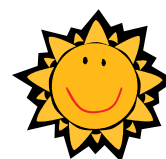


# Information Update



July 2006

Hello and welcome to the July edition of Information Update. We would like to hear from any carers who would like to either **make a contribution** to the newsletter or make a **suggestion for future articles**. Please don't hesitate to contact us if you have any queries or would like more information on anything on any of the articles in this newsletter! Our full contact details are on the back page.



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# Gateshead Crossroads Caring for Carers News

## A Quality Service for Carers - It's Official!

### Commission for Social Care Inspection Report

As reported in our last newsletter, Gateshead Crossroads Caring for Carers were recently inspected by the Commission for Social Care inspection. The organisation has progressed from the previous inspection and met or exceeded all standards. This inspection report is now available on the CSCI website at [www.csci.org.uk](http://www.csci.org.uk).

### Quality Standards Audit

Following our recent CROQUET audit we are delighted to announce that we have provisionally achieved a level 3 CROQUET evaluation. Level 3 is the highest level that can be achieved. There is one piece of work to be completed before the actual accreditation, but this is already accounted for in pre-audit planning and is underway.

CROQUET stands for Crossroads Quality Evaluation Tool. It is a quality assurance system that has been specially adapted from PQASSO (Practical Quality Assurance Systems for Small Organisations) by Crossroads Caring for Carers. CROQUET covers 15 quality areas and promotes continuous improvement through self assessment and audit by specially appointed auditors. It helps the organisation to identify what it is doing well and what needs to be done in order to improve.

### New Appointments

We have had a few new starters in July! The Young Carers Service have a new Assessor (Maureen Kew), a new Key Worker (Anthony Lea) and four new sessional Activity Workers (Dominic McGough, Nicola Mantalios-Lovett, Natalie McGarr and Linda Bilclough.) The Community Assistance Service have also employed a new Community Domestic Worker (Ann Alsop).

### Young Carers News!



#### Debenhams 'Pamper Day'



What a difference a day makes! A group of female young carers were invited to Debenhams for a day's pampering. All the girls had their hair and make-up done and received advice from the personal shoppers. A professional photographer took photo's (see left) of the transformation of the girls before we all went for tea!

# Gateshead Crossroads Caring for Carers News

## Young Carers News!



### Indian Dancing

The young carers appeared in the Sunderland Bolliwood Festival at the Winter Gardens and had a brief claim to fame on the TV. They also performed live at Newcastle Civic Centre on Saturday 15th July for a charity night to raise funds for the Pakistani Earthquake. The display was very professional and the young carers put on a wonderful display. We were even approached about a performance in June but due to other commitments had to turn this down. Word is spreading of our fame - Jill, Young Carers Activity Co-ordinator, is negotiating contracts for performances and autographs!

### Hadrian's Wall Sponsored Walk



A group of young carers and staff completed the Macmillan Cancer Support 'Walk Wonders' sponsored walk to raise money for both MacMillan and Gateshead Crossroads Caring for Carers. Having walked a total of 14 miles over the weekend we returned home tired with aching legs but having had a great time! The young carers did a great job of motivating the staff to complete the walk!

### Summer Holidays Activities

- The usual annual outing has been organised to Lightwater Valley for 49 young carers and staff on July 22<sup>nd</sup> so you have been warned to steer clear of the immediate area!
- Mobex are helping to arrange two overnight stays for lads in the group aged 11 and over. The stays will allow the Young Carers to build shelters and set up camp, cook their own meals and do a variety of out door activities such as jumping of a waterfall! The lads are very much up for it, as are the staff – the greatest appeal being no washing or brushing teeth etc!
- The girls are going for a more sedate and relaxing stay with a pyjama party, make-up, showers, hair straightners, comfortable beds and a roof over our heads!
- Football in the community – the team from St James are providing some coaching and friendly matches for the young carers on a Friday. Quite a few of our girls are really into football so we are having mixed sessions. And the response so far has been very good.

