

If you care,
we care.

Carers Support Centre
Bristol & South Gloucestershire



Carers News

FREE • £1.50 when sold

Issue 82 • Spring 2020



Judy Gowenlock, Training and Development Worker, with carers champions at the BRI

We have launched our Carers Champions award scheme at UH Bristol and North Bristol Trust. This initiative recognises the support provided for carers by hospital staff. On Carers Rights Day our hospital liaison team presented the first Carers Champions awards to the wards and individuals who referred the most carers to us for support. Certificates were awarded at Southmead, Bristol Royal Infirmary and South Bristol Community Hospital.

The scheme acknowledges our appreciation of the support hospital staff provide for carers, and also continues to raise awareness of carers and the support we provide for carers in hospitals.

Sam Radford, Hospital Carers Liaison Worker, said: "I hope the scheme will help staff, carers and the public understand what help they are entitled to when they identify as a carer."

"I met a family and the daughter was supporting her mother. She didn't want to identify as a carer but, after chatting with them, they both acknowledged that the line had been crossed between mother and daughter. The daughter was now her mother's carer and her mother had recently accepted that her needs had changed, something she had been in denial about and had found hard to accept."

If you need support in hospital, contact one of our Hospital Liaison Workers:

✉ info@carerssupportcentre.org.uk

Sam Radford, Southmead: ☎ 07557 418 692

Tracey Lathrope, BRI: ☎ 07557 441 613

Angela Robinson, South Bristol Community Hospital: ☎ 07917 880 375



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Turn to pages 12-13 to read about what young carers and our patron, Gareth Chilcott got up to on Young Carers Awareness Day.

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Welcome to the Spring edition of Carers News**Goodbye from Keith**

After more than 14 years leading this amazing organisation, it is time for me to say farewell. I hand over to Tim Poole as Interim CEO, who will do a fantastic job leading the organisation until Gavin Williams takes over as permanent CEO in March.

My last few weeks have been emotional for me and the team and I will always remember my time at Carers Support Centre fondly. It has been an amazing journey and I am proud of what we have achieved together as a team. When I joined the organisation, we were in contact with fewer than 3,000 carers and now support almost 13,000 every year.

Trusted Charity Mark Level 2

Organisations are only as good as their people and I am delighted that, in my last week in the office, the organisation was awarded Trusted Charity Mark Level 2. This is a quality mark awarded by NCVO (National Council for Voluntary Organisations) after an external assessment. It is a nationally recognised award and no other quality mark addresses all the essential areas necessary for the effective management and governance of a charity.

The feedback from the assessors was extremely positive and it was clear to them that this is a great organisation, with a fantastic team of dedicated professionals delivering really positive outcomes, consistently for carers.

I know there will be challenges ahead in terms of future funding and contracts. However, the organisation is in a good place for a new CEO to come in and continue to move it forward.

You are all amazing— stay resilient and continue doing what you are doing.

**Thank you, Keith Sinclair****Welcome to Gavin**

I am delighted to be joining Carers Support Centre in March. I know that I will be leading a great team and organisation that is dedicated to supporting carers, which is something close to my heart and personal experience.

I have developed and delivered many carers' services. My first role was co-ordinating specialist end-stage heart failure services in a 3-year research collaboration between the Kings Fund, St Joseph's Hospice and the community heart failure team of the British Heart Foundation. This was a reflection of my role for my late father, who passed away just before my 20th birthday.

I am qualified in health psychology and have worked in the Department of Health's National Health Checks project, coordinating policy and relationship management with GP practices in the London Borough of Camden. I then returned to carers support, working in Kensington and Chelsea and then Islington at Carers UK. I led the Consultancy and Training Division, developing new Carer Strategies for boroughs including Portsmouth, Dagenham, Southwark and City of London.

I now move to Bristol after leading Trafford Carers Centre, Manchester for the last four years. The centre delivers a Statutory Carers Assessment service, together with a counselling and therapeutic nursing support service for carers in the borough. Carers' health and wellbeing is important to me. So too is delivering services that carers need and want. I rest assured that I am joining an organisation that has spearheaded best practice in support and policy development for carers in the South West.

Coffee sessions for carers

I look forward to meeting you at future events. In my first few months, I will hold some coffee and introduction sessions for you to share your experiences with me. More details about these will follow. If you would like more information, please get in touch.

I want to ensure collaboration with carers is at the heart of everything we do.

Gavin Williams, Chief Executive

✉ GavinW@carerssupportcentre.org.uk

The right help for you – have you had your Carer's Assessment?

As a carer you have a right to an assessment.

A Carer's Assessment will help you think about the ways that caring affects your life. It also looks at anything you would like to change to be able to continue to do things that are important to you and your family.

Your physical, mental and emotional wellbeing will be at the heart of this assessment.

The person you are caring for doesn't need to be getting support themselves from the council.

To find out more call CarersLine.

Let your doctor know you are a carer

Make sure your details are added to the carers' register at your GP practice. In most cases the surgery will:

- provide you with a free flu vaccination
- offer you a Carers Health Check
- be flexible with appointment times, for both appointments for yourself and/or the person you care for
- share information about the condition of the person you care for (with their consent).

West of England Works extended

We are pleased to be able to continue supporting carers into work, education or training, as our funding has been extended until June 2022.

We give carers one-to-one support and can help you create an action plan that fits around your caring responsibilities. We run job clubs, help with CVs, job applications and preparing for interviews, and source flexible work placements and have links with flexible local employers.



