

August 2010

Hello Everyone

After 4 years supporting Learning Disability Carers in South & West Devon, I have been appointed as the LD Carers Development Worker for Exeter & East Devon. So far I have held meetings in Exeter and Honiton. I will be setting up other meetings around the area and will be sending invitations to Carers shortly.

Money from the Carers Grant is available for respite in the form of outings, activities and lunches etc. Please let me know your ideas.

I am looking forward to meeting you all in the near future.

Jackie Milan



Jackie Milan & Carolyn Elliott, Assistant Director & Head of Learning Disability

"I am sure you will all want to welcome Jackie to Exeter and East Devon" said Carolyn. "Many of you will know Jackie from her days as a Carer Development Worker in the Southern part of Devon. Jackie was very popular with Carers in her last post and they consider you to be very lucky! Her experience in working with Carers of people with Learning Disabilities comes with her as does her enthusiasm, energy and creative ideas."

"The role of Carer Development Worker is very important to us all; for you as a link person and someone to turn to when you need advice and help and, for us managers and staff in Health and Social Care, the role enables us to communicate all the latest information and guidance that you may find helpful."

There are still many Carers missing out by not joining **Devon Carers Link**. Joining is free, just call: 08456 431 341. Benefits of joining include access to: benefit checks; the Flexible Breaks Grant; Take a Break sitting service; a Carer Alert Card; training opportunities; regular newsletters; and invitations to local and countywide Carer forums.



Jackie Milan & Chairman of Devon County Council Cllr Christine Marsh at the Celebration of Carers evening at Larkbeare House

"It was my great pleasure to welcome and meet some of the Carers in Devon who provide such an essential service in looking after loved ones and friends" said Christine. "This was just one of the events I am attending as Chairman of Devon County Council, meeting some of the thousands, often unsung, people who make our County what it is.

There are an estimated 73,000 Carers in Devon who help sustain our vital social care and health services and I was delighted to be able to recognise their unstinting work on behalf of Devon County Council."

£14,440 from **the Carers' Grant** has been allocated by a panel of Carers to the following groups of people with Learning Disabilities throughout Exeter & East Devon - *Exeter & District Mencap; Exeter Horizon Club; Honiton 729 Club; Exmouth Gateway Club; Exeter Gateway Centre; Exeter Soundwaves; and Exeter Safe Hands Group.*

If you know of other groups run by volunteers who would like to apply for the Grant, please let me know so that I can send them an application form.



Jackie Milan (second left) presenting the cheque to Members of Exeter & District Mencap committee. From left, Bronwyn Nott, Alan Kerswell & Anne Brand.

Carers Focus Groups

Carers of adults with Learning Disabilities from across Devon are at the heart of developing policies for Carers and those they care for. Currently, the following areas have Carers involved in Focus Groups: Housing, Social Support, Brokerage, Health, the Carers Grant and the Resource Allocation System. All Carers are very welcome to join in any of the groups. If you have any suggestions for additional topics please pass them to me.

Should the person you care for need to go into hospital either for a routine appointment or be admitted as an emergency, please contact Liz Jennings, Liaison Nurse at The Royal Devon & Exeter Hospital on 01392 402237 for help and advice.

Primary Care Liaison Nurses support adults with Learning Disabilities to access primary care services such as GPs, opticians and dentists. Nick Paddon is your contact in Exeter, call 01392 208373. Ian Hudson is your contact in East Devon, call 01395 282082.



Adela Lewis & Lesley Baker talking to Carers about Total Communication at Honiton Carers meeting.

ROC Active supports people with Learning Disabilities to take part in health and fitness activities in their local community. The themes of choice, control and inclusion are key and a person centred approach is at the heart of what they do.

For more information, please call Neil Parsley on 07977 413970 or email: neil.parsley@roc-uk.org

The Carer's Credit is available to people who provide care for one or more disabled person(s) for a total of 20 hours or more each week, where they do not currently receive Carer's Allowance.

The credit will help to protect an individual's National Insurance record to ensure there are no gaps from having to undertake caring responsibilities.

For further help and guidance call 0845 608 4321 or write to: **Carer's Credit Palatine House, Lancaster Road, Preston PR1 1HB**

Email: www.direct.gov.uk/carers



Gus Pickup, Team Manager, Social Services Community Team talking to Carers at Exeter Carers' meeting

Do you live with a long term health condition such as Diabetes, Asthma, MS or Arthritis? Do you want more out of your life? **The Expert Patient Programme** will be running courses.

Devon's Carers Support Programme gives health and information on topics such as managing continence, advice on back care and prevention of injury, the prevention of falls, basic skills in first aid and stress management.

The course will be held at Budleigh Salterton Hospital over four weeks in September.