A varied and fun packed programme has been booked so all we need now is some good weather. The normal pattern from previous years is that if we plan an indoor activity it is sweltering hot and if we are outside we get torrential rain, but the young carers are ever hopeful and nothing deters us from having fun!

# Gateshead Crossroads Caring for Carers

## “Why won't you listen?” DVD

The Mental Health Carers Forum is an informal monthly meeting for carers who support people suffering from mental distress. It is a useful way of gathering opinions from carers who would not attend more formal meetings involving NHS mental health staff and it is also an opportunity to inform carers of changes and developments within mental health services locally and at national level.

At one meeting about a year ago, one of the carers said, “You get sick of telling your story over and over again to different people, nothing seems to change and you just end up getting upset.” This remark sparked the idea for making a video record of carers' stories and using elements of their recorded experiences to convince mental health and social care professionals of the need to listen more to carers. For a carer, not being listened to can add to the feelings of helplessness and inadequacy they often feel when coping with the disturbing changes in a loved one's behaviour caused by mental illness. What helped the idea along was the presence at the meeting of a carer who taught photography and video at college level and was keen to ensure that his and other carers' experiences could be used to help improve mental health services.



Since that meeting, under the working title “Why won't you listen?” one carer's story has been recorded on DVD, and a list of interviewees has been started. At this month's Mental Health Carers Forum, all the carers present contributed to drafting a plan for the work to complete “Why won't you listen?” by July 2007. The carers who attend Forum meetings will continue to play a part in the development of the project as will people who contribute their stories. We are starting with a clear focus for what we want the DVD to express but expect that there will be organic development from this basic idea over the life of the project. Costing the project and fundraising are both immediate priorities.

After completion “Why won't you listen?” will be distributed free throughout Gateshead to social workers, community psychiatric nurses, members of community mental health teams, psychiatrists, mental health service managers and commissioners as well as NHS Trust board members. If you are interested or if you know of any carers who would like to be involved in any way please let me know or ask them to contact me, Joe Lewis. Mental Health Involvement Worker on **0191 478 2423** or e-mail [joelewis@gatesheadcrossroads.org.uk](mailto:joelewis@gatesheadcrossroads.org.uk).

## Benefits Advice Service Drop In

Our **Benefits Advice Worker**, Natalie Freeman holds a regular drop in session at Gateshead Carers Association (Regent Terrace, Opposite the Civic Centre) every 2nd Friday of the month, 1 - 4pm. The dates for the next drop in sessions are Friday 11th August and Friday 8th September. Alternatively you can make an appointment to see Natalie at Gateshead Crossroads Caring for Carers office or she can visit you at home! Call her on **0191 478 2423** for more information.



# Gateshead Crossroads Caring for Carers News

## Annual Survey Results

Thank you to all carers who completed the Annual Survey this year and congratulations to the Carers who won the £30.00 in Metrocentre Vouchers! The results of the questionnaire's have been collated and a summary report will be available in early August on our website. Below is a brief summary of the results:

### Care Service

The Care Service provides support through trained Carer Support Workers who take over the caring role for a period of time, giving the carer a break. For more information contact us on **478 2423**.

- **100%** of carers said that they benefit from the opportunity the Care Service gives them to have a break from their caring role and that the person they care for has a good relationship with the Carer Support Worker.
- **88%** (60 people) described the care they receive as **excellent** and **12%** (8 people) described the care as **good**. Nobody described the care as either average or poor.

Some of the comments made were:

"The Care Service allows me to continue to work thus contributing to the financial wellbeing of the family and my self confidence."

"I have contentment and piece of mind knowing my mother is socialising and making her own choices. I can relax and feel this is a burden shared."

### Community Outreach Service

The Outreach Worker can provide carers with information, emotional support, help to access services, equipment and funding, support with work, learning or training and health needs. For more information contact **Martin Mulvaney** on **478 2423**.

- **100%** of carers who responded said that they felt that their overall experience of the Community Outreach Service was positive and beneficial. Comments included:

"I'm grateful for the information and support."

