



Carers' Voice

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The South and Vale Carers Centre has grown over the years with the support of dedicated and hard working trustees, who have brought a wide range of skills and experience to the role. At the moment we are looking for new trustees who have business and / or IT experience to join us to maintain our well regarded services and develop further initiatives. If you would like to know more and feel you could commit to one meeting a month please contact the Centre.

It is well known that carers often do not realise that there is help and support for them in their caring role. During Carers' Week, the Centre collaborated with other organisations to run a successful information stall in the John Radcliffe Hospital just by the League of Friends cafe. It turned out to be a very good opportunity to meet people who are caring and talk to the hospital staff about how we can work more closely together.

This month we have been sad to say goodbye to Chris Elliot, our Volunteer Befriending Co-ordinator, who has retired. Chris brought a diverse wealth of talents to the role and she is making the most of her new found freedom by writing and performing in a play, 'Life and Laundry,' at the Burton Taylor Studios in Oxford in September. We are pleased to welcome Teresa Thompson to the team and she will be making contact with carers and volunteers over the next couple of weeks.

I would once again like to thank Malcolm Buckland who has worked tirelessly with us over the last few months to make our new leaflets look fit for the 21st century. His work can be seen on his website (www.malcolmbuckland.co.uk).

Finally, if you need a break and this sunny weather makes you long for the seaside don't forget to book a seat on our trip to Bournemouth as places go very quickly. We hope to be able to have a pick up point in Thame if there is enough demand.

South & Vale Carers Centre

5 Lydalls Road
Didcot
Oxon
OX11 7HX

Tel: 01235 510212
carers@svcarers.org.uk
www.svcarers.org.uk

Open Monday - Friday
9.00am - 4.00pm

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The State Pension age for Women is changing.....

Between April 2009 and January 2012, the Department of Work and Pensions, (DWP), will be writing to approximately 1.9m women to explain these changes. Women who are affected will receive a letter and information leaflet telling them the date when they will be entitled to receive their State Pension, between 12 and 39 months prior to their 60th birthday. Upon receipt of this letter there is no need to contact the DWP unless their date of birth is incorrect.

Changes to the State Pension age for women - key facts:

- From 2010, the State Pension age for women will increase gradually to 65, to bring it in line with the State Pension age for men
- The State Pension age for women born after 5 April 1955 will be 65
- The age up to which customers will be able to get certain benefits, such as Jobseeker's Allowance, Income Support or Employment Support Allowance, will increase in line with the State Pension age
- The minimum age for claiming benefits such as Pension Credit and Winter Fuel Payments will also increase in line with the State Pension age
- Customers will still need to meet the necessary conditions to claim any benefits.

More information on the changes to women's State Pension age, plus a calculator that anyone can use to work out their exact State Pension age, can be found at www.thepensionservice.gov.uk

Unsafe electric blankets can cause fires

The South Oxfordshire District Council and Vale of White Horse District Council are offering free safety checks of electric blankets at the following venues:

Abingdon 11 September 2009

Didcot 20 October 2009

Faringdon 9 October 2009

Henley 6 October 2009

Thame 8 September 2009

Wantage 23 October 2009

**For details and to book your appointment:
Call: 01865 815607 or Email:
trading.standards@oxfordshire.gov.uk**

(Strictly on a first come, first served basis by pre-booked appointment only).

Carers needed for Physical Disability Strategy Implementation Group

Do you care for someone of working age with a Physical Disability?

Can you represent the view of carers in a mixed group of users, carers and representatives from organisations in Oxfordshire?

Priority areas include housing, transport, information, employment and community involvement.

We meet approximately every 3 months, the next meeting is on the 21/9/09 from 2 - 4pm.

Maryse Pomlett at Oxfordshire County Council is interested in hearing from carers to discuss this further. Please contact her on tel. no. 01865 323621 or email: maryse.pomlett@oxfordshire.gov.uk

Self directed support website launched - www.takingcontroloxon.org.uk

Taking Control is the new information portal for anyone with an interest in self directed support in Oxfordshire. The website is designed to address the information needs of people who use social care services, carers, social care and health care professionals, as well as partner organisations including voluntary organisations.



