

Carers Supplement

issue 7. May 2004

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This newsletter is also available on our web-site on www.pavs.org/carers.

If you would like further copies feel free to download from the web-site.

If you are able to receive this newsletter by e-mail rather than by post, please contact Sally Davies on sally.davies@pavs.org.uk to ask for future copies to be sent in this way. The deadline for articles for the next newsletter is Friday July 30th.

Carers Week - June 14th - 21st 2004

Health is the theme this year and there are many events taking place across Pembrokeshire. For events organised by Carers Outreach, contact them on 01437 767762.

Some of the aims of Carers Week are

- to encourage practices which improve carers' health and well-being
- to support carers to take action which positively enhances their own health

Pembrokeshire County Council's Leisure Department supports these aims and has kindly agreed to allow carers to have free access to swimming pools and gyms throughout the county for the whole of Carers Week. Vouchers for this can be obtained from Sally Davies, Carers Development Worker at PAVS.

A Carers Day is being held at the Plas Hyfryd Hotel in Narberth on June 17th. In the morning there will be a chance to get some feedback from Pembrokeshire County Council and the Local Health Board regarding respite issues, as well as hearing about the new Carers (Equal Opportunities) Bill. There will be a Carers Forum – a chance for you to influence developments for carers in Pembrokeshire.

In the afternoon, carers' health issues can be addressed in practice with plenty of complimentary therapists on hand to help you unwind - with a massage, yoga session or simple relaxation. You can even have a go at bellydancing, which is good for backs and general suppleness. Or you may want to use the time in the afternoon to get some information or advice on support and services that are available to you. It may be a problem with your benefits, help with a carer's assessment or information about local befriending projects.

If you haven't been to a Carers Day before, come along, meet other carers and find out about available support in Pembrokeshire. Help is provided for transport and replacement care to ensure you get a break from caring - You never know, you may even have some fun while you're there!

Carers Grant

The Carers Grant 2004-5 for Pembrokeshire of £226,468 has now been allocated.

17 Carers Support Groups were allocated up to £800 each to help their groups become more active and offer more support to their members.

Pembrokeshire is the only local authority in Wales to allocate funding directly to their carers support groups. One of the carers said

‘The money has really helped our group. We have been able to go on more outings and group members have really gelled together’

The Carers Grant has also been allocated to 17 voluntary organisations, to provide a range of support to carers. As a result of extra funding, carers can now benefit from additional befriending schemes at MIND and Age Concern, and more children with disabilities can receive extra places in Clybiau Plant Cymru Kids’ Club, which provides after school activities for children.

In addition to adult carers, there is also more support for young carers either through the Young Carers Project at Carers Outreach or activities organised by the Sibling Group. Social Care and Housing have also been allocated a small amount of money to pilot additional services for young carers.

If you would like more information about the Carers Grant funding or how to access any of the extra services provided, please contact Sally Davies on 01437 771196.

Carers Bill one step nearer

Improved legal rights for carers came one step closer on Friday 14 May, with the smooth passage of the Carers (Equal Opportunities) Bill through its Report Stage and Third Reading – the final stages in the House of Commons.

The Bill aims to give anyone providing regular and substantial care to a sick or disabled person, new rights to information and greater choices and opportunities for work, education and life-long learning.

Introduced by Dr Hywel Francis, MP for Aberavon, the Private Member’s Bill has been named ‘Sam’s Bill’ in memory of Dr Francis’ disabled son whom he and his wife, Mair, cared for until he died at the age of 16 – seven years ago this month.

“This is wonderful news and the culmination of months of hard work with support from organisations across the country” says Imelda Redmond, Chief Executive of Carers UK, the principal charity behind the Bill. “We must now focus our energies on maintaining our campaign for equal rights for carers to help the Bill through its final stages.”

Dr Hywel Francis MP, Bill sponsor said, “This is such a tremendous day for me to have got this far with something which is personally so close to my heart and which could make a real difference for carers. I have been supported all the way through by carers, carers’ organisations, businesses like British Gas and BT, MPs from all parties, life-long learning organisations and trade unions – all of which has made a difference. We need their continued support to get this Bill through.”

The Bill will now be passed to the House of Lords to be considered in June. If successful it will receive Royal Assent in July.