"I feel I can get in touch if ever I need to."

"Having that help behind you makes a great deal of difference."

### Benefits Advice Service

The Benefits Advice Worker provides advice and support to carers and people with disabilities in claiming Disability Living Allowance, Attendance Allowance and Carers Allowance and can also help with benefits calculations to enable access to other benefits, such as pension credit and signposting you to other agencies for support. For more information contact **Natalie Freeman** on **478 2423**,

- **100%** of carers said that they would recommend the Benefits Advice Service to others. Comments were:

"We would recommend this service to other people we know who are in the same position to us."

"Filling our complicated forms when one is emotionally upset is difficult so the service is very beneficial and I would certainly recommend it."

## Gateshead Crossroads Caring for Carers News

### Community Assistance Service

The Community Assistance Service supports people with tasks such as laundry, ironing, housework, shopping, dog walking, light gardening, transport and support with paperwork. For more information contact **Lisa Taylor** on **478 2423**.

- Carers were asked to indicate how they felt the Community Assistance Service had made a difference to their lives. The results were as follows:
 

⇒ More time to spend with the person I care for / my family	3 carers
⇒ I feel Less tired / Exhausted	2 carers
⇒ I have more time for myself	2 carers
⇒ I don't have to reply on other people as much	2 carers
⇒ I feel less stressed	4 carers

### Mental Health Involvement Service

Our Mental Health Involvement Worker works with carers of people who suffer mental distress. We seek to involve carers and to represent carers' views on key planning groups within local Mental Health Services. The project provides support, information and training for carers so that they can make their voices heard and so contribute to improving those services - particularly as they affect carers.

- 5 Carers who completed our Annual Survey said they would like to join the mailing list for the **Mental Health Forum**. People who care for, or who have cared for someone who has suffered mental distress can attend the **Mental Health Carers Forum**. We meet monthly to share views and experiences, to become better informed about Mental Health Services, and to look at ways of improving those services and the way they work with carers.

For more information or to be added to the mailing list, contact **Joe Lewis** on **478 2423**.

### Leisure Pleasure Pass for Carers

A reminder to all carers that you can pick up your Leisure Pleasure Pass from our Office or we can post them out to you on request, just call us on **0191 478 2423**. A Leisure Pleasure Pass entitles the holder to half day use of the Swallow Hotel Gateshead's Leisure Facilities at a cost of **£6 per person (or £10 including sandwich and drink)**. You can use the Indoor heated swimming pool, spa bath, steam room, sauna, gym, and chill-out room. There are also beauty treatments, sun beds/ massage chair available at extra cost.



The Leisure Club is open Monday to Friday 7.30am–9.00pm and Saturday and Sunday 7.00am-8.30pm. To take advantage of this offer you must be a member or service user of Gateshead Crossroads Caring for Carers or a member of Gateshead Carers Association but you can take a guest along with you!

## News You Can Use

### Special Offers for Carers



**Gateshead Carers Association (GCA)** are offering a number of special deals for carers including:

- **Access to a computer** to use Microsoft Office programmes, the internet or e-mail (appointments must be made in advance).
- **Weight Management and healthy eating sessions** on a Tuesday 10 - 11am at GCA's offices (11 Regent Terrace) run by a Community Nutritionist.
- **Keep fit at Gateshead Council Leisure Centres.** The carer must be a member of Gateshead Carers Association. Carers take their GCA membership card to any Council leisure centre and pay £1 for an Active8 card. The card is programmed to show they are a carer and entitled to the discount. Carers then get a concessionary rate of £1 per session each time they go to a leisure centre.

For more information contact **Gateshead Carers Association** on 0191 490 0121, or visit their website: [www.gatesheadcarers.com](http://www.gatesheadcarers.com).

