

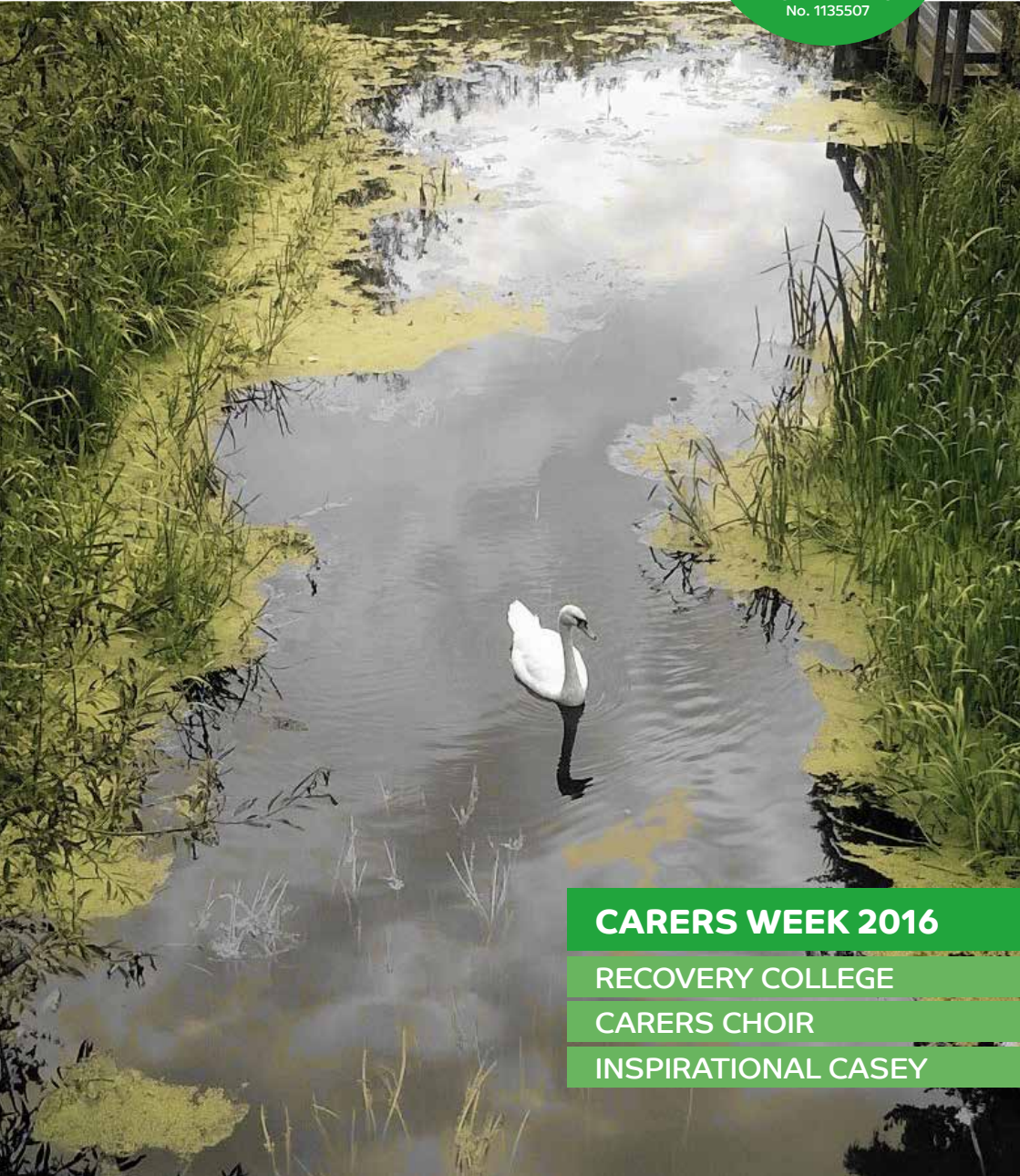
Summer 2016 | carersinbeds.org.uk

Carers



A not-for-profit
organisation run for
carers by carers

Registered Charity
No. 1135507



CARERS WEEK 2016

RECOVERY COLLEGE

CARERS CHOIR

INSPIRATIONAL CASEY

An Introduction to Autism



In partnership with **Autism Bedfordshire** we will be holding a training session on

An Introduction to Autism

This course is designed to give participants an understanding of Autism Spectrum Conditions and their effects on everyday life. The course also includes a personal perspective on living with someone with an ASC.