Diane, right, enjoying her new job

Since we started the programme in 2017, we have helped many carers increase their confidence, manage their wellbeing, and move closer to the employment market. One of these is Diane. When we first met her, her confidence was low and she was unsure of how to apply for work using online applications.

Diane had a career break of 20 years while caring for her children, who have physical disabilities and complex health problems. Since her children have grown older and now have respite care in place, Diane found herself with spare time she could use to earn some money for her family.

Carer Support Officer, Abi Unwin, met with Diane to help her come up with a job goal. Diane wanted a job which offered training and progression, along with flexibility to enable her to

juggle work and caring. Abi helped Diane build her employability by giving her the skills to create a CV and covering letter, complete application forms, find references and prepare for interviews.

Diane said:

"Working with Abi has been fun, as well as so helpful. I've learnt so much and enjoyed the short course Abi signposted me to at a local library to increase my IT skills."

With our help, Diane has now secured paid employment as a housekeeper at a local care home. She is delighted to be part of the team and her Deputy Manager told us 'Diane is just brilliant'.

If you would like help looking into options for work, training or education, please contact the Employment Team.

✉ employment@carerssupportcentre.org.uk ☎ 0117 377 1015

We're on Facebook and Twitter.

You can now follow Carers Support Centre on **Facebook** and **Twitter**. Just go to our website to follow the links. You can tweet us @CarersBSG

Changes to South Glos carers assessments

For the last 6 years, Carers Support Centre has been assessing carers on behalf of South Gloucestershire Council. The council is now introducing new ways of working, so that social workers will also assess carers. This will happen when the cared for person is being assessed by a social worker.

The assessment can now be a joint assessment, with the cared for person and carer assessed at

the same time. Or, if the carer prefers, the social worker can have a separate conversation with the carer. Carers will also have the option to continue to have an assessment with Carers Support Centre staff, instead of having an assessment with the social worker. If the cared for person does not receive council services, the carer will continue to be assessed by Carers Support Centre.

Denise Swain, Commissioning Manager at South Gloucestershire Council, explained:

"By the council assessing both the provide a volunteer to visit once a month to deliver a selection of library books and stay for a chat over a cuppa."

Judy Gowenlock, who works in our Hospital Team, volunteers for the home library in her free time. She said:

"It is a brilliant service that connects book lovers with books, without the need to visit a library. It also brings people together for a chat and company."

To find out more, get in touch with Bristol Home Library Service.
 ✉ BHLSVisits@royalvoluntaryservice.org.uk
 ☎ 0117 929 7444

cared for person and the carer at the same time, we can develop a better picture of what is working well and where the pressures are, and work with you to better support the cared for person, your own health and wellbeing and the whole family.

We are working to put this into place across our teams in the Spring."

If you have any questions or queries, please contact Denise Swain at South Glos Council.

☎ 01454 864 323



Bristol library that comes to you

The Royal Voluntary Service is working with Bristol Libraries to provide a free at-home library service to people in Bristol who can't get out.

Janice Walsh, Service Manager of Bristol Home Library Service said:

"We know how hard it is to find time for yourself when you're caring for a loved one. The good news is you don't have to give up your joy of reading. We can

Welcomes

Angela Robinson recently joined us as Carers Hospital Liaison Worker. After years working in advocacy and outreach roles, Angela recently became a carer for her mum. Now she brings her professional and personal experience to her new role.



Louise Harvey is our new Administration Assistant, taking the place of Maria Day who has moved to the Wellbeing Team. Louise recently returned from America, where she worked at a summer camp for children and young people.



Freya Jeffries has joined us as Communications and Digital Media Officer. She previously worked in marketing and recently completed an MA in Creative Writing at the University of Exeter.



Carmen Rodriguez is the maternity cover for Training Coordinator, a role she balances with her CarersLine work. Previously, Carmen was a GP Link volunteer.



South Glos First Contact Scheme

The South Gloucestershire First Contact scheme provides information and advice for people age 60+ living in South Gloucestershire. The scheme aims to connect people with services that will enable them to remain mobile and living independently at home.

Information is requested using a First Contact postcard. Postcards are widely available in libraries, One Stop shops and from us at Carers Support Centre.

To get help or support, you simply tick the relevant boxes on the postcard. Many of the services are free of charge and those which are chargeable are clearly indicated.

Once you have filled out your postcard, simply put it in a post box. It is sent via FREEPOST, so you do not need to add a stamp.

If you would like a postcard, get in touch with Louise Harvey.
 ✉ info@carerssupportcentre.org.uk ☎ 0117 939 2562

First Contact helps people who are over 60 years old access a range of information to live independently at home and be more mobile. To find out more about the support on offer, please tick the box for any advice you require, and return using the FREEPOST address.

