

Carers' Representation Course: Learn How To Have Your Say!

Have you ever wanted to have a say in what it means to be a carer and put forward the views of those in a similar position to yourself?

Sunderland Carers' Centre will be running a course in the autumn to help existing carer representatives and those who would like to become involved to develop skills that will enhance confidence, facilitate speaking in public and give an overview of the policies and strategies behind services provided locally and nationally. It is essential that the carer's voice is heard at every level and that means someone like you sharing your experience and those of others in order to influence what happens not only in the present but in the future.

Many people feel daunted by the idea of attending meetings or speaking in front of others. This is quite natural. So why not come on the course and pick up

some tips and information. There is absolutely no obligation to volunteer as a carer rep afterwards but we hope that you will want to. The more carers who are able and willing to speak up in an informed way, the more pressure can be exerted on service providers and community groups to meet your needs and the needs of those you care for.

Being a carer rep does not necessarily mean a lot of commitment in terms of time but it does mean that you can offer your services, when you can, to represent those whose voice needs to be heard.

The course will be held at Sunderland Carers' Centre and will begin on Thursday 27th September running for 6 weeks from 10.30am - 12.30pm (followed by a light lunch). You do not need to commit yourself to attending every session. Your voice is important. Give it a go!

Thursday Evening Carers Group

The next meeting of this group which is for all carers living in any area unable to attend other group meetings, particularly working carers, will take place on Thursday 16th August at 7 - 8.30pm in the Community Learning Workshop, 1st Floor, Bunnyhill Customer Service Centre, Hylton Lane, Sunderland. Guidance to the room is available from the Reception area and there is disabled access. The guest speaker will be Heather Carter from Adult Learning Services.

Future topics requested by and to be arranged for this group will include information and speakers/specialists on arthritis care, sleep problems, continence, skin care and conditions, and Direct Payments. If you have an interest or issue with any other carer-related topic please attend the group at this or another of its monthly meetings (3rd Thursday of each month), or contact Gillian at the Carers' Centre to see how these might be accommodated for you at this group or another basis. An information mailing has also been suggested for this group on topics of interest for its participants.

Every effort is made to ensure that the information in this newsletter is correct. Sunderland Carers' Centre can accept no liability for errors and omissions and can not recommend products or services. Views and opinions expressed in this publication are not necessarily those of Sunderland Carers' Centre.

Carers' Summer Trip

Join us for a coach trip to York on Thursday 6th September. This is a chance for you as a carer to have a day for yourself and enjoy some leisure time with other carers. York is a charming city with something to interest everyone - sightseeing, shopping, quaint coffee shops and craft shops. The coach will depart from Toward Road bus stop next to Mowbray Park at 10am prompt and plans to arrive back at Toward Road at about 5.30pm.

To secure a place we require a small contribution of £2 per carer towards the cost of the coach (non-refundable). Please call into the Carers' Centre or phone 567 3232 as soon as possible to book. Places are limited. Your place will be confirmed on payment of your £2. No further confirmation will be given just come along on the day and have a great time.

The Carers' Centre is open
Monday to Friday 9am-5pm.

Tel: 0191 567 3232

(Answerphone after 5pm)

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This newsletter can be made available in large print,
braille, on audio cassette and in other languages.

Company limited by guarantee No. 5842011 Registered in England and Wales

Registered Charity No. 1118502

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Newsletter

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July 2007

Sunderland celebrates Carers Week 2007



Sunderland celebrated Carers Week 2007 (11-17 June) with a number of events including a party in Mowbray Park, a conference at the Stadium of Light, a breakfast event about primary care and the presentation of the Caring for Carers Awards - more details inside.

The Carers Week events and activities were made possible thanks to a partnership with Sunderland Adult Services, Sunderland Teaching Primary Care Trust, City Hospitals Sunderland NHS Foundation Trust, Northumberland, Tyne and Wear NHS Trust and voluntary sector partners, People Into Employment, MS Society, Alzheimer's Society and Parkinson's Disease Society. Sunderland Carers' Centre and the many carers who enjoyed Carers Week would like to say a huge thank you to them all.

'Care for a broolly?'