Venue:

Carers in Bedfordshire
Sea Cadets HQ.
4 Station Road, Biggleswade
SG18 8AL

Date:

Friday 24th June 2016

Time:

10.00am - 1.00pm

Refreshments will be provided



If you would like to attend please contact Dawn Ray on **01767 315079**
or email dawn.ray@carersinbeds.org.uk

*(Places will be allocated on a first come first served basis
with priority given to those on a waiting list)*

Editorial

Welcome to our new look Carers magazine! We hope you like the changes and can easily find all the information and news you need.



Carers who saw the options for the new look gave us really helpful feedback on the styles they liked

so we have incorporated those into the finished version - including our trademark green!

Following on from the first carer's story in the last edition there are two more inspiring stories from a parent carer and a carer of someone with dementia in this edition. (see pp. 10-11 and 20-21) And a useful tip from Carers in Bedfordshire's Chair, Anne Grant for when you are travelling with the person you care for. Please continue to send us your stories, it is great to see what carers are up to.

CEO Helen Satterthwaite has signed up for a sponsored half marathon in October to raise money for Carers in Bedfordshire's services. (see p.22)

The successful and growing Carers Choir celebrates its first anniversary in June. Find out how you can join and where they have been performing. (see p.8)

This year for Carers Week (6-12th June) we are having cream teas at all our carer groups (see p.7 for more details) so apologies if you are working on beach bodies for the summer!

Please continue to get in touch with me with your ideas and stories for the magazine.

Nicola
nicola.judd@carersinbeds.org.uk

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Sea Cadet HQ, Station Road,
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Leighton Buzzard Office:

Arden House, West Street,
Leighton Buzzard, LU7 1DD

Carers Lounge Bedford:

Bedford Hospital, South Wing,
Kempston Road, Bedford,
MK42 9DJ

Carers Lounge Luton:

Luton & Dunstable University
Hospital, St Mary's Wing,
Lewsey Road, Luton, LU4 0DZ

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photography groups.

NEWS

ELFT's Commitment to Carers

Carers in Bedfordshire are working with East London Foundation Trust (ELFT), Bedfordshire's provider of mental health services, including adult mental health, memory assessment and child and adolescent mental health services, to produce a 'Commitment to Carers' plan. This will capture ELFT's commitment to supporting and involving carers as partners in the care provided to their loved one. If you are caring for someone receiving services from ELFT, and would like to be involved in the development and review of ELFT's commitment to carers, please keep a slot in your diary free for an event to take place on June 8th at King's House in Bedford.

Carers UK Creative Writing Competition 2016

Carers UK are running their annual writing competition welcoming poems and short stories on all aspects of caring - the joys and the challenges and complex emotions that come with looking after a loved one. First prize £150 high street vouchers.

To enter and for more information visit carers.org/creativewriting
Closing date 31 July 2016.

Carers in Bedfordshire's Awards and Nominations

The Carers' Lounge at Bedford Hospital won the Patient Experience National Award in the category of Support for Caregivers, Friends and Family, while Bedfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group (BCCG) was runner-up in Commissioning for Patient Experience for their project to involve service users and carers in choosing a new provider of mental health and specialist learning disability services.

Nina Fraser, Director of Nursing and Patient Services at Bedford Hospital congratulated the Carers Lounge, saying: "This award gives recognition for the fantastic work that Christina and the many volunteers at the Carers Lounge do on a daily basis."



The Carers Lounge is open from 11am-6pm at Bedford Hospital so call in if you are passing!

We were also shortlisted for the Charity Governance Awards run by the Clothworkers Company. This award is exclusively dedicated to charity governance and recognises the work of the Board, most of whom are current and former carers and work tirelessly in spearheading many of the changes that have contributed to the growth of the charity.

New Website



We are working on a new website so it's easier for you to find out about all our services and activities.

If you have any ideas for this or items that you would like to see on there, please email website@carersinbeds.org.uk
In the meantime, you can still look at the current website at carersinbeds.org.uk



Fidget Aprons

We had a fantastic response to our fidget apron plea in the last edition and one of our volunteer's craft group donated these beautiful fidget muffs they all made together in their meetings. A huge thank you to you all from us!

National Carers Strategy Consultation



The Department of Health has recently launched a consultation on their strategy for carers and they want to hear from carers.

Underpinning the strategy is that caring for others should not be to the detriment of the carer's own health and wellbeing and carers can receive support in a number of ways - including from social services, the NHS, or the benefit system.

Alistair Burt, Minister of State for Communities and Social Care and lead Minister for carers, launched the consultation at Carers in Bedfordshire on 18th March 2016. He heard directly from carers about what matters to them and talked about why consulting on the carers strategy is so important.

This is an opportunity for you to have your say directly. To do so or if you have any questions about this please contact carers@dh.gsi.gov.uk or go to www.gov.uk/government/consultations/carers-strategy-call-for-evidence

The deadline for responses is 30th June 2016 at 11.45am.

