



Fife Carers Centre *Newsletter*

Carers Poverty Protest

April 22nd not only saw the UK government Budget announcements it also saw carers and supporters marching in a well timed protest against carer poverty in London, Belfast, Cardiff and Edinburgh. Representatives from Fife joined over 100 carers and supporters on a route that took them from Edinburgh Castle down the Royal Mile to the Scottish Parliament. The protest was to highlight the plight of carers and to demand investment in carers.

Outside the Scottish Parliament over 200 carers and their supporters gathered at a rally where John Swinburne, leader of the Scottish Senior Citizens Party, highlighted the small amounts of money carers and pensioners are expected to live on. Currently £53.10 Carers allowance is the lowest benefit of its kind - for a carer giving 35 hours of care a week it is the equivalent of £1.51 per hour. These same carers currently save the Scottish taxpayer an estimated £7.6 billion per year. Sarah Boyack MSP also spoke and encouraged carers to raise their financial concerns with their local MPs.

You can find out who your local MP is on www.parliament.uk and your local MSP on www.scottish.parliament.uk where you will also find the address to write to them.



Carers Poverty March in Edinburgh

Want to talk to someone who really understands?

One of the common threads we come across in the feedback to our questions to carers on what helps them to keep going is that of how useful they find it to talk to someone who really, really knows how they feel. To help make this easier we would like your help in compiling a list of carer support organisations in Fife. These organisations could be solely for carers i.e. The male carers support group at Fife Carers Centre or it could be a condition specific group who welcome carers along with those affected for example the Association for Limbless in Fife (A.L.F). If you know of any such groups please give us a call on 01592 642999 or email to lesley@fifecarers.co.uk with the details and we will add them to our list. Thank you!

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Attention all Carers in Burntisland, Kinghorn and Aberdour!

The Burntisland Carers Group will take a break over the summer and next meet on 4th September 2009.

Fife Carers Centre has a Carers Support Group that meets on the first Friday of the month in the Solid Rock Café, High Street, Burntisland, from 10.30am until about 12noon. We understand that not all carers are able to attend each of the meetings as a result of their caring role, but if you can make it along, even for a short time, we will be happy to see you.

Our aim is to make the group a safe and comfortable place for any carers in the Burntisland, Kinghorn and Aberdour area to meet. We hope that the Group will give you a chance to share your caring experiences and break down barriers for some carers who have been plunged into caring and feel lost and overwhelmed. We hope that by talking to each other and feeling more confident about getting help and support, perhaps the carer's psyche of coping alone and holding it all in will be gently eased out.

Feel free to contact Grant Kidd who help to run the group if you have any questions or even if you would prefer to meet for a chat before you decide whether the group is right for you.

Do you care for someone affected by Downs Syndrome?

NHS Fife Learning Disability Teams are running one-stop health screening clinics looking at the specific health needs of anyone over the age of 18 affected by Downs Syndrome. The service is now looking at the best way of delivering training to carers enabling them to better understand the health needs of Down Syndrome. If you are interested in attending a workshop to improve your understanding of the health issues facing people affected by Downs Syndrome please contact Lesley at Fife Carers Centre on 01592 642999 or by email on lesley@fifecarers.co.uk and we will pass your details to the Learning Disability Liaison Nurse.

Caring with confidence

As one of our delegates at the carers event said "Carers love the people they care for, but they are not born carers. It is an ongoing learning process and no one is superhuman." Fife Carers Centre recognise that gaining from other people's knowledge and experience is one way of improving our own ability. We have a number of workshops planned that link us with other organisations and agencies designed to improve the ability of carers to cope with their caring role. There are currently places available on all of these workshops and if you would like to attend please call us on 01592 642999 to book a place.

