



# carers news

Carers Advice Line  
**0113 380 4300**  
Carers Leeds  
**0113 246 8338**

## WELCOME TO THE DECEMBER 2016 EDITION OF CARERS NEWS



## Seasons Greetings from the Carers Leeds Team

Well, December came around too quick for my liking that's for sure!

We feel the heat of the lights blazing from the new John Lewis store and the Christmas karaoke from the pub across The Headrow from us is to be applauded for the sheer volume and range...and now we welcome the holiday period.

The end of 2016 sees the end of our 20th anniversary year. A good year of celebrations, carer events, new services, hellos to new staff and some goodbyes, and even the royal seal of approval - I'm exhausted!! But being surrounded by wonderful people, meeting carers daily and knowing we deliver a service to so many carers across Leeds has made this year a great one.

I'd like to thank the amazing staff team, volunteers, our Board of Trustees and our Commissioners for helping make this year a year to remember.

As we move into the new year and set our resolutions for 2017, I'd like to wish you all the very best in all that you do.

*Val Hewison, CEO*

## Caring Well Training: A NEW four week course for 2017

Carers Leeds is launching a new version of our **Caring Well Training**. Open to all carers, the course consists of four weekly sessions.

Following feedback from previous courses, carers have informed us that most of the learning comes from carers sharing their ideas and experiences, and there is plenty of opportunity to do this throughout each session.

Each of the sessions are themed and cover different aspects of being a carer.

Session 1 (Thursday 26th January): **Talking About Caring** - What does it mean to be a carer, what do we do, why are carers so important, how do I get time for myself as a carer.

Session 2 (Thursday 2nd February): **Looking after my physical and mental wellbeing.**

Session 3 (Thursday 9th February): **Practical aspects of caring** - Managing medication, services that can help, assessments for carers and the person you care for, personal budgets.

Session 4: (Thursday 23rd February): **Money** - Welfare benefits, help with costs, appointees and power of attorney, care home costs.

### To Find Out More and to Book Your Place

Caring Well Training takes place at Carers Leeds (6-8 The Headrow), from 11.00am until 2.30pm. Each session will last 3½ hours with a coffee break and lunch break. For more information and to book your place, please contact Carers Leeds on 0113 246 8338.



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## Baby its Cold Outside

**Winter Fuel Payment:** An annual lump sum tax-free payment to help with winter heating costs.

It is usually paid automatically, but people need to make a claim if they are not claiming social security benefits and have not received a payment before.

You'll qualify for Winter Fuel Payment if you were born on or before 5 May 1953 (for winter 2016 to 2017 - this date changes every year) and you'll be living in the UK throughout the week of 19 to 25 September 2016.

Call the Winter Fuel Payment Centre to claim by phone: 03459 15 15 15

**Warm Home Discount Scheme:** For winter 2016 to 2017, you could get £140 off your electricity bill through the Warm Home Discount Scheme. The money isn't paid to you - it's a one-off discount on your electricity bill between October and April.

You qualify for the discount if on 10th July 2016 all of the following apply:

- you were getting the Guarantee Credit element of Pension Credit
- your electricity supplier was part of the scheme
- your name (or your partner's) was on the bill

If you want to find out if your electricity supplier is part of the scheme, contact the Warm Home Discount Scheme team on 0345 603 9439, available Monday to Friday, 8:30am until 4:30pm.

## Carers Trust online Relationship Guide for Carers

The guide is split into two sections: 'I am a carer for my partner' and 'I look after a family member, friend or neighbour'. In each of these sections there are a number of self-help articles, including: the challenges of being lover and carer, caring for a parent and how the stress of caring can impact relationships.

### Example: Challenges of Caring for Your Lover

*Couple relationships are intimate, complex, and often delicate things. A big part of being in a relationship is the way you look after each other, and you'll do this in different ways – whatever the dynamic, there's a balance of care, which is important to who you are as a couple.*

*So, when one of you needs to be cared for in a more significant capacity, by the other, it's an important shift.*



*As the needs of one partner increase, the responsibilities of the other grow.*

*If you're the person doing the looking after, this can affect the way you see yourself. Part of how we define ourselves is through our relationships. Your partner now needs you in a very different way, and you have a new role as their carer, in addition to being their lover. This is quite a change to your identity*

*without you even getting a say in the matter...*

The guide has been developed by Carers Trust in partnership with OnePlusOne, a relationship research charity and is funded by the Department for Work and Pensions.