Bedfordshire and Luton Recovery College

East London Foundation Trust (ELFT) launched the new Bedfordshire and Luton Recovery College in May 2016.

The college offers workshops and courses all focussing on recovery and wellbeing. Recovery has many definitions and one which resonates with many people is that it is about a personal journey to live as well as possible and have a meaningful and satisfying life.

The courses aim to support people to become an expert in their own recovery by exploring hope, control and opportunity. The Recovery College is inclusive for all; service users, carers, family, friends, neighbours, staff.

Courses include topics such as Wellbeing, Anger Awareness, Understanding Depression, Employment Pathways, Smoking Cessation and much more.

For more information and a prospectus please contact RecoveryCollege@elft.nhs.uk

Tel: **01582 709012**,
Mob: **07748 660070 / 07748 66336577**

From July 2016 you will be able to enrol on line.

Carers Week 2016



Carers Week 2016 is set for 6th to 12th June to raise awareness of caring, highlight the challenges carers face and recognise the contribution they make throughout the UK.



The theme this year is **Building Carer Friendly Communities:** communities which support carers to look after their loved ones well, while recognising that they have needs of their own.

We will be serving cream teas at groups during Carers Week - so if you have never got round to dropping in on us, this would be a good time to make it a date!

Another unmissable event is the Ageing Well Exhibition where our very own Carers Choir will be performing. We will have a market stall again in Leighton Buzzard and a joint session with the Barton le Clay Surgery at St Nicholas Church. We hope lots of carers will come along for taster wellbeing sessions.

TIMETABLE

Leighton Buzzard Morning,
26th May - Carers Week
Arden House, West Street, LU7 1DD
'Quiz & Cakes'

Bedford Monday Morning Drop In,
6th June 10.30-12pm, Pilgrim Centre

Leighton Buzzard Market Stall in
Leighton Buzzard on 7th June

Carers Choir, 7th June
Priory Methodist Church, Bedford

Carers Rest, 7th June
9.45-1.45pm, Dame Alice Court,
Newnham Street, Bedford

Shefford Carers Group, 7th June
10.30-12pm, Shefford Health
Centre, Shefford

Bedford Ageing Well exhibition
8th June 10-3pm, Corn Exchange

Dunstable Downs Group, 8th June
10.30-12pm, Gateway House

Leighton Buzzard Drop In, 9th June
10.30-12pm, Arden House

Barton le Clay, 10th June 10-2pm,
St Nicholas Church - joint event with
GP surgery - taster sessions, discount
card etc

Leighton Buzzard Walking Group,
21st June 'Cream Tea' at
Parsons Close Recreation Ground

Houghton Regis Group, 28th June
'Cream Tea', Houghton Regis Library

Details of all activities during Carers week are on our website. All activities are free of charge unless stated otherwise.



Carers' Choir

The Carers' Choir celebrates its very first anniversary in June. It has grown from the original 10 members to 24 today, and has given many performances around the county.

The idea of a carers' choir was first born in June. The choir is run by Evelyn Sutherland, a piano teacher who directs several community and school choirs.

Singing is good for health and wellbeing. Professor Graham Welch, Chair of Music Education at the University of London says, "Singing has physical benefits because it is an aerobic activity and has psychological benefits which are also evident when people sing together because of the increased sense of community, belonging."

The choir now regularly performs at events and groups, for example, the Carers Rest, the Volunteers Christmas Forum and at the bedside of one of their own members when she was very ill. The carer and her family enjoyed and appreciated it so much they then invited the

group to perform at her subsequent funeral. The choir are performing at the Ageing Well Exhibition and in various places during Carers Week in June.

One carer told us "It is such fun. I would encourage any carer thinking about it to give it a go. It is cheaper than pills or booze, less harmful and you will come home with a smile on your face." *Lesley Brinklow*

Singing is good for health and wellbeing and even has physical benefits.

The carers' choir is open to all Carers in Bedfordshire registered carers from all localities and meets regularly at the Priory Methodist Church in Bedford. No singing experience is necessary, just the willingness to learn, join in, have fun, make friends and work as a team. If you would like to join please contact Sandra Rome on **0300 111 1919**. We are also starting a choir in our Central Bedfordshire locality so if this would be better for you contact Sally Petre on **01767 315079**.



A Cautionary Tale

Written by Anne Grant

Our son was out with my husband and they had a puncture on the M1. They called me to notify the breakdown company.

They told me we were not covered, as I was not in the car and the insurance was on me not the car. It never occurred to me to have my husband's name on the insurance as he can't drive.

My husband is severely paralysed, he is in a heavy electric wheelchair and cannot transfer into the cab of a recovery vehicle. Neither the breakdown company nor the highway police knew how to resolve the situation. It took me several desperate attempts to find a wheelchair accessible taxi.

