coming to you a little early to make sure you have information about Carers Week, which this year is 18-24 June. On Thursday that week, a countywide conference for carers will take place, with three themes of interest (Carer Health and Wellbeing, Older Carers, Keeping Safe) as well as the opportunity to influence Northumberland's Carers Strategy. Book your seat with Alyson Blythe (details on the conference page) for an interesting and informative day.

As always, Caring Matters has a round-up of our activities, recent and future, and useful information about, amongst other things, the Digital Switchover happening in September and our new Carers Northumberland Excellence Awards programme. However, this edition we're very pleased to have contributions from carers to share with you. Don't miss John's moving poem, and Jude's very practical response to the challenges of maintaining & stimulating memory in people with dementia. We'd love more of your material, so start writing/photographing/drawing and send it in to us. Yours could be in print in the autumn.

I hope you enjoy reading this edition. As always, feedback is welcome.

*Sandi Downing*

Chief Executive,

## **Ever wondered what our Trustees do?**

As a registered charity, Carers Northumberland depends upon a volunteer Trustee Board for direction and guidance. Trustees must be members of Carers Northumberland, and are elected by the membership, ensuring that the charity is at all times guided by the wishes of its members. Trustees are elected at the AGM each year and are expected to remain on the Board for at least a year, although we recognise that individual circumstances can change so this is flexible. Our AGM this year will be 05 September.

However, we are aware that becoming a Trustee is not something everyone is familiar with. So we'd like to invite carers to come and meet our Trustees, to find out more about their role and the workings of the Trustee Board. We hope this will help you decide if you could help Carers Northumberland this way.

Three informal sessions will take place:

- ♦ Mon 11 Jun, Red Cross Centre, Hexham
- ♦ Mon 02 Jul, Room 17, Wansbeck Business Centre, Ashington
- ♦ Mon 06 Aug, Bell View, Belford

Each will last from 12.00-13.30 and will include tea/coffee and sandwiches. To help with catering, please let us know if you intend being there (0844 800 7354, [info@carersnorthumberland.org.uk](mailto:info@carersnorthumberland.org.uk)).

We look forward to meeting you soon.

**0844 800 7354** (5p per minute from BT landlines, mobiles may be more)

## Carers Support Fund

A huge thanks to Jim Whittaker who took this snap while playing golf courtesy of the Carer support Fund, which he used to join Wooler Golf Club . The picture is of his 3rd shot to the par four 7th hole, which he putted to make par! The photo shows the view of the Cheviots from the course. Jim said 'I would highly recommend anyone that hasn't applied for the Fund to do so now, as it is a good way to try something new but, most importantly, to give you some time to yourself'



The Carer Support Fund is available to carers registered with Carers Northumberland and offers the opportunity for you to take time out to do something you enjoy. Caring can impact heavily on a family's finances, so the aim of the fund is to help carers who struggle to meet the costs of a break away from caring, The Fund has helped carers to ; take swimming lessons, buy football season tickets, go fishing and much more! What will you do?

The fund is available to adult carers of adults. To apply contact Debra in our **Ashington Office** on **01670 518204**. A similar fund for Young Carers under the age of 18 is also available, please contact Debra for more details.

We would like to hear how you are using the Carer Support fund, If you have any photos, or stories you would like us to include in the newsletter, please contact Anne-Marie on 0844 8007354 or email [annemarie-johnstone@carersnorthumberland.org.uk](mailto:annemarie-johnstone@carersnorthumberland.org.uk)

## Garioch Fiddlers prepare for trip to Alnwick!



October this year sees The Garioch Fiddlersn Strathspey and Reel Society visiting Alnwick to play a fund-raising concert for Carers Northumberland.

The Society has just held its annual rally, to a sell-out audience, so will be well practised for their performance on the **Saturday 13th October 2012**. The players are very much looking forward to the trip and are pleased to be raising funds for such a worthwhile cause.

