# Caring Matters

# Newsletter Summer 2013





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Supporting Family Carers of All Ages

# **Summer 2013**

It is with great sadness I must announce this is my last editorial for the newsletter, as I'm leaving Swindon Carers Centre.

My time at Swindon Carers Centre has been one of changes and challenges. For much of the time, I have been fighting to ensure the financial viability of the centre, restructuring the organisation and trying to get funding. That battle is basically won, and the organisation now has financial stability for 3 years.

I've also been working to develop better services, making sure that we are as accessible as possible to carers, and implementing quality assurance systems that have been recognised by our achievement of the PQASSO level 2 award.

I leave the organisation confident that it will continue to go from strength to strength, providing support to carers of all ages, and also ensuring that the commissioners and providers of health and social care services recognise and value the crucial and difficult work that you, the carers in our community, do. I have been supported by an amazing team, and they remain to carry on the good work. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the staff, managers. volunteers and trustees, past and present, all of whom have worked exceptionally hard during my time with the organisation. Quite frankly, the achievements of the organisation during my leadership have been thanks to their efforts, and I am immensely proud of them all.



Kind regards
Diana Finch
Chief Executive

Diana has done a great job since joining Swindon Carers Centre.

There is no question we would not be where we are without her leadership, hard work and determination. I want to thank her on behalf of myself and all my fellow Trustees and wish her good luck for the future.



lan Price
Chair of Trustees

#### 'We need new members!'

Here at Swindon Carers Centre we have two Carer Representative Groups and we need new members!

Do you want to have a 'voice' and take forward the views of other carers re: services received by the person you care for and yourself? One group focuses on carers who look after an adult with a learning disability and the other group focuses on carers of someone with a mental health conditions.

The groups meet on a bi-monthly basis.

If you would like to come on board please contact Cath Johnston or Heather Goldsmith on 01793 531133

#### **Swindon Carers Centre - Social Media**



Don't forget that you can keep up to date with all the latest news from Swindon Carers Centre online at Facebook. You can search for Swindon Carers Centre and click on the 'Like' button or find us by using the following link:

www.facebook.com/swindoncarerscentre



You can now also find us on twitter too!
@swindoncarers

#### Carers Week 10th – 16th June 2013



#### Supporting carers in the workplace



We are holding an event for businesses in Swindon on June 13th 2013 from 6pm to around 7.30pm. Speakers will include Robert Buckland MP (for Swindon South) and Tony Martin who is the Volunteer Development Manager for Zurich Community Trust; as well as carers registered with Swindon Carers Centre.

It will be an opportunity for companies to network as well as build understanding of those staff in their businesses with caring responsibilities. There will be the chance for businesses to explore new

avenues to support us through sponsorship and by encouraging employee volunteering (which can help reduce staff turnover).

The event is free with complimentary cheese and wine and we'd like to say a big thank you to Jury's Inn for allowing us to use their venue.

Anyone wishing to register an interest in this event can do so online: http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/SCC business event

#### Other events going on too:

#### We have got lots of other things planned for Carers Week this year



We have coffee mornings for carers arranged at Old Town, Eldene and Wroughton GP surgeries (for more details please see our What's On section on page 11).

There is a coach trip planned to Oxford on the 11th June and our Highworth Group is off to Buscot Park on Thursday 13th June.

For more information about these events, please contact Heather Goldsmith on 01793 401095 or heather.goldsmith@swindoncarers.org.uk

#### **Healthwatch**



Healthwatch Swindon has replaced the Local Involvement Network (LINk). Healthwatch is the new independent consumer champion created to gather and represent the views of the public. It will play a role at both national and local level and will make sure views of the public and people who use

services are taken into account. (So they are here to make sure your views on local health and social care services are heard!).

