

Milton Keynes Carer



Running for



Carers Milton Keynes is taking part in the first Milton Keynes Marathon on

the 29th April. Seven ready and willing volunteers are preparing themselves to run the 26.2 mile course to raise much needed funds for our Young Carers. One of the volunteers is our own Chief Executive Stephen Archibald.

To show your support for them (and us), we are asking people to sponsor our runners.

You can do this in three different ways:

1. Bring donations to our offices at the David Baxter Centre
2. Online, by going to our JustGiving page at www.justgiving.com/youngcarersmarathonmk
3. Or by text. Text the code YCMK77£5 to 70070 and you will donate £5 automatically to our fundraising page. It is free and easy to use. You only donate £5, and there are no hidden charges.

We also need volunteers to be marshals on the day (they will be allocated duties by the race organisers) as well as volunteers to help cheer our runners on at the Carers MK 'Cheering Point'. This will involve encouraging and supporting the runners in the most fun and lively way possible. Parents are welcome to bring their children as it should be a fun day for all taking part.

Contact the Centre if you are able to help.



Independent Project

75 carers (some of whom are pictured above) are now signed up to this exciting new project which uses technology to support carers via a secure website.

This EU funded work will have project status until October this year when we hope that it will be adopted for use by all carers who are known to Carers Milton Keynes. All carers on the trial are being issued with an individual secure log in and we will ensure that throughout the project security of data is paramount.

Contact Carers Milton Keynes for more information.

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SOCIAL EVENTS

Singing

It's a joy, even if you don't have a great voice, to join in with this fun activity. It is a real 'switch off' from the stresses and strains of everyday life. Come and join us! These sessions are held at our offices.

**Fridays 9th March, 30th March, 27th April
from 1 - 2 pm**

Men's Group

The First Base Sports Bar in the Xscape building is the venue for male carers to meet up and socialise with each other. It's an opportunity for you to escape your normal routine and meet up with like minded men. Please arrive before 7.30pm - Anne Matthews will be there to greet you.

Mondays 5th March, 16th April, 28th May

Spring Ramble

We are going to take advantage of our local wood at Linford to admire the bluebells. We will meander for about 1-1/2 hours. Wear appropriate footwear and clothing and bring your own refreshments.

Wednesday 9th May 10.30am - 12.30pm

The Joy of Gardening

We will be visiting Frosts garden once again for a talk by resident advisor Maurice Rust. Although he has retired we are delighted that he is coming in especially to talk and advise our carers.

Wednesday 7th March 10.00am - 12.00pm

Book Club

What could be better for a relaxing activity than spending time with a good book! Even a short time each day will take you away from your worries. This new group has a different book every 6 weeks at a cost of £1. To get involved and to find out the book of choice, come along to our next meeting on **Thursday 16th February 3 - 4 pm**

Writing Group

'Every time we meet we astonish ourselves with what we produce'

The MK Carers' Writing Group meets 6 times a year, and each time they set themselves a subject to write about. The range is truly incredible, and you can write what you like - poetry, memoirs, factual articles, short stories etc. We can assure you of a warm welcome and supportive comments on what you write.

**Meetings are 13th March and 8th May
10.30am - 12.30pm. The subject for
March is 'Madness'.**

History Walk

Local historian, Brian Breacher will be our guide for this tour of Newport Pagnell. Discover more about its origins and the fascinating history of this market town. It will take about an hour and a quarter.

**Monday 26th March 10.30am - 12.00pm
(approx)**

Queen Victoria

Our next history talk will be about Queen Victoria encompassing Dickens, Tennyson and the Enlightenment.

Monday 28th May 10.30am - 12.00pm

Social Evenings

Do you ever feel like having a break from caring and meeting other local carers socially? **Then join us at The Barn Beefeater, Secklow Gate West, MK9 3BZ on Thursday 16 February and Thursday 26 April from 7pm onwards, in the conservatory area.**

In order to save our postage costs if you would like to receive your newsletter by email please email us at newsletter@carersmiltonkeynes.org

TRAINING

funded by Milton Keynes Council



Dementia Information Session

Dee Cope from the Alzheimer's Society will be the advisor at this session which helps carers to understand dementia, why it causes different behaviour and learn strategies and practical skills for coping with it. There will be plenty of opportunities to ask questions.