Carers Support Groups

Carers Support Groups

There are now 20 Carers Support Groups meeting in Pembrokeshire. Some of the groups are for carers from the whole county, some are for carers of people with specific disabilities and some are for carers in a particular geographical area.

Most of the groups meet on a monthly basis and give parents/carers an opportunity to meet with other people who are in similar circumstances and can share ideas and experiences.

Some of the support groups are detailed below:-

All Carers Support Groups

Meet on a regular basis and welcome new members to their groups. For a full list of Carers Support Groups look on the website on www.pavs.org.uk/carers or contact Sally Davies, Carers Development Worker on 01437 771196.

Groups for Parents

Parents TLC - a group for parents of children with life threatening illnesses. It meets monthly and is co-ordinated by Gill Lee-Munson. Contact Gill on 01437 762885.

Carers in MIND

This group is for carers of people with mental health problems. They meet at the MIND Resource Centre on the 2nd Wednesday of each month. The next meeting will be on June 9th at 2pm. For more information contact Ann Waide on 01348 687113.

Carers of adults with learning disabilities

There are 2 support groups for Carers of Adults with Learning Disabilities, both of which welcome contact from parents of children with learning disabilities. Both groups meet regularly and carers provide much needed support and advice to each other.

The Pembrokeshire Parent Carers High Dependency Needs Support Group usually holds its meetings on Fridays in Narberth, the contact person is Carol Mason on 01834 831833.

The Pembrokeshire Parent/Carers Association meets on the 3rd

Wednesday of each month, alternating between Milford Haven and Pembroke, the contact person is Joan Ward on 01646 636388.

Support Groups for Carers of Older People with Mental Health Problems

There are now 5 of these Carers Support Groups throughout Pembrokeshire. They are all co-ordinated by the local Community Psychiatric Nurses for each area.

South Pembs, contact Jackie Aitken on 01834 861379

Milford Haven area, contact Francis Rayner on 01646 699257 or Beryl Noyce on 01646 699258

Haverfordwest area, contact Vicky Richards on 01437 773382

Fishguard & Goodwick area, contact Angela Dowson on 01646 699258

Pembroke area, contact Cath Weathall on 07799891367

The groups all meet monthly and can provide a lifeline for some carers.

If you would like to publicise your group to other carers, please send in an article to Sally Davies to be included in a future Carers Supplement.

If you would like to join a group or set up a new group, contact Sally Davies.

CARERS HANDBOOK

To assist carers there is a free handbook full of information about services and help available. The handbook is updated regularly and this year's updates are being sent to carers at present. If you would like a copy of the handbook please ring:

Melanie Richards, Social Care and Housing, Pembrokeshire County Council,
Tel: 01437 776534

More Respite for Adults with Learning Disabilities

The work has now been completed on Bryn Heulog, the local authority respite unit for people with learning disabilities. On Thursday May 13th parents, carers, and other interested parties were invited to look round the newly extended and newly decorated building.

Carol Mason, one of the carers who was on the Respite Steering Group was very impressed by her visit. She said,

'It is now a beautiful home – the colour scheme is very warm and welcoming. The extra rooms downstairs have all the tracking facilities to make life easier for people with additional physical disabilities and having two extra ground floor rooms will make all the difference. Lots of parents have said that they'll be a lot happier for their sons and daughters to stay there now.'

The extension means that there are now 3 ground floor rooms, two of which have en suite facilities. There is also a room available for emergency respite.

If you would like more information about Bryn Heulog, please contact the manager Michelle Parry on 01437 760185.

Carers and Employment

One of the priorities of the Carers Strategy is the area of Carers and Employment. An initial partnership meeting was held on May 18th to see how the issues can be taken forward.

There are two main strands to the action needed, which are

- Training and support to enable more carers to remain in or return to work
- More local employers to develop car friendly policies reflecting a more appropriate work/life balance

The good news is that many of Pembrokeshire's employers have already developed carer friendly policies which are currently being put into practice. However there is still a lot of work to be done to encourage more employers to develop more flexible working practices to enable carers to remain in or return to work.