To use the guide or for more information visit: <http://relationships.carers.org>

**Carers Leeds will be closed from 2pm on Friday 23rd December, open as normal on 28th, 29th and 30th December, and closed on Monday 2nd January 2017. Carers Leeds will also be closed from 9am until 12pm on Wednesday 18th January due to staff training purposes.**



# Carers Leeds:

## Creating Working Carer Friendly Employers across the City!

In the UK today, according to census data, there are an estimated 6 million people who have unpaid caring responsibilities for a family member or friend. Of these, over 2.6 million are also employed.

Carers Leeds is running a major initiative to highlight the issue of people who work, and are also carers, and the difficulties they face in balancing work and caring.

Around 1 in 10 of the employees in any workplace will have significant caring responsibilities in addition to their employment, and this number is growing.

Carers Leeds is raising awareness of the issues affecting working carers, through training and information to organisations, whilst providing direct advice and support to working carers in the workplace.

Changes to health and social care services and the growth of long term health conditions such as dementia have led to a huge increase in the support provided by family and friends. One in six carers give up their job, or cut back hours to care; others continue the same levels of commitment to work, suffering exhaustion, stress and guilt.

### How is Carers Leeds supporting working carers?

At Carers Leeds we are passionate about raising the profile of working carers. We believe that employers may be losing good workers because they are not aware of the issues working carers face, nor are they doing anything about it.

We are currently working in partnership with a number of high profile employers in the Leeds area, including Yorkshire Bank, The University of Leeds, Leeds Beckett University, Direct Line and the Department of Work and Pensions.



A partnership with Carers Leeds will help employers understand what they can do to become Working Carer Friendly Employers with all the benefits that brings, such as:

- Direct advice and support to working carers in the workplace
- Training and support for Line Managers to recognise the issues of working carers
- Creating a community of Working Carer Friendly Employers across Leeds
- A toolkit for employers to better support their working carers
- Offering access to a Working Carer Friendly Employer Charter agreement.



### Get Involved

If you are a working carer let us know about your experiences of balancing work and caring responsibilities.

If you are an employer, tell us how you recognise carers who work in your organisation. Email Carers Leeds at [info@carersleeds.org.uk](mailto:info@carersleeds.org.uk)

Coming together is the beginning  
- staying together is progress -  
working together is success!

# What's on at Carers Leeds

## Important Notice

We advise anybody attending a Carers Support Group for the first time in December to contact Carers Leeds as a lot of the groups are not in their usual venues or at the usual times, due to festive celebrations and get-togethers. Contact Carers Leeds on 0113 246 8338 or Angie Thompson Support Group Coordinator on 07854 481 011.

## Time for Us Café: De-stress after Christmas with Adult Colouring

**Thursday 12th January 2017  
from 11am until 2.30pm  
Carers Leeds, 6-8 The Headrow,  
Leeds City Centre**

Christmas can be a stressful time of year so come along to the Time for Us Café in January and relax by enjoying some adult colouring, have a chat and a cuppa with friends and a spot of lunch.

Colouring is a stress-free activity that allows your mind to get the rest it needs. All materials will be provided but feel free to bring along anything you want to use.

Lunch will be provided but in order to cater for the correct number of people please contact Carers Leeds on 0113 246 8338 to book a place for those who wish to attend. Bookings will be taken from 10am on Tuesday 13th December.



## Time for Us Café: How to look after your eyes

**Thursday 9th February 2017  
from 11am until 2pm  
Carers Leeds, 6-8 The Headrow,  
Leeds City Centre**

Ray White, a local Optometrist, will be joining the Time for Us Café and will be giving helpful tips on taking good care of our eyes now and as we get older.

He will also be sharing information about the association of dementia and our vision.

Lunch will be provided but in order to cater for the correct number of people please contact Carers Leeds on 0113 246 8338 to book your place. Bookings will be taken from 10am on Tuesday 13th December.

## Young Mind Matters



Calling all parents, families and carers of children and young people with mental health issues, Young Mind Matters is a support group for you.

The numbers of children and young people with a mental health condition are growing year on year. Delays in treatment can leave people feeling like they have nowhere to turn. Young Mind Matters offers you a place to meet with other parent carers, and a place of support and comfort.

Liz says: "While waiting for Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) to assess and offer treatment to my daughter our family went through some really difficult times. I felt no-one understood or cared.

