

Network News



Dear carers

Happy Easter! Welcome to the 58th issue of Network News, bringing you up to date information on carers' issues, events and useful information for your caring needs.

This year marks the **20th Anniversary of Carers Network Westminster**. We will be hosting a celebration, so look out for details in the next few editions. We are also keen to document key historical changes and developments of Carers Network Westminster through archive material, photos and carers experiences over the years, which will be showcased in an exhibition as part of the celebrations. If you would like to share your photos or experiences of Carers Network Westminster, whether it is from a group holiday or a support group, please send them in or contact the office for more information.

Since the last newsletter in January we have organised two group holidays to Eastbourne and Folkestone; in total, just over 40 carers enjoyed the sun, sea and sights of these two lovely destinations. One carer said "The good thing about it was that I met different people and enjoyed relaxing with them by the sea". Look out for details of the next group holiday and please book early to avoid disappointment.

We are currently working on a **Carers Discount Card**. This is a real way to offer carers financial reward through discounts on local businesses. The scheme is in the early stages and more details are available on page 4.

We are also starting two new projects in **Kensington & Chelsea** and we are very excited about working more closely with this borough.

We have organised a week long of stimulating activities for carers in and around the heart of London to celebrate **Carers Week 2011**, including our Carers Conference, a trip to the theatre, a Thames boat cruise and a trip to Kew Gardens. See page 7 for more details and find enclosed our **Carers Week Calendar**.

We hope that you will be able to join us and celebrate the hard work that carers do in Westminster.

With thanks,
Kerrie Smith
Chief Executive

Changes to Adult Social Care in Westminster

Last year Westminster City Council carried out a consultation on changes to adult social care services. Westminster's Cabinet Members have considered these views and have made the following decisions:

- Only people whose needs and risks are assessed as 'substantial' or 'critical' within the nationally set levels will continue to receive these services. Those no longer entitled to this care will be offered an improved range of preventative services and information on other support available.
- Those who can afford to will be asked to contribute towards the cost of their care.
- Sherbourne House day centre will be closed, but day care for physically frail older people will continue at Elgin and Pullen Centres, with improvements made.
- Day services for adults younger than 65 with physical disabilities will end at 42 Westbourne Park Road (The Princess Diana Centre).

A copy of the Cabinet Member report 'Response to Consultation on Adult Social Care Spending Reduction Proposals' is available at www.westminster.gov.uk

If any of these changes affect you, and you wish to discuss them, please contact Lorna Hayes on 020 8960 3033



City of Westminster

We want your stories

Carers Network Westminster is looking for carers to share their experiences of being a carer. We want to know what life is like for you. In as many words as you like please let us know if:

- You find life is an upward struggle?
- You feel valued as a carer?
- You found a service useful for your caring role?



You can write to us by post or email (see back page for contact details). Or if you would prefer to discuss your experiences please contact Cecilia Faduola on 020 8960 3033

Applications for Carers Break Scheme 2011/12

The **Carers Break Scheme** can include anything that enables you to take time out from caring. Carers Network Westminster administers the grant. We are able to provide around 200 carers with support under the Carers Break Scheme. Applications are evaluated based on need and the decision to award or decline a grant is made by an independent panel.

To apply for the Carers Break Scheme grant please call for an application form on 020 8960 3033 or download Guidelines and an application form from our website: www.carers-network.co.uk



Carers Break Scheme

If you are a carer and need time to relax, then the Carers Break Scheme Grant could help you do just that.

Up to £400 to cover the cost of anything you like from a Holiday to a Laptop.

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Eligibility Criteria

- You must provide unpaid care for at least 20 hours per week.
- You must have had a Carers Assessment by Carers Network Westminster.
- The person you care for must be living in Westminster.
- You must not have benefitted from this fund, or from any other respite provided by social care, in the last 24 months. We require applicants to sign a disclosure in relation to this.
- You must find it difficult to afford a break.

Carer Friendly GP Award

Do you feel supported by your GP?

The Royal College of General Practitioners, in partnership with UK-wide charity The Princess Royal Trust for Carers, is looking for GPs who give the best support to unpaid carers.

Is that your GP?

Write to RCGP at the address below, letting us know how your GP helps you in your caring role. Don't forget to also include your name, address and telephone number and the name and address of your GP and practice.

The closing date for entries is 30 June 2011.

Winners will be informed and announced in September.