Recommended reading - The **Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night Time** by Mark Haddon is a book written from the perspective of a young man with Aspergers Syndrome.

Devon Carers Counselling Service supports Carers by listening and understanding to find the best possible outcome. "Counselling aims to support the expression of thoughts and feelings about what is happening in your life" said Co-ordinator Henri Treece. "This is an opportunity for you to take the time to talk about and reflect on what is happening in your life as a Carer."

Contact Henri on Freephone 0808 801 0878
Email: info@carersuk.eclipse.co.uk

Have you visited the **Accessible Play Park** at King George V Playing Fields, Topsham Road in Exeter yet? Much hard work was done by Miriam Guard to obtain the funding to allow the play park to be built. If you have any photos of those you care for using the park and would like them to be in my next newsletter, please send them to me.

Transition from Children's to Adult Services can be a worrying time for some Carers. Our groups hold a wealth of experience from Carers who have been through the same experience. We are here to help, so if you are about to go through Transition, please get in touch.

Many Carers say they would like to do some kind of paid work (National Carers Strategy 2009).

If that's you, then JobCentre Plus can help support you back to work.

They offer a range of training and financial help for Carers wanting to start or restart work at some point. Trained advisers understand Carers needs and can talk to you about training, part time work, voluntary work, job search, work trials, self employment, and in-work financial help. They can give you a 'better off' calculation so you can decide what your best option is. They can also pay for replacement care so you can attend interviews and training courses.

If you'd like to know more about what Jobcentre Plus can do for you, contact Sue Parr, Care Partnership Manager on 01392 888897 for a chat.

Alternatively, pop into your local Jobcentre, and make an appointment to see an adviser. It won't affect your benefits and there's no obligation to do anything else.

Starting in October, Exeter CVS, in association with CAB, will be offering FREE 3 hourly sessions running for eight weeks on Financial Literacy.

You will receive a Financial Literacy handbook with your next Devon Carers Link newsletter. If you haven't received yours by the end of August let me know.

A Wills & Trust Seminar run by Mencap will be held on Tuesday 28th September from 12.30pm to 2.30pm in the Ballroom at Oldway Mansion, Torquay Road, Paignton, TQ3 2TE.

This is your opportunity to find out how to set up a Trust for the person you care for so that it won't affect their benefits. We have heard of some awful cases where no Trust or, worse still, no Will has been made thus leaving much distress for the person with a Learning Disability.

If you would like to attend the seminar please contact me for an application form as booking is essential.

I have made arrangements with the Half Moon Pub across the main road for us to meet from 11am for a bacon roll & a coffee. If you would like to join us for this please let me know as numbers are needed by the pub.

As I mentioned on the front page there is money available from the Carers Grant to be spent on Carers. Some of the things Carers have visited as respite over the past couple of years are: Paignton Zoo; Plymouth Aquarium; Torquay's Hi-Flyer Balloon; Abbfest beer, food & craft festival, jewellery workshops and Christmas meals. Please let me know how you would like **your** Grant to be spent this year.



Kate James, third left, receiving the cheque from the Carers Grant on behalf of Safe Hands.

Safe Hands provides supported volunteering opportunities at Exeter CVS for adults with Learning Disabilities. They undertake basic clerical work for local organisations. The volunteers use their existing skills and develop new ones and enjoy working alongside others to benefit the community.

Bits and Pieces

- The next **Learning Disability County Carers Forum** will be held on Wednesday 8th September at the Dartmoor Lodge, Ashburton. Numbers are needed for lunch. To book please call Karen Safe on 01803 294275.
- All Carers who are members of **Devon Carers Link** are entitled to apply for the Flexible Breaks Grant of around £200.
- Carers may be entitled to a reduction of up to 50% in **Council Tax**.
- Carers may be entitled to a reduction in their **Water Rates** if they use a substantial amount of water.
- **Short Breaks**. To be eligible people must be over 18, live at home with a Carer and be known to the community team. It is an additional service separate from Fulfilling Lives and at no cost to the Carers.
- **Dream-A-Way** offers free week-long holidays to people with any disability at their luxury caravans at Sandy Bay, Exmouth.
- **Holiday Inns** offer free inter-connecting rooms (when available) for Carers anywhere in the world.
- **Redcourt Supported Holidays** in the Peak District offer holidays and short breaks designed specifically for people with Learning Disabilities. Some of the things they offer are: rock climbing, archery, mountain biking, caving, rafting, abseiling, sailing, walking and canoeing.
- **A Guide to Carers' Rights Benefit booklet** is available. Give me a call if you haven't yet received your copy.

If you know of anyone who would like to receive this newsletter, or if you want to come off the mailing list, let me know.

For more information on anything in this newsletter, or to receive a large print version please call me on 01392 202055 or 07775 990111.

Email: jackie.milan@exetercvs.org.uk