

"Involving People"

The newsletter for learning disability carers



charity registration number 1085491

May 2018

For more information about anything in this newsletter or to find out more about our support for carers of people with a learning disability, please get in touch with us. You can also contact the office or go on our website to find out about our upcoming free courses and workshops and the latest offers and discounts as part of our Carers' Passport. Contact us at:

Sue Maskell,
Involvement Worker for Learning Disabilities and Autism.

Or Roma Mills,
Carers Policy and Engagement Manager.

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4131036

Welcome

2018 is well underway and there is so much to tell you in our first newsletter of the year. With warmer weather here after a cold and wet start to the year there is a chance to think about getting out into the sunshine or enjoying an activity to boost your health and wellbeing. Some ideas about getting out and about in Hertfordshire are shared on page 3.



Hertfordshire County Council has made changes to the teams that support people with a learning disability and their carers. It is hoped these will improve the support available. The changes were explained at our February 2018 Learning Disability (LD) Carers' Forum. You can find out more about this on page 2 along with information about the Carer's Assessment.

We are still looking for more carers of adults with a learning disability to join small band of Carer Representatives who attend the Learning Disability Partnership Board meetings in Hatfield once a month. This enables carers to share views and ideas on caring services provided and have a voice on development of health and care services in Hertfordshire.

Details of upcoming Forums and events are on page 4. If you have ideas for topics to cover at future Forums or in upcoming newsletters or if you are interested in becoming a LD Carer Rep please contact me, Sue Maskell, Involvement Worker for Learning Disabilities and Autism. You can call 01992 58 69 69 or send an email to sue.maskell@carersinherts.org.uk

Making Carers Count

What is a Carer's Assessment ?

All carers are entitled to a Carer's Assessment, which is an opportunity to discuss how caring for someone affects your life and how you can continue doing the things that are important to you.

What does a Carer's Assessment involve?

The assessment is there to assist you in your caring role, to see what, if any, support you need and can be offered. Please do not be put off by the word 'assessment', you are not under scrutiny regarding how you care for the person you support.

The assessment will look at aspects such as:

- * Your caring role;
- * Your feelings and choices about caring;
- * Your health;
- * Your work and / or other commitments;
- * What you like doing to relax;
- * Planning for emergencies;
- * Are you willing and able to carry on your caring role;



- * How well you are supported; and
- * If you're entitled to financial help.

As a result of the assessment you will receive information and advice to help you in your caring role. You may also get ongoing support to make caring easier.

You can call Carers in Hertfordshire to ask for advice on how to get a Carer's Assessment. Call 01992 58 69 69.

If the person you care for lives in Hertfordshire the Carer's Assessment will normally be carried out by Hertfordshire County Council or an organisation working with them.

More support for people with disabilities and their carers

Hertfordshire County Council is investing in more staff in its Adult Disability Service (ADS) to meet people's need for support and an increase in adult safeguarding work.

The new posts follow a review of the new ADS service, which was set up in April 2017. The Council wanted to ensure the service was working well and the right staff were in place to deliver a quality service.

The Adult Disability Service replaced the Community Learning Disability Service. It supports people with a learning or physical disability, autism and those who misuse drugs or alcohol.

Mark Harvey, Head of the ADS, said: "We are investing in around 40 new posts as we recognised that current staffing levels are not sufficient to meet demand. We also want to make sure we provide the best social work, occupational therapy and care support possible. This means more social workers, occupational therapists and community care officers as well as office staff to free up practitioners to work with people."

Other changes following the review include:

- Integrating the Asperger Social Care Team into the Adult Disability Service. Each of the seven locality teams will have a specialist Asperger worker.
- Moving all casework to the local team for where the person lives. This means that staff will really get to know the towns, villages and communities they work in.

Ideas for trips out and keeping active

It's the Year of Physical Activity in Hertfordshire and as part of this, Hertfordshire County Council has a campaign running to encourage people to be more physically active.

The 'It's Never too Late to be Active' campaign started at the end of April and runs until early July 2018. As part of the campaign Hertfordshire residents can get free pass for themselves and a friend to try an activity or class at one of the county's leisure centres.

At Carers in Hertfordshire we aim to support carers in looking after their own health and wellbeing, as they often neglect this due to their caring role. We run free courses and activities including ski lessons and bowls or boccia.

Sue Maskell, Involvement Worker for Learning Disabilities and Autism, said: "Getting out into the fresh air and sunshine can have a positive effect on our health. Fresh air can boost your energy and the sun helps you produce Vitamin D, which is necessary to absorb calcium and form healthy bones. There are plenty of open spaces in the county. I was amazed to find out just how much there is to do in Hertfordshire and I thought I'd share some ideas about places you could visit over the coming months."