After three hours in freezing conditions and pitch darkness they were finally able to come home. I was phoned later by the breakdown company to say they were "escalating our case." They refunded us all costs and said if it happened again they would do their utmost to get my husband home.

TIPS:

- Ask your insurance company how they would deal with such a situation.
- Have a Plan B for situations like this - family/friend contacts.
- Have a list of wheelchair accessible taxis to hand or stored in your phone.
- Store your emergency contacts in your phone with "ICE" (In Case of Emergency) in front of their name so emergency services know who to contact.

Staying Positive

Written by Jenny Moody MBE

It's 8am, the sun is blazing through the window, I should be saying, "what a wonderful day." I turn over I just want to go back to sleep. I have been up eight times in the night reminding my beloved where the toilet is and how he gets to it. Deep breath, he will like a cuppa and we can start the day on a positive note. SMILE.

He wakes, I give him a cuddle and say the sun is shining. He sobs and says, "Who am I? What is happening, I want to kill myself." Now all I can think of is his pain and how powerless I am. I must try and say the right thing, "Love you and here is a cuppa." It works and within minutes he is talking about something outside the window. It does not make sense so I just laugh and agree. My head starts to hurt with the effort but I must stay positive.

He does a little laugh, I cling onto that.

Today we are going to try and attend a new group, Singing for the Brain. Maybe he will like it. I help

him to put his dressing gown on. Over breakfast he pours milk into the teapot and cold water on top and piles dishes full of cornflakes, not putting any milk on. I laugh and remake the tea.

We go to the bathroom together, I get him washed and dried. His clothes are laid out in order, I show him what to put on and how. He puts his clothes over his pyjamas, I laugh and make a joke about Batman but he just stares blank. Another thirty minutes spent getting things right. He does a little laugh, I cling onto that. The handle has come off the cupboard, another reminder of how he would repair it so easily but not now.

Find some lunch, I did not shop properly yesterday as I was worried about leaving him too long so not much in the fridge.

Remember when you were first married, you could make something out of nothing so let's see what we can do. He tries to wash up but can't remember how to get hot water or wipe things clean. It is important he feels he can do something though.



He sits down and is soon asleep. I must be grateful for the good years we had together.

Some friends pop by. They are patient and gently suggest things that may help him better. I KNOW, I KNOW I scream in my head, but I am so exhausted and if I am honest feel cheated that we are not having the life I hoped for together. Guilt sets in, how dare I feel like that instead of thinking about how he feels. Nearly forgot, SMILE, no one wants to see a glum face. I hold his hand, his thumb strokes my fingers, there's a connection, a little warmth between us.

I can cope, I must not start the self pity. Time for bed. He stumbles upstairs, becomes a little angry and shouts "stop pushing me!" I remember it's frustration and fear.

It is important he feels he can do something though.

I help him take his clothes off and give him his pyjamas. He climbs into bed and closes his eyes. I look at this face I have loved for over 60 years, kiss him and say "I still love you, sleep well." No response. Maybe tomorrow will be better.

Coping in this situation nearly every day is tiring and draining, robbing you of your own self. One strategy I use to survive and manage is a collection of Library Days. They are times when the day is a little more positive and there is a little glimmer of what that person was in the past and you think back on those days when you feel like screaming or crying.

Does this story sound familiar to you?

We run various dementia and memory loss services and carers groups across all our localities. For further information please call Lisa Head or Mick James on **0300 111 1919**.

Group Calendar

All carers welcome unless otherwise stated.

Bedford

Bedford Office: Suite K, Sandland Court, Pilgrim Centre, Brickhill Drive, Bedford, MK41 7PZ
0300 111 1919

Carers weekly drop in

All carers welcome.
Pilgrim Centre
10.30am - midday
Every Monday
(excl. 29 Aug)

Contact: *Sandra Rome*

Learning Disability Group

Carers of people with Learning Difficulties.
Pilgrim Centre
10am - midday
4th Friday of the month,
24 Jun, 22 Jul, 26 Aug

Contact: *Geraldine Place*

Bedford Evening Group

Pilgrim Centre
7 - 9pm, 2nd Monday of month, 13 Jun, 11 Jul, 8 Aug.

Contact: *Donna Charles*

Carers Choir

No experience needed.
Priory Methodist Church, Newnham Avenue
9.45 - 11.45am, 1st and 3rd Tuesday of month,
7 Jun, 21 Jun, 5 Jul,
19 Jul, 2 Aug, 16 Aug

Contact: *Sandra Rome*

Camera Club

All abilities welcome.
Pilgrim Centre
1.30 - 3.30pm,
last Thursday of month,
30 Jun, 28 Jul, 25 Aug
Contact: *Sandra Rome*

Carers Rest

Dementia carers and the person they care for. Dame Alice Court, Newnham Street, MK40 3NR. 10.15am - 1.15pm, every Tuesday.

