



Is your home ready for winter???

As a carer you need to make sure you stay in good health especially during the winter months when the weather turns cold. Making sure that your house is properly insulated will mean that you stay warmer for longer and with less cost. There are several schemes that can make sure your house is energy efficient and if it isn't you may qualify for help towards the costs of ensuring it is...

Warm Front

Warm Front makes homes warmer, healthier and more energy-efficient. The Warm Front Scheme provides a package of insulation and heating improvements up to the value of £3,500 (or £6,000 where oil, low carbon or renewable technologies are recommended). It is a Government-funded initiative and the scheme is managed by eaga.

If you own your own home or rent it from a private landlord, you may be eligible for a grant under the Warm Front Scheme.

Qualification

If you receive Working Tax Credit, Child Tax Credit, Attendance Allowance, Disability Living Allowance, Income Support, Housing Benefit, Council Tax Benefit, War Disablement Benefit or Industrial Injuries Disablement Pension you may be eligible for a Warm Front Grant.

To find out if you qualify or to apply please ring 0800 316 6011.

Northumberland Warm Zone can also provide services *in addition to warmfront...*

Warm zone also aims to connect householders with help and support to provide insulation, draught proofing, central heating & heating repairs, replacement boilers and energy efficiency and benefits advice.

Call 01670 356642 to see if you qualify.

You may be eligible to qualify for grants towards heating and insulation costs from both of these organisations so get ready for winter and give them a call!



Carers Newsletter

Issue September 2009

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Is Your Home Ready for Winter?



Carers Northumberland becomes a Princess Royal Trust for Carers Centre

We are particularly pleased this issue to be able to report that Carers Northumberland has been approved for membership of The Princess Royal Trust for Carers, and therefore meets The Trust's requirements to be designated a Carers Centre.

This enables us to display The Trust's logo in our premises and on our materials, which denotes achievement of national standards, ensuring that carers in Northumberland are benefiting from access to services and support equal to that of other Carers Centres in the country.

The Princess Royal Trust for Carers is the largest provider of comprehensive carers support services in the UK. Through its unique network of 144 independently managed Carers' Centres.

The Trust currently provides quality information, advice and support services to almost 354,000 carers, including over 20,000 young carers.

In addition, The Trust also acts independently in the interests of carers through:

- Research, development and consultation
- Influence on national, regional and local policy
- Partnerships with other national organisations
- Information through our interactive websites, providing advice and access to support groups

Carers summer lunch goes down a treat...

Carers in the Alnwick area and beyond enjoyed a summer lunch together generously organised and hosted by a former carer, Marjorie Mountain, on behalf of Carers Northumberland.



Marjorie became involved with Carers Northumberland a few years ago whilst looking after her husband. She has continued to maintain contact with us even though her personal circumstances have now changed. Marjorie has also become an active volunteer for another organisation in the local area. She is known for her ability to lift the spirits of all around her through her cheerfulness and sense of humour – and she is an excellent cook! Marjorie always says that she is so pleased to be able to give something back to those who offered her support in more difficult times and with whose own circumstances she can empathise. Undoubtedly, all those attending the summer lunch benefitted from her talents!

Relaxation sessions give carers a well earned break

Relaxation days always prove popular and the event held at Bell View Resource Centre in June was no exception. In fact, all the available places were fully booked with carers travelling to the venue from quite far afield. With a choice of alternative therapies and an excellent buffet lunch on offer, no wonder it was so successful. Carers Northumberland provides similar opportunities at other venues within the county but would be very pleased to hear from you with any suggestions for different locations which you think would be appropriate for such an event. We realise that there will always be carers who would like to attend a relaxation day but have difficulties with accessing the locations currently used. We'd like to ensure that all carers living in the rural north of the county are offered equal opportunities so please think about where would suit you best.



Your local contacts are:
 Jean and Kate, who are based at the Bell View Resource Centre, 33 West Street, Belford, Northumberland, NE70 7QB
 01668 219951



Skills Development

Would you like to enhance your skills as a carer?

Would you like to know information that will assist you in your caring role?

Carers Northumberland have arranged a series of workshops which are designed to enhance *your* skills as a carer and arm you give you vital information to help you in your caring role. The workshops are taking place throughout Northumberland, all you have to do is pick out which sessions you would like to come to at the venue that suits your needs and ring 0844 800 7354 to book your place.

| Workshop | Venues | Date |
|--|-----------|---------------------------|
| Falls Awareness | Blyth | December 1st |
| | Ponteland | January 22nd |
| Moving & Handling | Blyth | December 15th |
| | Ponteland | February 5th |
| Confidence Building | Alnwick | October 6th |
| | Blyth | January 12th |
| | Ponteland | February 19th |
| Making a will | Blyth | January 26th |
| | | |
| Power of attorney | Ponteland | October 2nd |
| | Alnwick | November 3rd |
| | Blyth | February 9th |
| Personal care (Incl Continence advice) | Ponteland | October 16th |
| | Alnwick | November 17th |
| | Blyth | February 23 rd |

What can I claim as a carer?

