

Carers Newsletter

The bi-annual Newsletter for Carers in Merthyr Tydfil

Carers Development Officer

Hello, my name is Elaine James and I am the new Carers Development Officer at Voluntary Action Merthyr Tydfil, I have taken over from Sonia Lloyd-Williams.

I have been in post since January this year and I have met with most of the Carers groups in Merthyr Tydfil but, I know there are many carers I have yet to meet.

I work part-time, Monday to Wednesday morning, and if you would like to contact me on those days my telephone number is **01685 353907** or you can email me at elaine.james@vamt.net

I look forward to meeting more of you in the coming months.



Merthyr Young Carers

A group of Merthyr Young Carers took part in a voyage of discovery during the Easter Holidays, thanks to a Countryside Council for Wales grant made available to them by Rolf Brown, Countryside Officer for Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council.



They were taken from Cardiff Bay on the "Lewis Alexander", through the barrage locks, to Flat Holm Island for a day of ecological taster activities and relaxation.

This was genuinely a special opportunity for these 15 young people aged between 8 and 16 years old, for many of whom the boat trip itself was a new experience.

The island is a wildlife reserve and has a SSSI (Site of Special Scientific Interest) designation for its bird colonies, plant life and geology so there was something there to impress most of our group, whether it was rocks decorated with fossils, tame wild birds and rabbits or just the absolute tranquillity of the place.

The day was spent exploring, enjoying the sun or skimming stones on the beach; for each one of these Young Carers it was a much needed, well deserved break from their caring responsibilities which allowed them to spend time with others in similar situations and broaden their horizons with new experiences.

Everybody took home a souvenir of the day – shells, a shining pebble or even a bag full of rabbit skills.

Hopefully they won't forget this special place and remember that spending time in natural environments can be fun, relaxing, therapeutic and free.



New Walking Groups



Communities First Town & Park Prams In The Park,

organised walks around Cyfarthfa Park for mums, dads, grandparents and carers, every Wednesday morning, meet outside Cyfarthfa Castle at 11am.



Communities First Town & Park Power Walking,

walk to get fit! Every Wednesday, 6pm-7pm and every Thursday morning 10am-11am. Meet outside Cyfarthfa Castle.

Walking is one of the cheapest, easiest and most effective ways to get in shape and Power walking can burn more calories than jogging at the same pace.

For further information on either of the walks please ring
Clair on 01685 353945.

Alzheimer's Society

New arrangements within the Alzheimer's Society

From April 1st 2010 the Alzheimer's Society was reorganised on a national basis, bringing together existing branch structures into larger planning and service delivery units.

There are 6 localities in Wales aligned to Local Health Boards (Powys not yet established) and which are run by a locality staff team This replaces the individual Alzheimer's Society branches and their committees. There will be a new Locality structure and team for Merthyr Tydfil and RCT Local Authority areas, to be known as the Cwm Taff Locality

Helen Abberley has been appointed as the Manager for Support Services and Development for Cwm Taff Locality. The new team is coming together and we are already very enthusiastic and excited about the possibilities ahead for improving and increasing further the services and support for those with dementia and their carers.



Helen Abberley

Service and Development Manager Cwm Taff

The Alzheimer's Society in Merthyr Tydfil is delighted that the Mayor, Councillor Clive Tovey has chosen the society as his Charity of the Year; and thank him for this decision.



The Society is still providing outreach support services at home to those with dementia and their carers in the local area. In addition we are providing a range of information and advice, carers support groups, social outings and monthly "Forgetful Friends" evenings with a relevant speaker, buffet and entertainment.

This year is an exciting time for us as we are starting a befriending service for individuals with dementia, which will also be giving the carers a break. We are now recruiting volunteers to grow this service and would be pleased to discuss this with any interested readers.

Our funding is only guaranteed for this year which means that the Mayor's Appeal is very important in keeping our services going for a growing number of clients.

The Alzheimer's Society website can give more information about these changes by looking at **www.**

alzheimers.org.uk/fitforthefuture.

