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Carers' Voice

This month we have sadly had to say goodbye to Jackie Chown, the outreach worker for the Didcot area, who has had to move away from the area due to family commitments. She will be much missed and we wish her all the best for the future. We look forward to welcoming Glenda Shaw to the team to cover the Didcot area at the end of September.

We would like to thank Jo Musson, who has been our cleaner for the last few years for all her hard work making the office look fresh and sparkling. We hope she enjoys the challenges of her new nursing career.

Warm congratulations to Lucy, our outreach worker for the Thame area, who recently married and is now known as Lucy Johnson. We wish Lucy and her new husband our very best wishes for their future together.

We were delighted that the rain managed to hold off when we had our "summer" trip to Weymouth. Apart from the unfortunate delay to one coach caused by slow moving traffic everyone had a good time. If you do want to go shopping in November or join us for Christmas lunch at Millets please send the reply slips back as soon as possible.

Free Electric Blanket Testing

Did you know that faulty electric blankets are the cause of hundreds of fires in the home every year?

The Vale of White Horse District Council is working with Oxfordshire County Council's Trading Standards and the County's Fire and Rescue Service to provide free electric blanket testing. The tests don't take long and will give you peace of mind this Winter.

These sessions are on:- **Friday 10 October** at Abingdon Fire Station
Friday 24 October at Wantage Fire Station

To book an appointment please call 01865 815607.



Carers Appointment Clinics, in partnership with some of our local Health Centres

We are pleased to be working in partnership with some of our local G.P. services, to provide weekly appointment 'clinics' for carers at the surgery. Although we usually visit most people at home, as this usually suits carers best, we thought that it would also be useful to offer appointments close to home within G.P. Practices.

If you are a patient at any of the following G.P. Practices, you can book an appointment with one of our expert Outreach Workers through the Practice Receptionist, in the normal way:

- Bell Surgery, Henley: Wednesdays at 10 a.m. or 10.45 a.m. (phone 01491 843250)
- Hart Surgery, Henley: Wednesdays at 11.30 a.m. or 12.15 p.m. (phone 01491 843200)
- Church St., Wantage: Tuesdays between 1.30 p.m. & 3.30 p.m. (phone 01235 770245)
- Fern Hill, Faringdon: Tuesdays between 9 a.m. & 12 noon (phone 01367 242407)

Our usual range of advice, information & support is available at the clinics:

- We can help to increase your income, by claiming Carers Allowance, Attendance Allowance or Disability Living Allowance, or other Benefits & discounts.
- We offer a sympathetic listening ear, & emotional support.
- We can put you in touch with a whole host of different support agencies.
- We can help to put you in touch with Social Services & Occupational Therapy.
- We can help to arrange care or respite, so that you can take some time for yourself.
- We can put you in touch with like-minded people, through our organised trips out.

To publicise the clinics, we have been putting up posters, and placing articles in local newsletters and 'What's On' guides. Church Street Practice has also been very innovative and they have put a short 'advert' on the bottom of their Prescription Forms!

This is very much a pilot to see if this is a service which is of value to carers, so we are keeping a close eye on the numbers of appointments & keeping in touch with the Practices to make sure it is working well from their point of view too.

If you have any other ideas about how we can work more closely with our local Health Services, please do contact me at the Carers' Centre.

Sue Jeffs

Health Outreach Co-Ordinator

Email: sue@svcarers.org.uk, or please ring me on our usual number, 01235 510212.

Re-cycled sheepskin-covered transfer turntable available: free on collection from our Didcot office!

"A Homecraft Rolyan transfer turntable for use in the car, on a chair or bed, has been returned to us by a carer who no longer needs it, in case someone else would like it. We can't guarantee its condition, although it looks very good, with a soft sheepskin cover. If you are interested, please do give us a call. We would need you to come & collect it please".

Flood Fair Coming Soon to Wantage

A flood fair is being held in Wantage on **Tuesday 7 October** as part of a Thames Valley wide campaign to help promote awareness about flooding.

The event, which is being held at the **Civic Hall from 3.00 - 8.00pm**, will feature a range of flood protection ideas, products and services.

Anyone who has been affected by flooding, or is worried that their house is at risk will be able to pick up lots of advice ranging from how to reduce damage to property and how to stay safe during a flood.

How to recognise a Stroke.....