If you'd like to find out more, visit their website www.healthwatchswindon.org.uk/

# Volunteer Handyman needed at SCC

If you could help with maintenance work at our office in Wood Street on an ad-hoc basis (probably not more than a couple of hours a month or less) please contact Sandra Chapman on 01793 531133 or email sandra.chapman@swindoncarers.org.uk

#### **DIRECTORY**

We have introduced a new directory to make life easier for those of us looking for a phone number! These things tend to start small but will hopefully grow quite

quickly to become a real resource for you. If you would like to advertise your services in our directory, please contact editor@swindoncarers.org.uk

#### **Chiropody & Podiatry**



#### **Steven Ayre**

D.Pod Med, D.S. Ch, MSSCh, MBChA
Home Visiting Chiropodist 07769 736364

#### **Opticians**



# VisionVisit Home Visiting Optician

www.visionvisit.co.uk

01793 232588

(Mention of goods or services in this Directory does not represent endorsement from Swindon Carers Centre).

# Why register the fact you are a Carer with your GP?

As a Carer you may neglect your own health needs because of your caring responsibilities. However every year significant numbers of Carers are unable to continue to provide the level of care they may wish to because of illness or injury. This may be

- Physical problems due to care related tasks (lifting)
- General health problems: exhaustion, lack of sleep
- Mental health problems: stress, depression, isolation
- Financial worries

You can protect your health with the right information and support. Some people do not get the right support because they do not recognise themselves as Carers.

#### Is this you?

The term "Carer" refers to someone who looks after or provides regular unpaid help to family members, neighbours or friends who are sick or disabled. This includes parents of children with disabilities. Children or young people who undertake caring responsibilities are referred to as "Young Carers".

#### What is already happening in your local surgery?

Kingswood Surgery says "It is very important for you to ensure when you register at a GP Surgery you make them aware you are a Carer. The benefits of doing this are:

- 1. It will allow the Surgery to make a record on both your Medical Records and the person you care for (if they are registered at the same Surgery).
- 2. It will allow you to advise the Surgery of any special needs you may have relating to your role as a Carer.
- 3. It will ensure when you have any contact with the Surgery they are aware of your circumstances and you will not have to continually explain to them.
- **4.** The Reception Team will be aware of any time constraints you may have when attending for appointments.
- **5.** It will give the staff at the Surgery the opportunity to care for you and support you in your role as a Carer.
- **6.** If the Surgery offers Coffee Mornings/Advice Sessions or other support to their Carers it will ensure you are included."

The role of a Carer can be extremely stressful and there are times when you are not sure who to turn to for help and advice. If you are known as a Carer to the Surgery it will allow them to offer a level of support to you when you need it the most."

#### Rachel Fairchild from Eldene Health Centre says:

"I think it has been and will be beneficial for patients to register with the surgery as carers as it enables us to assist them with extra help they may need as well, especially those who don't realise help is out there. The carers who are reluctant to ask for help often don't take care of themselves as they are more concerned about the welfare of the person they care for. This often means their emotional well-being suffers as well as their own health. Recognising a patient is registered as a carer gives us the opportunity to ask about their well-being, not just the person they are caring for, which will be positive for the carer and the cared for."

Make sure you are on your GP's Register by asking your Doctor or the receptionist for a form. By knowing you are a Carer the surgery will be able to support you more effectively.

The surgery might be able to offer extra support, such as more readily available home visits, or more flexibility with appointments.

As a registered carer you are also entitled to an annual health check by your GP or practice nurse and flu jab every year.

# **Exciting opportunities in the near future**

carers week

During National Carers week (10th – 16th June) there will be events held at local GP Surgeries for registered patients who are carers.

Monday10th JuneCoffee Morning- Old Town Surgery10am-12noonTuesday11th JuneDrop In Session- Penhill Surgery10am-2pmWednesday12th JuneCoffee Morning- Eldene Surgery10am-12noonWednesday12th JuneCoffee Afternoon - Great Western Surgery2pm-4pmThursday13th JuneCoffee Morning- Wroughton Surgery10am-12noonThursday13th JuneCoffee Afternoon - Kingswood Surgery2pm-4pm

#### In addition to this:

Moredon Surgery will be holding 'carers clinics' the 1st Monday of every month 1-4pm from 3rd June. This is run on an appointment basis which you can make at reception.

Kingswood Surgery will also be holding a carers surgery which is being arranged.

The clinics will be for carers to come along to chat about anything to do with their caring role. Carers will be able to register with Swindon Carers Centre and benefit from the services we offer, including carer's assessments, emergency card and groups and activities.