If you would like to contact Helen Abberley for any more information about the services available and changes in the Merthyr area, email her on **Merthyr@Alzheimers.co.uk** or ring **01685 353919**



Jobcentre Plus

**Do you look after someone?
Are you thinking about starting
or returning to paid work but are
put off because you**

- Haven't worked for a long time
- Don't have any up to date skills
- Don't want to lose your financial security
- Don't think a job would be flexible enough
- Are concerned about the impact on the person you care for?
- Don't know who to talk to about help and training?

Jobcentre Plus offers a range of help for carers wanting to start or return to work. This includes confidence building, work related training, training expenses, job search, CVs, voluntary work, work trials, part time work, self employment, in work financial help and in work support. Additionally, **Jobcentre Plus** can pay for replacement care to enable a carer to take part in our approved activities.

Jobcentre Plus has trained personal advisers who understand carers' needs and can help you explore suitable options. This includes a 'better off in work' calculation which shows how you can be better off working and what in - work benefits could be payable.

If you're over 18, a carer and working less than 16 hours (and not already receiving work related help and support from Jobcentre Plus) you may be eligible for help through the 'Work Focused Support for Carers' programme

Call **Jobcentre Plus** on 0845 604 3719 for an appointment with a local Jobcentre Plus adviser. From BT landlines 0845 are charged at local rate. Charges from mobiles and other network providers may vary.

'Work Focused Support for Carers' is voluntary, there's no obligation to participate in any further activities and it won't affect any benefits you might be receiving. You can find out more about **Jobcentre Plus** services at www.directgov.co.uk.

If you'd like to know more about how **Jobcentre Plus** helps carers wanting to start or return to work, phone

Erin Tyler
Care Partnership Manager,
on **01443 484762**
or email
erin.tyler@jobcentreplus.gsi.gov.uk.



TASTER DAYS

**Cefn Coed
Community Centre**
Date: Friday 11th June, 2010
Time: 11am - 9pm

**Galon Uchaf
Residents Centre**
Date: Friday 18th June, 2010
Time: 11am - 1pm

**Troedyrhiw, The Willows
Boys & Girls Club**
Date: Friday 2nd July, 2010
Time: 11am - 1pm

Dowlais, All Saints Church
Date: Friday 2nd July, 2010
Time: 11am - 1pm

Contact: **Caroline Jones**
The EPP Co-Ordinator
Tel: 01685 353911

Working with GP's in Cwm Taf area to help you improve your quality of life!

This is a FREE NHS Course that runs all over Wales

Call in for a coffee and get a flavour of what it's all about.

Learn to Manage Your Health Your way

jobcentreplus

Part of the Department
for Work and Pensions

Pensions for unpaid carers

Unpaid carers looking after loved ones can, for the first time, build up a full basic State Pension based entirely on National Insurance credits.

The Department for Work and Pensions and Carers UK are calling on 7,041 carers in Merthyr Tydfil to find out if they could benefit.

April 2010 saw the introduction of the new Carer's Credit that will count towards their basic and second State Pension.

If you are caring for someone for 20 hours or more a week, find out if you qualify by visiting www.direct.gov.uk/pensions or by calling **0800 678 1132**

Hafal Merthyr

Hafal Merthyr **Road to Recovery Campaign Day**

This year Hafal Merthyr's summer campaign is Road to Recovery.

The Road to Recovery campaign will see Hafal's VW microbus travelling through Wales this summer with 22 county events to spread the word about recovery from serious mental illness.



As well as getting a number of important messages across to the people of Wales the campaign will also provide fun summer activities.

Visitors will also be able to sign up to a special Road to Recovery postcard containing a message on key campaigning issues.

The microbus features an interactive information suite with touch-screen PCs and high-speed internet connection.

The campaign aims to spread the word about mental health recovery.

Recovery means regaining mental health and achieving a better quality of life.

Hafal's clients – people with serious mental illness and their carers – want the public to know that recovery should be the expectation for all people in Wales with a serious mental illness, and that all mental health services should have this recovery ambition for their clients.

Hafal Merthyr Tydfil helps people with severe mental illness and their families to work towards recovery.

All our services are underpinned by Hafal's Recovery Programme which empowers clients and families to take control of their lives and achieve recovery.