### National Patient Safety Agency – Please Ask!



The National Patient Safety Agency (NPSA) has launched a website to encourage patients to ask questions about their care and to let them know of any safety concerns. Visit [www.npsa.nhs.uk/pleaseask](http://www.npsa.nhs.uk/pleaseask) for more information or if you don't have access to the internet you can contact them on freephone:

**0800 015 2536.**

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### Attention All Carers

*Do you need to unwind, relax and  
decompress?*

*Do you need time for yourself?*

**Yes?**

Then let me help you with relaxing treatments tailored to your needs. My mobile service offers the flexibility to suit your life style, as I know being a carer is not a 9 / 5 job.

**Interested?**

Contact me for further details.

#### Treatments

- Reflexology
- Indian Head Massage
- Swedish body massage
- Hopi ear candles
- Manicure
- Pedicure
- Holistic Facial

**Holistic Therapies by:**

**Diane Daughtry**  
Tel: 01914205628



## News You Can Use

### Choosing Your Hospital: Questions Answered

#### **What is Patient Choice?**

The NHS is changing to give you more choice about where and when you are treated and a greater say in how you are treated. When you have decided with your GP that you are going to see a specialist for further treatment you will be offered treatment from a list of at least four local hospitals or clinics. If you choose which hospital you are treated in, you can make sure that you go to the place that will best suit your needs.

#### **What if I don't want to choose?**

You do not have to make the decision yourself. If you prefer, your GP can still make the choice for you and recommend a hospital for your treatment.

#### **What if I don't want to go to a different hospital?**

You don't have to. If you would rather visit the hospital that you usually go to, then you can make that choice.

#### **Is patient choice offered for all medical conditions?**

A choice of hospital is available for most medical conditions. However, not all hospitals treat every medical condition and some patients may need a more specialist service.

#### **If I need treatment after my first appointment, will I be treated at the same hospital?**

In most cases you will. But if you need very specialised treatment, you may have to go to another hospital.

#### **Is there help available for my travel arrangements to get to hospital?**

If your GP or the person who has referred you determines that you have a medical need for transport to get to hospital, patient transport services should be provided. You may also have your travel expenses paid through the Hospital Travel Costs Scheme, if you get Jobseeker's Allowance, Working Tax Credit, Child Tax Credit or Pension Credit.

#### **Which hospital should I choose?**

The hospitals you can choose from will depend on the type of specialist you need to see. Our choice information pages show you which hospitals carry out the treatment you need and give other to help you make a choice that best suits you.

#### **What happens if I change my mind?**

If you decide that you do not want to be treated at the hospital where you have your first appointment, you can go back to your GP, who will go through the other options available to you.

#### **Where can I get the information I need to help me make my choice?**

If you want to know more you can talk to your GP or other local support services. Choice booklets, which give information about your local choices are also available from your GP and you can visit [www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk) for more information.



## News You Can Use

### Work and Families Bill

The Work and Families Bill received Royal Assent on 21 June 2006. A major step forward for carers, business and the economy reached the statute books yesterday as carers won the right to request flexible working.

Carers UK is hailing the new legislation as a triumph. It has campaigned long and hard for the new right - the most far reaching that carers have gained so far, affecting more carers than any other to date. The groundbreaking Work and Families Act 2006 will come into effect in April 2007 and will enable carers to better juggle work with their caring role.

Carers UK's research with leading employers has found that supporting carers at work results in higher staff retention, lower absence through sickness or stress, and greater flexibility in the delivery of some services. One business saved up to £6 million on its bottom line. This move also encourages company loyalty and positive company employee values. For more information see the Make Work Work Campaign information on [www.carersuk.org](http://www.carersuk.org) or contact them on their carersline on **0808 808 7777** to find out more, or become a member.



### ITV/ITN Support Carers - "Who Cares?"



ITV/ITN showed a week long series of programmes recently highlighting the case for more support for carers. They also conducted a survey amongst carers which they could complete online and was publicised by Carers UK. Their survey found that most families struggle financially, find the benefits system complicated and lead very isolated lives.