This is as easy to answer as *how long is a bit of string...*



But we will try to answer this important question, to help you find out if you are entitled to any benefits. We still come across people who have missed out because they didn't understand the benefits system. We don't want any of our readers to miss out, so please read on.

If it still seems a bit confusing, please contact Carer's Northumberland on 0845 800 7354 to find out where to get advice.

The main welfare benefit is **Carer's Allowance**, currently worth **£53.10 per week**, and it can be claimed by any carer aged 16 or over. The person being looked after must receive a qualifying benefit, usually Attendance Allowance at either rate or Disability Living Allowance middle or high rate care component.

Confusion sets in when a carer is also entitled to another benefit themselves, such as State Retirement Pension, Incapacity Benefit or contributory Employment and Support Allowance. These are *overlapping* benefits and this means if you are paid any of these at a higher rate than Carer's Allowance then you will not actually be paid any Carer's Allowance.

This means that most people over pensionable age who are entitled to Carer's Allowance won't receive it because their state pension will *overlap* with it. For some people though, all is not lost. Even if Carer's Allowance isn't paid, someone who is otherwise entitled to it will have *underlying entitlement* to Carer's Allowance. Having *underlying entitlement* to Carer's Allowance may mean someone gets an increase in other benefits such as Income Support, Pension Credit and Council Tax Benefit.

If you can tick **all** the following **you will** be entitled to Carer's Allowance:

- ✓ Aged 16 or over and providing at least 35 hours care each week
- ✓ Caring for someone in receipt of Attendance Allowance (high or low rate) or DLA care component (high or middle rate)*
- ✓ Not in full time education
- ✓ Not earning more than £95 per week from work (NB other income and capital do not affect Carer's Allowance. It is only earnings from work that may affect entitlement to Carer's Allowance)

*Certain other disability benefits can also qualify.

Please see www.direct.gov.uk/carers or www.nhs.uk/Carersdirect for further information about all benefits available to carers and the people they look after.

Don't miss out

Forthcoming Events and Activities

There is a new support group pattern planned for the far north of the county to make Carers Northumberland more accessible for you. We have come up with the idea of rotating locations so that every other month there would be a group on the east coast and one on the western border. Please look at the proposed meeting places below and see if one of these would suit where you live.

| <u>Area</u> | <u>Month</u> | <u>Month</u> | <u>Month</u> |
|-------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| Wooler | October | February | June |
| Embleton | November | March | July |
| Cornhill | December | April | August |
| Seahouses | January | May | September |

Come along for as much or as little time as you can and enjoy a free afternoon tea in a relaxing setting. Have a break, meet other carers and enjoy some time for you. We'll be trying out different venues and would welcome your suggestions. Meetings will be on Mondays from 2.30pm to 4.00pm.

Here are the first dates:

Monday 12th October, Breeze, Wooler

Monday 9th November, Embleton

Monday 7th December, the Collingwood Arms, Cornhill

Monday 11th January, Seahouses

Book now for...

'Managing Stress & Your Emotions' with Genni Poole

October 5th & 19th @ Aln ward meeting room Alnwick Infirmary 10.30-1.30

Visit to Alnmouth Friary to meet Brother Alan & enjoy quiet calm & conversation November 12th

Call Jean or Kate on 01668 219951

Carers Stories

Do you have any stories that you would like to share of the positive benefits caring has brought to your life?

We know that carer tend to underestimate both their personal skills and talents as well as their value to society as a whole.

Perhaps you could share with others any positive gains you recognise have come from your caring role – good for you to tell and good for them to read!

If you have a story you wish to share contact Kate on 01661 219951 or e mail

katewhitehead@carersnorthumberland.org.uk

Carers Group Support going from strength to strength

We have continued to add to the numbers attending our support groups in the West with new carers joining us at most recent sessions. Many new carers are introduced to us by other carers who are already registered with us, so if you know someone else who is a carer tell them about us or bring them along to your next local support group meeting to find out more about how we could support them too.