Security and Fire Safety	Your Home
<input type="checkbox"/> Home security check from Avon and Somerset Police or the Handy Van	<input type="checkbox"/> Adaptations in your home
<input type="checkbox"/> Home fire safety advice from Avon Fire and Rescue Service	<input type="checkbox"/> Arrange a visit to the Council's home adaptations centre in Yate
<input type="checkbox"/> Advice on a money problem	<input type="checkbox"/> Housing repairs (if you own your home)
<input type="checkbox"/> Benefits advice	<input type="checkbox"/> Housing advice
<input type="checkbox"/> Community care, family or consumer law advice	<input type="checkbox"/> Home adaptations to make life easier from We Care Home Improvements
<input type="checkbox"/> Advice about scams and rogue trading	<input type="checkbox"/> Information about the Handy Van service
<input type="checkbox"/> Southern Brooks - Support to find work	<input type="checkbox"/> Advice and information on grants to keep your home warm and reduce your fuel bills
	<input type="checkbox"/> Western Power Distribution - Advice and support for people who could be vulnerable in a power cut
	<input type="checkbox"/> GDA - Assistive equipment for your home
	<input type="checkbox"/> Wessex Resolutions CIC - Homeowner loans for home repairs or adaptations

Affordable local home repairs

We Care Home Improvements helps vulnerable people with affordable home repairs and home adaptations. They support people aged over 60, people of all ages with a disability, those on a low income and people coming out of hospital.

They specialise in accessible bathrooms, occupational therapy, home independence products and home adaptations. All their handypeople – who can do jobs like tiling, gutter clearing and shower repairs – are Trading

Standards Approved.

They are also commissioned by Bristol City Council to provide funded home improvement work for Bristol residents who could not otherwise afford to pay. They can also help South Gloucestershire residents access funding, such as low-cost loans.

A local carer recently told us about their positive experience with them, both in terms of price and the friendliness of the service.

If you look after someone who needs home maintenance,



adaptations or repairs, you can get in touch with We Care Home Improvements.

✉ info@wecr.org.uk
 ☎ 0300 323 0700

Deaf Centre equipment drop-ins

The Centre for Deaf and Hard of Hearing are now running equipment drop-in sessions at the We Care Home Improvements showroom at Waterloo road in Bristol every Wednesday morning between 10am -1pm. This is a chance to test a range of listening aid devices – such as amplified telephones, TV listening devices and personal listeners – and ask any questions. Bristol and South Glos carers alike can come along to the drop-in for advice and equipment.

The Centre for Deaf and Hard of Hearing also hold drop-in sessions at their office at the Vassall Centre in Fishponds Monday to Thursday between 10.30am to 1pm. They can also do home assessments for Bristol residents.

For more information, please contact David Melling at The Centre for Deaf and Hard of Hearing.

✉ david@centrefordeaf.org.uk
 ☎ 0117 939 8653

GP Awards Scheme extended

Following the success of our GP Carers Awards Scheme in South Gloucestershire over the last few years, we have now launched the scheme in Bristol. The awards recognise GP practices for providing support for carers and being 'dementia friendly'.

The scheme is a great opportunity for practices to evaluate how they support carers and to agree on what more they could do. All practices are supported by a member of our GP Carer Liaison Team, who continue to work with GP practices regularly to help them identify and support more carers.

Our congratulations go to the following practices on their recent awards:

★ Silver: Fireclay Health, Air Balloon Surgery, Beechwood Medical Practice, Fishponds Family Practice

★ Bronze: Lawrence Hill Surgery

We are also working with the following practices, who will be assessed this spring:

Bradgate Surgery (Pioneer Group), Eastville Medical Practice, Falldon Way Medical Centre, Maytrees Medical, Monks Park Surgery and Southmead and Henbury Family Practice

If you think your GP practice could be more carer aware, ask them what services they offer carers and encourage them to contact us.

✉ info@carerssupportcentre.org.uk ☎ 0117 939 2562

First Hospital Link volunteer

Ken Cruickshank is our first Hospital Liaison Link volunteer. His role is to give carers information about support services and signpost them to us if they need more help.

Ken has been working at the University Hospitals Bristol, alongside Tracey Lathrope, our Hospital Liaison Worker, since last summer. He has already made a big impact on our work in the hospital. He is knowledgeable about how carers can be supported and passionate about his work.

He has been running information stands in the atriums at the BRI and at St. Michael's Hospital and has been particularly helpful in identifying male carers, who feel they can talk to Ken. This has resulted in some male carers accessing support for the first time. Ken has spent his working life helping people with IT systems. After retiring, he knew he wanted to do something different.

He said,
"it's time to give something back. I like meeting people and feeling I am helping people cope with difficult situations more comfortably."



Chloe Payne-Cook,
Volunteer Mentor at UHB
said:

*"Ken is such a valued
volunteer."*

If you are interested in becoming a Hospital Link volunteer, please contact Tracey Lathrope.

✉ Tracey.Lathrope@UHBristol.nhs.uk ☎ 07557 418692

New Learning Disability Support at Southmead Hospital

The team at Southmead have been growing their learning disability support services. There are now 3 new Learning Disability Nurses at Southmead Hospital. Also, on entering the Brunel Building, you will see a Learning Disability Liaison Support banner with the team's contact details. There are also leaflets and hospital passports you can take.

The Learning Disability and Autism Steering Group is attended by key leads in the hospital and meets 2 times per month. The group discusses how to improve support for people with learning disabilities and autism.

The team now give fortnightly Learning Disability Awareness training to all new North Bristol Trust staff, as part of their induction. The trust is also currently arranging Autism training from BASS (Bristol Autism Spectrum Society). They are also developing a whole day masterclass for all 86 of their Learning Disabilities Champions.

To make a referral, get in touch with the Learning Disability team at Southmead.