Monday 13th February 10.30am – 12.30pm

Anxiety and Depression information Session

This is the second session of the series about mental health problems. This is an informal talk by Jess Twyford about how to support someone with anxiety and depression and as a Carer how you are affected.

Monday 27th Feb 10.30am – 12.30pm

Understanding Stress and How to Manage It

A caring role can be very stressful and can engender many emotions. This course helps you to identify the effect that stress has on you and helps you to manage it and develop coping strategies.

Monday 5th March 10.00am – 2.30pm (incl lunch)

Understanding Diabetes

Lesley Scott, Specialist Nurse will be joining us to talk about all aspects of diabetes including causes, signs and symptoms and will be happy to answer any questions.

Thursday 22 March 10.30am – 12.30pm

First Aid

This First Aid Workshop run by the British Red Cross teaches 18 key skills to save a life, these include helping someone who is unconscious, choking, bleeding heavily, dealing with burns or scalds, broken bones, heart attacks, strokes, seizures or fits, diabetic emergencies, asthma,

ingesting harmful substances, head injuries, hypothermia, sprains & strains, meningitis & allergic reactions.

Wednesday 18th April 10.00am – 4.00pm

This will be held at the British Red Cross at 49A Wolverton Road Stony Stratford

Open University Taster Sessions

There are two sessions to illustrate to carers how they might benefit from education with the Open University. The sessions will talk about the cost involved and how the experience of carers can benefit the OU.

Wednesday 25th April 10.30am – 12.30pm and Wednesday 23rd May 10.30am – 12.30pm

Short Breaks Training Session

(for those caring for an adult with a learning disability).

Gerry Fitzpatrick who co-ordinates the short breaks service, will advise carers about the possibilities of having a short break for the person you care for.

Wednesday 9th May 6.30pm – 8.30pm

Siblings Workshop

When you have a child with additional needs recognising the needs and emotions of your child(ren) can be challenging. Being able to address this situation with all the demands on your time and energy is difficult. This course aims to help parents who are in this situation

Monday 14th May 10.30am – 12.30pm

Please note for all training/social sessions you will receive confirmation and additional details about a week to 10 days before the event is due to take place.

NEWS FROM CARERS MILTON KEYNES



Welcome

Sue Sullivan (*picured above*) has joined Carers Milton Keynes as the new Administrator and has already become an important member of our team. She previously worked for a Cancer Support Centre in London.

And Farewell

We said a sad farewell to Elfie and Mandy in December. We wish them well in their future ventures and thank them for their contribution to the work of the Centre. Elfie had been our longest serving member of staff and for many people their first point of contact with us. Mandy was also known to many carers and contributed hugely to keeping Hilda sane!

Funding for a New Post

We have been able to secure funding for a new position of Parent Participation Co-ordinator. The successful candidate will be based with us at Carers Milton Keynes for at least a year whilst they develop a network of parents and parents organisations who will be involved with developing all local services for children with additional needs.



Hilda having a swinging time!

Goodbye Hilda

We are sad to inform you that Hilda Kirkwood, Manager of Carers MK, will be retiring at the end of March.

Hilda joined us six years ago whilst we were going through a transitional phase as we joined forces with Carers Bucks. She brought tremendous enthusiasm to the team. Due to Hilda's extensive networking, Carers MK has developed and grown to offer a broad and varied service and, we like to think, a warm and welcoming environment for carers to visit.

We would like to thank Hilda for all her hard work and support to both the staff and carers and wish her all the best for the future.

We will be having an 'open day' on Friday 30th March at the office for carers and professionals who would like to pop in and say farewell.

LEARNING DISABILITY



Some of our carers playing 'pooh sticks' at Waterhall Park.