*Photo: The Garioch Fiddlers at their recent rally. The orchestra were joined by Claire Telford and Wayne Robertson, Jim McColl,*

*and, for a fleeting moment, in an homage to The Olympics and The Queen's Jubilee, the players shared the stage with royalty! ...well, sort of!*

# Training courses

**Northumbria Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust have courses running that are free to carers. To book a place, contact Anne-Marie on 0844 800 7354 or email [info@carersnorthumberland.org.uk](mailto:info@carersnorthumberland.org.uk)**

## Emergency First Aid

This one day course is accredited by HSE and will address the role of appointed person in first aid, the course will cover, Action to be taken in an emergency, demonstrate cardio-pulmonary resuscitation, First Aid procedures for the unconscious patient, First Aid procedures for the bleeding patient, main causes of unconsciousness and role of the appointed persons.

13/08/12	Salvation Army, Bedlington	23/01/13	Blyth Community Enterprise Centre
20/08/12	Salvation Army, Bedlington	30/01/13	Lindisfarne Centre, Alnwick
04/09/12	Dene Park House, Hexham	05/02/13	Choppington Welfare Centre
17/09/12	Blyth Community Enterprise Centre	11/02/13	Berwick Rugby Club
18/09/12	Choppington Welfare Centre	26/02/13	Salvation Army, Bedlington
09/10/12	Blyth Community Enterprise Centre	27/02/12	Dene Park House, Hexham
16/10/12	Berwick Rugby Club	12/03/13	Lindisfarne Centre, Alnwick
16/10/12	Choppington Welfare Centre	14/03/13	Choppington Welfare Centre
23/10/12	Dene Park House, Hexham	19/03/13	Berwick Rugby Club
06/11/12	Salvation Army, Bedlington	26/03/03	Dene Park House, Hexham
07/11/12	Dene Park House, Hexham	28/03/12	Blyth Community Enterprise Centre
15/11/12	Lindisfarne Centre, Alnwick		
20/11/12	Blyth Community Enterprise Centre		
11/12/12	Choppington Welfare Centre		
12/12/12	Dene Park House, Hexham		
14/12/12	Salvation Army, Bedlington		
20/12/12	Salvation Army, Bedlington		
10/01/13	Blyth Community Enterprise Centre		
17/01/13	Dene Park House, Hexham		



**Text CARE16 £5 to 70070 to donate £5 to us today!**

## Nutrition and Health awareness.

This 3 hour session aims to develop an understanding of the principles of healthy eating and the role of food in maintaining health. The course will explore principles of healthy eating, consider the nutritional needs of a variety of individuals and the use of food and nutrition information to plan a healthy diet.

### Date/ Time/ Venue (am 9:30/10.00 - 12:30 or 13:30/14:00 - 16:30)

07/08/12 (am only)	ARCH, Wansbeck Enterprise Centre, Ashington
24/09/12 (am and pm)	Choppington Welfare Centre
26/09/12 (pm only)	Dene Park House, Hexham
02/10/12 (am and pm)	Salvation Army, Bedlington
06/11/12 (am and pm)	Lindisfarne Centre, Alnwick
26/02/13 (am and pm)	Choppington Welfare Centre
28/02/13 (am and pm)	Berwick Rugby Club
19/03/13 (am and pm)	Dene Park House, Hexham
21/03/13 (am only)	ARCH, Wansbeck Enterprise Centre, Ashington

## Moving and Handling (People)

This 1 day course is to raise awareness with regard to moving and handling techniques and to facilitate safe working procedures. The course will identify legal responsibilities with regards to the moving and handling of people, the requirement of maintaining good posture, effective and safe moving and handling techniques, recognising unsafe systems of work and unsafe techniques, functions of the spine and the use of moving and handling aids.

### Date/ Time/ Venue (9:30 - 16:30)

08/08/12	Wansbeck enterprise centre, Ashington
12/09/12	Wansbeck enterprise centre, Ashington
18/08/12	Lindisfarne Centre, Alnwick
18/10/12	Wansbeck enterprise centre, Ashington
10/10/12	Dene Park House, Hexham
13/11/12	Wansbeck enterprise centre, Ashington
20/11/12	Berwick Rugby Club
16/01/13	Wansbeck enterprise centre, Ashington
20/02/13	Wansbeck enterprise centre, Ashington
07/03/13	Dene Park House, Hexham
19/03/13	Wansbeck enterprise centre, Ashington

To book a place on any course please call Anne-Marie on our information line, on 0844 800 7354.