Contact: *Mick James*

Former Carers Group

All former carers.
Contact: *Geraldine Place*

Parents Together

All carers of children with additional needs.
Pilgrim Centre
10am - 12pm 23 Jun, 22 Jul

Contact: *Darran Youell*

Ivel Valley and West Mid Beds

Sea Cadet HQ,
Station Road,
Biggleswade, SG18 8AL
01767 315079

Dementia Gateway

2nd Monday of month,
13 Jun, 11 Jul, 8 Aug
Sea Cadet HQ
Contact: *Lisa Head*

Men's Group

All male carers welcome.
White Hart Pub,
Biggleswade, SG18 0AR
6.30 - 8.30pm, 4th
Monday of month,
27 Jun, 25 Jul, 22 Aug

Contact: *Dawn Ray*

Parkside Drop In

All stroke carers, either alone or with the person you care for.
Run jointly with the Stroke Association.

Parkside Hall, Ampthill
MK45 5AA
10.30am - 12.30pm
3rd Wednesday of month, 15 Jun, 20 Jul, 17 Aug

Contact: *Geraldine Place*

Shefford Carers Group

Health Centre, Shefford,
SG17 5FS
10.30 - 12pm
1st Tuesday of month,
7 Jun, 5 Jul, 2 Aug

Contact: *Dawn Ray*

Stotfold Carers Group

Larksfield Surgery,
Stotfold, SG5 4HB
10.30 - 12pm
3rd Tuesday of month,
21 Jun, 19 Jul, 16 Aug

Contact: *Dawn Ray*

Tea & Toast

All carers and cared for welcome.

Sea Cadet HQ
10.30 - 12.30pm
3rd Monday of month,
20 Jun, 18 Jul, 22 Aug

Contact: *Sally Petre*

Walking Group

Various locations.
11am - 1pm, 3rd
Wednesday of month,
15 Jun, 20 Jul, 17 Aug

Contact: *Dawn Ray*

Parents Together

Parent carers.
Sea Cadet HQ
10am - 12pm
9 Jun, 14 Jul

Contact: *Darran Youell*

Leighton Buzzard, Chiltern Vale

Leighton Buzzard Office:
Arden House, West
Street, Leighton Buzzard,
LU7 1DD

Contact: *Sarah Johnson*
07772231208

Dunstable Carers Group

All carers and cared for welcome.

Salvation Army, Lammas
Walk, LU7 1JB
6 - 8pm
2nd Tuesday of month
14 Jun, 12 Jul, 9 Aug

Walking Group

Various locations
2 - 4pm
3rd Tuesday of month
21 Jun, 19 Jul, 23 Aug

Dunstable Downs Group

Gateway House
10.30am - 12pm, 2nd
Wednesday of month,
8 Jun, 13 Jul, 10 Aug

Dunstable Evening Group

Salvation Army,
Lammas Walk, LU7 1JB
6 - 8pm
2nd Tuesday of month;
14 Jun, 12 Jul, 9 Aug

Dementia Gateway

2nd Monday of month,
13 Jun, 11 Jul, 8 Aug
Please call Lisa on
0300 111 1919
for location

Houghton Regis Group

Houghton Regis Library
1 - 3pm
Last Tuesday of month,
28 Jun, 26 Jul, 30 Aug

Leighton Buzzard Morning Carers Group

Arden House
10.30am - 12pm
Last Thursday of month,
30 Jun, 28 Jul, 25 Aug

Leighton Buzzard Evening Group

Arden House
7 - 9pm
Last Monday of month,
27 Jun, 25 Jul, no
meeting in August

Leighton Buzzard Drop In

Carers and cared-for.
Arden House
10.30am - 12pm
2nd Thursday of month,
9 Jun, 14 Jul, 11 Aug

Training

Please get in touch to put your name down for the courses or just come along to one of the information sessions.

BIGGLESWADE

Understanding Autism (one day)

Fri 24th June 10am - 1pm
Sea Cadet HQ, Station Road
Biggleswade SG18 8AL

Benefits Workshop

Thurs 21st July 10am - 3pm
Sea Cadet HQ, Station Road,
Biggleswade SG18 8AL
Booking required.

FLITWICK

Understanding Brain Injury

Weds June 22nd 10.30am - 12.30pm
Amphill and Flitwick Sea Cadets,
Althorpe Ave, Flitwick

Falls Awareness

Weds 6th July 10.30am - 12.30pm
Amphill and Flitwick Sea Cadets,
Althorpe Ave, Flitwick

Contact Dawn/Sally at the Sea Cadet HQ on **01767 315079** for more information on any of the Flitwick & Biggleswade courses.

