



# Carers Newsletter

Winter 2014

## A walk through the hills

Back in October a few carers took on the hills of Rothbury and had a fantastic time! Mary said, “The whole day was an experience I never expected and the sense of achievement was overwhelming. There’s a lot we can achieve with the right back up...and the expertise of our friends from Mobex and your good self made an escape from everyday trials and tribulations which we all recognise.” Another carer said, “It’s been a great way to get



out in the countryside for a great bit of exercise whilst meeting new friends.” - David  
**Read page 5 for details of our next active break for carers.**

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## **Exciting news! Carers Centre Newcastle is moving to new premises in Spring 2014!**

After consultation with carers and careful consideration we are moving to a larger building on Shields Road in Byker; just in time for the Carers Centre's 10th Anniversary.

We have outgrown our current premises at Saville Place; our new location gives us space to offer more services and to continue to grow in the future. This new and exciting opportunity

enables us to provide fit for purpose and cost effective services for carers.

There are good transport links to the new location with bus stops and the Byker Metro right outside our door and plenty of accessible parking. We will send you more information in the coming months so keep an eye out!

See pg 14 for information on how you can help!

### **Carer's benefits information session**

We have organised an informal session to help carers understand some of the welfare benefits available, including Carers Allowance, means tested benefits and Council Tax discounts.

Please note this is not an advice session, but a chance

to find out generally what benefits are available, how to claim and who can help you. Contact the Centre to book on.

**When?** Wednesday 26th February 10.30am to 12 noon

**Where?** Carers Centre

**Cost?** Free

## Working carers

We know that carers who are also in employment often find it hard to get along to things at the Carers Centre.

Did you know that you can have an out of hours appointment with a Carer Support Worker? You may need information, advice, or

support about your caring role, or you may want to find out about your rights to work as a carer. Just ring the Carers Centre or email us and ask for an appointment - all contact details are at the back of the newsletter.

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## Do you care for someone with dementia?

Do you care for someone with dementia?

Would you like to meet others in the same position?

Then come along to our support/information sessions. These will include information about looking after someone with dementia, about services that support carers, making sure you look after yourself and things that will help you in your caring role. The sessions will be very informal - tea and biscuits provided.

Choose either:

- 4 sessions in **Blakelaw** - Wednesdays - 5th March, 12th March, 19th March, 26th March 10.30am-12.00 at **Blakelaw** Neighbourhood Centre, Binswood Avenue, NE3 3PN
- 4 sessions in **Walker** - Mondays - 24th Feb, 3rd March, 10th March, 17th March 1.30pm - 3.00pm at St Anthony of Padua Community Centre, Welbeck Road, NE6 3BT

## Shepherds Dene 2014

We are organising two breaks for carers to Shepherds Dene, Riding Mill.

This is a chance for carers to take a break with other people. It's an opportunity to relax, reenergise and socialise.

Much like previous breaks we will have organised activities for carers: walks around the grounds and the opportunity to visit the surrounding area. You're free to join in on the activities or simply relax with a book by the fire.

The dates for the 2014 breaks are:

- **Mon 28th–Wed 30th  
April**
- **Wed 10th–Friday 12th  
Dec**

We are currently taking names from interested people. People who have not attended previously will be given priority.

**Cost £120.00 per person**

To give an expression of interest, ring the Centre on 0191 260 3030.



## Archery and indoor climbing for carers

We have organised two activity sessions for carers to try their hand at indoor climbing and archery at Newburn Activity Centre. It's a great opportunity to get active and meet other people. Both sessions are suitable for beginners.

**Indoor climbing** (including lunch and transport)

**Wednesday 12th March**, 10.15am meet at Carers Centre Newcastle (to be at Newburn Activity Centre for an 11.00am start). Return to Carers Centre Newcastle by 1.30pm.

Cost - £5.00

This will be supported by an expert coach. Sessions cover safety harness application, a warm up and climbing technique instruction.

Please wear casual loose fitting clothes and trainers.

**Archery** (including lunch and transport)

**Wednesday 14th May**, 10.15am meet at Carers Centre Newcastle (to be at Newburn Activity Centre for an 11:00am start). Return to Carers Centre Newcastle by 1.30pm.