These four pages are produced by Oxfordshire Carers' Forum, Oxford Carers' Centre, South and Vale Carers' Centre and Carers' Centre (North & West Oxon)

Covering local and national news of importance to Carers in Oxfordshire

Discrimination against carers to be made against the law

The Equalities Bill was published at the end of April and will become law in 2010.

Protecting carers, family and friends.

The law now says that you cannot treat someone worse because they go around with someone from a different race or someone who is gay. This is called discrimination by association. But sometimes you might be treated worse because you are a carer of an older person or disabled person. You could also be treated worse because your friend or a person you live with is disabled, transsexual or is an older person. The Bill will make it against the law to do this.

An example of how this might work:

A company is looking for staff. Carla, who has a disabled daughter applies for the job. The company must not turn Carla down just because they think she will take too much time off work to care for daughter.

Protecting disabled people better

The law now says that you cannot discriminate against someone because they have a disability or because of things to do with their disability.

For example:

Lisa, who has learning difficulties, goes to a restaurant to have dinner. Because of her learning disability, Lisa makes a mess when she is eating. The waiter asks her to leave because she is making a mess. He guesses she is disabled but asks her to leave anyway. He does not have another good reason for asking her to leave. This is called discrimination arising from disability. The Bill will make it against the law to do this.

This simple explanation above was taken from a government easy read booklet, The Equality Bill 2009, What is it all about? Crown copyright 2009

Changes have been made to the existing law in response to The Coleman case. Sharon Coleman claimed that she was discriminated against and harassed because she had a disabled son and was treated less favourably than employees whose children weren't disabled. The European Court of Justice ruled that she should be protected by the law because she is associated with disability, opening up new rights to millions of carers.



Are you in an unpaid caring role looking after a close relative or friend? Is your health and ability to cope at risk? Would you welcome understanding, support and advice?

A new programme, Caring with Confidence, is about to be launched in Oxfordshire. This programme offers Carers a free, safe and supportive environment to explore the services available to them. It also covers the essentials of looking after someone and how to communicate effectively with other people to help support their needs. This will all help to improve the carers' own health and wellbeing and that of the person they care for.

The programme will allow those people who find themselves in a caring role the opportunity to meet other people in a similar situation, learn more about the condition they are dealing with and improve their ability to get exactly what they need from health and community professionals and services available to them. Caring with Confidence is part of the Government's New Deal for Carers and the National Carers Strategy. It has been devised nationally and is aimed at helping carers build on their knowledge and strengths, sharing useful information and identifying the positive changes they can make to their own situations.

The programme is to be delivered locally in Oxfordshire by the Oxfordshire Carers' Forum, in partnership with the three local Carers' Centres.

Caring with Confidence has been designed to enhance and supplement existing provision. It will mean a step up in Oxfordshire from 45 to 200 carers a year benefiting from this kind of support.

The programme has seven modules each being held over a three hour period. The carer is encouraged to sign up for all seven modules as the greatest benefit is derived from the peer support from a group of 12 to 14 carers undergoing the experience together.

It is intended that the seven module programme will be delivered in sequence in different venues throughout Oxfordshire over the next two years. Oxford will be the main venue but locations will vary. It should be possible to arrange delivery at times and places convenient to carers wherever at least 15 carers are identified as wanting to undertake the programme.



Carers who work will be welcomed and evening programmes arranged if sufficient people are interested. Otherwise the programmes will run in the middle of the day which has proved to be most beneficial to retired and non working carers.

This is an outstanding opportunity for unpaid carers in Oxfordshire to obtain informed help and support in an understanding and cost free manner.

Interested carers should sign up for the introductory module, '**Finding your Way**'.

STOP PRESS:- Details of the first courses have now been received and are as follows

Course 1 - Oxford

Mondays

13, 20, 27 July, 3 and 10 August

Wesley Memorial Hall, Oxford

Course 2 - Abingdon

Fridays

17, 24, 31 July, 7, 14, 21, 28 August

The Charter, Abingdon

Course 3 - Banbury

Mondays

September 7, 14, 21 and 28 October 5, 12 and 19.