☎ 0117 4141239
✉ learningdisabilities@nbt.nhs.uk



Workshops for carers 2020

Writing for Wellbeing

Thursday 5 March 2020 in Eastville, Bristol
1.30pm – 4.00pm

Writing can help relieve stress and put you in a more positive frame of mind. This workshop will discuss two short pieces of writing: one about being a carer and one about wellbeing. You will be encouraged to write your own pieces, from your perspective, and share them if you would like to. This workshop is run by Marilyn Reynolds, who is experienced in relaxation techniques.

Everyday First Aid for Carers

Monday 9 March 2020
Longwell Green, South Gloucestershire
10.30am – 12.30pm

This first aid workshop covers scenarios including what to do if someone is choking, unconscious or bleeding, and how to treat a burn or fracture. It will also help you spot the warning signs of a heart attack or stroke and give you the tools to step in and act.

"Clear, friendly delivery... Good opportunities to have a go at different techniques. Useful that not too much was crammed into the two-hour session, so it was easier to remember."

Stress Management

Thursday 2 April 2020
St Werburghs Community Centre, Bristol
10.00am – 1.00pm

This workshop will help you recognise some of the signs of stress, give you an opportunity to share your experiences and show you techniques you can practice.

"I found this workshop very helpful. It made me feel that I am not on my own."

Cookery for male carers

Wednesday 22 April 2020
Henleaze, Bristol
10.00 am – 2.00 pm

In this workshop for male carers, Jacques Hann, an experienced community chef, will take you through how to make nutritious food simply and quickly. You will make a starter and main course with the opportunity to enjoy eating with others in the last hour (or take it home if your time is limited).

Introduction to Mindfulness

Monday 18 May 2020
Poole Court, Yate, South Gloucestershire
12.30pm – 3.00pm

Introducing participants to techniques that focus on being 'in the moment', relaxed and receptive. You will be taught simple techniques you can continue to practice at home, with the person you care for or on your own.

"I will now take some time out to practice mindfulness and be aware of my feelings so that I can be less stressed about fitting everything in on the caring front and being better able to cope."



Carer courses

Caring with Confidence

Thursdays in Fishponds, Bristol
The Vassall Centre, Fishponds, Bristol
June 11, 18, 25 and 2 and 9 July 2020
10.30am – 12.30pm

These 5 week sessions are run by Carers Support Centre on behalf of Southern Brooks Community Partnerships and South Gloucestershire Council.

This course will help you build a better understanding of what services are out there for you. It aims to increase your confidence in making decisions, working with professionals and getting the practical support you need. It also teaches techniques to deal with stress and emphasises the importance of looking after yourself.

"This course gave me tips on coping strategies and the companionship of other carers in the same boat."

For more information and booking please contact Carmen Rodriguez.

✉ training@carerssupportcentre.org.uk
☎ 0117 958 9988



Befriending service

Does your caring role sometimes leave you feeling lonely or isolated? Would it help to speak regularly to someone who understands your situation?

Our befriending service can help. We will match you with a trained volunteer, who can provide conversation, companionship and emotional support. Your volunteer will call you fortnightly for up to a year, although some carers benefit from support for a shorter period.

All of our volunteers have comprehensive training, which includes: carer awareness, maintaining boundaries, understanding safeguarding and confidentiality, using active listening skills, and how to build rapport with someone.

To find out more about our service or to volunteer contact Maria Day, Wellbeing Service Coordinator.

✉ mariad@carerssupportcentre.org.uk

☎ 0117 958 9904

Penny: I can be more honest than with family and friends

Penny is a carer for her husband, who has motor neurone disease. She was apprehensive about befriending at first. Now, 5 months later, she thinks it's wonderful.

When Alan calls Penny, they start by chatting about the ups and downs of the last fortnight. This gives Penny a chance to talk about any frustrations she's experiencing. She doesn't like to discuss her problems with her husband as he faces many issues of his own and she doesn't want to add to his worries.

Penny recounts a memorable phone call:

"During one particular phone call Alan did make me laugh. He had asked me how I was doing and at one point he stopped me and said 'you realise that you've just been telling me how your husband is getting on, but I had asked about you, how are you doing?'"

It is wonderful that he thought to bring the focus back to me, as so much of my life can be dominated by my husband's needs, especially as his condition won't improve and gets progressively worse. I constantly have to adapt to the new issues his condition causes and I can forget to focus on myself."

Penny enjoys hearing about how Alan has been getting on and they enjoy talking about holidays, memories and the outdoors. This gives Penny a welcome distraction. Alan has even been providing Penny with book recommendations for her husband, which he's been thoroughly enjoying.

"Alan is so wonderful to chat to. I can talk openly and freely without fear of criticism. Alan is brilliant at giving advice and suggestions. It's wonderful to be able to receive long-term support. I make sure that my husband has everything he needs before the call so I can sit in another room and at a time that works well for me. It's a great relief to know support is there."

Penny fully recommends befriending to all carers.

"There have been times when I've been in a low mood when I am due to have a call. At these times, I have thought about how my time might be better spent doing jobs around the house. However, when I come off the phone, I realise my mood has lifted and it was a really valuable use of time."

It's great to have someone outside of the family to talk to. I feel I can be more honest with Alan than I can with my friends and family. He is so positive, and we have similar outlooks on life. The phone calls are a joyous and pleasant 30 minutes. I look forward to them all week."

Anyone who is unsure should give it a go. I'm so glad I gave it a try."