Cost - £5.00

This will be supervised, with instruction and may be outside if the weather is agreeable.

Please wear a long sleeve top.

**Please note: to secure a place we ask that you pay for any activities at least one week prior to it taking place.**

If you are interested in these activities, please ring the Carers Centre on 0191 2603030 to book a place.

## Welcome to Complementary Therapy Week

Do you look after someone with dementia?

Haven't tried our pamper sessions yet?

The week of 24th-28th February is our **Welcome to Complementary Therapy Week** for carers of someone with dementia. If you need a break and would like an aromatherapy massage, an Indian head massage or reflexology, then this is for you. The therapist will start with a consultation about your health and any medication you take, to ensure the therapy is right for you. Then you'll have a relaxing massage. Please note there is a charge of £5.



Just give us a ring to make an appointment on 0191 2603030.

If you can't make that week, then we'll do our best to find you an appointment at another time.



## Carers Opportunities Fund

The Carers Opportunities Fund gives out grants of up to £250 to adult carers in Newcastle who care for an adult living in Newcastle.

You can apply for funding to help you have a break, to buy household items, or to pay for leisure activities, skills, or learning, including driving lessons.

If you are wondering whether to apply for the Carers Opportunities Fund,

or you want to apply but need more information, then this informal session is for you.

**When?** Wednesday 12th February 10.30-12.30

**Where?** Carers Centre.

Please let us know if you're coming - ring the Carers Centre on 0191 2603030.

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## Confidence building

**Would you like to feel more confident?**

give you some tips on being more assertive.

**Do you sometimes feel you need to be more assertive?**

Come along and give it a try.

Lots of carers feel the same way, and that's why we run these 2 relaxed and fun sessions. The sessions will help you think about ways to build up your confidence, and

Monday 3rd March and Monday 10th March 1.00pm - 3.00pm at the Carers Centre

For more information or to book a place please ring the centre on 0191 260 3030

## Farewell to Wendy

By the time you read this I'll be relaxing in sunny Lanzarote!

It's been a difficult decision leaving the Carers Centre as I've so enjoyed working with such supportive and fun colleagues and meeting so many interesting carers. Listening to your stories and being involved in your lives in a small way has been a privilege and I have been constantly amazed by the dedication and resilience of the carers I have had the pleasure of meeting. I'm going to be spending more of my time with my family and doing more exercise! However, you may see me now and then as I will still be involved in a voluntary capacity with our carers breaks.

I wish Carers Centre Newcastle and all of those involved with it much success in the future and will watch with interest all the new developments planned for 2014.

Wendy has been involved with the Carers Centre since its inception and will be greatly missed by staff and carers alike.



Opening of Carers Centre Newcastle in 2004



## Making a difference

“It happens again and again...” how often does someone say that to us at The Carers Centre?

First and foremost we believe it's important to support individual carers, but if we can change things for the better by making other services and organisations more aware of carers needs, then maybe things will be easier for all carers in the future.

For this reason, we attend meetings with G.P.'s, the City Council, The Hospitals Trust, Mental Health services and many others to talk about how important it is to think about carers and make sure they get information, advice and support from professionals.

Does it work?

Well...

We suggested changes to the registration form for GP practices in the West of the city, and now they are identifying many more carers so they can get the information and support they need.

We wrote information for a Top Tips leaflet for hospital staff to encourage them to involve carers.

We supported carers to be involved in a consultation about plans to build new specialist assisted living housing for people with dementia, and this ensured the needs of the carer were considered too.

These are just a few examples. If you would like more information or would like to be involved in this kind of work, please ring Rachel Parsons at the centre on 0191 2603030

## Are you paying too much for Council Tax?

As a carer you could qualify for a discount on your Council Tax bill.

Your Council Tax bill assumes there to be 2 adults in the household. Some people can be ignored when counting the number of people in the house. If this leaves one person or less, your Council Tax bill could be reduced.

To get a Carer Discount you need to satisfy the following criteria:

- You have to be living in the same home as the person who you provide care for
- You have to provide at least 35 hours a week of care to a person who is entitled to receive one of the following: any rate of Attendance Allowance; the middle or highest rate of the care component of Disability Living Allowance; any rate of the daily living activity component of Personal Independence Payment; an increase in

Constant Attendance Allowance

- The person receiving care is not your spouse or partner or a child of yours who is under the age of 18.