Learning Disability Partnership Board

The Milton Keynes Learning Disability Partnership Board is made up of people with learning disabilities, family carers and staff. The Board meets 6 times a year to look at a particular theme and ways to make services better for people with learning disabilities and their carers. This year's dates and themes are:

3rd April - Things to do in the day, evening and weekends

12th June - Keeping Safe and Housing and Support

7th August - Health

2nd October - Including Everyone

4th December - Making it Happen

The Board is holding a **Big Health Day on Friday 1st June at Tower Drive Day Centre in Neath Hill** where there will be lots of different health services providing information, advice and health related activities.

The Partnership Board does most of its work through its subgroups, including a carers' subgroup. This is made up of family carers, Carers MK and the managers of the Learning Disability Carers' Short Breaks Service.

Carers' views are very important to the Board and subgroups, so if you would like to be involved **contact Sheila Taylor, Senior Joint Commissioner for Learning Disability and Autism on 01908 253259 or Lucienne Dunlop, Learning Disability Partnerships Officer on 01908 253209. Or you can email: valuingpeople@milton-keynes.gov.uk**

A list of local events, Board meeting notes and newsletters can be downloaded from **www.milton-keynes.gov.uk/learningdisability** The Board also has Facebook and Twitter (@MK_LDPB) pages.

Day Opportunities

PJ Carer's Day Opportunities Centre in Bletchley offers activities for people with physical and learning difficulties in a safe and secure environment. There will be further information in our next newsletter but if you would like more details **visit their website at www.pjcare.co.uk**



Netbuddy is an award-winning website for parents, carers and learning disability professionals. It is a place to hunt for ideas, swap tips and access information on everything from brushing teeth to challenging behaviour.

All the information on the site is submitted by people with first-hand experience of learning disability and is organised under quick searches such as 'Dressing & Undressing', 'Out and About', 'Behaviour' and 'Routines'. There are also practical information packs on subjects like financial help and jobs and training, plus a friendly interactive forum.

For more information visit www.netbuddy.org.uk

SERVICES AND INFORMATION

Respite Breaks for Carers

The Saga Respite for Carers Trust was launched to help redress the balance for as many carers as possible by providing a much-needed holiday for the carer and a friend. The award also includes spending money and, if required, respite care for the cared for person.

To be eligible carers should:

- be over 50
- have been caring for someone for more than a year
- not have taken a significant holiday away from their caring responsibilities within the last year
- not be a professional carer.

You can apply yourself or nominate someone you think deserves it. Forms can be downloaded from Saga's website at www.saga.co.uk (and click on care) or by post. **Send a sae to The Trust Manager, Saga Respite for Carers Trust, The Saga Building, Enbrook Park, Folkestone, Kent CT20 3SE.**

Someone to Talk To

Sometimes it helps to talk, confidentially and in a safe place with someone who understands. **If you would like to make an appointment to speak to a Carer Support Worker call us on 01908 231703.**

Carers' Week is the 18th – 24th June. We will let you know what events we are planning during that week in our next newsletter.

Services or companies mentioned in this newsletter do not constitute a recommendation by Carers Milton Keynes.



Carers enjoying a stroll in Waterhall Park.

Exercise Taster Session

People with neurological conditions (eg Parkinson's, Multiple Sclerosis) or who have suffered a brain injury or a stroke and who exercise regularly experience less stiffness as well as a reduction in and even a reversal of muscle wasting. In addition to the many health benefits the psychological benefits are extremely important in managing these conditions.

The Stroke Association is arranging a free exercise taster session under the supervision of a neuro physiotherapist at PJ Care Ltd, (153 Sherwood Drive, Bletchley MK3 6RT) on **Thursday 22nd March at 11am.** (If there is enough interest weekly sessions will be arranged).

If you would like to book a place or like more details contact Debbie Bullard, Long-term Support Co-ordinator, The Stroke Association on 01296 633351.

SERVICES AND INFORMATION



Reiki

We are pleased to be joined by Oya, a Reiki therapist, (*pictured above*) who will be offering free Reiki treatments to carers on a Friday afternoon.