Keep an eye out on your surgery's carers' notice board as more and more opportunities will be available in the near future.

# **Benefit changes** 2013

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In this edition, we will run through, very briefly, the major changes to benefits that have just occurred or are coming up this year. Please

feel free to call our benefits advice line between 10am and 12pm on Tuesday and Friday on 01793 531133, if you feel that you are affected by these changes or have any questions.

#### January 2013

#### Child Benefit

Couples or single parents who claim this benefit and have at least one person earning an income exceeding £50,000 per year will now have to fill in a tax self-assessment or stop claiming it. Excess benefit will be withdrawn through the tax system.

#### **April 2013**

#### **Council Tax Support**

Swindon Borough Council has taken over the responsibility for setting the rules for Council Tax Benefit now called Council Tax Support.

Households with a person with a severe disability and older people over pension age may not be affected, but others will have to pay at least 20 percent of their tax and in certain situations will have to pay even more as income, like child benefit, will now be taken into account.

#### Local Welfare Allowance (LWA)

People on qualifying benefits used to be able to claim community care grants to replace essential items in the home. These have been replaced by grants from the LWA run by Swindon Borough Council. There are stricter rules about who can claim and now people will be likely to receive a voucher to take to the foodbank or a second hand store to get their items rather than being paid a lump sum.

#### **Bedroom Tax**

This was brought in for people renting their property either from the Council, other public sector landlords or housing associations. Those with one or two spare bedrooms will have their housing benefit reduced by 14% or 25%. Older people are not affected and there is a "discretionary housing fund" that people can claim from the council to try and meet the difference.

#### Benefit Rates

Most benefits and tax credits for working people will only go up 1% per year for the next three years. Carers Allowance and older people are not affected by this.

#### Tax Credits Rates

Many of these rates have been frozen. Also, the amount your income can increase from one year to another before it starts to affect your payments has decreased from £10.000 to £5.000.

#### Benefit Cap

This started in some areas of London on 15th April and will be rolled out in Swindon this summer. Couples and families can only get a maximum of £500 per week and single people £350 in benefit, including Housing Benefit. Households with older people, a severely disabled person, or claiming working tax credit will be exempt.

Carers who are caring for someone not in their immediate household, such as an older child, brother or neighbour for example will not be exempt.

#### **June 2013**

## Disability Living Allowance (DLA) and Personal Independence Payments (PIP)

People with a disability who put in a brand new claim should claim DLA until June. From then new claims will be for the new PIP. See the last edition of Caring Matters for more information. From October 2013, those renewing claims, turning 16 or having a significant change in their care needs will have to transfer to PIP.

#### October 2013

#### **Universal Credit (UC)**

UC will replace a number of benefits including Income Support, Tax Credits and Housing Benefit. New claims will start in October with others being transferred over in the future.

If one member of a couple is under women's pension age, UC must be claimed rather than Pension Credit, meaning people will get less money. If carer's circumstances change, and they have to transfer across to UC, they could be worse off, especially if they have a disability themselves.

Overall there is not much good news for carers. In the next edition, we will look at changes that are due to happen in 2014.

#### **Tim Saint**

Supp

#### **Money Saving Tips for Carers Trips**

Hopefully the weather will be kind to us this summer and it will be good to go out and about. Many places offer discounts and concessions of some kind for carers with those they care for, it is always worth asking - if you don't ask you will never know!

Some places will require some kind of proof, and you can usually contact them to see what they require (letter from Doctor, DLA form).

There is a very useful website that has lots of information about places that offer discounts for carers www.disability-grants.org.



#### **Train Travel**

There are different types of railcard and it is worth doing the maths to see which will work best for you (such as disabled persons or family railcard). Details can be found at train stations or at www.railcard.co.uk/. Remember there are also lots of 2-for-1 deals if you go by train.

#### Cinema Card

By using the Cinema Exhibitors' Association Card (CEA) you pay £5.50 for the year and then a carer gets in free accompanying the cared for. Please see information and download form from www.ceacard.co.uk or ring: 0845 123 1292. The person you care for must be in receipt of DLA/Attendance Allowance.