Eventually I came across Carers Leeds and they have been a life-line for me as my daughters main carer. I had the chance to meet other carers who had often been through similar difficulties.

The staff at Carers Leeds are brilliant at pointing you in the right direction for help, and support you in many ways. Without their support there were times when I thought I wouldn't be able to carry on caring for my daughter at home."

For more information or to see if this group meets your needs, call Angie at Carers Leeds on 0113 246 8338 or 07854 481 011. We look forward to meeting you!

## Winter Wiggle and Giggle

**Monday 9th January 2017  
from 11am until 2pm  
Carers Leeds, 6-8 The Headrow,  
Leeds City Centre**

Do you fancy starting the New Year with a Wiggle and Giggle! Join other carers to learn a fun and easy Line Dance.

You don't need a partner but you can bring along a friend and have a lot of fun. Plus you get exercise without realising you are actually exercising – amazing!!!

A Line Dance is a choreographed dance with a repeated sequence of steps in which a group of people dance in one or more rows. The steps will be easy and suitable for carers of all ages and fitness. You will need to wear comfortable shoes and clothing.

After you've had fun dancing you can relax, socialise and enjoy a light lunch.

For more information and to book your place please contact Carers Leeds on 0113 246 8338. Bookings will be taken from 10am on Tuesday 13th December.



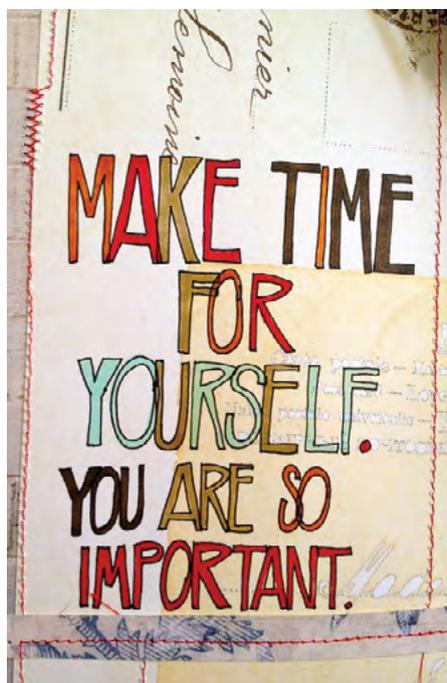
## Wellbeing Sessions at Carers Leeds

**Monday 9th January  
Monday 23rd January  
Monday 6th February**

Wellbeing sessions are designed to give health benefits guaranteed to melt away your stress and tension.

Choose from Aromatherapy Massage, Indian Head Massage, Foot Massage or Face and Neck Massage. Treatments are just £5 per session lasting 30 minutes.

Carers can book up to 2 sessions per year (April 2016 to March 2017). To book your place please contact Carers Leeds on 0113 246 8338. Bookings will be taken from 10am on Tuesday 13th December.



## Beat the January Blues

**Saturday 21st January 2017  
from 11am until 2pm  
Carers Leeds, 6-8 The Headrow,  
Leeds City Centre**

Carers Leeds will be opening our doors on this SATURDAY in January to all carers, friends and family to take some time out and join us for fun and relaxation.

Pastries and refreshments will be available while you take the opportunity to enjoy a hand massage, play a game of table tennis, socialise with family and friends whilst meeting other carers, and as usual Carers Leeds staff will be available to offer information, advice and individual support.

Everyone welcome! There is no need to book, just drop in with your friends and family. We look forward to seeing you!

## Pie and Ping Pong - Special Bat and Chat Event

**Friday 20th January  
from 12pm until 2pm  
Carers Leeds, 6-8 The Headrow,  
Leeds City Centre**

This month Carers Leeds are hosting a special Bat and Chat winter warmer - carers are invited to join us for a game of ping pong and delicious pies for lunch.

