

Network News

Dear carers

Happy New Year and welcome to the Spring edition of Network News. We hope you had a lovely Christmas.

Thank you to everyone who attended our Christmas Party for Carers on December 14th 2010. We had around 150 guests and we were visited during the day by the Lord Mayor of Westminster, who spoke to many carers. Cath Atlee came along to represent Westminster City Council. Christmas dinner was accompanied by a singer, a magician and a steel band from Queen's Park Community School. We would like to thank everyone who contributed to a very enjoyable day, including donors and sponsors; Marks & Spencer, Primark and Selfridges.

We held our AGM on December 7th 2010 and many carers and partner organisations came along to support us on the day. We were lucky to have four very interesting speakers. Elaine Edgar, from the Department of Health, Barry Taylor, a councillor for Queen's Park ward, Etta Carnelli, Carer and Afshin Naghouni, a service user of the Direct Payments' scheme. A copy of our Annual Report is available upon request or from our website, and copies of the presentations will also be online.

We also held an Information Fair on November 25th 2010 at the Stowe Centre, which was our Carers Rights Day event. Thank you to those carers who came along despite the cold weather! Snacks and massages were provided and stallholders included Westminster Social Services; Westminster Libraries, Westminster Health Trainers, Advice Plus, Improving Access to Psychological Therapies (IAPT) and many more. Carers had an opportunity to feedback on Westminster City Council's Consultation on Adult Services. Over the last few months there have been many events held for this purpose to ensure that the views of carers have been taken into account. Westminster City Council has indicated that there will be a reduction in the budget of around 25%. It is a worrying time for everyone. Our focus at Carers Network is to make sure that we continue to receive funding to provide services which support carers at this difficult time.

At the back of the newsletter we have included a list of councillors and an address at which they can be reached. We would encourage you to write to councillors and tell them how you feel about any possible reduction in services which will affect you, including our service, explaining why it is important to you that these services continue and what would happen if these services were no longer provided.

There will be a group holiday to Eastbourne on 21st March 2011 so if you're entitled this year and would like to join the group please let us know. Spaces are limited so please get in touch if you would like to come along. We will also be holding day trips in February and March. Carers have requested trips to cultural events in London. Please call the office to register an interest and give us your suggestions about possible activities.

There is still available funding for the Carers Break scheme and we are encouraging applications. Carers may receive grants of £300 to fund a break from caring. This can be a holiday or anything else which helps the carer to have a break. Please contact the office for an application form.

Thank you to all of you who completed the questionnaire on carers assessments, direct payments and personal budgets, which was sent out in our November Newsletter. Your answers will be very useful for us in improving and providing future services. One winner was drawn at random and has received a weekend for two at the Devonshire Park Hotel in Eastbourne, including travel, breakfast and evening meal, which was donated by The Devonshire Park Hotel. If you haven't yet returned your survey to us and would like to, please do so.

Thank you for reading. We look forward to hearing back from you.



Carers Network Team

Christmas

Party from left to right; Betty Hippolyte, Chair, Carers Network; Rosalind Waddon, Trustee, Carers Network; Kim Crosby, Chair, Carers Action;



The Lord Mayor, Kerrie Smith, Chief Executive, Carers Network

Below: The Christmas Party Conga!



Carers Health

Carers Walking Group - we have had a couple of enquiries about setting up a **walking group for carers**. The idea came out of group discussions at the September Learning Disability Partnership Board meeting about carers' health. Sounds like a great way to keep healthy/fit in good company. If you think you might be interested, please let us have your name and we'll organise you all getting together.

Call **020 8960 3033** or email info@carers-network.co.uk

MyAction Health Checks are now available at the Beethoven Centre, Third Avenue, London W10 4JL

If you are aged between 40 and 75 years and your GP is based in Westminster, you can get a free health check.

Appointment times are Tuesdays 11.15 – 12.00 and Fridays 9.30 – 13.00.

The Health Checks take approximately 30 – 40 minutes.

For more information, or to book an appointment, please call:

020 8962 0565 and ask for MyAction.

Free Health Checks are also available on Wednesday afternoon/evenings, which might be particularly helpful for working carers, at:

**Half Penny Steps Health Centre, 427-429 Harrow Road
London W10 4RE**

Tel **0208 962 8700** to book an appointment

Training



The Injury Prevention Service works to prevent injury and promote good health among carers who are at risk of injury or have suffered an injury through caring for someone.

They are offering a **FREE** two-hour training course at **Soho Centre, 1 Frith Street, London W1D 3HZ** on **Wednesday 19th January from 11am – 1pm**. The session will include general back care and training in the best and safest way to move and handle the person you care for.

Places are limited, so please contact the office to book your place. Call 020 8960 3033 or email info@carers-network.co.uk



**Central London
Community Healthcare**

Massage

Westminster City Council, in partnership with the London School of Beauty Therapists, is offering a course to carers; Introduction **to Therapeutic Massage**. The course, if completed, will result in the award of a certificate. The course has six sessions between 16th February and 6th April and will take place the LCBT offices on Oxford Street. The course is usually offered only to care managers, so this is a fantastic opportunity. Spaces are very limited. Please contact the office to register an interest.