You don't have to be claiming Carers Allowance to qualify for this discount, and your income and savings will not affect your eligibility.

If there is more than one carer in the property, you can both be disregarded for Council Tax purposes, as long as you both meet the conditions.

For more information about other ways to reduce your Council Tax bill, or to apply for the Carer Discount contact Newcastle City Council on [www.newcastle.gov.uk](http://www.newcastle.gov.uk) and follow the links to Council Tax, or telephone 0191 2787878.

See also the Carers UK website: [www.carersuk.org](http://www.carersuk.org) for more information about help with Council Tax.

## **Your experiences of dementia services need to be heard**

The Care Quality Commission (CQC) would like to hear about your experiences of dementia services in Newcastle.

**The Care Quality Commission (CQC) will be inspecting Dementia Services in the Newcastle local authority area before the end of February 2014.**

**They need to hear from anyone who has used dementia services in the past year, family members or carers.**

### **WAYS TO SHARE YOUR EXPERIENCES:**

1. **COMPLETE THE QUICK ON-LINE SURVEY** by 23RD February 2014. Simply visit the survey link and answer the questions:

**<https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/X65G2MH>**

2. **RING THE CQC HELPLINE ON 03000 616161** between 8.30-5pm, Monday to Friday and ask to talk to someone about the inspection. Calls will be charged at the standard rate.

3. **WRITE TO CQC** by letter, addressed to CQC National Customer Service Centre, Citygate, Gallowgate, Newcastle, NE1 4PA.

4. **SEND AN EMAIL TO CQC**, addressed to [enquiries@cqc.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@cqc.org.uk).

## Carers Christmas Party 3rd December 2013

Our annual Carers Christmas Party went off again without a hitch! Carers enjoyed a 3 course meal and raffle at the Assembly Rooms. A serenade of Christmas carols were performed by the Carers Chorus and then The Old Codgers band entertained everyone.





**Carers  
Chorus**



**The  
Old Codgers**

**Are your details up to date?**

Please let us know of any changes to your contact details or caring role.

Email us on: [info@carerscentrenewcastle.org.uk](mailto:info@carerscentrenewcastle.org.uk)  
or ring 0191 2603030 and ask to speak to Lynn, Sally or Sharon

## Could you help towards the new Carers Centre?

It's going to take a lot of resources to make our new Carers Centre in Byker the best it can possibly be. We want to make it the hub of improved services for carers across the city for years to come.

We're making alterations to the building to create additional rooms for activities, events, carer support and fully equipping the new pamper room. We hope to provide a space where carers can use computers. Generous support from carers and former carers has helped us make a good start. Since announcing the move in December we're already at £8,000, but more support is needed.

### Could you help us?

There are many ways you could make a donation, and whether you can spare a few pennies or a few pounds it all adds up and will make a real difference.

Here are some ways you could help:

- Text **MOVE14** followed by the amount you'd like to give to **70070**, e.g. **MOVE14 £5**
- Donate your spare change next time you're at the centre
- Donate online at: <https://mydonate.bt.com/charities/carerscentrenewcastle>
- Send a cheque payable to 'Carers Centre Newcastle'. If you're a UK tax payer remember you can gift aid your donation to make it go even further, ask us for a gift aid form.

### Could you do more?

Perhaps you'd like to do a sponsored event or fundraiser? Does your workplace support local charities? Maybe you've a wonderful idea we haven't thought of? If you'd like to fundraise on our behalf please get in touch with Rachel on 0191 260 3030.

## GP Practices are Calling all Carers

It is not always easy being a carer; often your needs and desires come second to the person you care for. As a carer it is really important that your voice is heard, and that your needs are catered for. This is especially so when it comes to your own health and wellbeing.

One way to do this is to make good use of your local GP and let them know that you are a carer. But did you know that you could play a role in developing your GP practice by being a member of the practice's Patient Participation Group? Most practices have either a virtual group (communication via email) or a face-to-face group, which meets to discuss issues affecting the practice

and wider health issues.

Please do consider becoming a member of your practice's Patient Participation Group. Contact your surgery's Practice Manager for more details.



