

Information Update

Winter 2005



Welcome to the Winter 2005 issue of Information Update! This newsletter aims to provide you with some useful information and details on what's been happening within Gateshead Crossroads Caring for Carers over the last few months.

If you have any queries or require further information on any of the articles within this newsletter, please contact us on **0191 478 2423**.

Christmas and New Year Arrangements

Gateshead Crossroads Caring for Carers office will close during the Christmas and New Year period. The office will **close at 1pm on Friday 23rd December 2005 and will re-open on Tuesday 3rd January 2006 at 9am**. During the closure period an on-call system will be in operation for those who are receiving a Care Service. Details of how to contact the On-Call Service can be found in your Service User Plan (Care Plan). For further information contact us on **0191 478 2423**.

Change of Name

At the Annual General meeting a special resolution was agreed for Gateshead Crossroads to adopt the name **Gateshead Crossroads Caring for Carers** and the Crossroads corporate identity. The outcome of this is to enable carers, other people and agencies to easily identify us as an organisation providing services for carers within the Borough of Gateshead.

The resolution was passed by the members present at the AGM and therefore our new official name is **Gateshead Crossroads Caring for Carers**.

Seasons Greetings

On behalf of all of the Board of Trustees and staff at Gateshead Crossroads Caring for Carers we wish you all Happy Holidays. Merry Christmas and our very best wishes for 2006 to you all!

**If you require this information in other formats,
please contact us.**

Gateshead Crossroads Caring for Carers News

Commission for Social Care Inspection

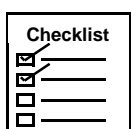
Domiciliary Care Services are now subject to regulation and inspection by the Commission for Social Care Inspection (CSCI) under Care Standards Act 2000 legislation.

Our first inspection took place in January 2005. The report of this inspection is available on the CSCI website at www.csci.org.uk. We have just concluded a second inspection. Perhaps some of you who are reading this newsletter contributed to the inspection by completing a questionnaire or a personal interview with the Inspector.

The report of the second inspection will be available from CSCI in approximately one month's time, but verbal feedback from the inspector last week indicated we have met ALL national care standards and exceeded many. The second report will also be published on the CSCI website, and copies will be available from our office as required.

Benefits Advice

In our last information update we said that a new benefits advice post had been introduced to help carers through the process of making benefit claims. This is well underway and our new Benefits Advice Worker Natalie Freeman provides support by:



- Offering advice and support in claiming Attendance Allowance, Disability Living Allowance and Carers Allowance.
- Helping with benefit calculations to find out if carers and people with care needs are entitled to housing benefit, council tax benefit and pension credit.

Natalie is currently doing drop-in surgeries at Gateshead Carers Association on the second Friday of every month between 1pm-4pm. The next three sessions will be held on:

13th January 2006
10th February 2006
10th March 2006

At 11 Regent Terrace, Gateshead (opposite the civic centre).

Alternatively you can contact Natalie on the number below for advice or to arrange a home visit.



0191 478 2423

Gateshead Crossroads Caring for Carers News

Annual Survey

Thank you to all of you who completed and returned the Annual Survey sent out in August of this year. Three different surveys were sent out this year to carers receiving services from the Care Service, Community Service and Young Carers Service. The results of the three survey's are currently been condensed into a summary report which we will make available on our website: **www.gatesheadcrossroads.org.uk** in the new year. Please contact the office if you would like to receive a copy.

Community Assistance Project



The Community Assistance Project has recently employed Tiffany Davis as a Community Domestic Worker. Tiffany will be responsible for proving support to carers in their own homes with housework, laundry and ironing. Tiffany works 18 hours a week and will support carers throughout the Borough of Gateshead.

The Community Assistance Project now employs 2 workers and provides free practical help to carers with tasks that they are unable to manage because of lack of time, health problems, work/family commitments or financial hardship.

We can assist with laundry & ironing, housework, shopping, transport, dog walking, support with paperwork & phone calls, and light gardening

For further information please call Lisa Taylor, Community Assistance Project Manager on **0191 478 2423**.

Carers Register

Being a Carer can bring extra stresses to your everyday life. It may affect your health and it is important that you have advice and support when you most need it. **Did you know you can ask your GP Practice to make a note on your patient record that you are a carer?**

If you inform your GP Practice of the fact that you are a carer, in future you should be offered advice and support to assist you in your caring role. Also by knowing how many patients have a caring role, GP Practices will be better able to develop services. To register pick up a Carers Register leaflet at your GP Practice, contact Gateshead Crossroads Caring for Carers who can send you one out in the post or visit our website at **www.gatesheadcrossroads.org.uk** to download a leaflet. For more information contact us on **0191 478 2423**.