Carers UK have produced 2 useful booklets on employment issues

'Juggling Work and Care' – information for employees and

'Carers at Work' – information for employers
You could find out if your employer offers flexible working patterns to help you work and care, for example:

- Flexible starting and finishing times
- Compressed working hours
- Annualised working hours
- Job sharing or part-time working
- Homeworking and teleworking
- Term-time working

We will be looking at an audit of carers' training needs, which will include the training needs to enable carers to return to or stay in work.

There will be regular updates on Carers and Employment issues in this newsletter, but if you would like to get involved in moving

things forward, please contact Sally Davies for more information.

Have you told your GP that you are a carer?

Being a carer can have an impact on your health. You could be prone to back injury due to lifting the person you care for. You could have sleepless nights if you have to provide help during the night. There could be stress due to the constant juggling of responsibilities in your life.

All of these can affect **your** health and well-being and you need to ensure that you remain well in order to sustain your caring role.

Regular check ups can ensure that you prevent minor ailments from becoming worse and will ensure that you are given the correct advice and support in your vital role.

Your GP is there to ensure your health and wellbeing and will need to know about additional demands you are putting on your body.

So tell them that you are a carer. Tell them what your caring role involves and how vital it is to the person you care for. Ask for a regular check up at least once a year so that you can be sure you are well enough to keep going.

Just as your car needs an MOT so you need to keep an eye on yourself and have a regular check over and service. When I had my car serviced recently it received a change of oil and a top up of coolant.

As a carer you might find the doctor suggesting a short change of scenery and an evening out for a good meal! So tell your GP and ask for a check up. They need to know you are there.

Phill Vickery

Carers Assessment Development Worker

Exercise

Can exercise be beneficial in easing stress and depression?

Rudyard Kipling thought so!!

The cure for this ill
Is not to sit still
Or frowst with a book
By the fire
But to take a large hoe
And a shovel also
And dig till you gently perspire.

Mr Kipling – he did write exceedingly good poetry – ouch!!

Seriously, did you know that if you think a little enjoyable, programmed exercise in the company of like-minded people might help you, then your GP can put you in touch with a qualified fitness instructor at a local gym or leisure centre. What is more, he/she can write an explanatory letter about your circumstances and issue a gym prescription which means you can typically pay only £1.50 a session. You may even get a free swim.

Ask your doctor or ring Peter Harvey from Carers in Mind on 01834 814874.

Carers in Mind are looking for a logo for their group. There is a prize of a wine box for the winning entry, so get your ideas on paper and send them to Peter c/o PAVS, (address on the back page). Carers in Mind meet at the Mind Resource Centre on the 2nd Wednesday of the month, so if you're caring for someone with a mental health problem, you're welcome to come along.

CARERS AND HEALTH

Recent surveys have shown that caring can have a negative impact on carers' mental health. Some ways of relieving stress are for carers to have regular breaks or perhaps talk things through with someone outside your situation. If you are feeling stressed, accessing the Holiday Break Scheme or Pembrokeshire Counselling could be the answer for you.

HOLIDAY BREAK SCHEME

The PAVS Holiday Breaks Project for Carers has recently been awarded nearly £4,000 from the Carers Grant. Carers who look after family or friends with disabilities can apply for up to £200 towards a holiday of their choice – either to go away with the person they care for, and use the money to buy in additional support whilst on holiday, or a holiday on their own to have a break from their caring role. All carers must be living in Pembrokeshire and be providing care to someone aged 16+. There is a limited amount of funding available therefore one grant per family is usually allowed only every other year. The application process is very simple and easy to complete so apply as soon as you can.

For an application form please contact:
PAVS, 36 – 38 High Street
Haverfordwest Pembs SA61 2DA
Tel: **01437 769422**

Pembrokeshire Counselling

Carers who are often isolated and stressed may benefit from having someone outside their situation to talk to. Sometimes you may feel that you do not want to burden your friends or family with your problems, but you still need to talk to someone.

Pembrokeshire Counselling Service has been offering counselling for all ages (i.e. 9 years to 90) to people within Pembrokeshire for the last 10 years.

We now have 18 Counsellors and 4 Supervisors. We have between 300 - 350 people contacting us each year asking for

counselling. A few of them may be directed to specialist groups, but the remainder keep our counsellors busy, each having 3 on-going clients. There is usually a waiting list varying from 3-9 weeks.

As always the problems are as various and numerous as the clients, including:

Losses due to bereavement, divorce, work, health and self esteem.