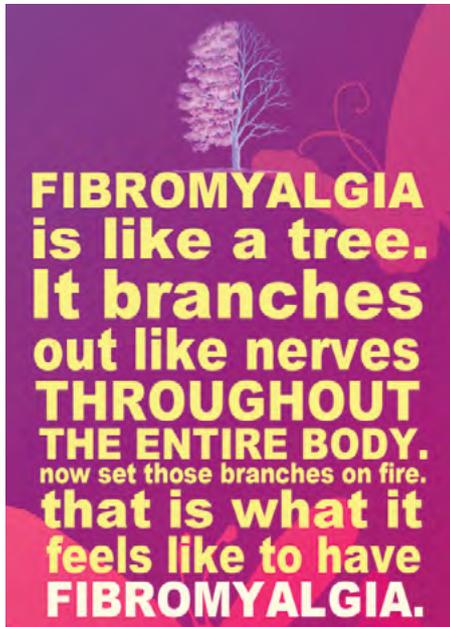
Please book this event so we can make sure we have enough pies! To book your place please contact Carers Leeds on 0113 246 8338. Bookings will be taken from 10am on Tuesday 13th December.

Table tennis is becoming very popular and Channel 4 News recently asked whether 'Ping Pong is the elixir of youth'. It's a great way of getting some exercise and having some fun. Bat and Chat takes place every Friday at Carers Leeds, please come along for a game.

# Your Stories

## Fibromyalgia Awareness, Written by Reena, Carer

Fibromyalgia Syndrome (FMS) affects many people in the UK and I am one.



**The causes of Fibromyalgia Syndrome (FMS) are still unknown and diagnosis is based on discussions with a health professional. A trigger of Fibromyalgia can be trauma or negative life experience. Stress contributed to my health deterioration, my Father died, I became a carer for my Mother suffering mental ill-health, whilst holding down a stressful job, along with other health conditions.**

Fibromyalgia Syndrome (FMS) can be undetected for a long time, the range of symptoms makes it difficult to diagnose and are commonly mistaken with other medical

conditions. In 2012, I suffered a flare of symptoms prior to an eye operation. Following regular visits to the GP I was mis-diagnosed with Multiple Sclerosis (MS).

Hiding my ill-health whilst working in a stressful position did not help, and I eventually opened up to my family 6 months later, my family's love and support was most welcome.

Later it was confirmed I had been given the wrong diagnosis. I started a diary of my symptoms to help me explain to the doctor what I was going through, this triggered a process of exclusion of health conditions, later leading to Fibromyalgia Syndrome (FMS) diagnosis in 2015.

After a further eye operation working with limited vision was difficult, in addition to my diagnosis of Fibromyalgia Syndrome (FMS), and caring for my Mother, I decided to take a break to recover.

I am a carer for my Mother who has Schizophrenia and needs help with her confidence and memory, her health and wellbeing as well as avoiding isolation. Being a carer with my own long term illnesses is very difficult. I support my Mother by encouraging positivity, helping with chores, providing cooking and keeping healthy. Her social isolation

triggers depression, so I encourage my Mother to take part in community group activities, and meeting people. Caring for my Mother takes up a lot of my time along with trying to handle my Fibromyalgia Syndrome (FMS) condition.

I am determined to turn my life around and attending the Expert Patient Program (EPP) helped me to use better strategies to manage pain, lifestyle changes and pacing to prevent relapse.

Now I campaign for Fibromyalgia Syndrome (FMS) awareness, petitioning for recognition that the condition is an illness. I also talk with people that have Fibromyalgia Syndrome (FMS), and creating a support group is my long term goal.

I have also recently become a volunteer for Touchstone, a community based service promoting wellbeing, where I have taken part in World Mental Health Day and community development work. Becoming a volunteer will help me move forward towards getting back into work.

Accepting this illness has not been easy with limitations to my lifestyle, strain on my caring role and daily frustrations, but with a good support network - keeping positive will determine my future.

- If anyone is suffering with Fibromyalgia Syndrome (FMS) symptoms go talk to your GP and get support.
- More information can be found on [www.fmauk.org](http://www.fmauk.org).
- To support the most recent campaign for Fibromyalgia Syndrome (FMS) visit: [www.thepetitionsite.com/309/717/019/fibromyalgia-is-a-real-illness-with-no-cure](http://www.thepetitionsite.com/309/717/019/fibromyalgia-is-a-real-illness-with-no-cure)
- For information about the Expert Patient Program call 0113 843 4548 or email [epp.account@nhs.net](mailto:epp.account@nhs.net).
- To learn more about Touchstone services contact 0113 216 3140.

**It's the most  
Stressful...  
ahem  
Wonderful...  
Time of the Year!**

## Mindfulness and Meditation



Mindfulness sounds very grand but it is all about being in the moment and not thinking about anything else but what you are doing at that time. You could be having a cup of tea, walking in the winter sun or filling in your adult colouring book. Never heard of adult colouring - give it a try! Join us at the Carers Leeds Time for Us Café in January. More details can be found on page 4.