Fun Event in Mowbray Park

It was billed as an event for carers to let their hair down and have some fun in the summer sunshine - unfortunately the weather didn't deliver but carers who attended the Carers Week fun event in Mowbray Park on Tuesday 12th June didn't let a few spots of rain spoil their day!

Fortunately a huge marquee was put up so carers could enjoy most of the activities under cover - although there was some debate about erecting the main metal structure of the marquee in the middle of a lightning storm!

Those attending could choose from a wide range of activities. Those who wrapped up warm and stayed

for the whole four hours probably managed to cram everything in! Irish dancing, tai chi, arts and crafts, gardening and a well-deserved relaxing therapy at the end of it all! In between activities carers could pick up information from various organisations promoting the help available to carers. It was great to meet some new carers picking up information about services and to see carers relaxing and having fun.

The event was closed by live music in the bandstand from Broadway Melody - their fingers may have been numb but they didn't miss a note! Thanks to the musicians, stall holders and organisations providing activities throughout the day. Special thanks to Adult Services who supplied the marquee - without this the day would have been a wash-out!



Pictured: The Right Worshipful the Mayor Elect, Councillor Leslie Scott and Mayoress Elect, Ann Scott with the Caring for Carers Awards nominees at the fun event in Mowbray Park.

Carers Week Conference

Over 100 carers and workers from Sunderland attended the Carers Week Conference at the Stadium of Light on Thursday 14th June. The aim of the event was to give carers the chance to tell local agencies what they would like to see in a multi-agency carers' strategy for Sunderland.

Carer, Alan Lindsley, chaired the day and we heard interesting presentations from the key-note speakers - Shan Nicholas, Chief Executive of The Princess Royal Trust for Carers, who talked about the New Deal for Carers from a national perspective, and Peter Chapman, Deputy Chief Executive of Sunderland City Council, who spoke about achieving the city's vision for carers.

Carers discussed topics such as employment, health and social care services, leisure, learning, finance, welfare rights, and carers' assessments in a range of workshops and the main points were later raised with a panel of officers representing Adult Services, the three health trusts and the voluntary sector (pictured below). Information gathered on the day will be taken into account when the local carers' strategy is produced and feedback on the progress of the strategy will be given to carers via the Carers' Centre newsletter and at future events.

Thank you to the Stadium, the organisations involved in planning the conference and the individuals who helped on the day.



Pictured (from left to right): Ken Bremner, Chief Executive, City Hospitals Sunderland NHS Foundation Trust, Sue Winfield, Chairperson, (who chaired the panel session) and Margaret Kennedy, Business Manager, Sunderland Teaching Primary Care Trust, John Fisher, Head of Service, Adult Services, and Roy McLachlan, Chief Operating Officer, Northumberland, Tyne and Wear NHS Trust. Voluntary sector groups were represented by Ailsa Martin from Sunderland Carers' Centre.

Caring for Carers Awards 2007

The Caring for Carers Awards give carers the opportunity to nominate and thank workers who have made a real difference to their lives. This year workers were nominated from health, social care and the voluntary sector. The judges, from Adult Services, Sunderland City Council and Sunderland Teaching Primary Care Trust, had the difficult task of choosing the four winners.

Graham Burt and Kay Ragsdale, of Sunderland Adult Services - nominated by Norman Hildrew. Graham and Kay were part of the team involved in Sunderland City Council's successful Beacon Status Award for Supporting Carers in 2005-2006. Norman said "The work of Graham and Kay ensured that Beacon Status has resulted in a continuing and improving focus on carers."

Dr Karen Horridge, consultant paediatrician at Sunderland Royal Hospital - nominated by Kay Ragsdale. Kay said "Dr Horridge has been a vital link between the medical world and life at home."

Corinne Morgan, holistic therapist and support worker at Sunderland Carers' Centre - nominated by Christine Dawson and Audrey Stoodley. Audrey said "Corinne is a very thoughtful and caring person and gives you her full care and attention."

Councillor Eric Timmins, Cabinet Member with the Adult Services Portfolio and Cynthia Irvine MBE, Chairman of Sunderland Carers' Centre presented the awards at the Carers Week Conference.



Pictured (from left to right) are Ken Bremner, Chief Executive, City Hospitals Sunderland NHS Foundation Trust, Kay Ragsdale, Dr Karen Horridge, Cllr Eric Timmins and Cynthia Irvine.