Relationship problems – Partners, family, work etc.

Mental Health - Early or mild depression, anxiety states, post natal depression, and post traumatic stress syndrome.

All our counsellors are trained up to diploma level or working towards this, and of course are supervised by our trained supervisors at regular intervals (2-4 weeks). Other in-house training is provided e.g. short term counselling, children's counselling, mental health, couples counselling, suicides, etc.

People from all walks of life come to us including an increasing number of professional people, service personnel and others. All are self referred but the vast majority are pointed in our direction by G.P.'s and other health workers, but a number have heard about us from previous clients who have recommended P.C.S.

We do, of course, use and recommend specialist services within Pembrokeshire as we do not pretend to have the answer to everyone's problems, however, we know that we are the only voluntary general counselling service available, and so very necessary to the general population of our County.

None of our members are paid, not even our co-ordinator, and we make no charges, just suggesting to clients that they might like to give a donation – the size of which being their own choice.

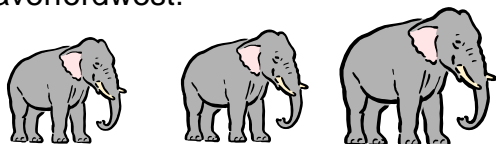
We are now able to offer a limited bilingual service, as two of our counsellors are Welsh speaking.

If you would like to talk to a counsellor, contact Pembrokeshire Counselling on 01437 541325.

NEWS FROM CARERS' GROUPS & ORGANISATIONS

News from Pembrokeshire Alzheimer's Society

On Monday 28th June look out for a yellow pachyderm riding a motorbike. The Alzheimer's elephant is coming to Haverfordwest!



2004 is the Alzheimer's Society's 25th anniversary and in Wales we are taking our elephant on a tour visiting all the Welsh branches starting at Chester Zoo (which has been annexed to Wales for the day!) and continuing until it reaches Cardiff in time for our Awareness Week 4th to 10th July.

The elephant will be collected from Cardigan and, hopefully, taken from Narberth to Haverfordwest by 25 year old motorbikes. Please support us by throwing money at us (preferably paper as that doesn't hurt, but as crash helmets will be worn, perhaps the hard stuff will be accepted as well!)

Other means of transporting the elephant around town are being devised, further details to follow. A grand barbecue in Pembroke Rugby Club is being planned – again, further details to follow.

Your support and ideas are welcomed to make this year a truly memorable one. The aim is to raise awareness as well as funds for the Pembrokeshire branch of the Alzheimers' Society.

If you have any ideas or suggestions, contact Beryl Noyce on 01834 813908.

Beryl Noyce



Pembrokeshire Carers Outreach Support Group

We are a group of carers who meet regularly for discussion and social activities. Because caring is an intense and somewhat isolated job, the support meetings are a chance for members to chat with other people in the same situation as themselves – to exchange ideas and to relax for a couple of hours.

Recent outings that the group have been on include 10 pin bowling at the Phoenix Bowl, various lunches, shopping trips and garden visits. We have also helped and advised Elaine Jones of Pembrokeshire Coast Path and National Trust about access to the coastal path.

Elaine organised two trips to different sections of the path, which were attended by 14 – 18 members of the group, and led by Park Rangers. Our members then gave their views on possible improvements. These trips were published in a recent edition of 'Park View' issues by the authority. We are hoping to make more trips to the coast path this year.

Meetings are held on the 1st Tuesday of each month at Meyler House, St Thomas' Green, Haverfordwest
2 – 4 pm

Whenever possible we invite someone to speak for a short time on various interesting subjects.

All Carers Welcome

Please contact

**Pembrokeshire Carers Outreach on
01437 767762**

Or

Dave Watkin on 01437 769701

NEWS FROM CARERS SUPPORT GROUPS

Headway Pembrokeshire



the brain injury association

Headway Pembrokeshire is pleased to announce the opening of their office at the Bungalow Meadow Park. The opening times are as follows:-

Monday 9.30 - 11.30 am

Tuesday 2 - 4 pm

Wednesday 1 - 4 pm

Every other Thursday each month - 3 - 5 pm - solicitors clinic and help with Disability Living Allowance & Attendance forms (please ring for appointments for these)

Friday 9.30 am - 1pm

Telephone number 01437 765764

Due to the continuing success of the group, we are now actively seeking new committee members and also volunteers. If you have an interest in Brain Injury and can spare the time please give us a ring on 01437 765764.