Emergency Card Scheme

Well done those of you who registered for the Carers Emergency Card Scheme. The call centre is now up and running and Gemma Nicholls will keep you posted on any new developments. If you have not yet applied and would like to do so, please contact the Gemma for a registration form, which you will just need to complete and return. Once registered, the person you care for will be eligible to receive replacement care for up to 72 hours in the event of an emergency.

Carers Break Scheme

Our Carers Break Scheme for 2010-11 has been updated. Please contact the office for an application form and a copy of the new guidelines. Carers Network administers breaks services to carers who would struggle to finance breaks personally. Carers can receive grants of up to £300 to take a break.

Support Groups and Surgeries

Bangladeshi Carers Support Group meets on the first Thursday of every month.

The dates for your diary are: **Thursday 3rd February, Thursday 3rd March, Thursday 7th April**

All the groups will be from 1pm to 3pm at the Beethoven Centre

Please contact Tareq Shahajahan for more information on **020 8960 3033**

Learning Disability Carers Coffee Mornings are held on the last Tuesday of the month, every two months.

The dates for your diary are: **Monday 7th February 2011 from 10.30 – 12.30, Tuesday 29th March 2011 and Tuesday 31st May 2011**

These coffee mornings will be held at the **Beethoven Centre**

Please contact Lorna Hayes for more information on **020 8960 3033**

Older Carers/Carers of Older People's Support Groups are held on the third Thursday of every month.

The dates for your diary are: **Thursday 20th January 2011, Thursday 17th February 2011 and Thursday 17th March 2011.**

All the groups will be from **11am to 1.30pm at the Lancaster Hall Hotel, 35 Craven Terrace, Paddington, London, W2 3EL**

Please contact Lorna Hayes for more information on **020 8960 3033**

The Unwind and Revive Group meets every last Friday of the month.

The dates for your diary are: **Friday 28th January 2011, Friday 25th February 2011 and Friday 25th March 2011.**

The Unwind and Revive Groups will be from **1pm to 3pm at 1 – 3 Norton House, 10 Arneway Street, London SW1P 2BG**

Please contact Lorna Hayes for more information on **020 8960 3033**

Mental Health Carers Information and Support Drop-ins (**South Westminster**) are held every second Thursday afternoon of the month.

The dates for your diary are: **Thursday 13th January 2011, Thursday 10th February 2011, Thursday 10th March 2011 and Thursday 14th April 2011.** The drop-in will be from **1.30 – 4.30pm at Gordon Hospital, Bloomsburg Street, London SW1V 2RH**

Information and Support Drop-ins (**North Westminster**) are held every third Tuesday afternoon of the month.

The dates for your diary are: **Tuesday 18th January 2011, Tuesday 15th March 2011 and Tuesday 19th April 2011.** The drop-in will be from **1.30 – 4.30pm at 7A Woodfield Road, London W9 2NW**

Regular Carer Support groups are held at Lancaster Hall Hotel, Paddington and the Soho Centre (evenings)

For more information, or if you would like to join one of the groups, please call Kelly on **020 8960 3033**, or email kwright@carers-network.co.uk

End of Life Carers consultations are being run by Carers Network Westminster for Westminster Primary Care Trust. This is a chance for carers to help to develop future services for carers. Travel costs and replacement care can be reimbursed, and refreshments will be provided.

We are still looking for a representative to sit on the End of Life Care steering group. Please contact the office for details: 020 8960 3033

Information

If you need information, advice or support as a carer, please get in touch. We hold surgeries at City Hall, Victoria on Friday mornings and on Harrow Road on Tuesday afternoons. However, we can arrange to see you at other times too. We also have a new **Monday afternoon drop-in advice session, "Advice Plus" between 2pm and 4pm at the Beethoven Centre.** (Please see feature above for full details) If you are unable to get out of the house, please call and we can talk about other ways of helping you such as a possible home visit.

Telephone 020 8960 3033 or visit www.carers-network.co.uk

Counselling

We are running a pilot scheme to provide free counselling for carers. Please contact the office for further details.



Need Advice? Think Advice Plus...

Need **ADVICE** on housing, finding work, training, benefits or debt, health, your neighbourhood or anti-social behaviour? Advice Plus will find the solution for you. **Advice Plus** is available **every Monday afternoon 2-4pm in the Beethoven Centre, Third Avenue, London W10 4JL. No appointment needed.**

Many local organisations, PLUS Arabic and Bengali translators and local councillors will be available to help you. Our **Fresh Fruit & Veg Co-op Stall** offers a great, value for money, way to get your five-a-day. The stall is open from 1pm-4pm.

Advice Plus also offers **tasty cooking demonstrations** every 1st Monday of the month at 2pm, where you can see how to prepare and then try a delicious easy to cook healthy meal. No appointment needed. For more information, please call 020 8969 5881.