## Northumberland Carers Conference

### Celebrating Carers Week

#### “In sickness and in health”



A conference that will highlight the progress of Northumberland Carers Strategy will be held on:

**Thursday 21 June 2012** from **9:00-4:30** at Newcastle Falcons Rugby Stadium, Kingston Park. The programme will include presentations and discussion groups and aim to consider both health and social care issues with an emphasis on the following:

#### **Carer Health and Wellbeing**

Including learning from our DH Demonstrator Site, Carer Health Checks pilot, with input from Community Nursing, Primary Care and Carers Northumberland

#### **Older Carers**

Implementing the ‘Statement of Commitment to Family and Friends with a Caring Role within End of Life Strategies’, Legal issues for older carers and Future planning.

#### **Keeping Safe**

Working together to improve outcomes around carers and safeguarding with a focus upon carers speaking up, carers at risk of harm and carers who harm.

**Attendance is free and aimed at statutory health and social care providers and commissioners, voluntary sector providers and carers.**

**To book, please confirm your attendance by 8th June 2012 to Alyson Blythe**

**[Alyson.blythe@northumberlandcaretrust.nhs.uk](mailto:Alyson.blythe@northumberlandcaretrust.nhs.uk) or call 01670 394403**

## **News from Northumbria Health Care NHS Trust community services.**

### **Northumberland Health Checks for Carers Pilot**

Last year we completed an 18 month pilot for the Department of Health that involved developing and offering health checks to carers. We were one of six areas in the country doing this with each area taking a different approach, and in Northumberland the health checks were provided by our district nurses. Many carers benefited from the checks and overall they were well received. This year Annette Pike, a district nurse, has been following up as many of the health checks with carers, either through visits or telephone contact, as the pilot finished before carers had the chance of a review.

#### **What did we learn?**

We have been able to use the learning from our pilot and the other five national pilots to make long term plans.

Though the pilot was very successful in terms of benefits to carers we found it was not sustainable. This was because it was very long and comprehensive, however, this helped us to find out which key questions made the most difference and led to support. The health checks also needed to be given by qualified nurses because of the range of questions and took a long time to complete. But one of the main reasons for not continuing was that since the pilot started national NHS health checks were introduced to patients between 45 and 75, the main age of carers, which meant the key was to help carer access these and other health screenings easier.

## So what happens next?

Using the learning, we have continued to work with carers to develop a more sustainable **Carers Well-being Check**. The purpose of the new check aims to help carers to think more about their own health, how the caring role affects their life and to consider things to change to make caring easier. It will also help carers to access health interventions early and continue caring in a way that suits the person without their own health suffering. A key element of the new check is that a range of professionals can offer the check and help the carer to access support, making it much more accessible. The new check can also be used before a carer's needs assessment discussion with a care manager and should increase the number of carers accessing services.

Thank you

May we thank all the carers who took part in the pilot, especially those carers who gave their valuable time to support the evaluation and research. Thank you also to the carers who have helped with the development of the new Carers Wellbeing Check, this is very much appreciated.

The new Carers Wellbeing Check will be launched in Carers Week at:

**Northumberland Carers Conference**

**“In sickness and in health”**

**Thursday 21 June 2012, 9:00-4:30**

**Newcastle Falcons Rugby Stadium, Kingston Park**

If you would like to attend the conference please call Alyson Blythe on 01670 394403 or

Email; [alyson.blythe@northumberlandcaretrust.nhs.uk](mailto:alyson.blythe@northumberlandcaretrust.nhs.uk).

## Grand Day out at Woodhorn

On 26<sup>th</sup> April we held our first event for male carers. They had the chance to join a workshop of their choice – photography, cooking and laser clay pigeon shooting were on offer. The weather was a bit wet and miserable but that didn't put off some hardy souls from joining in the outdoor activities.



The workshops were followed by a delicious lunch then there was free time to get lots of useful information from Alzheimer's Society, Parkinsons Disease Society, Calvert Trust, Health Trainers and Welfare Benefits advisors as well as Carers Northumberland. Woodhorn Museum extended an invitation to everyone who was there to have a look around the museum too and many took advantage of the chance to explore the historical exhibition and have a look at the famous Pitmen Painters' work. The feedback we've had from those who came along has been really positive – a big thank you to everyone for making it a day to remember. Particular thanks to Calvert Trust, Trevor Walker Photography and Real Food Works for their inspiring workshops. This event was possible thanks to a grant from the Princess Royal Trust for Carers and a substantial private donation.