Gateshead Crossroads Caring for Carers News

Young Carers Service News



Feedback Activity Day - Young Carers



MacMillan Cancer Relief and Gateshead Crossroads Caring for Carers are arranging a Feedback Activity Day on 14th January 2006 at Newcastle United's St. James Park. It is open to any young carer in the region who is caring for (or has cared for) a member of the family with cancer or a terminal illness.

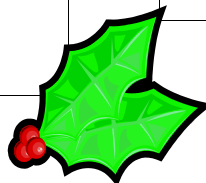
The programme for the day is relaxed and fun and the young carers will be taking part in various activities involving video, art, music and sport which will enable them to give feedback about their caring role and opinions on the impact that their family member's illness has had on their lives.

Christmas Greetings

We asked everyone who has worked with the young carers over the last year to send us a message. These will be displayed at our office and also on our website. Some of the greetings were very touching and we used them for our Christmas card to send to the young carers and their families. See the examples below:

"We all gain strength, courage and confidence with every problem we have faced and overcome. So do the thing you think you cannot do! There's no failure except in no longer trying. Next year will be the best one ever!"

"Thanks for all the laughter
Thanks for all the smiles
Thanks for all the fun
Thanks for the way you are
Fun to be with
Fun to be around
Have a great Christmas
and see you all next year!"



Art Display in Saltwell Towers

Over the Summer we did an activity session with a group of young carers at Saltwell Park with Kelly Anderson, Outreach Worker and Corrine, a local artist. We had a great time getting covered in paint and glue and now some of our work is being displayed in the Gallery (upstairs) of Saltwell Towers and will be on show with some of Corrine's work until the end of January 2006.

Gateshead Crossroads Caring for Carers News Website Development

Just a reminder that our website address is: www.gatesheadcrossroads.org.uk. The website has comprehensive information about our services and all the latest news. In 2006 we plan to revamp and develop the website further – watch this space for updates!

Carers Mental Health Forum

Gateshead Mental Health Carers Forum meets monthly and is open to anyone who looks after or supports someone who suffers or has suffered mental distress. Contact Joe Lewis on **0191 478 2423** for more details or click here to read the recent press release.

News You Can Use

Keep Warm, Keep Well



To keep well during Winter it's essential to keep warm. As the weather gets colder, we are all more likely to catch colds or flu, and if your body temperature drops then the risks of a heart attack, stroke or breathing difficulties increase. This is especially true for older people, or if you have a serious disease, or are vulnerable due to a physical disability.

The best way to combat Winter is to keep warm and follow as healthy a lifestyle as possible. What you eat and drink, and the exercise you take, can make a big difference. And, as part of keep well, it's vital to keep your home warm and keep yourself warm when you go out.

If you have any questions about keeping warm and well, or for a copy of the Winter Guide, call the winter warmth advice line on freephone **0800 085 7000**.

Carers Week 2006 - June 12 – 18



The 2006 theme is health. Crossroads Caring for Carers Association are looking for Carers who are willing to discuss their health experiences with the media. This will require a minimum of effort but anyone chosen will make an impact both during the prior to Carers Week 2006.

If you would like your story used please contact appeals@crossroads.org.uk or write to Crossroads Caring for Carers, FREEPOST LON5274, London, EC3B 3BR.

News You Can Use

The Carers (Equal Opportunities) Act

The Act was introduced as a Private Members bill by Dr Hywel Francis MP in January 2004 to: “**place duties on local authorities and health bodies in respect of carers**” and became law in April this year.

The major significance of the Act for carers is that for the first time there is a recognition in law that carers need to be informed of their rights and that local authorities must consider the well-being of carers as individuals rather than just in respect of their ability to perform their caring role.

The majority of the duties in the act are placed on social services but there are important links and duties for health and other services.

The Act is divided into three main parts. **Part 1** places a duty on social services to inform carers of their right to an assessment. **Part 2** of the Act places a duty on social services to ensure that a carer’s wish for employment, learning or training opportunities and leisure are considered as part of their carers assessment. **Part 3** of the Act gives social services the power to enlist the help of housing, health, education and other local authorities in providing support to carers.

The key benefits hoped for from the Act are;

- An increase in employability for carers who wish to return to work.
- More carers being able to continue in work whilst caring.
- More opportunities for carers to access learning and training opportunities.
- Better chances for carers to lead more fulfilled and less stressful lives.

For summarised details on the act and how it affects carers rights visit:
<http://www.carersuk.org/Policyandpractice/carersEqualOpportunitiesAct>.

How to Contact Us



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