Alan: I can make someone's day better

Alan is Penny's volunteer befriender. When he retired, he wanted to do something that would help him stay active and engaged. He volunteered for our sitting service, before choosing to dedicate more time to befriending.

"People who are isolated and lonely need to be listened to and feel understood. Some of the people I talk to can be unwell themselves. By giving them the opportunity to talk I can provide a welcome distraction and help cheer people up."

Alan always starts a call by asking 'How are you doing/feeling today?' This gives the person an opportunity to talk about what's on their mind, before moving on to other topics. As well as being there to listen and provide support and empathy, he also aims to provide a distraction. He has noticed that talking about television or the news can provide a break from day-to-day life and lift someone's mood.

Alan gains a lot personally from being a befriender too. He enjoys finding common interests and sharing stories.

"It is really encouraging to know you've helped to make someone's day better and have helped to lift them up. You can tell how much people enjoy that time for themselves and can see what a difference it makes. It's just a really important thing to do."

Alan found the active listening training especially useful for communication on the phone. He found all the training very thorough and he is given regular support by our wellbeing support team.

"I get a regular call from the staff at Carers Support Centre to check up on how I'm doing. This makes me feel encouraged and appreciated. I know that if I ever have a problem I can call, and they will give me support."

Alan highly recommends being a volunteer befriender.

"You don't need any experience at all. You just need to be a nice person who likes a chat and is willing to listen to people. It fits so easily into my life at a time which is convenient for me. It would also be great for someone who is thinking of volunteering and doesn't have any transport."

Mentoring Service

Our Carers Mentor service is new. Your mentor can help you understand what support is available. Our trained volunteers have experience of caring and can provide you with practical support, information, advice and guidance. The service is available for up to a year, or shorter periods of time too.

Volunteers delivering the mentoring service are carers or former carers; and this service will match people with similar caring situations. This means that you can get information and support from those who truly understand and empathise with your situation, and you can benefit from their experience.

Kerry, who is a volunteer in our office, is also a parent carer who looks after her 11 year old son. She said:



Kerry and her son

"This is going to be such a great service. There are so many things that nobody tells you when you become a carer which I wish I'd known. Nobody tells you that you can work and that you can get lots of financial help with benefits like

the carers well-being grant. I didn't know that you can use the pink card in Bristol to get free entry into loads of places. I had no idea that there were support groups I could join and I didn't really know what respite was and that you could get help to take time off even if you're a parent. I think lots of parent carers don't realise they are going to be entitled to help and support like other carers, because looking after your child is just a part of your everyday life."

New Wellbeing Service Leaflet

The Wellbeing Team are working on a new leaflet. The leaflet will outline our new phone and online services, as well as giving you some tips and ideas for how to take time for yourself each day as a carer.

Friends of Carers Support Centre

We were busy in the run up to Christmas and we thank all the volunteers who helped at our events. It was nice to meet so many of you on Carers Rights Day where the Friends Group ran a 'Christmas Present' stall, which raised £120. The event itself was supported by Asda, Longwell Green, and we thank them very much for this. Our choir event in Cabot Circus was supported by 3 local choirs and raised over £200.

We are now busy planning events for 2020 which include an antiques valuation/cheese and wine evening, a tombola at the Vassall Centre Summer Fayre and a sponsored walk.

Other discussions for future events include a variety show, a cabaret and a celebrity 'Meet & Greet' evening.

Friends of Carers Support Centre always welcome new people to organise events and helpers on the day to support our stalls, raffles and car boot sales. Can you help? If so, I would be very happy to hear from you. Please get in touch with me, Margaret Nash.

✉ MargaretN@carerssupportcentre.org.uk
☎ 07712 345732



Margaret with Asda representative from Longwell Green

Gala ball success



Carers Support Centre staff enjoying the wines at the Gala Ball

Last autumn, Carers Support Centre held its first Gala Ball fundraiser at The Marriot Royal Hotel in Bristol. Attendees told us this was a wonderful evening, and we were delighted to raise £4357 for young carers.

Guests received a red-carpet reception and a glass of bubbly on arrival whilst being entertained with music and close-up magic tricks. Following a welcome from Mayor Marvin Rees, guests took part in a heads and tails game and enjoyed a sumptuous three course meal with table wines.

Guests were then invited to bid for various auction lots – the bidding was competitive and fun

with many guests walking away with cherished items. Our guests stayed to dance the night away to fabulous disco music provided by the hotel DJ.

We are grateful to the guests who came and for the help of our supporters, who made the night a success. Thanks to:

- Kevin Purnell Heating and Plumbing – drinks on arrival
- Barry Lowe – guitarist
- Adrian Pritchard – magician
- The Cross Inn and Restaurant – table wine
- The Marriot Hotel team, for their amazing support

Finally, thanks to our kind donors who gave us our auction lots.

Thank you to everyone who has generously donated funds to help us support carers, including:
Fulmer Charitable Trust, Burges Salmon Charitable Trust, Mercedes-Benz of Bristol, King Richard I Preceptory no. 341, Medlock Charitable Trust, William Hancock Trust Fund, Carers Trust, Rotary Club of Thornbury Trust Fund, CAMRA Bristol & District Beer Festival, Girls' Brigade, Osborne Clarke, The Henbury Singers, Royal Edward Lodge No 4140, Avon Gorge Hotel, Whitechurch Securities, Focus On Design, Co-op Local Community Fund. Thanks also to Mr Gordon R Hobbs from Keynsham Baptist Church who kindly donated £380 in memory of Mrs Val Stephen and the individual donations we receive as thank yous for our support.