## Dates for your diary

What?	When?	Where?	Cost?	To Book
<b>Groups and Activities</b>				
<b>Carers Coffee Morning</b> With occasional speakers, open to carers and former carers	Mondays - 10:30-12noon  13 Jan  10 Feb  10 March	St James United Reformed Church, Northumberland Road	Donations welcome	Just turn up on the day
<b>Shepherd's Dene</b> —A two nights stay. A relaxing break for carers.	Mon 28—Wed 30th April & Wed 10-Fri 12 Dec	Shepherd's Dene Retreat Centre	£120 per person	Contact the Carers Centre
<b>Relaxation for Carers</b> Elements of tai chi, yoga, meditation and voice work make up the classes	Fridays each week  1:00-3:00 pm	Brunswick Methodist Church hall (behind Fenwicks)	Free for carers on means tested benefits. Others—£40 for 10 wks.	Just turn up on the day



What?	When?	Where?	Cost?	To Book
<b>Groups and Activities (continued)</b>				
<b>Stroke Group</b>	Wednesdays - 2.00-4.00pm 8 Jan, 5 Feb, 5 March, 2 April	Carers Centre Newcastle	Free	Community Stroke Team on 219 4710
<b>Alzheimer's Support Group for Carers</b>	Group meets on Thursdays once a month.	Carers Centre Newcastle	Free	Contact Gill on 274 2727
<b>Support &amp; Info Group for carers of people with dementia</b>	<b>Blakelaw:</b> Wednesdays 5, 12, 19, 26th March 10.30am- 12noon  <b>Walker:</b> Mondays 24 February, 3, 10, 17 March 1.30-3.00pm	Blakelaw Neighbour- hood Centre, Binswood Ave  St Anthony of Padua Community Centre, Welbeck Road	Free	Contact the Carers Centre
<b>Welcome to Comple- mentary Therapy Week</b>	24th–28th February  (see pg 6)	Carers Centre Newcastle	£5 per session	Contact the Carers Centre

**‘Dates for your diary’ is continued  
on the next page.**

What?	When?	Where?	Cost?	To Book
<b>Training and support to care</b>				
<b>Carer's benefits information session</b>	Wednesday 26 Feb 10.30am- 12noon	Carers Centre Newcastle	Free	Contact the Carers Centre
<b>Carers Opportunities Fund Information Session</b>	Wednesday 12 Feb 10.30am- 12.30pm	Carers Centre Newcastle	Free	Contact the Carers Centre
<b>Confidence Building 2 day course</b>	Mondays 3rd & 10th March 1.00–3.00pm	Carers Centre Newcastle	Free	Contact the Carers Centre

If you need anything to be able to attend any of the training or activities e.g. an interpreter, please let us know when you book. Contact the Carers Centre on **0191 260 3030**

If you have any difficulties reading the Carers Newsletter, please let us know and we will make arrangements to help you with this.

## **Carers Centre Newcastle successfully awarded two top quality marks!**

We have recently successfully achieved the Carers Trust and the PQASSO Level 1 Quality Awards.

Over the course of 2012-2013 we worked hard within the organisation to make sure we were achieving all of the indicators required to meet the quality standards.

Given the recent changes in our organisation to become independent we had a lot in place already, but still there was work to be done! Staff within the Centre were all on board and carers were supportive of any changes that were implemented.

The assessment process looked at the organisation from all angles - from governance to staff morale to ensuring we were meeting carers needs. Working towards these quality awards has helped us to become a more efficient and effective organisation.

For more information on the Charities Evaluation Service and PQASSO follow this link: <http://www.ces-vol.org.uk/PQASSO>



If you have any comments about the Carers Newsletter or other services provided by Carers Centre Newcastle, or you wish to make a complaint, please contact us.

**Carers Centre Newcastle**

**6 Saville Place**

**Newcastle upon Tyne**

**NE1 8DQ**

**e: [info@carerscentrenewcastle.org.uk](mailto:info@carerscentrenewcastle.org.uk)**

**[www.carerscentrenewcastle.org.uk](http://www.carerscentrenewcastle.org.uk)**

**Follow us on Twitter: @CarersNewcastle**

**t: 0191 260 3030**

**f: 0191 230 1500**



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