# Carer Support

## South East area - Gail, South East Office 01670 320019



Newbiggin Support Group - At the Maritime Centre

As the very successful men's event was held on the last Thursday of May the **Cramlington Support Group** changed their plans and enjoyed a very well attended meal in May – thank you to all who came and made it a pleasant couple of hours. Newbiggin Meet & Greet is steadily becoming a regular fixture now in the South East and all are welcome to drop in to the Maritime Centre on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday of the month at 2 – 3 pm for a cuppa and a chat.

To address recent feedback from many Morpeth carers, this Support Group is changing days and times. From July they are meeting on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday of the month at 10.30 am. At the moment this will still be held in Weatherspoons for a cuppa and chat with a view to considering alternative venues in the future. **Instead** of meetings in August there are a couple of trips organised. Places and transport are limited so please register your interest asap.

- ◆ Thursday 23 August – Royal Quays – from approximately 12.30 – 3.30/4 pm
- ◆ Wednesday 29 August – Washington Old Hall – from approximately 10 – 3 pm

**Ring the INFORMATION LINE 0844 800 7354 to register your interest**

## North area - Margaret, North Office 01668 219951

Support groups in the North continue to grow and it is so good to see so many carers coming along to relax and enjoy the company of others in similar caring roles.

The first support group meeting in Belford went well and we will be following this up with a group every other month in St. Mary's church in Belford between 10.30 am and 12.00 noon, but everyone is welcome to drop in and out whenever it might suit.

Carers in the Cornhill area decided that lunch in the Collingwood was a good way to enjoy their meeting last month where both the food and atmosphere were really good, everyone who came along really enjoyed themselves.

Our groups in Alnwick and Berwick continue to have good numbers of carers coming along with Amble, Felton and Wooler groups catching up with attendances increasing. Our new group in Rothbury met for the first time on Friday 27<sup>th</sup> April and we hope that it will grow and flourish too.

Carers are very welcome to any of our groups, even if you just pop in for a few minutes for a cuppa and a chat. See the activities sheet that you will have received with this newsletter for details of venues, dates and times or contact our Information Service on 0844 800 7354. You can also find more information on our website – [www.carersnorthumberland.org.uk](http://www.carersnorthumberland.org.uk)

Some carers in the North of Northumberland find it difficult to come along to support groups because they do not have access to transport. There are some services available in the local area that may be able to help carers get to our groups as well as to get to appointments or go shopping. For details of local schemes, contact our Information Service on 0844 800 7354.

**Text CARE16 £5 to 70070 to donate £5 to us today!**

## West area - Katherine, West Office 01434 608033

Katherine, our Carer Support Worker in the West of Northumberland, has been enjoying getting to know lots of carers at our regular support group meetings throughout the area.

It has been good to see new faces at all of the groups and we are delighted to welcome new members to any group, there is no need to book ahead, please just turn up!

In their April meeting, the Ponteland group were visited by an officer from the NHS Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS), who talked about the work of PALS and how they can help support NHS patients and their carers. Members of the group were able to ask lots of questions and took information away with them about how PALS could help them in the future.

The Prudhoe group has moved its meetings to a more cosy and private room within The Manors. Instead of taking place near the downstairs cafe area, the meetings are now held in the Quiet Room on the second floor. This has given group members the freedom to talk more openly in a relaxed and comfortable space.

Since the last newsletter went out, Katherine has organised two meetings of our New Beginnings group, which is a social group to support former carers. Thanks to a kind donation from one of our former carers, the group met up in March for tea and cakes at Brocksbushes Farm Shop tea room in Corbridge then again in May at Dobbies Garden Centre cafe in Ponteland. Positive feedback has been received following the group meetings and the next one is currently being planned, so if you are a former carer on our database you will be hearing from us soon!

A new group in the West has been set up to support carers whose loved-one is in residential or nursing care. The first coffee morning was held in May, where carers told us their ideas and hopes for the future of the group, so we are currently arranging the next meeting of this new group. If the person you care for is in residential care and you feel you would like to come along to the group for a friendly chat and to meet others in a similar situation, please contact us on 01434 608 033 and we will let you know about future meetings.

### Would you like to receive the newsletter and information by email?

To help cut costs, and to meet the requests of those carers who find they're making increased use of email, We would like to send as many copies of the newsletter to carers as possible.