If you visit any of these places we would love to hear your stories and feedback, get in touch with me Sue (details on page 1).

You can find out more about the Council's campaign by visiting www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/nevertoolate or by calling HertsHelp on 0300 123 4044.

Places to visit in Hertfordshire

Nature Reserves

There are more than 40 nature reserves in Hertfordshire and Middlesex, from woodlands and meadows to wetlands and orchards. They include the RSPB Rye Meads nature reserve next to the River Lee in Hoddesdon and Amwell Nature Reserve, a Site of Special Scientific Interest in Ware. You can learn more at www.hertswildlifetrust.org.uk or call 01727 723765 or visit www.rspb.org.uk or call 01992 708383.



Hertfordshire Health Walks

Free, led walks of various distances throughout the county to encourage people of all ages and abilities to get active. For more information visit the [Hertfordshire Health Walks website](#) or call 01992 588433.

Parks and Leisure

There are plenty of parks across the county including:

Aldenham Country Park in Elstree that has a farm, a Winnie the Pooh trail and playground for children with Special Education Needs and Disabilities.

Fairlands Valley Park in Stevenage that has an aqua playground, sailing centre and offers land-based activities too.

Stanborough Park in Welwyn Garden City, which has a Watersports Centre, two lakes and bike hire from Easy Riders, including adapted bikes suitable for people with disabilities.

Verulamium Park in St Albans with activities including beach sports courts, golf, a splash park and nearby St Albans Cathedral.

The Henry Moore Studios and Gardens in Much Hadham
Visit the former home of artist Henry Moore and view some of his work, including over 20 of his iconic sculptures in the beautiful gardens.
For more information visit www.henry-moore.org or call 01279 843333.



Carers Week event to highlight housing options

In response to carers' requests for information about housing options for the person they care for, we have organised an Accommodation Information Event during Carers Week (June 11th – 17th 2018).

The event will take place in Welwyn Garden City on Wednesday 13th June 2018 and is aimed at people caring for someone, normally a family member, who may have a learning disability, mental health condition or who misuses drugs or alcohol.

There will be a presentation about Hertfordshire County Council's Accommodation Strategy and a chance to hear from a panel of housing providers about what they offer and ask them questions.

You will also be able to find out about different options in Hertfordshire such as supported housing, sheltered housing, flexicare housing and shared lives – which matches a person with care needs with a family that will take them in.

The event takes place from 10am – 3.30pm. If you would like to attend the Accommodation Information Event please book a place online at www.carersinherts.org.uk/events or call 01992 58 69 69.



Forums and Groups

Our Forums are open to carers of an adult with a Learning Disability, Autism or Asperger Syndrome. The Forums provide an opportunity to meet other carers, listen to professional guest speakers, get up to date information related to your caring role and to have your say about caring issues and improving services.

Upcoming Learning Disability Carers' Forums:

Tuesday 5th June 2018

Tuesday 7th August 2018

Tuesday 2nd October 2018

Tuesday 4th December 2018

All the meetings take place from 10am to 12.30pm and are followed by a sandwich lunch.

At Birchwood Leisure Centre, Longmead, Hatfield, Hertfordshire, Herts, AL10 0AN.

Upcoming C4A Carers' Group

This group is for people caring for an adult with high functioning Autism or Asperger Syndrome:

Monday 2nd July 2018

Monday 3rd September 2018

Monday 5th November 2018

All of the meetings take place from 7.30pm to 9.30pm.

At Oxlease House, Travellers Lane, Hatfield, Hertfordshire, AL10 8TJ.

To book your place or receive information about either group, please contact us:

☎ 01992 58 69 69

@ contact@carersinherts.org.uk

🌐 www.carersinherts.org.uk

If you don't have your own transport and wish to attend please contact us to discuss travel arrangements.

We can also cover the costs of alternative care.

Learning Disability Week 2018

This year's Learning Disability Week takes place from 18th - 24th June 2018 and is focused on health.

To mark the awareness week we will join Herts People First at Hampson Park Community Centre, Stevenage, at a Wellbeing Workshop. The event takes place on Thursday 21st June from 11.30am – 1pm. The event will include a performance by the Purple All Stars, a group of people from Hertfordshire with learning disabilities who use creative arts to campaign for better healthcare for people with a learning disability. There will also be a meeting of the Learning Disability Partnership Forum in the afternoon. Contact us for more details.