Hafal's services in Merthyr Tydfil for clients and families include:

- Employment /Training
- Family Support Service
- Breaks for Carers
- General Support
 - o Information
 - o Advice
 - o Groups
 - o Befriending
 - o A voice in planning

Hafal's VW microbus will stop at Hafal Merthyr on Thursday 26th August between 11:00 – 3:00.

Refreshments and a BBQ will be provided along with lots of fun & games.

The theme of the day is 1970s/Woodstock and fancy dress is optional.

Please ring **(01685)373322** to book a place and to tell us of any diet requirements that you may have.

Legal Advice for Carers

Many people are often surprised when a parent or loved one is suddenly diagnosed with early stage dementia. It can be emotional and upsetting to the person and the family who do not know what the future holds.

It is at this early stage, when the planning and advice is most important, all the legal papers which will help the family and carers in the future should mum or dad lose their ability to handle their own affairs or make decisions.

The Mental Capacity Act that came into force in 2007 means that a next of kin has no legal rights to make those decisions or handle finances without being appointed either under Lasting Power of Attorney or if the person is unable to make such a document because of incapacity, then by appointment of the Court of Protection for Deputyship.

Evans Bell Solicitors was established to bring together two solicitors; Meinir Evans and Ann Marie Bell to create a firm joining together the legal world of Older Person's Law and Commercial Litigation.

The firm, based in Pontypridd, is expanding upon their expertise to create a personal tailor-made client service to both the individual and the larger client.

The firm offers advice on Court of Protection and specialist training in respect of carer's issues and long term planning, in particular to people over the age of 50, planning in terms of retirement and those diagnosed with long term illnesses that may be looking for that specialist advice.

Taking legal advice about these matters can be complex and the Solicitors for the Elderly National Organisation for England and Wales recommend using a specialist Solicitor who will also be qualified to advise on Nursing Care fees and contracts and making decisions as an Attorney or Deputy.

Meinir Evans is the Chair of SFE South Wales and is able to provide this specialist advice to individuals and carers groups and is available to provide talks in the community.

You can contact Meinir for further information and advice on **01443 409241** or email **evansbell@gogglemail.com**

"WHO CARES"

We do at the Merthyr Tydfil Carers Branch, where we hold our monthly meetings on the third Thursday of each month, ex-carers and existing carers can meet to discuss their problems and seek advice.

We also plan, various events such as trips, social evenings and training lectures for all of our members.

So why not come along and enjoy our friendly company and have a break from your stressful caring role.

There is no membership fee and all carers will be most welcome.

Our contact details are as follows:

EXECUTIVE MEMBERS OF THE BOARD

Chairman

Mr Harry Harbord
01685 385887

Vice Chairman

Mr Roland Fellows
01685 721411

Hon Secretary

Mrs Mal Difford
01685 721680

Treasurer

Mrs Brenda Astley
01685 721547

Executive Member

Mrs Sylvia Singer
01685 359533

Executive Member

Mrs Pam Price
01685 721833

Executive Member

Mr David Osbourne
01685 812204

Telecare Technology

The Merthyr Tydfil Demonstration Equipment Centre (MIDEC) was officially opened in December 2009.

MIDEC is based in Cefn Coed and is aimed at vulnerable individuals including those who are elderly, frail, prone to falls, have a physical or learning disability, epilepsy or dementia as well as the chronically sick, both young and old.

The centre consists of a mock house where all the latest aids, adaptations and Telecare technology are on display and can be demonstrated to individuals or groups.

Telecare is a 24/7 service which is linked to a lifeline system of which there is a charge of £2.00 per week and, for installation, the property will require a BT landline.

If you would like to make an appointment to visit the centre or, if you require an information pack or a DVD, please contact

Sonia Lloyd-Williams on
01685 727032
or email
sonia.lloydwilliams@merthyr.gov.uk

The Stroke Association

The Stroke Association is the only charity solely concerned with preventing stroke and ensuring that everyone touched by stroke across the UK gets the help they need. We recognise that **caring** for someone with stroke can be a **solitary experience** - and a **draining** one - so our three local services are specifically designed with carers in mind.