Emailing the newsletter saves us over 50p per copy. If we could send half our newsletter mailing by email every quarter, we'd save over £1500 a year in postage alone! If you would like to receive your newsletter by email please contact Anne-Marie either by email [info@carersnorthumberland.org.uk](mailto:info@carersnorthumberland.org.uk) or phone the Information Line (0844 800 7354) and let us know your email address.

As always, we'd like your comments, both on the newsletter itself and on receiving it by email.

We look forward to hearing from you.

## Older Carers Project

In March, older carers attended three consultation days across the county – a big thank you to everyone who came along and joined the discussion. Many of the needs they identified were the same as for any group of carers, but they are affected by the increasing strain of caring in advancing years. The issues include the carer's own health, lessening strength and mobility, tiredness, growing tensions for both carer and cared-for, and dealing with changing relationships. As well as discussing how they manage - one carer declaring 'We laugh a lot' - the participants recognised the value of getting breaks from their caring responsibilities, in particular through taking exercise, principally walking, and relaxing when they could.



Older Carers - Consultation Day.

Based on what older carers have told us, the Project – aimed at improving the health and wellbeing of carers over the age of 70 - will develop more opportunities for them to access information and activities. An example is participating in carer themed Ageing Well Weeks in Wooler between 11<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> June and in Ashington later this year.

For more information about the project, you can contact Sarah Marshall on 01434 608033.

## Walking in Northumberland

Feedback from older carers told us that many were interested in finding out about opportunities for going out walking in their local area.

There is a national initiative called 'Walking for Health' which has participating groups all over Northumberland. They have organised easy walking available in most of the major towns and many villages in the county including : Alnwick, Rothbury, Amble, Druridge and Hadston, Belford, Berwick, Seahouses, Wooler, Blyth Valley, Central Northumberland and West Northumberland .For more information about local walks in your area, contact our Information Service on **0844 800 7354** or ask your local Carer Support Worker. You can also visit the Walking for Health website at [www.whi.org.uk](http://www.whi.org.uk)



Walks are for all ages and abilities. You don't need to book you can just pick the walk you would like to do and turn up! Be sure to wear comfortable shoes and appropriate outdoor clothing.

## Have Your Say Events and Consultation – GP Project

In March, carers attended a series of informal events across the county to encourage them to share their experiences, discuss how supported they currently feel by their GP and make suggestions about what support would best help them to continue to care while maintaining their own health and wellbeing.

The consultation has shown that although many carers feel very well supported by their GP practices much more could be done to support them better. There were some consistent themes with information, communication and recognition being the main things that carers told us were most important to them. We have already approached some practices identified through the consultation to talk to them about how they support carers. We have offered the opportunity to work with us to identify and recognise carers, raise awareness of carer issues and help more carers access our services. The response so far has been really positive. Of the GP practices we have approached, 5 recognise the benefits of supporting carers and have committed to working in partnership with Carers Northumberland.

We would like to say a huge thank you to everyone who contributed to the consultation through attending the events, having one to one discussions with Jayne or by completing the GP questionnaire. For more information about the project, you can contact Jayne Povey on 01434 608033

## Carers Northumberland Excellence Awards programme



In 2008 and 2010, Carers Northumberland ran a programme to acknowledge members of our community who go “above and beyond” to ensure that carers are supported in different aspects of daily living.

Trustees have revised the programme, and are pleased to introduce the Carers Northumberland Excellence Awards Programme, which will run throughout the year, starting in July 2012.

The Carers Northumberland Excellence Awards aim to recognise individuals who go out of their way to ensure that carers are supported, involved and welcomed throughout their daily lives.

Carers Northumberland invites carers to identify those people who have gone over and above the usual requirements of their job, role or connection to make a carer’s life easier.

Carers must be registered with Carers Northumberland to be able to nominate for an award. Nominations can be made by obtaining a nominations form from Carers Northumberland, in electronic or paper copy, and completing the details of the form as fully as possible.

We will only make awards where it is obvious that the nominee has done more than their job. We recognise that many people support carers as part of their work or volunteering: these awards seek to highlight those who do this beyond the level expected of them.

Individuals nominated by more than one carer will have nominations collated and be entitled to progressive awards from a general (one nomination) award, through to gold (ten different nominations in a 12-month period).