Reiki healing is a natural complementary therapy that gently balances life energies and brings health and well being, promoting wholeness of mind, body and spirit.

This treatment does not involve direct touch and can be carried out fully clothed. This session is not available for pregnant women.

See page 10 for details of dates and times.

Winter Fuel Payments



You will need to apply for your first Winter Fuel Payment if you were born on or before **5th January 1951**. If you meet the qualifying age but don't yet get a State Pension, or receive another Social Security benefit, you need to complete a claim form. Even if you are working, you could get help towards your fuel bill. Claim forms must be received on or before 30th March 2012. **Call the Winter Fuel Helpline on 0845 9 15 15 15 for a claim form or to check your eligibility.**

Centre for Integrated Living

The Centre offers free and independent services for people needing support with everyday activities. Support is offered to people who have a physical, sensory or learning disability, a communication disorder, a mental health issue, dementia, older people, a child or young person with a disability or complex need or a family member or carer.

Information & Advice Service

Information and advice is provided on social services procedure, care, local and national support groups, benefits, transport and mobility, leisure and holiday opportunities.

PA Employment Support Service

Support is given to people who want to employ a Personal Assistant (PA) by providing initial advice and information and helping with recruitment and interviews. They provide support to meet the legal requirements of being an employer, as well as offer a payroll service.

Peer Support Planning & Brokerage Service

People who receive a personal budget from Adult Social Services sometimes need advice and practical support to help them choose the resources that best meet their assessed needs and outcomes.

One way to get this advice is through our Peer Support Planning and Brokerage Service - help and guidance from a person who has had similar life experiences.

We can offer the opportunity of using a trained peer support planner to help produce a plan that will suit individual needs.

The office is open Monday to Friday 10am to 4pm (Phone line open 9am to 5pm)

For more information contact the MK Centre for Integrated Living on 01908 231344; email: info@mkcil.org.uk; or visit www.mkweb.co.uk/MK_Disability/home.asp

MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT

Changes to the Mental Health Service

The Mental Health Service in Milton Keynes is undergoing a transformation programme. This will change the internal structure of the organisation with the aims of improving the services offered and making them more responsive and accessible, whilst making necessary cost savings.

The changes include having an ageless service for people with mental health problems, with a specialist service for people of any age with a dementia. The dementia service will include a new Memory Assessment Service which has already been implemented. There will also be a 24 hour service as a single point of access into the Mental Health Service which will provide assessments based on urgency and need. The current community teams and their bases will be changing, with the distinction made between shorter term and longer term interventions, depending on the nature of service users' mental health problems. There is intended to be a greater emphasis on psychological treatments being offered and the Complex Needs service for people with personality disorders will be enhanced. The Mental Health Service's Carers Support Service will continue to be provided and will offer support across the whole service.

If you would like to know more about the proposed changes or have any concerns about how they may impact upon you or the person you care for please come along to the monthly Mental Health Carers Group at Carers MK as the Director (Anna Selby) and Operational Manager (Jon Olsen) of the service will be providing regular updates and seeking carers' views.

Alternatively contact Beth Lawrence, Carers Support Development Co-ordinator on 01908 340967 or email beth.lawrence@Milton-Keynes.gov.uk

Do You Support Someone with a Personality Disorder?

We run a support group every 2 months on the last Thursday of the month for people caring for someone with a personality disorder. If you are interested in joining us please see pages 10-11 for dates and times.

We also plan to run another eight week course which will cover all aspects of personality disorder including, what is personality disorder? the different types of PD, what causes it, how you can support someone with PD and many other topics.

For more information contact Debbie on 01908 231703.

Mental Health Group

Wednesday 1st February 6pm – 7.30pm

Tracey Chapman, senior Commissioner for Mental Health will be talking about her role and listening to Carers' experiences.

Wednesday 7th March 6pm – 7.30pm

Anna Selby, Director of Mental Health Services will give us an update on Mental Health Transformation Programme and answer your queries. Anna will be joining us at the beginning of this meeting.