The symptoms of a stroke can be difficult to identify but doctors now say a bystander can recognise a stroke by remembering the 3 steps to 'STR' and asking the following questions:-

S = Ask the person to **Smile**

T = Ask the person to **Talk** and say a simple sentence (*coherently*)

R = Ask him or her to **Raise both arms**

If the individual affected has trouble with any one of these tasks, call 999 immediately and describe the symptoms.

You can also check by asking the person to stick out their tongue. If the tongue is crooked, if it goes to one side, this is also an indication of a stroke.

Life After the Break

The end of a relationship or marriage can be a difficult and painful experience. It can leave you feeling confused, lonely and lacking in confidence in yourself and the future. **Relate Oxfordshire** will be running an eight week course looking at how relationships work and why they sometimes go wrong. How to manage our own needs as well as those of others and how to increase the skills and confidence needed to build new relationships for the future. The sessions will be held Thursday evenings starting **16 October** at their offices at **33 Iffley Road, Oxford**, from **7.00 - 9.00pm**.

To find out further details please call **Mandy Blair** or **Maureen Buy** at **Relate** on **01865 242960**.

Local Housing Allowance

For new claims for Housing Benefit made since April 2008, local authorities now set maximum amounts that they will pay for rent. This scheme is called the 'Local Housing Allowance', (LHA). The rates of LHA are set locally in line with market rents in the area and you can find up to date tables showing what South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse District Councils will pay by going to their websites and following the links through benefits to LHA. If you were already receiving Housing Benefit before April and have not moved or had a break in your claim, the new rules will **not** apply to you. If you receive Housing Benefit and are thinking of moving, please check what amount of rent the council will cover before making any decisions, otherwise you might find the rent is more than your benefit will pay.



Carers' Groups

www.oxondads.com

This website has been put together by a group of Oxfordshire dads to highlight what is going on locally and what help and advice is available. The dads are from the 'Saturdays' drop in sessions held at the Oxfordshire Children's Centres. They take place on Saturday mornings for dads/male carers and their children (0 - 5yrs).

Oxfordshire Family Support Network has developed a new e-group for Parents of Disabled Children in Oxfordshire called "Disabled Children Matter in Oxfordshire". The aim of the group is to form a strong parent/carer led group, to lead the consultation process, be an active part of decision-making, raise specific issues concerning parents of disabled children and to develop the services families need. Parents interested in joining should contact Gail Hanrahan at Gail@oxfsn.co.uk

Dementia Support Groups

Ridgeway Day Hospital
99 Wantage Road, **Didcot**
1st Thursday of each month, 12 - 1.30pm
Contact Brenda Green on 01865 455816 or Stella Inston on 07796 441203 for details

Wykeham Park Day Hospital
East Street, **Thame**
1st Wednesday each month, 1.30 - 3.00pm
Contact Brenda Green on 01865 455816 or Maggie Jarrott on 01865 876508 for details

United Reformed Church Hall
Crown Square, **Wheatley**
2nd & 4th Thurs. each month, 1.30 - 3.00pm
Contact Brenda Green on 01865 455816 or Liz Barry on 01865 876508 for details

If you attend a carers' group or know of one taking place in your area and you would like us to advertise it in our newsletter, please let us know.

Oxfordshire Carers' Forum Discussion Network Breaks

This offers a chance to meet other carers and share friendship, ideas and concerns. On **23 September, 11.30am - 1.30pm, Exeter Hall, Oxford Road, Kidlington**. There will be a talk on PALS - Complaints now and in the future by Deborah Dunn, Oxfordshire PCT.

African/Caribbean Carers Oxfordshire Carers' Forum Network Discussion Break

Information exchange and lunch for those looking after someone who could not live in their own home without their support. On **13 October, 11.00am - 2.00pm, East Oxfordshire Community Centre, 117a Cowley Road, Oxford**. There will be a talk on Direct Payments by Anthony Thorn, Oxfordshire County Council.

Older Carers Floating Support Group

Floating support sessions take place across the county every month

- Free information packs
- Support for getting help with services
- Helping you to understand your rights
- Free benefits advice
- Independent and confidential
- Factsheets and other information

For details contact Age Concern on 01235 849400 or chriswitcher@ageconcernoxon.org.uk



EVENTS

FREE
Oxfordshire Dads Festival 2008
Dads go WILD!!!