#### **Theme Parks**

Many have concessionary rates, it is best to check beforehand as to what proof you might need to take. This may also mean that you do not have to queue for certain attractions/rides.

#### **STEAM Museum**

Mention that you are a carer.

#### **Wyvern Theatre**

The Wyvern does offer free carer tickets for all performances (subject to availability). You will need to discuss this when you book and bring some proof (DLA letter). There are also 10 seats that can accommodate wheelchairs. Please contact the ticket office on 01793 524481 or email info@wyverntheatre.org.uk

#### **Westonbirt Arboretum**

Carer in free, you do not need proof, but it may help. During the summer holidays

children are admitted free too.

FREE Rough Guide to Accessible Britain if you hold a Blue Badge, Disabled Person's Railcard or you're a Motability customer.
Usual cost £6.99.

To obtain your book either go to www.accessibleguide.co.uk or telephone 0800 953 7070. For large print or Braille versions of the guide telephone 0800 953 7070.

#### **English Heritage**

English Heritage has more than 400 properties including abbeys, castles and stately homes.

It provides free entry to carers or companions of disabled people to English Heritage sites.

To help you plan your visit a free Access Guide is available from www.english-heritage.org.uk or by ringing 0870 333 1181

#### **National Trust**

The National Trust is able to issue a "companions free" entry card "Admit One" for the carer. It is issued to the disabled person so that it can be used for different carers.

To obtain an "Admit One" card e-mail the disabled person's name and address to accessforall@nationaltrust.org.uk or telephone: 01793 817634

They also publish an access guide for all their properties to enable you to plan your visit.

Katie Brown Parent Carer Support Worker

# **Groups and Activities Review** (Jan-Mar 2013)

#### **Highworth Carers Group**

On 10th Jan the group met for their 'Christmas' meal at The Highworth. On 14th Feb we held a general Coffee Morning and discussed what the carers would like from the group during the forthcoming months. On 14th March Chris Suter, from Highworth Historical Society



delivered an interesting and humorous talk about the history of Highworth.

Basic First Aid Awareness courses were offered on 23rd January and

19th March. Carers learned how to:

- Manage an emergency situation
- Place someone in the Recovery Position
- Check airway/breathing Perform CPR
- · Manage shock, choking etc.
- Apply a pressure bandage and a sling

**Pamper sessions** On 1st of March another group of carers visited the Equilibrium Beauty Salon at Swindon College and enjoyed a choice of treatments including body massage, manicure or pedicure.



**New Carer Programme** On 30th January, as part of this programme for carers new to their role, Lucy Hawkes from Swindon Psychology Service delivered a talk 'Coping with Caring'. Advice was given about how to cope with feelings and emotions and managing your wellbeing. The group practised some relaxation techniques and were given a CD to take home.

**The Rethink caring and coping course** This is delivered for carers of people with mental health conditions by Donna Huff and Jamie Palfrey from Rethink, Swindon. Carers can choose which sessions to attend from a choice of 10 topics.



**Male Carer Group** This was re-launched on 26 February. The group met at Ten Pin in West Swindon and enjoyed a couple of games of bowling in an informal and social environment. The group will be invited to meet quarterly please see the July-Sept Activities form for further details.

The new group for carers 18-25 years of age was launched on 13th March. A meal and social evening was enjoyed at Cosmos (JRC Global Buffet) Restaurant. The group will be invited to meet quarterly-please see the July-Sept Activities form for further details.



Another 'Dementia Awareness' course was delivered on 18th and 25th March by Jane Rachel (Gold Standard Trainer from The Alzheimer Society and SEQOL). Carers learned about causes, signs and symptoms, diagnosis, caring for someone with Dementia/Alzheimer's, prognosis, medication and support available. Another course is being offered in June.

Coach trip At the end of March 2012 the temperature was 21 degrees C. on 26th March 2013 a group of carers visited Bourton-on-the-Water but this year conditions were VERY COLD!! Brrrrr! Some carers visited the Motor museum



which consisted of 7 areas displaying cars. motorbikes, caravans etc. from early 1900s up to today. Each room had a theme, was decorated with artefacts from that period and typical music from the era was playing in the background. Some carers had a brisk walk beside the river and most enjoyed a hot cuppa in a cosy tea room!