Wednesday 4th April 6pm – 7.30pm

A representative from the Samaritans will be talking about their confidential telephone, email and face to face support service.

Wednesday 2nd May 6pm – 7.30pm

Support and chat session

PARENT CARERS

Supporting Parent Carers

We continue to have a speaker at our Monday group but are making it even more informal by asking carers to bring their own sandwiches, if they wish, to share at the end of this session. The group meets from 11am -1pm.

20th February

Therapist Sharon Ferris will be available to give you a hand massage. This might be a technique that you can take home and use as an aid for calming your child(ren).

19th March

Jenny Wilson from Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) will be talking about their service.

16th April

The newly appointed Parent Participation Co-ordinator for PACA will be talking about their role.

21st May

Mandy Lee-Fell the Deputy Manager of the Children with Disabilities Team will be the speaker at this group to tell you about their service.



Our first family Christmas party in full swing.

One of PACA's projects is the orange 'My story' booklet. The University of Northampton is responsible for evaluating them and will be sending out evaluation forms in February. Your comments would be really helpful so please respond if you can.

Changes at PACA

A Parent Participation Co-ordinator is being appointed to support the work of PACA. The Co-ordinator will work closely with PACA's steering group to fulfil its role of working for parents who have a child with an additional need to encourage and promote better services within health, education and social care.

Any parent is welcome to attend the PACA group meetings at which topics/projects are identified and carried forward. It is hoped that parents will feel they can make a contribution even if it is in a small way. These meetings are held at Carers MK offices and the appointed worker will be based at Carers Milton Keynes.

Date of the next meeting is Thursday 8th March 10.30am – 12.30pm.

Autism Partnership Board

The autism partnership board was set up to administer the workplan from the national autism strategy. It is for family carers of adults and those in transition from 14 years upwards.

Two main meetings of the Board have now been held tackling the topics of information and communication and training and awareness. Action groups from each of these topics have been set up and they report back to the main board meetings.

The remaining board meetings of the year will discuss:

- employment
- transitions.

Attendees at the meetings are divided into 3 groups – people with autistic spectrum disorders, family carers and stake holders/professionals who discuss the topic before reporting back to the main group.

For details contact Luci Dunlop on 01908 253209 or Anne Matthews on 01908 231703.

DIARY OF TRAINING AND EVENTS

Support Sessions		
Mental Health Evening Support Group 6 - 7.30pm	Wednesdays	7th March; 4th April; 2nd May
Olney Support Group, Olney Centre 2 - 4pm	Thursdays	1st March; 5th April; 3rd May
Parent Carer Coffee morning , Greenleys Family Centre 10.30am - 12.30pm	Fridays	2nd March; 30th March; 4th May
Former Carers 1.30 - 3.30pm	Thursdays	8th March; 12th April; 10th May
Crafty Carers 10am -1pm	Thursdays	16th February; 15th March; 19th April; 17th May
Parent Carer Group 11am -1pm	Mondays	20th February; 19th March; 16th April; 21st May
Stroke Group 6 - 8pm	Tuesdays	21st February; 20th March; 17th April; 15th May
Friends and Family Mental Health Group 6 - 7.30pm	Thursdays	23rd February; 26th April
Coffee Morning 10.30am -12.30pm	Fridays	24th February; 30th March; 27th April; 25th May
Newport Pagnell Support Group, UR Church 1.30 - 3.30pm	Wednesdays	29th February; 28th March; 25th April; 30th May
Bletchley Support Group, Parkside Surgery 1.30 - 3.30pm	Wednesdays	29th February; 28th March; 30th May
Citizens Advice		
Citizens Advice Bureau 9am - 12.30pm (<i>appointments only</i>)	Thursdays	1st March; 5th April; 3rd May
Therapies		
Relaxation Therapies 10am - 1pm (<i>appointments only</i>)	Thursdays	1st March; 5th April; 3rd May
Relaxation Therapies 10.30am - 1.30pm (<i>appointments only</i>)	Thursdays	16th February; 15th March; 19th April; 17th May
Reflexology or Indian Head Massage 1 - 4pm (<i>appointments only</i>)	Fridays	2nd March; 13th April; 4th May
Reiki 12.15 -2.15pm (<i>appointments only</i>)	Fridays	10th February; 24th February
Yoga		
Yoga, Heron Lodge 11.30am - 1pm	Tuesdays	21st February; 28th February; 6th March; 13th March; 20th March; 27th March; 17th April; 24th April; 1st May; 8th May; 15th May; 22nd May; 29th May