BEDFORD

Unless stated otherwise, these all take place at Pilgrim Centre, Brickhill Drive, Bedford, MK41 7PZ

Dementia Awareness Training

Tues 7th, 14th & 21st June,
1.30 - 3.30pm

Online Shopping

Mon 13th June, 1.30 - 3pm

Dealing with Change

Thurs 16th June, 1.30 - 3pm

Using Social Media

Mon 20th June, 1.30 - 3.30pm

Wellbeing

Mon 4th, 11th, & 18th July, 12 - 1pm

Understanding Carers Assessments

Tues 5th July, 1 - 3.30pm

Tablet Training (Android)

Mon 4th & 11th July, 1.30 - 3pm

Supporting Adults with Autism

Wed 6th July 1.30 - 3.30pm

John Bunyan Talk

Thurs 14th July 1.30 - 3.30pm

Tour around Elstow Abbey

Thurs 4th Aug 1.30pm (need to make your own arrangements to get there)

Contact Nicola West at Pilgrim Centre on **0300 111 1919** for more information

Siblings Workshops for carers of those with autism

Half term & August - see page 16 for more details.

LEIGHTON BUZZARD

1:1 IT Training

Computer Tutor Jacqueline Dunn can provide training with Laptops, iPad/Tablets and Smartphones. (By appointment only)
Weds 8th June, Weds 15th June & Weds 22nd June from 10am - 2.15pm at Arden House, Leighton Buzzard.

First Aid Training

Facilitated by the British Red Cross
Thurs 23rd June 10am - 12pm at Arden House, Leighton Buzzard.

For both of the above courses please contact Sarah Johnson on **07772 231208** or sarah.johnson@carersinbeds.org.uk Appointments will be allocated on a first come first served basis to carers registered with Carers in Bedfordshire. Priority will be given to those on a waiting list.

Leighton Buzzard Morning

Guest Speaker Richard to talk about Diabetes Awareness and Prevention on Thursday 25th August, 10am - 12pm at Arden House, Leighton Buzzard.

Mental Health Awareness Week

16th - 22nd May we have guest speakers Beth Timms and Sapphira Timperio from **Mind BLMK**, coming along to talk at the Leighton Buzzard Carers Café about their services locally.

DUNSTABLE CARERS

Guest Speaker from Dunstable Good Neighbours Scheme on Tues 9th August at 6 - 8pm at the Salvation Army.

HOUGHTON REGIS CARERS

Guest Speaker Richard to talk about Diabetes Awareness and Prevention on Tues 30th August, 1 - 3pm at Houghton Regis Library.

Leighton Buzzard & Chiltern Vale News



We bid a very fond farewell to Jane in March, as she headed off back to Scotland and a new beginning. She was completely overwhelmed by all your lovely cards and wonderful

presents. I will run all her groups, so please keep coming, as I really look forward to seeing you all.

The walking group are looking forward to a Cream Tea in Parsons Park for our annual Carers Week celebration, Woburn in July and the

Leighton Buzzard Canal in August, if you would like to join us, please check dates out on the group pages, which will also tell you about the other group activities.

Our Art Class has been really successful and a number of talented artists have emerged!

We've been out at about with stalls at Houghton Regis Over 50s fair and the Houghton Regis Easter Egg Hunt.

Any ideas for guest speakers are always welcome. If you would like to know more about any of the groups or training, please contact Sarah Johnson on **07772 231208** or email sarah.johnson@carersinbeds.org.uk

Young Carer News

Young carers video



A group of young carers aged 14-17 across Borough and Central

Beds is working with the University of Bedfordshire to create an awareness/information video on Young carers to be shared with schools and professionals. As a first step in this long term project, the group got stuck in to create a practice short film of young carers talking about caring and how they feel. Each person chose a role which appealed to them, from being on camera or filming to being in the studio and cutting takes.



The next stage gave the group the opportunity to plan and film the content

of the video. After that, they were given a tour of the university.

There's still a lot to do before the video is ready to be showcased to parents, teachers and other professionals before being made available to schools and services across Bedfordshire. The young carers are very enthusiastic about

the project saying 'I came home buzzing, had such a good day'

'I got the opportunity to make a new friend who was in a similar situation to me with his brother'.

And parents gave it the thumbs up 'Both came home buzzing, didn't stop talking about it, both definitely want to go again!' 'Thoroughly enjoyed it, Inspired by the uni and its facilities''

For more information about support for young carers, call our Young Carers team on **0300 111 1919** or go to our young carers page on our website.