New Group for Children with Lifelong Illnesses and their Parents

GARAGE GANG

We are pleased to be able to provide a programme of activities for you and your family at Haverfordwest Youth Club, The Garage.

All sessions are free!

Session Times 11am - 2pm

Saturday 12th June - Reach for the skies - 'phab' kite making session

Saturday 10th July - Rock on and learn to be a DJ (includes production of own music CD)

Saturday 14th August - Guided Imagery & Music

All children/young people must be accompanied by an adult

Refreshments provided but packed lunch required

For more information contact
Gerri - 01545 570194(evenings) or 07884057008
Jayne Thomas - 01437 773853
Judith McNamara - 01646 685768

NEWS FROM PEMBROKESHIRE COALITION

INCAPACITY

Opportunity for a change of style

This event is to highlight what is available to people with a disability. Within the next 2 years the incapacity benefits system will be changing in Pembrokeshire and we would like you to know what options are available to you. What help you can get if you want to go into employment or volunteering.

Benefits explained, Information on Self employment,
Financial Incentives for Employment, Training options,
Volunteering Options.

A number of organisations will also be exhibiting at the event so if you would like to meet them on a one to one basis and ask questions you can do.
Come along and find out your options with no commitment.
Transport maybe arranged upon request.

THURS JUNE 24TH 2004 - LETTERSTON VILLAGE HALL
11AM UNTIL 4PM (including light refreshments)
FOR FURTHER DETAILS CONTACT
PEMBROKESHIRE COALITION - DEVELOPMENT OFFICER
ON 01437 769422 OR FAX 01437 769431

Access to Events and Activities in Pembrokeshire for people with impairments

Living in rural Pembrokeshire can be limiting, especially for people with impairments. Pembrokeshire has a variety of activities and events and Pembrokeshire Coalition would like to help support people with impairments to be able to access these events. We are providing transport initially for the 2 events below. However we would like to hear from people with disabilities about events they would like to attend if accessible transport can be arranged.

Please contact Rachel Gibby on 01437 769422 or fax: 01437 769431

Sat 5 June 04 Saundersfoot - Proms in the Park (tickets £8)

Cardiff Philharmonic 01834 8134965pm bring a picnic.

Wed 30th June 04 –FREE - Pembrokeshire Fish Week

Fishing -Treffgarne Bridge 0.30 -3.00pm



BENEFITS NEWS

Benefit Snippets for Carers

As well as the usual increase in rates of benefits in April, there have been other changes as well.

Lets look at some of the benefit increases first. Carers Allowance increased by £1.20 per week to £44.35 and the Carer Premium/Addition for Income-based benefits by 45p to £25.55 per week. The High Rate Attendance Allowance (AA) and Disability Living Allowance (DLA) Care component increased to £58.80 whilst the Low rate AA and Middle rate DLA Care to £39.35. The Low rate DLA Care and Mobility components both increased to £15.55 and the High rate Mobility for DLA rose to £39.35. Other payments have also gone up including Pension Credit. The Guaranteed Credit for a single person is now £102.80 per week and for a couple £160.95 and for Savings Credit the limit is £144.23 for single people and £211.50 for couples. But remember these can be increased with the Carer Addition, extra for those in certain circumstances with severe disabilities or for those with home loan interest to pay.

I have had several queries from carers recently about letters sent by Jobcentreplus telling them that they will be called in for a compulsory 'Work Focused Interview' at the Jobcentre because their partner is receiving certain benefits. This is part of the general information provided by the government about changes to the benefit system and links in with the introduction of a revised New Deal for Partners scheme being launched on 6th April 2004. The letter states that a further letter will be sent with an appointment to attend the Jobcentre. In West Wales, the second letter is not being sent out at present. They are