Thanks to everybody who donated through our Justgiving campaign. With your help we were able to take young carers to the Christmas panto.

Check your council tax calculation

Carers support officers are here to support individual carers with some of the practical and emotional issues that they face. This often includes helping carers understand and get the right welfare benefits and any entitlement to other discounts and savings.

Certain council tax discounts that affect carers are not well known and carers support officers have had some success raising awareness about these and advocating on behalf of carers who have had difficulty with the application process.

We have written this article with the help of Bristol City Council tax department to explain how council tax discounts work.

If you have a qualifying mental health illness or you provide live-in care for someone, you may be able to get help with your Council Tax bill.

Ask your local council tax department to send you the discount application forms relevant to your situation if either of the following applies to you:

You have a 'severe mental impairment' (SMI) and you are entitled to one of the following benefits;

- Disability Living Allowance (middle or highest rate care component)
- Personal Independence Payment Daily Living Component (standard or enhanced rate)
- Attendance Allowance
- Severe Disablement Allowance
- Employment and Support Allowance
- Incapacity Benefit
- Income Support or Jobseeker's Allowance (with a disability premium)
- Working Tax Credit (with the disability element)

(Please note: your Doctor will be contacted to confirm that you qualify)

OR you are a carer living with the person you care for (who is not your partner/spouse or a dependant under 18).

If you meet the above qualifying criteria you may qualify for a discount and the household council tax bill will be calculated on the basis of any other adults living at the property.

Adriana cares for her husband Stefan who has Alzheimer's. They are the only adults living at the property. Stefan gets the severe mental impairment discount. As Adrianna is caring for a partner/spouse, she is not eligible for the carer discount. The couple therefore pay the single person rate which is 75% of the council tax bill.

Julie lives with and cares for her Mum who has advanced dementia and can no longer speak or move about. Julie and her Mum also both qualify. Their council tax bill is reduced by 50%.

Nula's mother has vascular dementia and has moved in to live with Nula and her grown up family (5 adults in total). Nula and her mother meet the



Jan Mussi (right) helped Julie secure her discount

conditions for possible discount but, as three other adults live at the property, no reduction is awarded.

Other discounts, which may apply to your household, are explained on the council websites.

Get in touch with Bristol City Council:
☎ 0117 922 2900

Or, get in touch with South Gloucestershire Council:
☎ 01454 868 003

If you need extra support getting help with your council tax bill, you can call CarersLine.
☎ 0117 965 2200

Talk to us at your GP practice

We hold regular carers surgeries at some GP practices. This gives carers the opportunity to talk about their caring situation and find out about the different types of support available. **Phone CarersLine or check our website** to find out if we are coming to your practice and on what day of the month. You can then book your individual appointment with the surgery in the same way as you would book to see your doctor.



Young Carers Awareness Day

To mark Young Carers Awareness Day, the E-ACT Academy launched their Young Carers Charter and brought together 30 young carers to have a day of fun. Our patron, Gareth Chilcott, attended to help them celebrate. The Academy includes 6 primary schools in Bristol and the charter demonstrates their commitment to giving young carers the help they need at school.

Young carers struggle to keep up with their schoolwork and are often bullied. Through our Young Carers in Schools project we help schools with inset days and training for staff, governors and pupils. Schools can then set up support groups, homework clubs and drop-in sessions for young carers. This gives pupils confidence that staff understand their home situation and means they get the support they need.

Kama McKenzie, Young Carers Manager, at Carers Support Centre, said: "On average young carers will miss a day of school each month as a result of their caring role, so the steps schools take to identify and support them can have a huge impact on their learning, wellbeing and life chances."

Claire Peters, Young Carers Lead at Ilminster Avenue, said, "I arranged the event so that all the young carers can be recognised, for the day to be about them, and for them to have fun."

Increased council funding

We are delighted that our contract with Bristol City Council, to support young carers, has been extended by one year from the end of January 2020. Our funding has been increased by £44,500 to enable us to bring our waiting list down for assessments. It is essential that young carers receive their Young Carers Assessment as soon as possible to safeguard them from excessive or inappropriate care. We are incredibly pleased that the council has recognised the importance of funding this work to meet the needs of young carers.

Our patron, Gareth Chilcott said, "I've been a carer, I know how difficult it is, and I was an adult. To be these children's age is just heart-breaking really, but they're so positive and they help their families."

Our work in schools has received a huge boost in Bristol thanks to funding awarded to us by The Nisbet Trust. You can help young carers by finding out if your local school is part of the Young Carers in Schools programme. If they are not, ask your school to get in touch with us.



Thanks to Gareth for coming along to celebrate

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Contact us on 0117 958 9980, YoungC@carerssupportcentre.org.uk or text us on 07821 258 383

Cooking roast dinner with friends

Many young carers struggle with cooking healthy food as part of their caring responsibilities. Thanks to Carers Trust and the Pears Foundation, we were able to provide an opportunity for 15 boys to learn to cook a three course Christmas lunch.

The young carers learned useful cookery skills and got to sit down together at the end to enjoy the meal they made. They were asked what they enjoyed about the day:

"Making the Pigs in Blankets was fun. I have learned how to cook a roast dinner with friends." Jack

"I have learned how not to burn down the kitchen!" Ryleigh

We are planning 2 further workshops this Spring with our 13-up club, thanks to funding from One You South Gloucestershire. In these workshops the young carers will compare the nutritional value, cost and taste of processed food with freshly cooked food. Then they'll be cooking and sitting down to enjoy a cottage pie and apple crumble. Mmm...yummy.