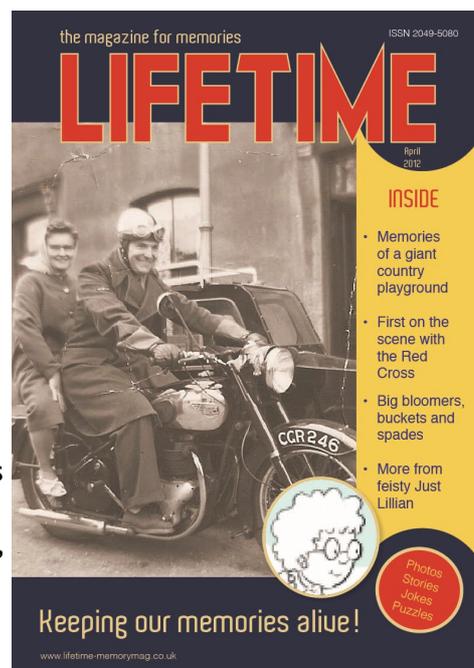
For more information, or to request a form, contact Carers Northumberland on 0844 800 7354 or at [info@carersnorthumberland.org.uk](mailto:info@carersnorthumberland.org.uk).

# Lifetime: the magazine for memories

## New magazine boosts memories

A new monthly magazine produced in Tynedale is taking a fresh approach to dementia, using shared reminiscences to stimulate older people's memories. *Lifetime: the magazine for memories* is written, designed and published by Hexham writer Jude Irwin.

“Both my parents have dementia, and it always frustrated me that in the crucial early stages there is so little in the way of appropriate memory-boosting activities people can do,” says Jude. “Also, there’s a big stigma attached, and many people who have a problem are in denial, or just not able to comprehend what’s happening. I wanted to create something manageable that people with memory problems would want to do and enjoy by themselves or with others, and also to make sure it didn’t carry any form of dementia labeling. That way, family members would be able to introduce it without meeting resistance and readers would keep their dignity.”



After carefully watching what worked for her mum and dad and noting what distressed and confused them, Jude began experimenting with personalised publications for them. Finally she developed *Lifetime*, which is in large print and full of stories, jokes, puzzles and features all based on older people's memories of times gone by. It never mentions dementia, there are no confusing ads, and all the features are of a manageable length. The mood is upbeat and fun – there's even a cartoon strip, with characters and stories based on Jude's own experiences of caring for her mum. “*Just Lillian* is an independent lady living with an uncertain memory,” says Jude. “In every story, Lillian manages to get exactly what she wants, and runs rings round the other characters, so I hope she comes across as a heroine for older people.”

Jude's mum really loves reading *Lifetime*. “It never fails to distract her and get her smiling,” she says. “It's so nice to be with her when she reads it – she will read out a passage and then go into a reminiscence of her own, and we'll end up sharing a lovely conversation. Or she'll sing the monthly song I include – in fact you can see a film clip of her doing that on the *Lifetime* website.” As an unexpected bonus, Jude is finding *Lifetime* is popular with older people in general, not just those with memory problems, and many people are buying subscriptions as a gift for older relatives. Care homes, dementia groups and care agencies are also subscribing, and she's hoping sheltered housing groups and older people's charities will do the same.

You can subscribe to *Lifetime* – an annual £19.80\* subscription entitles you to up to ten copies a month – at [www.lifetime-memorymag.co.uk](http://www.lifetime-memorymag.co.uk) \*Plus postage and packing Contact Jude at [theworddoctor@btinternet.com](mailto:theworddoctor@btinternet.com) or call 01434 600889 or 07766485188

## Social Networking – Facebook / Twitter

facebook

twitter

Carers Northumberland now has active profiles on both Facebook and Twitter. Our profiles are updated regularly with news and information we feel are useful to carers. To follow us please type Carers Northumberland in the search bars on both Facebook and Twitter. Please tell us what you think about our pages and posts and let us know anything you think we should be sharing.

**CARERS NORTHUMBERLAND INFORMATION LINE**

## Carers Trust

Since 1st April 2012, Princess Royal Trust for Carers (PRTC) and Crossroads Care, both national carer support organisations, have joined forces to form a new national charity called Carers Trust.



Formerly a network member of PRTC, Carers Northumberland has joined the Carers Trust and will continue to participate in and benefit from the activities and support of the organisation, to ensure that carers in Northumberland have the best possible information and support available to them.