Some of our groups have been out and about, making the most of the summer days. In July the Hexham group enjoyed a lovely riverside walk from Hexham to Warden, stopping for a pub lunch at the Boatside before walking back to Hexham. A great time was had by all and everyone found they had chatted to new people along the way, sharing stories and useful information. In August the Hexham group spent a soggy morning at Brocksbushes where they met up for a cuppa and a cake on one of the wettest days of the summer. However, the weather didn't dampen anyone's enjoyment of the morning.



What else has been happening...

At Bellingham, our regular group in August was replaced with a social evening where local carers enjoyed a buffet supper and drinks after an interesting presentation by the Fire Service on fire safety in the home.

Ponteland group have decided to swap their daytime meeting for an evening at the Waggon. Many carers enjoyed a social evening get together here as an alternative to the daytime support group and all had a fantastic time.

We held an afternoon of Relaxation Taster Sessions in Hexham on August 18th for carers in the West which was well attended. Carers had the opportunity to try a range of massage including Reiki and Shiatsu as well as group sessions to help them relax and learn some relaxation techniques to try in their own time. Feedback from carers who came along was very good giving carers the well earned break that they deserve. Following the success of this we hope to arrange another session towards the end of the year so watch out for publicity in the coming months.

Your local contact is:

Tricia Ashford who is based at Tanners House,
20 Gilesgate, Hexham, Northumberland, NE46 3QD
01434 608033

Northumberland Family Events

If you missed out on the Carers Northumberland information sessions with Fiona Horsman, there is another opportunity to catch up on what is happening. In Control, the national charity leading on self-directed support, personal budgets and personalisation are organising family events to find out how service users, families and carers want services to respond in Northumberland. So come along and find out more about what social care will look like in the future:

15th October St James Church Centre, Pottergate, Alnwick
19th October - Hexham Community Centre, Gilesgate, Hexham
27th October - Stannington Village Hall, Main Street, Stannington

The day will include real stories from people who have managed to achieve amazing outcomes with a personal budget. Each day runs 10.00am to 3.00pm and is free, but you do need to book a place by ringing 01564 821650 (ask to book on the Northumberland Family Event).



Carer Health Checks

Important development as Carers Northumberland is supporting carers to stay in good health...

You may have seen in the press that a Northumberland bid to a Department of Health fund supporting pilot projects for carers will result in the launch of Carer Health Checks in the county.

Carers Northumberland is a partner in the project, along with Northumberland Care Trust and the North of Tyne Primary Care Trust. Carers Northumberland's role will be to appoint two Carer Support Workers, each of whom will be attached to a number of GP practices in the county, offering information and signposting to carers within the practice, as well as ensuring that carers are linked in to wider Carers Northumberland activity such as support groups, skills and leisure sessions and receipt of the newsletter etc.

Recruitment for the posts will begin shortly, and once the workers are in post, carers attending participating GP practices will hopefully begin to see them and their information, as well as be able to take advantage of the support they can offer.

New Carer Support Fund launching

As part of the work in the county around Transforming Adult Social Care, Carers Northumberland has reviewed the way the Carer Opportunities Fund operates. In partnership with Northumberland Care Trust, we are testing out a Carer Support Fund process which will enable carers to highlight how a break from caring will help them carry on in their role.

As with the previous fund, the Carer Support Fund is aimed particularly at those carers for whom the family financial circumstances mean that taking any sort of break is difficult. For more information, contact us on 0844 800 7354 or at info@carersnorthumberland.org.uk.

Transforming Adult Social Care - It affects You

*****Important information please read*****

Carers Northumberland are committed to keeping carers informed about, and involved in, the changes happening in the county in relation to adult social care provision. Jean, one of our Development Officers in the north, will be circulating a regular newsheet about the changes to all carers on our database every few months, and between newsheets will include the latest information in our regular newsletter.

We will also be hosting regular information and consultation events, to ensure that carers are able to ask questions and influence decisions about development.

If you need more information, or want to check out anything reported here, contact Jean on 01668 219951 or by email on jeanworth@carersnorthumberland.org.uk.

Personal Budgets

As part of the changes to adult social care, Personal Budgets are being introduced, which will enable people to make their own choices about the care, support and activities they need.

Northumberland Care Trust have announced that from November 2009, some people new to adult services will be offered a personal budget with which to purchase their care and support, subject to appropriate political processes.

By April 2010 the Care Trust expects over 1200 people to have a Personal Budget (i.e. not just those new to the adult care system), and by April 2011 expects more than 5000 people to have a Personal Budget, and for **everyone using adult services** to have the choice of a Personal Budget.

Ideas to help You to Shop for Support

Once in receipt of a Personal Budget, people need to be able to find out what care and support services are available. The Care Trust is looking to develop a range of tools to provide people with information and advice on what is available to spend their personal budget on.