You may also find meditation helpful. Daily meditation has been shown to help people stress less, exercise more and even sleep better. You could use an app on your mobile phone to help you with this. The Headspace 'Take10' app is a good starting point and you can try it for FREE.

## Music

Listening to music can also be very relaxing. Try putting your favourite music on and relaxing for a song or two, or even better have a dance around the kitchen! Try dancing with friends and come along to the Carers Leeds Wiggle and Giggle in January. More details can be found on page 5.



Here at Carers Leeds we understand that carers are busy all year round, but with the added pressure of Christmas and celebrations, no wonder the festive feeling can fizzle out. Here are some tips to help you through it and ways to reduce stress...

## Exercise

When we exercise, 'feel good hormones' are released, while 'stress hormones' are decreased, therefore exercise can naturally enhance your mood and reduce stress, as well as take your mind away from your daily worries.

Join the Carers Leeds walking group – **Walk in My Shoes!** A fun way to exercise whilst discovering new places and meeting new people. The group takes place on the 2nd Wednesday of every month at 11am; the walk will last between 30-45mins followed by drinks and refreshments. For more information please contact Charissa Chester, Carers Health Support Coordinator on 07398 173 322.

## Be Kind to Yourself



When was the last time you had a really good laugh? Talk to your friends and make sure you are not isolated. A cup of tea with a friend can really help. Carers Leeds hosts a number of social activities and groups across the city. Visit [www.carersleeds.org.uk](http://www.carersleeds.org.uk) to find your local group.

## Sleep More



Do you find yourself unable to sleep or waking up night after night? Residual stress, worry, and anger from your day can make it very difficult to sleep well. The Carers Leeds Health Team provides Stress and Anxiety workshops to help carers handle stress in a productive way, and maintain a calm, positive outlook, and gain better sleep at night. For more information please contact Charissa Chester, Carers Health Support Coordinator on 07398 173 322.

## Eat Well

You may find it hard to eat healthily if you are very busy caring. The Carers Leeds Health Team offer support and encouragement to carers to find ways of leading healthier, happier lifestyles.

The service can support carers who have a GP in the North, South and East areas of Leeds, contact the Carers Advice Line on 0113 380 4300 for more information.

# Staff Page



## Margaret Hebden – Longstanding Member of Staff Retires.

We were all very sad when earlier this year, Margaret announced her intention of retiring at the end of October. Margaret has supported carers in Leeds since 1994 when she first started work with the Leeds Carers Health Project. This project moved to Carers Leeds in 1996. Since then, Margaret has had a number of different roles, working for many years as the project

worker for the Yellow Card scheme. Whilst her work has mostly been part of the essential administrative backbone of our service, she has also run many groups and led on a particularly demanding quality assurance process.

We will all miss Margaret very much and wish her a happy and fulfilled retirement.



## Farewell to Sarah Gilfillan

We are sorry to say goodbye to our Administrative Assistant Sarah Gilfillan. Sarah has been involved with Carers Leeds since 2006 when she started volunteering for us. Since 2009 Sarah has been part of the staff team and has covered many posts including being part of the reception team, a sessional worker and most recently working on the Time for Carers grant

scheme. Sarah has brought many skills and attributes to Carers Leeds in the past 10 years and she will be sadly missed.

We would like to say a huge “thank you” to Sarah for all her hard work and commitment and wish her every success for the future from all the staff, volunteers and Board of Trustees.

**If you are able to receive the newsletter via email, if you are no longer caring, or if you have received more than one copy at the same address, please let us know.**

## Contact Details

- **Carers Advice Line 0113 380 4300**  
(9 am – 4.30 pm, Monday - Friday)
- **Drop-in to Carers Leeds City Centre office**  
(10 am – 3.30 pm, Monday - Friday)
- **Email: [info@carersleeds.org.uk](mailto:info@carersleeds.org.uk)**
- Message via the website, Facebook or Twitter

For support for carers aged 5-17, contact Willow Young Carers on 0113 262 2851

6/8 The Headrow, Leeds, LS1 6PT  
**Admin telephone number: 0113 246 8338**

Carers News is also available in large print and on audio tape or CD. Please contact Brenda James at Carers Leeds on 0113 246 8338 to request your copy.



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