In time, the PRTC logo appearing on our stationery and promotional materials will be replaced by the new Carers Trust logo.

For more information about the Carers Trust, visit the website at [www.carers.org](http://www.carers.org).



## Digital Switch Over - 5 Facts

### 1. The digital TV switchover is happening.

In Northumberland the switchover begins with stage 1 on 12th September (analogue BBC2 signal will be switched off) then stage 2 (Analogue signal will be switched off completely) on the 26th September .

### 2. You don't have to buy a new TV!

Almost all sets can be converted with a digital box, however if you are thinking of getting a new TV look for one with the digital logo. This means it's designed to work through switchover, the logo looks like this 

### 3. You can choose how you switch to digital.

Prices vary depending on which service you choose. There are two ways of going digital: A one-off payment with services such as Freeview, Freesat from Sky or Freesat. Or a monthly subscription with services such as Sky TV, Virgin Media, BT Vision or Top Up TV.

### 4. Switch over effect on people with a Freeview service.

If you have a Freeview service or box at switchover, TV channels sometimes move to new frequencies and go missing. Re-tuning will bring them back. To find out how to retune visit [www.digitaluk.co.uk/retuning](http://www.digitaluk.co.uk/retuning) or call **0845 50 50 50**.

### 5. The Help Scheme and Digital UK are here to help!

The Switchover Help Scheme is run by the BBC and provides older and disabled people with everything they need to switch **one** TV to digital. For more information please visit [www.helpscheme.co.uk](http://www.helpscheme.co.uk). Digital UK offers independent advice and information about switchover.

**Any Questions? Please visit [www.digitaluk.co.uk](http://www.digitaluk.co.uk) or call 0845 50 50 50**

# In your own words...

## The Love of my Life

Carers Northumberland would like to dedicate a page in the newsletter to the creative side of all of our valued carers. A big thank you to John Stenhouse an active member of the Cramlington Support Group for letting us share his wonderful poem with you this time.

### The Love of my Life

I loved you my darling from the first time we met,  
But why did it end up in tears?  
Why did I not notice your memory was fading?  
We'd been married nigh 61 years.

'Twas after the scans they said you had Alzheimer's,  
Brain shrinkage, O! God, I felt lost!  
But there was medication that might perhaps work,  
Though it's use was dependent on cost.

So I just had to give all the love that I had,  
Though this wasn't the life we had planned,  
I cared and looked after her, make her feel safe,  
Or sat here just holding her hand.

Oft times I thought that she knew who I was,  
As she smiled and whispered my name,  
Then she'd look at me blankly and ask "where's my John?"  
As if it were some kind of game.

It took almost three years from beginning to end,  
Just watching her slowly decay,  
Till I no longer knew where my loved one had gone,  
What to do, how to act, what to say.

Then suddenly, quickly she just slipped away,  
She's at rest, and at peace, no more pain,  
But O! God, how I miss her, the love of my life,  
Now my heart ache starts over again.

By John Stenhouse

We would love to hear from you, if you have any poems, stories, art or photographs you would like to share with us and other carers in the County. Please contact Anne-Marie by telephone on **0844 800 7354** or by email [annemariejohnstone@carersnorthumberland.org.uk](mailto:annemariejohnstone@carersnorthumberland.org.uk)

## Carers Allowance – Additions for dependants

Have you been claiming Carers Allowance since before 6<sup>th</sup> April 2010? **And** do you have any of the following dependants?

- ♦ A spouse of civil partner that you live with, **or**
- ♦ A spouse or civil partner that you do not live with, but whom you maintain by at least £34.40 **or**
- ♦ An adult who you live with and they look after your children.

If yes you may be able to claim **additions for dependants**.

The amount of additions are:-

♦ Carers Allowance -	£34.40
♦ Incapacity benefit* - Long Term	£57.60
♦ Severe Disablement Allowance*	£34.60
♦ State Pension	£61.85



\*Payable only for a spouse or civil partner who has reached Pension Credit qualifying age or for a spouse, civil partner or other adult looking after children.