The Mill Arts Centre, Banbury

For more information on how to access the Caring with Confidence programme contact:

Valerie Thwaites on 01235 547180

or admin@oxoncarersforum.org.uk or at:

**Oxfordshire Carers' Forum
2nd Floor
The Charter
Abingdon
Oxfordshire
OX14 3LZ**





Emergency Carers Support Service in Oxfordshire

For **adults** who provide unpaid care for **adults** who depend on them because of illness, disability or frailty.

The Emergency Carers Support Service is a unique service funded by Oxfordshire County Council and Oxfordshire NHS PCT. The service offers free emotional support to any adult carer and is able to provide practical emergency support to registered carers with this service.

How can this service support adult carers?

- By offering professional and confidential support to the carer over the telephone
- By supporting the carer when they have an urgent appointment or an emergency situation
- By offering information about services and resources available to carers in Oxfordshire

Who can register?

- Any adult can register that provides substantial regular unpaid care to another adult in Oxfordshire
- Carers may or may not be living with the person they care for
- All information received will be treated confidentially, respectfully and with an understanding of your circumstances by an experienced team

How can an adult carer register?

- By telephone on 01865 374430 to request a registration form
- Online at www.a4e.co.uk/ils/oxfordshire
- Or ask your local Carers Centre

Registered carers will receive a registration card to keep in their purse or wallet.

Carers Direct

Information, advice and support for carers



www.nhs.uk/carersdirect

Freephone: 0808 802 02 02* (7 days a week)

Carers Direct is a practical and comprehensive information, advice and support service for carers. Whatever you're looking for just give us a call free or go online. It's at your fingertips.

(7 days a week)

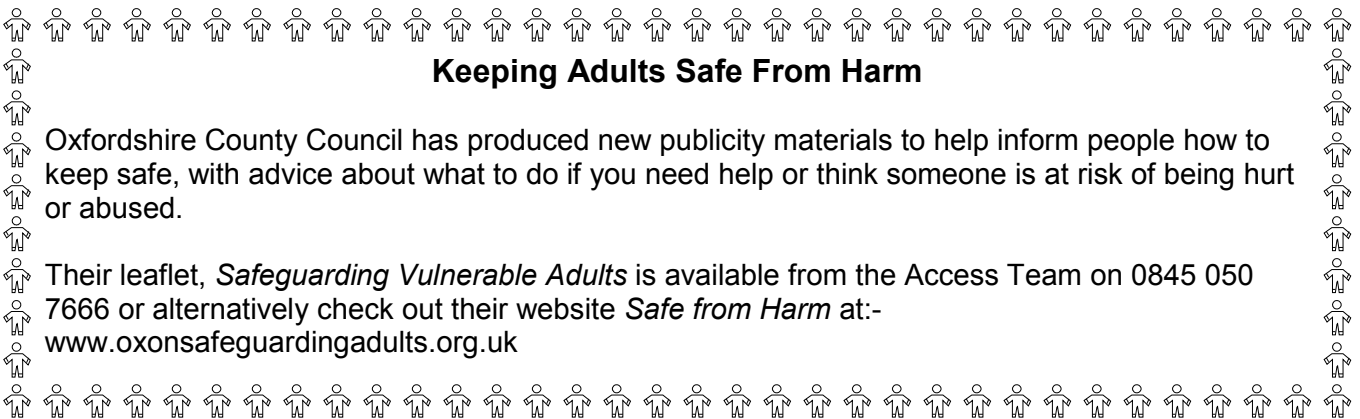
THE ABBEYFIELD OXFORD SOCIETY

Jean Moir, their administrator writes:-

The Abbeyfield Oxford Society is part of an international organisation, providing small, friendly homes for elderly people in several countries across the world. They run Brian Lewis House in St. Clements, Oxford. Here ten elderly residents enjoy the character and spaciousness of a former Victorian rectory, with every modern comfort, and within easy reach of central Oxford.

Here they can enjoy their independence with support. A team of dedicated staff provide delicious meals, keep the House in good order, and are there to help the residents in whatever they want to do, and with any problems. Very important in the residents' support are their "sponsors", friends or relatives who visit frequently, and are closely involved. Volunteer members of the committee also keep in touch with the residents and ensure everything is running smoothly in the House.