DIARY OF TRAINING AND EVENTS

Social		
Singing 1 - 2pm	Fridays	9th March; 30th March; 27th April
Book Club 3 - 4pm	Thursdays	16th February; future dates to be confirmed.
Men's Group, First Base Sports Bar from 7pm	Mondays	5th March; 16th April; 28th May
Joy of Gardening, Frosts Garden Centre 10am - 12pm	Wednesday	7th March
Social Group, The Barn Beefeater	Thursdays	16th February; 26th April
Writing Group 10.30am - 12.30pm	Tuesdays	13th March; 8th May
History Tour of Newport Pagnell 10.30 - 12pm	Monday	26th March
Ramble around Linford Wood 10.30am - 12.30pm	Wednesday	9th May
History Talk 10.30am - 12.00pm	Monday	28th May
Training		
Dementia Information Session 10.30am - 12.30pm	Monday	13th February
Anxiety and Depression Information 10.30am - 12.30pm	Monday	27th February
Understanding Stress & How to Manage It 10am - 2.30pm (inc lunch)	Monday	5th March
OU Taster Session 10.30am - 12.30pm	Wednesdays	25th April; 23rd May
Diabetes Information Session 10.30am - 12.30pm	Thursday	22nd March
First Aid Course 10am - 4pm (at 49a Wolverton Road)	Wednesday	18th April
Short Breaks Information Session 6.30pm - 8.30pm	Wednesday	9th May
Siblings Course 10.30am - 12.30pm	Monday	14th May
Signing Course 9.45 - 11.45am	Thursday	24th May

Please note that all our activities are at our offices in Central Milton Keynes unless otherwise stated.

MORE NEWS FROM CARERS MILTON KEYNES

Olney Group

The historical town of Olney is the venue for our carer support group which meets on the **first Thursday of the month at the Olney Centre (2- 4pm)**. This group has been set up to cater for carers in Olney and surrounding villages. We can assure you of a welcoming 'cuppa' and friendly face and somewhere to meet other local carers.

We are putting together a programme of interesting topics to take your attention at each of these sessions. Please come along to find out more.



Young Carers being crafty at our family Christmas party.

Working Carers' Support Service

Many of you will be aware of the increasing numbers of employees caring for someone who is ill, frail or has a disability, whilst at the same time juggling their paid work with their caring role. Carers Milton Keynes provides a support service to working carers and is hoping that some of the local employers might consider making a small annual donation to help fund this free service.

We have produced two leaflets to help draw attention to our Working Carers' Support Service. These colourful and attractive leaflets have been printed by csf print of Lathbury, Newport Pagnell. We are enormously grateful to Craig Fletcher, the owner, for csf's sponsorship of the first print-run of these leaflets.

Young Carers Update

This year, for the first time, young and adult carers came together to enjoy the festive season at our Carers Milton Keynes' family Christmas party. Nearly 200 people attended on the day at Lovat Hall in Newport Pagnell. There was a buffet lunch, a raffle and a quiz for families to tackle (with some controversy!) with prizes for first, second and third places. There was also a Christmas art activity which the children did beautifully! We'd like to thank you for coming along, it was really good to see everyone and hope you all had a very happy Christmas!

Some of you may be aware that due to financial constraints we are no longer able to offer transport to Young Carers clubs and activities. We have been fortunate to recruit a number of volunteer drivers who will be able to assist us with each Young Carers' Club.

A copy of our latest newsletter is available on our website at www.carersmiltonkeynes.org together with up to date information about events, groups and training.

CARERS MILTON KEYNES

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Registered Charity No. 1116804