### Earning rules

If the adult dependant earns more than the amount of addition, it is not normally paid. Earning rules for State Pension, long-term incapacity Benefit and Severe Disablement Allowance are more generous – the addition is payable as long as the adult dependant is living with the claimant and does not have earnings which exceed £71.00 a week, if your dependant lives elsewhere the addition may still be payable if you are contributing towards their maintenance and they do not earn more than £61.80 a week for State Pension, £57.60 for long-term Incapacity Benefit and £34.60 for Severe Disablement Allowance. Find out more from [www.direct.gov.uk](http://www.direct.gov.uk) or call the Carers Allowance unit on **01253 856 123**

## Research opportunity

Carers Northumberland have been approached by a Postgraduate student at University College London who is undertaking research with carers of people with dementia. We have agreed to mail out a questionnaire on her behalf, which will come to some carers on our database that we know are caring for someone with dementia. If you are one of the carers to receive this mailing, please do not feel under any obligation to complete the questionnaire, however, if you are willing to do so, the information supplied will be kept confidential and nothing will be published that identifies any of the respondents. Carers Northumberland have no involvement in the research beyond mailing out the questionnaires, so we are unable to answer questions about it – please direct those to the researcher, whose details will be on the information you receive.

# Useful information

## Support in North Northumberland

<b>Alnwick</b>	1.30pm to 3.30pm	St Paul's Court lounge	(4th Mon of month)
<b>Berwick</b>	10.30am to 12.30pm	Walkergate Methodist Church Hall	(last Wed of month)
<b>Wooler</b>	1.00pm to 3.00pm	Tankerville Arms Hotel	(2nd Mon of month)
<b>Cornhill</b>	1.00pm to 3.00pm	Collingwood Arms Hotel	(2nd last Mon of month)
<b>Amble</b>	1.00pm to 3.00pm	Wellwood	(3rd Thurs of month)
<b>Felton</b>	1.00pm to 3.00pm	Felton Village Hall	(1st Thurs of month)
<b>Belford</b>	1.00pm to 3.00pm	St Mary's Church	(Alternate months ring to check)
<b>Rothbury</b>	1.00pm to 3.00pm	Quiet lounge at Rothbury Hospital	(under review ring for info)

## Support in South Northumberland

<b>Ashington</b>	1.00pm to 2.30pm	Age Concern, The Round House	(4th Tues of month)
<b>Bedlington</b>	1.00pm to 3.00pm	Salvation Army Hall, Bedlington	(3rd Wed of month)
<b>Blyth Meet and Greet</b>	10.00am to 11.00am	Dolly Dimples	(14th June, 12th July)
<b>Cramlington</b>	1.30 pm to 3.00 pm	St Nicholas Church Parish Hall, Cramlington	(last Thurs of month)
<b>Morpeth</b>	10.30pm to 12.00pm	JD Weatherspoons for a cuppa & a chat	(2nd Tues of month)
<b>Newbiggin</b>	2.00pm to 3.00pm	Maritime Centre, Newbiggin	(2nd Tues of month)

**Tuesday 12th June visit to the exhibition at the Maritime Centre, Newbiggin. Please call to register your interest, own transport required.**

## Support in West Northumberland

<b>Bellingham</b>	1.00pm to 3.00pm	Community Room, Bellingham Fire Station	(4 <sup>th</sup> Thurs of Month)
<b>Haltwhistle</b>	10:30pm to 12:30pm	Haltwhistle War Memorial Hospital	(3rd Thurs of Month)
<b>Hexham</b>	10.30am to 12.30pm	Hexham Community Centre	(4 <sup>th</sup> Wed of Month)
<b>Ponteland</b>	10.30am to 12.30pm	Merton Hall, Merton Way, Ponteland	(1 <sup>st</sup> Thurs of Month)
<b>Prudhoe</b>	10.30am to 12.30pm	The Manors, Adderlane Road, Prudhoe	(3 <sup>rd</sup> Wed of Month)

**For more information check out our website or contact the information service on 0844 800 7354**



This newsletter is produced by Carers Northumberland for carers, their families and professionals supporting them. Feedback on, and contributions to, the newsletter are welcomed, and should be emailed to [info@carersnorthumberland.org.uk](mailto:info@carersnorthumberland.org.uk) or mailed to: Caring Matters, Carers Northumberland, Suite 17, Wansbeck Business Centre, Rotary Parkway, Ashington, NE63 8QZ. Registered Charity Number : 1122972. Company number: 6266972