Send your nomination to:

Caring About Carers Award: RCGP, Wessex Faculty Suite, 3 Fosse House East Anton Court, Icknield Way, Andover, Hants SP10 5RG

Carers Network Westminster can also submit nominations on your behalf, to nominate your GP, please contact Gemma Nicholls 020 8960 3033.

**A Fairer Deal
For Carers
Paper Petition**

**CPA
Carers
Poverty
Alliance**

For those of you unable to attend the National Poverty Protest on 20th May, Carers Poverty Alliance has put together an online petition to be delivered to 10 Downing Street London.

The petition is to raise awareness of the unfairness inherent in the benefits system that continue to keep carers on a very low income and penalises any attempt at self-empowerment.

Poverty Protest March – 20th May 10am

You can register your interest by contacting CNW on 020 8960 3033

If you would like to sign the petition please visit www.carerspovertyalliance.com or you can download and print a paper petition, which consists of a cover sheet and a signature sheet (which can be printed as many times as needed).

Paper petitions must be returned no later than **Friday 3rd June 2011** -

Please post all paper copies back to: Mr Darren Osborne (CPA), 10 East Crescent, Canvey Island, Essex, SS8 9HL.

The Carers Discount Card...coming soon!

Carers Network Westminster will be launching the Carers Discount Card in the next few months. Carers holding this card will be entitled to a discount of varying amounts when presented at participating local businesses. Businesses currently include restaurants, pharmacy and alternative therapists.

Discounts will range from 10-20% depending on the business and may be subject to some conditions such as days the discount is available or products that are subject to the discount.

Carers Network Westminster are looking to expand the scheme to include as many local businesses as possible and to ensure that Carers are able to receive the maximum benefit from discounted services.

Any feedback or contributions about discounts that would be of most benefit to Carers are welcome, or if you are a local business who would like to increase your community involvement, to be publicised in Carers Network Westminster literature and help Carers, please contact Gemma Nicholls at gemma.nicholls@carers-network.co.uk or call 020 8960 3033.

Free Computer and Laptop Give-a-way

Westminster City Council is recycling their computers and donating them to residents. To apply you must be a Westminster resident in receipt of low income benefit or Disability Living Allowance. An application form is available on the Community Computers page on Westminster Council website.

If you have any queries please contact Irene McWilliams on 020 7641 6293 or email imcwilliams@westminster.gov.uk



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www.twitter.com/CNWestminster

Carers Action Steering Group: Vacancies for General Forum Carers Representatives

Carers Action is made up of carers from across all care groups. They are looking for members to join its steering group who meet quarterly and are often made up of carers who sit on various groups around Westminster.

If you live in Westminster and are passionate about advocating the needs of carers and sharing your caring experiences then please contact Cecilia Faduola on 020 8960 3033 or email cecilia.faduola@carers-network.co.uk



As a charity we are reliant on donations towards the free support services we offer all our carers. You can now make a one-off or monthly donation through Just Giving, a safe and secure method ensuring any donations from you come straight to us.

Visit www.carers-network.co.uk and click on the tab 'Help us support carers' on our home page. Thank you!



Carer's Thames Walk 2011

This year we are asking for sponsorship towards the Carer's Thames Walk. The fundraising walk along the South Bank of the Thames is organised by a committee of Carers and Carers Centres and is supported by The Princess Royal Trust for Carers and Crossroads.

If you would like to take part in the walk and help raise money for Carers Network Westminster, call Cecilia Faduola 020 8960 3033

Financial Information and Advice		
Organisation	Service	Contact details
Turn 2 Us	Income Maximisation	0808 802 2000 www.turn2us.org.uk Turn2us is a charitable service which helps people access the money available to them – through welfare benefits, grants and other help
Money Matters	Independent Advice Free welfare, housing benefits and debt advice service	Drop in service Every Monday 1-4 pm (except Bank Holidays) The Beethoven Centre, Third Avenue W10 4JL Tel: 0208 969 5881 web: a2dominion.co.uk/bethoven Every Wednesday 2-5pm Church Street Neighbourhood Centre, 88 Church Street NW8 8ET Tel: 020 7641 6633 web: churchstreetneighbourhood.org.uk
EDF Fuel Debt Advisor	Fuel & Debt Advice	fueldebtadvisor@westminstercab.gov.uk Free access to independent advice on how to deal with household debts through Citizens Advice. Tailored to suit each individual's needs, from general information to independent casework
Energy Saving Trust Advice Centre	Information and Grants	0800 512 012 For up to date information about available insulation and heating grants
Well at Home	Unsuitable Housing Condition Helping vulnerable people older people, low income families with children, and people with disabilities to identify and address risks within their home.	Church Street - Trevor Withams - twithams@westminster.gov.uk South Westminster - Sarah Ellison - sellison@westminster.gov.uk Westbourne - Tim Carrick - tcarrick@westminster.gov.uk Phone: 020 7641 8959

Merchandise Branding Competition

Carers Network Westminster is searching for a brand new emblem to feature on all our merchandise and promotional material. We're looking for an original, funky design that captures the essence of carers and caring, simply send us your emblems by email or post and we will pick the best three designs and announce them in the following Carers Network News. Prizes will be awarded to the winners.