Workshops for Siblings

The Sibling Project will again be hosting a program of workshops for those under 18 who help care for a brother or sister. These will be a series of two Autism specific workshops exploring the effects of this condition on the siblings within the family. A further two will be generic both offering information around disability and strategies for coping and living in a home where there is disability or illness.

These are planned to take place in the June half term holidays and the August holidays.

For details contact Jan Sterling on **0300 111 1919** or email young.team@carersinbeds.org.uk

Ivel Valley Locality News

Biggleswade, Sandy, Shefford, Stotfold and surrounding villages



Hello everyone - we are keen to invite you along to some new events that will be happening in Biggleswade. Our

latest Choir is a group for anyone who enjoys singing so please come along and give it a try. Music seems to be a theme and at Tea and Toast in our Monday morning group and the Biggleswade café we are offering ukulele sessions - we could start a carers orchestra!

We will be holding a poetry workshop on June 27th 10am - 1pm. You are welcome to come along and bring the person you are caring for to enjoy a fun morning with words. All abilities welcome.

We are starting a camera club on the last Wednesday of each month from 10.30am - 12.30pm run by one of our volunteers. The next one is on the 29th June.

The Biggleswade carers café is trying out a few different things after great responses to a questionnaire asking what you all wanted. We will have a knit and natter group and the ukulele sessions starting in June and we are continuing with the book swap.

If you have just registered with us then the cafes or our Tea and Toast events are a really good way of finding out more about us. These events are available to both carers and the person being cared for and are very informal. They are an opportunity to gain support, access information and meet new friends.

West Mid Beds Locality News

Amphill, Flitwick, Barton le clay and Woburn area

The Flitwick café has been a great success and we are already introducing new things. For starters we are hoping to run a book club - more information at the next café. If you don't attend the café but would still be interested in book club do get in touch.

On Friday 10th June we will be holding an information event at St Nicholas church from 10.30am - 1.30pm with the surgery in Barton le Clay. You can collect a discount card, find out about carers grants and benefits and also talk to other providers such as Respite at Home, Age UK and Alzheimer's Society.



We are so proud of our Carers Lounge team at Bedford Hospital for their success in the Patient

Experience Awards. See page 5

Carers seem to like our new Groups and Training brochure – and new people are coming along to sessions. Our first Energy Saving Workshop was so successful that one carer saved **£640** on energy costs by attending!

A new workshop on 16th June will be about 'Dealing with Change.' Sometimes change comes slowly – little by little you are doing more and more for the person you care for. Sometimes change happens overnight and instantly affects every aspect of life. If that sounds familiar maybe this workshop is for you.

Booking is essential to get onto our courses or workshops so please call Nic on **0300 111 1919**.

Come and find our Carers Week stand at the Ageing Well Festival at Bedford Corn Exchange on 8th June from 10am – 3pm, we'd love to see you there. Our wonderful Carers Choir will be singing at this event!



MoneySavingExpert.com

Mental Health Debt Guide 2016

"No debt problems are unsolvable."

Help, info, guidance and support for individuals and carers.



These charities have produced a Mental Health Debt Guide which can be downloaded free from www.moneysavingexpert.com/mentalhealth

Who cares for the carer?

'Who cares for the carer?' I hear a man say,
'Her day blends with night and then night becomes day,
The cooking, the cleaning, the hospital trips,
The changing, the bathing, wiping food from his lips,
The meltdowns, the tears... so hard to endure,
What keeps her from walking straight out of that door?'

I'll tell you what stops me from leaving each day,
And what gets me through when I don't want to stay,
It begins with an 'I' and ends with an 'e',
It's a power, a force, emanating from me,
An emphatic heart a gift from above,
I do this, my friend, in the name of LOVE.

By Megan Jenkins

We featured this poem on our Facebook page recently and it got a lot of attention and praise so we thought we would share it with you.

Inspirational Casey

This edition's story comes from a parent carer of an inspirational little girl who despite having cerebral palsy doesn't let her disability stand in her way and has taught her parents so much about disability.

"Many years ago, I went to a country fair. Amongst other things, the best part was the food stalls. We decided on the hog roast stand. I joined the queue behind a lady in an electric wheelchair. At the time, I had no idea what her disability was, or why me noticing her and my experience of her would stick in my mind so strongly.

Casey doesn't let disability stand in her way at all

She ordered her sandwich and managed to somehow balance it on her knee while she manoeuvred her wheelchair to the table. I was frozen to the spot, fascinated by her every move.

In her attempts to add ketchup to her pork sandwich, she managed to drop the whole thing on the floor. She stopped, waited, attempted to pick it up but couldn't reach it. I could see her mind ticking while she thought about what to do next. She turned round, clearly deflated and moved off back into the fair.