FAMILY AND CARER SUPPORT

Family and Carer Support is a visiting service that gives practical **information** and emotional **support** to the **families** and **carers** of people who have had a stroke. We help families **prepare** for the **changes** that inevitably happen because of a stroke and make sure they are able to **cope** - both **physically** and **emotionally**. The service can also help people who live alone.

For more information please contact **Paul Beckerton** on **01685 375 245**.

DAY SERVICE

The Stroke Association's Day Service is a service for people under the age of 65 who have had a stroke.

It aims to provide people aged between 18-65 with a meaningful day away from home, helping them to regain their former skills and learn new ones, which builds their **confidence** and encourages **independence**.

Day Services offer regular weekly **meetings** and a range of **activities**, including social events and outings.

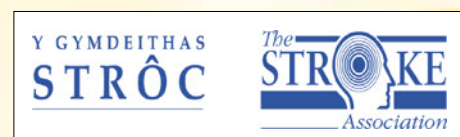
For more information please contact **Margaret Turner** on **02920 534 422**.

COMMUNICATION SUPPORT

It is very common for a stroke to affect a person's communication skills. Losing the ability to speak or understand what people are saying is frustrating for people who have had a stroke and their families.

Our **Communication Support Service** works with people who have had a stroke and their families on aspects of communication. The aim is to build up **confidence** and achieve the best possible level of **recovery** and **independence** in **language skills**.

For more information please contact **Stephanie Martin** on **01443 742 648**.



A Course For Carers

Looking After Me A Course for Carers

What's it all about?

The Course is about you making some time to look after your own health needs. Make a difference to the quality of your life. The Course is FREE and runs over six weeks - just 2½ hours every week.

Over the 6 weeks we look at

- *Exercise & healthy eating*
- *Relaxation techniques*
- *Coping with tiredness & loneliness*
- *Planning for the future & communication skills*

One of the NHS led Expert Patients group of free courses, for adults who care for someone living with a long term health condition or disability. Courses are run in confidence and no information is shared with any organisations.

The next Carers course's will be held at:

**13th September - 18th September 2010
Pentrebach**

**22nd October 2010 – 26th November 2010
St Tydfils Hospital**

Contact:

Caroline Jones: 01685 353911/900

to book a place on a course or call in at our Taster Days for Expert Patients Programme to get a flavour of what its all about.

Carers get new rights in Wales

After much campaigning by carers and lobbying by Carers Wales, the first ever Welsh law to support carers has been announced.

The aim of the new law will be to ensure carers get the information they need from the NHS and other public bodies and that they are consulted about the provision of services. The main features of the new law (Measure) are to:

- Place a duty on the NHS and local authorities in Wales to work jointly and in consultation with carers and their representatives to prepare and publish a strategy setting out how they will work together to provide information and advice to carers
- Ensure that carers are consulted about the provision of services to carers or the person they care for
- Place a requirement on the NHS and local authorities to implement the strategy and to provide information and advice to carers free of charge and
- Designate an NHS organisation as the lead authority for overseeing and publication of each strategy.

The Measure also applies to directly provided services or contracted out services, such as GP services contracted to Health Boards.

Gwenda Thomas, Deputy Minister for Social Services said "This Measure is the first time we have used the new powers available under the Carers Legislative Competence Order (LCO) and it addresses some of the most important concerns that carers and carers organisations have shared with me over the years".



Walking with Angels

*Walking with Angels
Every single day
All these miracles
As we pass our way
Let's get this right
They are hid from our sight
So near yet so far
Passengers in the car
or on the Stagecoach bus
Mingling unnoticed with us
How do we
Not see
Not know
Shining stars of the show?
Here's the joke
They are ordinary folk
Just doing the everyday decency
Not noticed in their humility
We all take turn
Angels' wings to earn
Sometimes it's him the helper
Sometimes it's her the carer
Other times maybe
It could even be me
When we pick up the hurt
Crawling in the dirt
Give the older and colder
The warm shoulder
Then God says "no strings
Time to try
Out our wings
Now fly."*

Gary Rowlands