It's important that young carers learn cookery skills

©Tina Gue

I cannot rest when I want to

Hi, I am Ethan and I am 11 years old. I live in Frampton Cotterell and I care for my mum and my brother. My mum has a really bad back, so most of the things I do are to help her around the house. My brother has a sensory condition and dyslexia, so I help to calm him down.

The impact being a young carer has on me is that I cannot rest when I want to because I have to help at home. Sometimes I cannot do the things I want to do like sports or spending time in my room. Young Carers helps me to do the things I want to do. At Young Carers groups, I can do stuff I would like to do in my spare time. I have met other young carers and see them at different things I go to.

If you are a young carer, or you know a young carer, I would like to say to you: Young Carers has helped me a lot and has changed my life. I would definitely recommend it.

"Ethan attended the Young Carers residential at Magdalen Farm in Somerset last summer. It was great to see Ethan enjoying looking after the animals, making friends and having a break from caring for his brother." Chris, Young Carers Key Worker



Ethan loved the goats at Magdalen farm

Young Carers has a Facebook page to share useful information with young carers, their families, professionals and anyone else who supports young carers! Please 'Like' our page Young Carers – Bristol & South Glos

14 Carers Emergency Card

Do you ever worry what would happen if you had an accident or had to be rushed to hospital? Emergencies can happen to anyone, but if you are a carer it can affect the person you care for too.

A Carers Emergency Card can prevent harm coming to the person you care for and offer you peace of mind.

It's free to register for a card and thousands of local carers already carry one. The card shows your name, a unique identification number and an emergency phone number. If you have an accident/emergency or are taken seriously ill, the card can be used to alert a 24-hour emergency call centre that the person you care for needs help. Steps are then taken to ensure the safety of the person cared for.

Sue's story

"In December 2018, I fell down the stairs at my home and suffered a head injury.

I care for my elderly mother and one of my first thoughts was how will she cope if I have to stay over in hospital - which is precisely what happened. When an ambulance arrived, I handed my Carers Emergency Card to the paramedic who assured me they would call the number on the front of my card so that the appropriate people would be contacted. Phew! This was a huge relief. I was able to focus on myself for the rest of the day and not worry about my mother.

The next day I was a bit more with it and learned from neighbours that somebody from the emergency response team had been to see mum and continued to pop in for a couple of days. 'Meals on wheels' were arranged and a supply of her medication in dosette boxes arrived. Goodness knows what would have happened if I hadn't had the card, it makes me shudder to think.

I'm sure it aided my recovery not being constantly worried about the situation at home. I would urge anybody who doesn't have one of these magic cards to get one as soon as possible."



Nina's story

"I care for my mother, who is 88 years old and cannot walk.

Last year, I was in the dentist having an injection and I passed out. I was non-responsive and had to go to hospital in an ambulance. My Carers Emergency Card was used to contact the emergency call centre.

They then phoned my mum and kept her informed about my situation. It was brilliant. Two of my emergency contacts live nearby and they made sure my mum knew to call them if she needed anything. I wasn't responsive until late afternoon, so it was brilliant having that card."

Use your card to get discounts

As well as providing an essential emergency response, the card can also be used to access local discounts. You can use it in local leisure and retail outlets, as well as cafes, restaurants and other local businesses. You can find a full list of discounts on our website, with as many as 250 to choose from.



Lisa Saunders, Carers Emergency Card Coordinator

For full details on applying for a card visit the Carers Emergency Card page of our website or get in touch with Lisa Saunders.

✉ LisaS@carerssupportcentre.org.uk
☎ 0117 965 2200

All support groups (unless indicated) are drop-ins, so there is no need to book: just turn up.

SUPPORT GROUPS	VENUE	TIME	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June
BEDMINSTER Third Tuesday	NEW: Community Room, Winterstoke House, Duckmoor Road, Ashton Gate, BS3 2EW	10.15 - 12.15	18th	17th	21st	19th	16th
CALLINGTON ROAD DEMENTIA CARERS First Wednesday	The Coppice, Callington Road Hospital, Brislington BS4 5BJ	10.30 - 12.30	5th	4th	1st	6th	3rd
DOWNEND Fourth Wednesday	Badminton Gardens, Beaufort Road, BS16 6FG	2-4	26th	25th	22nd	27th	24th
HANHAM First Tuesday	Hanham Folk Centre, High Street, Hanham BS15 3EJ	1.30 - 3.30	4th	3rd	7th	5th	2nd
HARTCLIFFE First Thursday	Details subject to change. Please contact Louise Brown on 0117 958 9982						
KINGSWOOD Second Wednesday	The Park Centre, Kingswood BS15 4AR	2-4	12th	11th	8th	13th	10th
LAWRENCE WESTON Third Thursday	Lawrence Weston Community Farm, Saltmarsh Drive, Bristol BS11 0NJ	2-4	20th	19th	16th	21st	18th
MENTAL HEALTH Second Tuesday	The Vassall Centre, Gill Avenue, Fishponds BS16 2QQ	PM6.30 - 8.30	11th	10th	14th	12th	9th
PATCHWAY Third Tuesday	Callicroft House, Patchway Council Offices, Rodway Road, BS34 5DQ	1.30 - 3.30	18th	17th	21st	19th	16th
PARENT CARERS SUPPORT GROUP CENTRAL Wednesdays	Phoenix Social Enterprise, 5 Russell Town Avenue, Lawrence Hill, BS5 9LT	10.30 - 12.30	5th	4th	1st	6th	3rd
PARENT CARERS SUPPORT GROUP NORTH WEST	Henbury and Brentry Community Centre, Machin Road, Henbury, Bristol, BS10 7HG	10.30 - 12.30	26th	18th	22nd	20th	17th
PARENT CARERS SUPPORT GROUP SOUTH Thursdays	The Inns Court Centre, 1 Marshall Walk, Inns Court, Knowle, Bristol BS4 1TR	10.30 - 12.30	27th	26th	30th	21st	25th
SOUTH WEST CARERS FOR BDP (Borderline Personality Disorder) Alternate Wednesdays	Please contact Tracey Harvey on 07922 746287 for details	7-9	Call CarersLine for details				