Fire Station Visit for Parent Carer Families

Parent carers and their children/families are invited to attend a family visit to North Moor Community Fire Station, North Moor Lane, Sunderland on Thursday 26th July at 10.30am - 12 noon. You will find out about the Fire and Rescue Service as well as fire safety and fire prevention in the home. Places are limited to 60 persons. To book your place(s) please contact Gillian at the Carers' Centre on 567 3232 before Monday 23rd July. Gillian will also give you advice on the suitability of this venue and on travel arrangements.

New National Strategy for Carers

The government launched a New Deal for Carers earlier this year and part of the New Deal was to update the National Strategy for Carers. At the time of the launch the Minister, Ivan Lewis, promised there would be extensive consultation about what should be in the strategy. That pledge is now being made good and the consultation has been launched.

If you would like to make your views known you can use any of the following options:

- Log on to www.newdealforcarers.org and add your comments to the Tree of Ideas. (For those of you a little worried about technology it really is a very straight-forward site - even Ailsa can use it!)
- If you do not have a computer but want to send your own comments call in to your local library or community buildings with community computing facilities.
- Contact Sunderland Carers' Centre and tell us your comments and ideas
- Make your views known at the carers' groups which you go to.
- Come to a "Drop In" consultation event at Sunderland Carers' Centre on Tuesday 4th September anytime between 10.30am and 3pm.

Please do make use of this opportunity to let government know what would help you as carers. You may be concerned about Carers Allowance or you may want to suggest ways of making local services more responsive to your needs. The first National Carers Strategy really did begin to make a difference for carers. Please help ensure that the revision leads to further progress.

Star Volunteer

Congratulations to Carers' Centre volunteer, Vera Loraine, who won a Volunteer Award for Commitment at this year's Volunteers Awards. The Mayor of Sunderland, Councillor Leslie Scott presented Vera with her award at the 'Celebrating Volunteering in the City of Sunderland' Event held at the Seaburn Marriot Hotel during Volunteers Week.

Bacon Butties for Better Health

Sunderland Teaching Primary Care Trust hosted a breakfast meeting during Carers Week to examine ways in which primary care services, particularly GP practices, could make life easier for carers. Ideas about health checks for carers, sign-posting to other services and ways in which carers could help GPs and practice staff offer a better service were all discussed.

Family doctors are the only service which all carers are likely to have contact with so they are a vital link in telling carers about what else is available to help them. But doctors need carers to tell them about their caring responsibilities and to suggest how their visits can be made easier e.g. by requesting a first appointment so that the cared-for person is not distressed by a long wait in a busy waiting room or a double appointment to have time to talk in detail.

The meeting ended with some firm plans for closer working between some practices and Sunderland Carers' Centre, between practices and Adult Social Care and ways in which the primary care trust could support practices to help carers. Please watch your GPs notice boards and the Carers' Centre Newsletter for further developments.

It was a very positive meeting with lots of good ideas - and the bacon butties were really tastie!

Carers' Dancing Display

Carers and members of staff (pictured) put on an excellent display of Irish Set Dancing (traditional Irish couples dancing) at the party in the park during Carers Week. The group of 8 had never done any set dancing before but learned to perform 3 dances on stage after just 5 weekly sessions of a couple of hours per week. The group really enjoyed the practices and the performing despite some initial nerves and really did their teacher (me!) credit in the commitment and good humour they put into it.

Several members of the group would like to carry on with their dancing and if there is sufficient interest I would be happy to start a class in the autumn if premises can be arranged. You do not have to have any special skills, just enjoy the music and be prepared for a bit of fun. If you are interested please get in touch with the Carers' Centre and ask for Eibhlin Inglesby and I'll keep you informed of progress on the class.

Eibhlin Inglesby



Pictured (from left to right): Kevin Devine, Beth Wayman, Rose Scrafton, Eibhlin Inglesby, Vera Loraine, Pat Hewitt, Audrey Watt, Vicky Donnigan and Emma Kirtley.

Benefits advice

Sunderland City Council Welfare Rights Service provides free advice to carers about benefits for them and the people they care for at Sunderland Carers' Centre every Wednesday afternoon. Help is also given to fill in claim forms. To make an appointment please contact the Carers' Centre on 567 3232.