They found that a staggering one third of those polled said life is "difficult" while another 21% said it is a constant struggle. One third live on benefits alone and a shocking 31% said they are actually in debt as a result of having to care for someone. Only 43% of respondents have income from employment, despite the majority of them being of working age. One in four respondents have not claimed benefits because they said the benefits system is too complicated, they didn't know what benefits to claim or they felt it wasn't worth it.

In addition to struggling financially, many carers also feel socially isolated and say their health has suffered. Of those surveyed 63% feel isolated and over a third never get a break. Holidays or simply leaving the house is often difficult. A worrying 45% said their health has deteriorated since becoming a carer and 14% claiming their health is "much worse". Out of all respondents 44% said they spend more than 70 hours a week caring for someone else, while another 10% spent at least 50-70 hours a week on a sick or disabled family member.

Crossroads Association applauds ITV for bringing this problem to the notice of a far larger audience that previously obtained.



the brain injury association

## Headway

Headway started in 1979 because of a growing number of people surviving brain injury. The difficulties a brain injury can cause may not be obvious to other people. Because of this it is often referred to as a 'hidden disability'. It can change the life of the person with the brain injury. At headway, we provide information, support and services to survivors, their families and carers.

Brain injury can mean problems with balance, thinking skills, memory, concentration, speech and language. It can also cause changes in behaviour, physical difficulties, head pain, epilepsy, sensory loss and even a lack of awareness.

Headway operate a network of local groups and branches across the UK. They can help people with brain injury and their carers, to meet others in the same situation. More than 60 of our groups organise Headway Centres. These provide activities and rehabilitation for brain injury survivors. They also offer respite for families and carers.

Headway want to establish a Branch or Group in the Gateshead area. They are interested in hearing from people who have a common interest in Brain injury and it's effects. These could be people who have acquired a brain injury or health professionals or maybe somebody who is genuinely concerned about the lack of after-care provision for somebody with a brain injury and their carers.

Please contact the North East Regional Co-ordinator for Headway - Alastair White on **0191 443 4122**, if you are interested in establishing a branch or a group in the Gateshead area. Email: [ne.regional.co-ordinator@headway.org.uk](mailto:ne.regional.co-ordinator@headway.org.uk)  
Headway website: [www.headway.org.uk](http://www.headway.org.uk)

## Krocodile Klub



The Krocodile Klub run a nightclub by and for people with learning difficulties. The dates for the next Krocodile Klub events are as follows:

Date: **22nd Sept 2006** at Caedmon Hall, Gateshead between 7.00pm-11.00pm.  
Cost: £2 - carers go free

Date : **13 Oct 2006** at The Sage Gateshead, £4 carers go free, book tickets at the box office 0191 443 4661

Date: **10 Nov 2006** at Caedmon Hall, , Gateshead between 7.00pm-11.00pm.  
Cost: £2 - carers go free

For information you can contact the Klub on **0191 4789200** or via e-mail [info@thelawnmowers.co.uk](mailto:info@thelawnmowers.co.uk)

website: [www.thelawnmowers.co.uk](http://www.thelawnmowers.co.uk)



## Gateshead Heritage Walks

Some of the walks taking place in August 2006 are:

- **Sunday 6<sup>th</sup> August 2.30pm : Nails Chains and Revolution** Find out about the unique village of Winlaton; Crowleys Crew and the chartists, the Cowens and Coffee Johnny, a village of revolution and radical reform. Walk starts at Winlaton library. Pre-booking essential for this walk.
- **Wednesday 16<sup>th</sup> August 6.45pm: Rabbits and Redheugh** Railways, modern art and bridges are all covered in this promenade along the Gateshead bank of the river. Walk starts from outside the west entrance of the Sage Gateshead (St. Marys Square). This walk is operated by Newcastle City Guides. Tickets £3 (concessions £2).

You can make bookings for walks by contacting the Central Library on **0191 433 8420** or Gateshead Visitor Centre on **0191 477 5380**.

For more information on what is happening in Gateshead this Summer, including activities for kids during the school holidays, visit [www.gateshead.gov.uk](http://www.gateshead.gov.uk)

## How to Contact Us



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

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