Having Your Say

Many of you who completed the Annual Survey asked for an opportunity to contribute to **Network News**. It's now time to get writing! Letters, articles, stories, poems, etc. should be sent into the office before Christmas and we will print as many of them as possible in the April issue. If we've been able to help you, please let us know how. Please don't worry about handwriting or spelling. We want to hear your stories and opinions, not make you sit an exam! And don't forget, if you can email your contribution, you will save postage and paper. Our email address is; info@carers-network.co.uk.

We will also be participating in the National Carers Poverty Protest on Friday 20th of May 2011 at 12 noon.

Staff and Volunteers

We would like to thank all of our volunteers and interns who have helped us to provide services for carers. If you are interested in volunteering at Carers Network, please contact the office to register an interest.

We will advertise any vacancies for paid positions in this newsletter and would encourage applications from carers who are interested in the role and meet the person specification. We are currently recruiting for a Communications & Stakeholder Engagement Manager. Details are available on our website.



The volunteer centre is looking at developing potential volunteering projects for adult carers in Westminster, particularly within the 18-25 age bracket. There is a survey enclosed, or you can complete the survey online; <http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/BKD5BY9>

Changes to short break services for carers of adults with learning disabilities (message from Westminster City Council)

Short breaks for carers of adults with a learning disability living in Westminster have always been valued. Westminster City Council is working hard to make the service better.

The short breaks services affected include the bed based and outreach services at Alison House, Kingsbridge Road and Portnall Road.

Westminster City Council and the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea have undertaken consultation with service users, families, and carers of adults who have a learning disability and who use the short break services. The feedback included:

- the short breaks services are valued
- services should be more consistent and reliable
- services should be more flexible
- people want increased choice, and needed better planned access to services at times of high demand.

At the moment the short breaks service is offered by four different providers - the Councils will seek to reduce this number. This will improve access and reliability and offer greater flexibility in the way the service is delivered and offered. The Councils will also seek to ensure everybody receives a fairer level of access to the short break service at the weekend, when demand for this type of service is at its highest.

For more information please speak to any of the short break providers or your allocated case manager, who will be able to answer your questions.

Support to Combine Working and Caring

Many of you who completed the Finance survey for the Princess Royal Trust for Carers said that you wanted to know more about support to combine working and caring. The DWP has now appointed a specialist worker at each **Job Centre Plus** to advise and help carers who would like to undertake training with a view to doing work of some kind if and when that becomes possible. The contact details for each office are as follows.

Central London District - Jobcentre Carer Contact Points

Kentish Town Jobcentre:

Covers NW1(parts 0 & 7 - 9);NW3 and NW5 (parts 2 - 4);

Contact: **Abdul Kalam, Advisory Services Manager**

Tel: **020 7853 3900**;

North Kensington Jobcentre:

Covers W8; W10 and W11;

Contact: **Janet Cleary, Stage 3 & 4 Advisory Services Manager**

Tel: **020 7941 6642**

St Marylebone Jobcentre:

Covers NW1 (parts 1-6); NW8; W2 and W9;

Contact: **Leon Ranson, PG1 Team Manager**

Tel: **020 7853 4607**;

Westminster Jobcentre:

Covers W1, WC2 and SW1;

Contact: **Mac McDonald, PG1 Team Manager**

Tel: **020 7853 3038**;

List of councillors

You can write to your local councillor at the following address:

Westminster City Council

64 Victoria Street

London

SW1E 6QP

We have listed one councillor from each ward below;

Abbey Road [Conservative]

Bayswater [Conservative]

Bryanston & Dorset Square [Conservative]

Church Street [Labour]

Churchill [Conservative]

Harrow Road [Labour]

Hyde Park [Conservative]

Knightsbridge & Belgravia [Conservative]

Lancaster Gate [Conservative]

Little Venice [Conservative]

Maida Vale [Conservative]

Marylebone High Street [Conservative]

Queen's Park [Labour]

Regent's Park [Conservative]

St James [Conservative]

Tachbrook [Conservative]

Vincent Square [Conservative]

Warwick [Conservative]

Westbourne [Labour]

West End [Conservative]

Lindsey Hall

Michael Brahams

Richard Beddoe

Ahmed Abdel-Hamid

Nicholas Yarker

Ruth Bush

Colin Barrow

Anthony Devenish

Susie Burbridge

Ian Adams

Lee Rowley

Edward Baxter

Paul Dimoldenburg

Daniel Astaire

Tim Mitchell

Alan Bradley

Danny Chalkley

Nicola Aiken

David Boothroyd

Jonathon Glanz

Going green: We are trying to reduce the amount of paper we use. If you are happy to receive newsletters and other updates by email, please email us at info@carers-network.co.uk

If you would prefer to receive information in another language or format, please let us know and we will work towards providing this in the future. Telephone 020 8960 3033 or visit www.carers-network.co.uk