ACTIVITY GROUPS	VENUE	TIMES	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June
LUNCH CLUB Third Thursday	Yate	12.30 - 2	20th	19th	Please note: dates from April are not confirmed as we are awaiting the outcome of a funding bid to continue running these groups.		
CRAFTY CARERS Second Monday	Downend	2-4	10th	9th			
BOOK CLUB First Monday	Downend	11.30 - 12.45	3rd	2nd			
Theatre Club	Various	Various	Please contact for details				

For information about activity groups, please contact Stacey Vallis
☎ 07742 291 073 ✉ activities@carerssupportcentre.org.uk

CARERS GROUPS THAT RUN INDEPENDENTLY There are many other carers groups that run independently or are supported by other organisations. They may be of interest to you because they are local or because they are for carers of someone with a specific disability or long term condition. We do our best to keep the list updated and accurate. For a list of carers groups across Bristol and South Gloucestershire please go to our website or, if you don't have online access, contact CarersLine who will be happy to help.

Bedminster group venue change

From March, the Bedminster Carers Support Group will be meeting at the Community Room, Winterstoke House, Duckmoor Road, Ashton Gate, BS3 2EL. 10.15am – 12.15pm There is lots of free parking at Winterstoke House. If you have any questions, please contact Louise Brown.

✉ LouiseB@carerssupportcentre.org.uk
☎ **0117 958 9982**

Patchway carers support group

If you live in Patchway or the surrounding areas and help look after a friend or relative who couldn't manage without you the Patchway group is an opportunity for you to take a break and meet other carers.

The group runs every 3rd Tuesday of the month (see page 15). You can expect a warm welcoming atmosphere, free refreshments, informal support and information, guest speakers and discussions about carers' needs and issues. One carer described what they gain from coming to the group.

"Support, friends and a break from caring, also a chance to learn new things."

To find out more contact Luke Knee.
✉ LukeK@carerssupportcentre.org.uk
☎ **07515 130 091**

The Mindful Life - Free one day courses

Friday 27 March 2020
Saturday 20 June 2020
10am – 4pm

The sessions cover simple mindfulness techniques you can use to improve your wellbeing and resilience.

"Previously I had felt very low, however mindfulness provided an inner peace I'd not experienced before."

These courses are run by The Mindful Life. For information or to book, contact Francine Russell.

✉ info@themindfullife.co.uk

New carers group at Marie Curie, Bristol

A new carers group is meeting at Marie Curie shop at 107 Gloucester Road BS7 8AT on the first Monday of every month, 10am – midday. All carers welcome – for information, support and a chance to chat to other carers. If you would like to come along, contact the Marie Curie shop. ☎ **0117 944 2371**

Lottery winners

September Pat Dart, RC Merritt, Chloe Scholefield, Rachel Obi

October Guy Pegden, Donella Longhurst, Wendy Gregory, John Quartly, Chloe Scholefield

November Wendy Louise Russell, ST Wilson, Elizabeth Cross, Rebecca Hussey, Adrian Northcott

December Deborah Means, Pauline Edwards-Samuels, Rachel Obi, Elaine Gibson, Elizabeth Cross

Carers Support Centre

The Vassall Centre, Gill Ave,
Fishponds, BS16 2QQ

🌐 www.carerssupportcentre.org.uk
✉ carersline@carerssupportcentre.org.uk
☎ **0117 965 2200**

CarersLine opening times

Mon–Fri 10–1pm

An answerphone operates outside these hours

If you are able to receive this newsletter by email please let us know, as this helps reduce our costs.

✉ info@carerssupportcentre.org.uk



Your generous donations help us make life better for local carers. If you pay tax, you can make your donation worth an extra 25p in every £1 by completing the Gift Aid declaration.

Title _____ First Name or initials _____ Surname _____

Address _____

Postcode _____

GIFT AID DECLARATION Please treat the enclosed gift of £ _____ as a Gift Aid donation.

I want to Gift Aid my donation and any donations I make in the future or have made in the past 4 years to Carers Support Centre. I am a UK taxpayer and understand that if I pay less Income Tax and/or Capital Gains Tax than the amount of Gift Aid claimed on all my donations in that tax year it is my responsibility to pay any difference. Gift Aid is reclaimed by the charity from the tax you pay for the current tax year and will boost your donation by 25p for every £1 you donate.

Signature _____ Date _____