expected to be introduced some time after April 2005. This is part of the Government's policy to extend choices to people receiving a range of benefits including Carers Allowance. Once you are invited to attend the interview, you will have the opportunity to discuss your personal circumstances and concerns with a Personal Adviser at the Jobcentre. Carers especially, may have many genuine concerns about this and these should be fully discussed, as it is only at this stage that that a decision can be made to delay or cancel the interview. The last thing I wanted to mention is a change in the National Health Service Charges - Low Income Scheme, including free prescriptions. From April, if your income is less than or equal to £3.20 above the Income Support level for someone of your age and circumstances, you are entitled to full help with any NHS charges and to vouchers towards the cost of glasses. The Health Benefits Division, the department in Newcastle that deals with your claim, will send you an HC2 certificate. If you made a claim under the low income scheme any time before 6th April 2004 and received a certificate for partial help which you only had to make a small contribution to the cost yourself or you were just over the cut off for full help and as such could not receive free prescriptions, you should make a new claim on form HC1. These are available form LEAFLETLINE 08000 328 555 or any Jobcentre or Social Security office.

**Jane Bryant - Information
Officer for West Wales,
Social Security Office,
Tŷ Myrdin, Dan y Banc Road,
Carmarthen,
Carmarthenshire. SA31 1GS
Tel: 01267 322130**

BENEFITS/OTHER NEWS

Launch of Pension Credit

The new Pension Credit Scheme was launched on 6 October 2003, replacing the Minimum Income Guarantee. It guarantees everyone aged 60 or over an income of at least £105.45 per week for single people and £160.95 per week for couples. There is also an additional amount for severe disability which is now £44.15 for a single person and £88.30 for a couple. It is estimated that at least half of all pensioners will be entitled to Pension Credit.

If you think that you might be entitled to additional money there are regular surgeries being held throughout Pembrokeshire, where advisors are on hand to help you review what you are claiming.

The surgery times are as follows:-

Monday 9.30-3.30 Pembrokeshire County Council Information Office, Argyle St, Pembroke Dock (weekly)

Tuesday 10-2 Methodist Chapel, The Ridgeway, Saundersfoot (fortnightly 1st & 15th June)

Wednesday 9.30-3.30 North Wing, County Hall, Haverfordwest (weekly)

Thursday 9.30-12.30 Town Hall, Fishguard (weekly)

Claim Carer's Allowance Online

Carers can now claim Carer's Allowance online by visiting the DWP website www.dwp.gov.uk/lifeevent/benefits/carers_allowance.asp.

Pembs Strategy for Older People

Pembrokeshire County Council and its partner agencies are in the process of developing a strategy for older people in the county. There is a commitment to ensure that older people are fully involved in planning and developing services.

One of the ways that Pembrokeshire is involving older people is setting up Independent Older Persons Forums (sometimes called senior citizens forums, over 50s forums or pensioners forums). The target is to set up 5 local forums in the next year.

If you are an older person or the carer of an older person, and you are interested in joining one of the forums in your area, or you would like a copy of their newsletter please contact Liz Higham, Development Officer for the Older Persons Strategy on 01437 77622 or e-mail on liz.higham@pembrokeshire.gov.uk

Where do you read yours?

It has been rumoured that some carers are reading their Carers Supplements in rather strange places – some have been spotted reading theirs at parties, out on walks or even in the Jacuzzi. If you have any photos to show strange places where you have been reading yours, or you have spotted someone else reading theirs, please send them in to Sally Davies at PAVS by July 30th 2004. The strangest photo will be published in the next Carers Supplement and will even win a prize!

A prize has been donated from Castle Photography for the winner and they have agreed to judge the entries.

If you need to borrow a digital camera for this, contact PAVS.

Please feel free to copy and distribute this publication as required. If you would like to receive your own copy of the Carers Supplement, please complete the details below

Name.....Tel no.....

Address.....

.....

If you would prefer to receive your copy electronically please give details of your e-mail address

E-mail.....

This newsletter is also available on our web-site at www.pavs.org/carers

We would like to hear from you if you would like any carers' issues put in the Carers Supplement or if you have any ideas for improvement. Please let us know if you no longer wish to receive this newsletter.

I would like to make the following comments about the newsletter

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.....
.....

Thank you for the time taken to complete this

The deadline for articles for the next issue is July 30th 2004

Health & Social Care Update & Carers Supplement
PAVS
FREEPOST SWC4881
36-38 High Street
Haverfordwest
Pembs SA61 2ZZ

Or e-mail me at sally.davies@pavs.org.uk