Saturday 27 September, 10.30am - 3.00pm
South Oxfordshire Adventure Playground,
off Abingdon Road, Oxford



- Adventurous activities for dads & children
- Climbing wall
- Arts and Crafts
- Penalty shoot out run by Oxford Utd coaches
- Music by South Parade
- BBQ (cost applies)
- Plus many more activities on the day!

Henley Football Club is holding
a....

Learning Disability Football
Fun Day

Sunday 5 October 2008
2.30pm - 4.30pm
At the YMCA, 2 Lawson Road,
Henley-on-Thames

Football session followed by
refreshments



Children (over 5), teenagers and
adults are all welcome to join in.
Please register in advance on
01491 411849 or email
mike.henleymca@btconnect.com

Alzheimer's Society

Banbury & District Branch's

Dementia: Engaging in
Meaningful Activities

Fifth Conference

To be held at
The Tew Centre
Ledwell Road, Great Tew, Chipping Norton

Wednesday 22 October 2008
9.30am - 4.30pm

£50 per delegate
For details contact 01295 720132 or
alzheimersbanbury@tesco.net

'LOOKING AFTER ME'
FREE COURSE FOR UNPAID CARERS

LEARN HOW TO ORGANISE YOUR LIFE,
REDUCE STRESS, IMPROVE HEALTH AND
GENERAL WELL-BEING

SIX TUESDAYS, 10.30AM - 2.00PM
14 OCTOBER - 18 NOVEMBER 2008
WESLEY MEMORIAL METHODIST
CHURCH HALL, NEW INN HALL
STREET, OXFORD

TO ENROL: Contact Oxfordshire Carers
Forum, 01993 706543 or
admin@oxoncarersforum.org.uk

COUNCIL TAX AND HOUSING BENEFIT

Earlier this year it was announced that from October 2008, backdating of claims would be limited to a maximum of 3 months instead of 1 year. We have just been told by the district council that the legislation has not yet been passed by government, so the new tighter rules won't be in place for a little while. If you think you may be entitled to benefit, please put in a claim as soon as possible. Our outreach workers can help check whether you are entitled to benefit. Also, from October 2008 we have been told that maintenance payments will not be counted as income when calculating benefit entitlement. If you have income from maintenance payments and you tried to claim Housing Benefit or Council Tax Benefit in the past and were turned down, it may be worth trying again. South Oxfordshire District Council have recently started a series of 'surgeries' in local towns, where people can drop in and talk to their staff about benefit issues or claim benefit. In some cases the session just covers Housing and Council Tax Benefit, at others the local pensions service and other local organisations may be present. Forthcoming sessions are as follows:

Benson Village Hall, 22 October 2008, 2 - 5pm

SOHA, 24 September & 19 November, 10am - 12pm both days

Thame Town Council, 2 October, 9.30am - 12pm

Foxhall Manor Park, Didcot, 1 October, 9am - 12pm

BRITISH TELECOM (BT) - Protected Services Scheme

A free scheme that safeguards the telephone service of people who have special needs due to a disability or because they are elderly or housebound. If a bill is unpaid due to exceptional circumstances (a stay in hospital, for instance), the phone won't be disconnected while the problem is being sorted out. Alternatively, if you know you are going to be away when the phone bill is due, you can make special arrangements with your local Customer Service Centre by calling BT free on...**Freephone 0800 800150 or Mnicom 0800 243123.**

Take a look at the newly designed website for **The Clive Project**, who support younger people with dementia.

www.thecliveproject.org.uk

Social dates for members at The Clive Project Café, Cassington Village Hall.

25 Sept., 23 Oct., 27 Nov. To book supper call 01865 821699 or 01993 891955.

Open Access in association with **Leonard Cheshire Disability** is a drop in group for physically disabled people of all ages, their carers and supporters. It meets on the 1st, 2nd and 4th Wednesday of each month. From 10.00am - 1.00pm at the **Red Cross Hall, Wantage.**

Many thanks to all the individuals and organisations who have provided us with funding, enabling us to support carers.

Trips and Training - Places are limited, please return your slips early!

- ◆ 12 November 2008 Southampton Christmas Shopping
- ◆ 10 December 2008 - Millets Farm Christmas Lunch
- ◆ Wednesday 1 October, Relaxation Techniques, Didcot Civic Hall, 9.30 - 1.00
De-stress with this useful course on how to relax and make time for yourself.
- ◆ Wednesday 19 November, Coping with Anxiety, Didcot Civic Hall, 9.30 - 1.00
Tips and techniques on managing anxiety better.



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