#### What's On

Please see the enclosed Activities Form for July-Sept for full details, however, activities will include:

#### **Coffee Mornings at Swindon Carers Centre**

Monday 3rd June 10.30-12pm Monday 8th July 10.30-12pm Monday 5th Aug 10.30-12pm Monday 9th Sept 10.30-12pm



#### **Highworth Carers Group**

at the Community Centre, The Dormers, Highworth on:

Thursday 13th June 10.30-12pm Thursday 11th July 10.30-12pm Thursday 8th Aug 10.30-12pm Thursday 12th Sept 10.30-12pm

#### **Carers Group/Coffee Morning in West Swindon**

We are still looking at starting a new group. Please let Heather know if you are interested in attending.

Knitting and Crochet Circle This group meets every Thursday morning 10.30am-12.00, at Swindon Carers Centre. Beginners and more experienced people are welcome to join the group. Come and have a chat and a cuppa!



Mental Health Peer Support Group Do you care for someone with mental health conditions? Would you like to come along to a Peer Support Group for mutual support and to chat with other carers who can empathise with your situation? The group is led by a Facilitator (Emilia) and meets every 1st Thursday of the month. If you would like to find out more information please contact Heather for times. The dates of the next meetings are:

Thursday 6th June Thursday 4th July Thursday 1st August Thursday 5th September

#### Pamper sessions at Equilibrium Beauty Salon, Swindon College

Please contact Heather if you would like to book a treatment.

Another Food Safety course and a SOVA (Safeguarding of Vulnerable Adults) course will be offered during this quarter.

**Dementia course** Another dementia awareness course will be offered at Swindon Carers Centre in June. Please ask Heather for details.

**Dementia Peer Support Group** The next meetings at SCC are on:

Thursday 6th June 2.30-4pm

Thursday 4th July 2.30-4pm

Thursday 8th Aug 2.30-4pm

Thursday 29th Aug 2.30-4pm

Thursday 26th Sept 2.30-4pm

#### **New Carer Programme**

The next course will start on 7th June and the following one on 11th September. On week 1. Kate Woodhouse (Counsellor) will deliver a session about coping with your caring role. Topics will include feelings and emotions, looking after your well-being and boundary setting. Please ask Heather for details.

#### **Male Carer Group**

Male carers are invited to get together for another social evening on Thursday 15th August. See the July-Sept Activities form for more details.

#### **New Group for Carers and cared for over 65 years of age**

(people with dementia and their carers are particularly welcome). Due to a small amount of funding available we are pleased to offer a new monthly group for both carer and cared for. Activities will include a tea dance. craft, singing, bingo, table-top gardening, memory boxes and books. Please contact Heather for further information.

#### Other activities will include:

- Trip to Lydiard House and gardens
- Basic Computer course

#### Forthcoming talks will include:

- M.E.(Chronic Fatigue Syndrome)
- Bobby Van
- Coping with caring by Kate Woodhouse (Counsellor)
- PALS/ICAS what do if you need to complain about services received in hospital etc?

#### For further details about any of the above please contact:

Heather Goldsmith, Groups and Breaks Co-ordinator. Tel 01793 401095/531133 or email heather.goldsmith@swindoncarers.org.uk



# Young Carer Award for Schools and Colleges by Leah Prior

We have 12 schools and 2 colleges doing the Young Carer Award at the moment. This is to make sure young carers get the support they need. Here are a couple of updates:

**Dorcan Academy:** Currently at Dorcan we have achieved Standard 1 out of 3 standards for the Young Carer Award. We are working on a training session for teachers to educate them in what being a young carer is like. The sorts of things we want to talk about are homework deadlines and general support that should be available. At our school we think it's really important teachers understand our needs and what better way to hear about it than from young carers themselves. Think this is a good idea? Maybe you could help arrange something at your school.