Send your entries to Cecilia Faduola at cecilia.faduola@carers-network.co.uk

The True Face of Carers

Can caring be a richly rewarding experience that brings out the human spirit?

Or a battle for recognition, identity and appreciation?



Carers Week 10th - 18th June 2001



The True Face of Carers is the theme of Carers Week this year. As the theme suggests we want to explore and unveil the real lives of those who care. There is no one identity for a carer but once someone becomes a carer do they lose their identity?

The week of awareness will take an in depth look finding out if caring can ever be a rewarding experience that brings out the human spirit or just a constant battle for recognition, appreciation and individuality.

Over the years, carers have expressed a lack of time for themselves, which all too often leads to health related illnesses, feelings of isolation, exhaustion and despair. Here at Carers Network Westminster we are passionate about people who care and by focusing on them as individuals who also have ambitions, dreams and desires, we're keen to challenge society's image of the ever-benevolent, over protective carer who has no time for outside interests.

As part of Carers Week we have organised a range of free and interesting tours, walks and taster sessions at different times to suit your availability and interest. Please see inserted calendar for a list of programmed activities. Booking is essential, call 020 8960 3033.

Carers Conference 15th June 10.30 - 4pm
Lancaster Hall Hotel, 35 Craven Terrace, London W2 3EL

In keeping with this year's theme, the Carers Conference will be showcasing carers who have managed to find a balance between caring and leading a productive life through a series of testimonials and six lively workshops.

The keynote speaker is Hugh Marriott, author of "The Selfish Pig's guide to Caring," and the day will include therapeutic treatments courtesy of London College of Beauty Therapy. A free hot lunch and refreshments will be available, plus live entertainment. Booking is essential, call 020 8960 3033.

Hellos and Goodbyes

We have gained two new staff members in the last year and we are currently recruiting a Carer Support Manager. This has increased the capacity of the team by half. Our aim is to make sure that carers do not have to wait for our services.

We are sadly saying goodbye to two of our team members; **Thuy Phan**, our fundraising intern, who did a fantastic job, left us in March to have her baby, Annabel. We would like to thank her for doing such a good job and we hope to see her again soon.

We are also saying goodbye to **Luke-Osbourne-George**, who has been with us for some time. He has been a highly valued member of the team and we would like to thank him for his significant contribution to the work of Carers Network Westminster. He will be very sadly missed. Please join us in wishing him well for the future. A word from Luke;

"Dear Carers,

It is with regret that I must say "goodbye" to you all. I have enjoyed my time working at CNW and have met some very inspirational individuals at the different Carer events that I have attended along with the Carers surgeries that I have held. Even though I will be moving on to different avenues I will take with me the wisdom that I have gained while working with the many different types of Carers that I have had the pleasure to come into contact with. I wish you all nothing but the best. Peace and long life.

Luke Osbourne-George "

We would like to welcome **Cecilia Faduola**, who started in February as our new Communications and Stakeholder Engagement Manager. We are delighted to have her as part of the team at CNW. Her role will involve building and developing relationships with key stakeholders and increasing the capacity of carers, so they can play an active role in health and care services in Westminster.

We would also like to welcome two new trustees; **Sue Reynolds-Hart** and **Selena Lam Tam**. Sue works for the Care Management Group and Selena is a qualified finance professional. We are very lucky to have them on board and we wish them a warm welcome.

I will be on maternity leave after the Carers Conference in June and I am recruiting an interim CEO to make sure that the charity is in safe hands whilst I am away. Details to follow in our next newsletter.

Thank you,

Kerrie Smith, CEO

Carers Network Westminster

Office 8, Beethoven Centre

Third Avenue, London W10 4JL

Tel: 020 8960 3033 • Fax: 020 8962 9461

Email: info@carers-network.co.uk • Website: www.carers-network.co.uk