For more details contact: The Administrator, Brian Lewis house, 80 St. Clements, OXFORD, OX4 1AW. Tel. 01865 790439; e-mail: mail@abbeyfieldoxford.org.uk; Website: www.abbeyfieldoxford.org

**Keeping Adults Safe From Harm**

Oxfordshire County Council has produced new publicity materials to help inform people how to keep safe, with advice about what to do if you need help or think someone is at risk of being hurt or abused.

Their leaflet, *Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults* is available from the Access Team on 0845 050 7666 or alternatively check out their website *Safe from Harm* at:- www.oxonsafeguardingadults.org.uk

Support Groups

Headway Carers' Group



A new group set up for carers of an adult with an acquired brain injury

7.30pm - 9.00pm, second Wednesday of each month. The next meetings are:
8th July, 12th August, 9th Sept.

4 Bagley Wood Road
Kennington, Oxford, OX1 5PL

For details call 01865 736354 or Email communitysupport@headway-oxford.org.uk

Do you know that children can have CFS / ME?

OMEGA is a support group for children, adults and carers affected by CFS / ME.

For more details contact **OMEGA** on 01865 766310 or email ltrl3@tiscali.co.uk

Henley Group for Adults with Learning Disabilities

This group is for any adult living in or near Henley who has a learning disability. The group offers the chance for people to grow in confidence.

Contact Mark Smyth, My Life, My Choice, on 01865 204214
Venue: YMCA, Henley
6pm - 8pm.

Next meeting dates are:-
13th July, 10th August, 21 Sept., 12 October

Cognitive Behavioural Therapy Groups 2009

Oxfordshire Mind is running a programme of 8 week Cognitive Behavioural Therapy Groups across the county during October 2009, including Anxiety and Depression in **Abingdon**.

For more information or to register tel. **01865 263734** or **01865 263730**
email: ellie.raikes@oxfordshire-mind.org.uk



Trips for Carers

Bournemouth Trip..... 27 August 2009

Christmas Shopping at Birmingham Bullring..... 11 November 2009

Trip to Independent Living Centre, Witney (see article below).....TBC

Making life easier!

Guideposts' Independent Living Centre in Witney has a showroom with a wide range of equipment to make life easier throughout the home. This includes stairlifts, riser-recliner chairs, specialist beds, bath aids and a whole range of gadgets and gizmos, all in individual room settings. They have an Occupational Therapist (O.T.), who can give expert, individual advice and information. If you would be interested in joining a small trip to have a look round the Centre and to talk to their O.T., please let us know on the enclosed form and we'll then contact you to try and find a date that suits everyone who wants to come. The trip will include a pub lunch stop.

Oxfordshire Family Information Service Holiday Play Schemes 2009

A copy of the booklet listing this years Summer Holiday Play Schemes can be viewed at www.oxonfis.org.uk Alternatively, you can phone 08452 26 26 36 to request a hard copy.

www.odi.gov.uk

This website for The Office for Disability Issues seeks views on the way disabled people can use the funding they receive from the state. The policy forms part of the Government's welfare reforms and will for the first time enshrine in legislation the principle that disabled people are the experts in their own lives and have the right to choice and control over their support.

Susan and Tony from **Oxfordshire Mental Health Matters Information & Advocacy Service** visit Restore at Fleetmeadow and May Tree House, Mereland Road in Didcot regularly on Tuesday mornings.

(Ring first to check, as times vary).

Restore: Tel. 01235 817215
May Tree House: Tel. 01235 516220

You're not Alone

For many people one of the worst effects of caring is the isolation. Research carried out by Carers UK in 2008 revealed that a large majority of carers are cutting back on leisure activities and hobbies. The Carers UK website discussion forum offers a place where carers can meet online to get advice and support, to share their experiences or just to have a laugh and a joke with other people in similar situations. **www.carersuk.org/forums**

Donations

We would like to thank The Brian Murtagh Charitable Trust for help towards improving our information technology system and the Four Acre Trust for help towards the cost of places at the Young Carers Festival this year.

Since our last mailing we would also like to thank the following parish councils for their support:- Berinsfield, Brightwell cum Sotwell, Checkendon, Goring, Steventon and Upton.

Disclaimer: South and Vale Carers Centre takes every care in producing this newsletter but cannot take responsibility for any errors that may have occurred. Mention of goods or services does not imply endorsement.