New Recruits: Despite the success of some schools supporting young carers and getting on board with the award scheme. the YC Forum is aware there are a few who appear less interested in the scheme or support for us. Being recruited to the scheme means your school has to involve voung carers more and support them more. My school is a new recruit and I'm expecting to be contacted by our Young Carer Lead very soon to get involved. I want to see improvement in the awareness of young carers and the standard of support we receive. Before joining the Forum I didn't know that my school could have someone called a Young Carer Lead who specialises in young carers and their needs. let alone who it was in my school. There simply isn't enough awareness about the fact support should be available, something that I believe is beneficial to any young carer, especially while going through

secondary school.

This is why I urge you all to raise vour voice in school: Do you know who your Young Carer Lead is at school or college? Is there any support for you and is it adequate? I can understand from personal experience how difficult it can be to be a young carer at school. Maybe you feel isolated. like nobody understands your situation, but just talking to a couple of people really helps. It could be just telling a friend about your caring role or even speaking to your teachers, tutors or Head of Year. You might even be surprised with how much more understanding and support comes from just getting things off your chest. Please don't feel like vou are on your own - hopefully with your help we can ensure that all young carers finally get the support they deserve. THANKS!

#### Poem

Working, working everyday Rushing past Tim he says "Hey"

He doesn't know the troubles I face About the speed of my pace

Sometimes I feel so tired and old Like as if I've been left out in the cold

I feel as if no-one cares for me Not school, nor work or family

Thankfully I know that there's someone there Someone I know who will care

Swindon Young Carers is where I know I will always have a loving home

16 year old Young Carer



#### **Young Carers Forum**

Hi, I'm Lauren and I've been a Forum member for Swindon Young Carers for more than a year now. The Forum has been great, and has given me many opportunities. I've been able to meet some of you in group, and have been able to hear what you think of Swindon Young Carers.

Being able to help Young Carers is brilliant and I work hard every Forum to try to make the service better for you! I have done some scarier things, like council meetings to look at what schools can do to help, and we are hoping that some schools are giving more support now than when I first started. We do want to hear from you, because you matter. We work for a better service so you will get more support, and at the end of the day are happier. You will be seeing more of the forum members as we plan to meet you in groups to discuss any issues you have or how we can get better. Young Carers has given me so many opportunities to become experienced in helping others, and enjoying countless activities. So we hope to be seeing you all soon!

#### **Young Carers 2013**

The story so far...So we are now well into 2013, here are a few of the activities the young carers have taken part in.

The Salamander project: This was a week-long activity for 20 young carers aged between 12-17 in the February half-term, who had the opportunity to learn what it's like to be involved with the Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Service. This involved abseiling, water rescue, ladder climbing and



using high powered cutting equipment for road collisions. All the Young Carers did fantastically well and passed with flying colours.

**Easter workshop:** During the Easter break we held a graffiti, street dance and MC workshop for young carers aged 11-14. The young carers wrote and recorded rap.



learnt a street dance routine and made a graffiti canvas that they took home with them. All the young carers did some great work and there were definitely some potential Banksy's or Dappy's in the making!

What's in the Woods: This activity was for young carers aged 5-10 who experienced den building, fire making and some bush craft skills. They also made

popcorn and hot chocolate on an open fire and crafted a whistle from wood and we finished the activity off with an Easter egg hunt!



#### **Swindon Young Carers Facebook**

Swindon Young Carers have a Facebook account which is only open to Young Carers who have had a Young Carers assessment with us and that are still registered at Swindon Carers Centre.

To access it you will need to send a friend request to Swindon Young Carers, however if you are under 12 years old we will need permission from your parent or guardian before we add you.

If you need to talk to one of our Young Carers support workers (Julie and Helen) you can now just send us a personal message. We may not see it straight away as this page will only be checked once a day Monday to Friday. It will also be used to send out any updates about the Young Carers team, groups, activities and anything that may be happening with the Young Carers forum.





#### **Swindon Carers Centre**

1 Wood Street, Swindon SN1 4AN Tel: Swindon (01793) 531133

Office Hours: 9.30am - 4.45pm Monday to Thursday and 9.30am - 12.30pm Friday

### **Swindon Young Carers**

Tel: Julie Collar 01793 401096 Helen Rankin 01793 401091 Matt Teale 01793 401092

Please contact the Editor Susanna Jones with your views/articles and information editor@swindoncarers.org.uk

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