She had no sandwich, maybe no money to buy another one and no one with her. At the time I had no reason to have any interest in this. I didn't know anyone disabled or any wheelchair users. Yet for some reason the picture of this situation evoked strong emotions in me.

Six years later I now understand why I was so moved by this observation. I have a 6 year old daughter, Casey, who has cerebral palsy. She can't walk and is incontinent - she can speak very

well and her cognitive function is almost 'normal.' She presents very much like the lady at the fair. And because of that lady - I understand."

"I understand the challenges that Casey will face in life, for her whole life but Casey doesn't let disability stand in her way at all. Her best friend, Matilda nominated her for a Family Hero award because she had helped her so much by raising **£44,000** for Matilda to have an operation to enable her to walk unaided. Casey's plan was that if **25,648** people donated £1 each, her friend would be able to walk.

Her best friend, Matilda nominated her for a Family Hero award

I am still sorry, to this day that I didn't help the lady - I had no idea whether I should or not, whether offering to buy her a new sandwich would offend her. I owe Casey so much. I can only hope she doesn't feel as lonely and isolated as that lady looked on that day. I would never want Casey to feel like that."

Written by parent carer Suzanne Burke.

We run parent carer groups across all our localities for carers of children with additional needs.

For further information please call Darran Youell on **0300 111 1919**.





Fundraising

Our CEO Helen Satterthwaite and two other staff members have signed up for the 7 for 7 challenge being organized by Nick Kier of Lane & Holmes Estate Agents. They are running a half marathon in October 2016 and raising money for Carers in Bedfordshire.

Nick is running 7 half marathons in 7 days for 7 different charities each day. Are there any running events coming up that you would like to take part in and raise money to help Bedfordshire's carers. Why not order one of our running vests so everyone knows who you are supporting?



Contact Nina for more information on **0300 111 1919**

Other ways to raise money for carers

- Have a dress down day at work
- Organise a non uniform day at your child's school
- Have a bake sale
- Organise a quiz night at your local pub
- Ask to have a collection at your place of worship

If you have any questions or have your own ideas for fundraising, please contact us. When you enter or set up an event, please let us know and we will send you a fundraising pack. We also have a step by step guide on setting up a JustGiving page.

Volunteer News



Bob Izzard, Volunteer

Volunteering can be good for you

About **35%** of our volunteers are registered carers or former carers who say things like, "Volunteering gives me a purpose to get up in the morning and gets me out of the house. It gives me a social life, a chance to meet new people." From January to March 2016, our fantastic team of volunteers donated **1744** hours!

If you have a few hours to spare and would like to make a difference, learn new skills please consider one of our opportunities.

Here are our current volunteer opportunities:

- **Reception**, Bedford - Meet and greet visitors and telephone callers, visit the wards to meet carers. 3 - 4 hours per week, afternoons ideal
- **Discount card promoter**, Bedford or Biggleswade - outreach sessions and talks at community venues about our Carers Discount Card. 2 - 3 hours per week.
- **Telephone befrienders**, Bedford, Biggleswade or Leighton Buzzard - be a listening ear for a carer.
- **Carers lounge support**, Bedford or Luton & Dunstable Hospitals - welcome visitors, visit the wards to meet carers and signpost to information, visit wards to promote the lounge to carers. 2 hours per fortnight
- **Dementia befrienders** - give a carer some respite by providing companionship to their relative. 2 hours per week in your local area.



For any enquiries about these opportunities please contact Carol Solaiman, Volunteer Coordinator on **0300 111 1919** or volunteering@carersinbeds.org.uk

Carers Discount Card

The latest offers for our Carers Discount Card!
Sign up for yours now, then enjoy these discounts!

10% off Harrisons Jewellers (not including Pandora, watch batteries or straps) harrisonsjewellers.co.uk or info@harrisons.co.uk

10% off TK Furniture, 3 Hockliffe Street, Leighton Buzzard, LU7 1HG, **01525 854668** or tkfurniture@gmail.com

20% off Jam Crackers, (Business & IT Support), **0800 955 8041**

20% off Astara Holistics & Beauty, 35 Hitchin Street, Shefford, **07745 325365**

To apply for your Carers Discount Card, please complete and return this form to Carers in Bedfordshire, Suite K, Sandland Court, Pilgrim Centre, Brickhill Drive, Bedford, MK45 7PZ.

You must include a passport sized photo.

Alternatively, email discountcard@carersinbeds.org.uk or call **0300 111 1919**.

Full name: _____

Address: _____

Postcode: _____

Email: _____

Contact number: _____

Do you care for an adult? child?

Please note: the Discount Card is currently only available to carers living in Central Bedfordshire.