Funding has already been secured from the Regional Improvement & Efficiency Partnership for a project to research what is being called the "eBay" for social care, Shop4Support. This aims to provide a web-based catalogue to choose and purchase support, care and equipment online.

Forthcoming Meetings

Hexham – meetings between 10.30am and 12.30pm at Hexham Community Centre, usually on the fourth Wednesday of each month

- September 23rd
- October 25th
- November 25th

Bellingham – meetings between 1.00pm and 3.00pm in the Community Room at Bellingham Fire Station, usually on the fourth Thursday of each month

- September 24th
- October 22nd
- November 26th

Prudhoe – meetings between 10.30am and 12.30pm at the Parish Hall, usually the second Wednesday of each month

- September 8th
- October 14th
- November 11th

Ponteland – meetings between 10.30am and 12.30pm at Ponteland Memorial Hall, usually the first Friday of each month

- September – no meeting
- October 2nd
- November 6th

Meetings in Haltwhistle were cancelled due to lack of carers attending. If you are a carer from the Haltwhistle area and would be interested in coming along to a local group session, please contact Tricia at the Hexham.



Tricia will be planning December groups and pre-Christmas events in the coming weeks. If you have any ideas or suggestions, please contact her at the Hexham office.

Skills development and information sessions will be starting in the West in September, with sessions being held in Ponteland Memorial Hall. See page 11 for more information.

Relaxation Events

South Northumberland

This summer we have held a series of Relaxation Events around the area. The two daytime events were at Blyth and Ashington.

Blyth – Carers had the opportunity to experience full body massage, Indian head and reflexology. A lovely buffet lunch was served and carers were able to chat with each other, staff and therapists. Thanks to Blyth CEC for arranging the Buffet and to Absolute Energy therapists for the fabulous therapies.



Ashington – Carers attending were given Indian head massage, acupressure and reflexology from Lyn and Sandi of Absolute Energy. Lunch was a choice of meals from the Cafe at Hirst Welfare then Jo MacKintosh of the Northumbria Healthcare Trust Oral Hygiene Department came along and chatted to carers about their experience of accessing dental explained the theory and basic techniques along with a thorough demonstration. Thanks go to the other therapists and staff that helped make the event go so well and to Anne for a fantastic buffet. We hope to work together again in the future.



Your local contact is:

Cari Hook who is based at our central office:
Pegswood Community Project, Longhirst Road,
Pegswood, Morpeth, NE61 6XG
01670 518204

Have you got any ideas???

Carers Northumberland want to hear your ideas on what sort of activities you would like to take part in as a carer. Do you work? What activities would you like to see? What would make you feel good and give you a break from your caring role?

Please contact us with your ideas on 0844 800 7354

Carer Groups

New venues and times have been organised for Carer Groups in the area. Please feel free to come along to any group you find convenient there is a new group starting in Morpeth which is to be held on an evening which might suit you better if you are a working carer and find it difficult accessing services through the day.

PLEASE NOTE - We will **no longer** hold a group in Seghill for the foreseeable future – Many thanks to Seghill Medical Group, Netherfield House for the use of their premises.

Morpeth

Morpeth Methodist Church

evening meetings 6:30pm – 8:30pm

Wed 14 Oct 09

Wed 11 Nov 09

Wed 9 Dec 09

Wed 20th Jan 10

Wed 10th Feb 10

Wed 10th March 10

Cramlington

Cramlington Community Centre

Cramlington Village 1:00pm – 3:00pm

Fri 16th Oct 09

Fri 20th Nov 09

WED 16th Dec 09

THURS 14th Jan 10

Fri 26th Feb 10

Fri 19th Mar 10

Carers Northumberland Infoline

0844 800 7354

Open 10.00am-2.00pm Mon-Fri

And

5.30pm-7.30pm

Every 1st & 3rd Tuesday of the month

Research for Everyone

Inclusion?

What is inclusion? Where do you see inclusion happening in the NHS and in the community? What does it feel like to be included or excluded?

Are you a carer or family member who supports a person who uses Walkergate Park Regional Neurological Rehabilitation and Neuro Psychiatry Services? Are you over 18?

We need you to tell us about your experiences

Come and be a part of a research project at Walkergate Park to inform the Department of Health about the impact of inclusive practice.

Want to know more?

Contact Helen Atkin or Eileen Birks on:

Telephone: 0191 287 5148 or 0191 215 6202

Fax: 0191 215 6083

helen.atkin@northumbria.ac.uk or

e.birks@northumbria.ac.uk