- Caring for someone living with Dementia - working with Alzheimer Scotland to provide workshops on caring for someone living with dementia. Dates for these workshops are 17th September, 29th October, 28th January and 11th March.
- "Looking after the interests of Adults with Incapacity". On 22nd September The Office of the Public Guardian will deliver a session of information on topics such as the range and scope of Power of Attorney, Guardianship and so on. In addition a speaker from a firm of local solicitors will speak about the process of gaining Power of Attorney etc, what to expect, how long it can take, how much it's likely to cost etc. Lunch will be included in the day. There are a limited number of places so book early.
- Moving & Handling project – the project will enable carers who regularly move & handle the person they care for the opportunity to work with a moving & handling specialist. The project allows the carer and moving & handling specialist to work in the carers own home to develop a moving & handling plan specific to their own situation. For more information please contact Cindy Souter at Fife Carers Centre on 01592 642999 or email cindy@fifecarers.co.uk

We'd like to hear from you about the topics you think would be useful to learn more about and that would help you care with confidence. If you have a suggestion for a workshop - please let us know.

Dates for your Diary

Call us today on 01592 642999 to book places.

June

Friday 26th - Drop In Event Meeting Point lunch at Fife Carers Centre between 12 and 2pm. There will be a surprise guest speaker!!

Tuesday 30th - Drop in Event Male Carers Group meeting at Fife Carers Centre between 1pm and 3pm.

July

Friday 31st - Drop In Event Meeting Point lunch at Fife Carers Centre between 12 and 2pm. The guest speaker will be from the Kirkcaldy & Levenmouth Long Term Conditions Team and will be talking about Self Management and care.

Tuesday 28th - The male carers group is not meeting this month! Back again in August.

August

Tuesday 25th - Drop in Event Male Carers Group meeting at Fife Carers Centre between 1pm and 3pm.

Friday 28th - Drop In Event Meeting Point lunch at Fife Carers Centre between 12 and 2pm. The guest speaker will be Janice Russell from Trading Standards who will be talking about, amongst other things, protecting the person you care for from scams.

September

Friday 4th - Drop in Event Burntisland Carers Group, Solid Rock Cafe Burntisland from 10.30 am - 12 noon.

Thursday 17th – Book your place. Caring for someone living with Dementia. A carer information day held in Fife Carers Centre in conjunction with Alzheimer Scotland.

Tuesday 22nd - Book your place. Fife Carers Centre hosts a workshop on "Looking after the interests of Adults with Incapacity". There will be a morning session of information from the Office of the Public Guardian on topics such as the range and scope of Power of Attorney, Guardianship and so on. In the afternoon a speaker from a firm of local solicitors will speak about the process of gaining Power of Attorney etc, what to expect, how long it can take, how much it's likely to cost etc. Lunch will be included in the day. There are a limited number of places so book early.

Friday 25th - Drop In Event Meeting Point lunch at Fife Carers Centre between 12 and 2pm. The guest speaker will be from the Samaritans and they will be talking about how they support carers or anyone in distress or despair.

Tuesday 29th - Drop in Event Male Carers Group meeting at Fife Carers Centre between 1pm and 3pm.

Carers Week Event 2009

Fife's 2009 Carers Week Event took place on Wednesday 10th June in the Carnegie Conference Centre in Dunfermline. Over 50 carers came along to join together and enjoy a day of information, relaxation and celebration.

The day began with a welcome message from Cathy Cairns Associate Nurse Director from NHS Fife. Carers then went on to enjoy their morning. There was a fantastic choice of Complementary & Beauty Therapies, Information and Learning about topics such as Healthy Eating or Learn to give a Hand Massage, and for those feeling a little more energetic – exercise in the form of anything from Yoga & Tai Chi to Line Dancing. Between sessions and over the coffee and lunch breaks there were a wide range of information stands to go and have a look at.



Marian & Sandra learn to give hand massage

Many carers commented on how interesting and useful they had found the information available and many of them went home with bags of leaflets about the help available from various organisations and freebies gleaned from the stands.

And then of course there was the delicious lunch ... it was just as well the only thing being exercised in the afternoon was our minds as any form of physical exercise was probably impossible!



At an information stand - looking for those pesky quiz answers!



Everyone enjoying lunch and chat - general opinion was that the food was excellent as always

After lunch a panel made up of Cllr. Tim Brett - (Strategic Chair: Social Work & Health Committee) Fife Council, Claire Cairns – National Coordinator for the Coalition of Carer Organisations in Scotland, Gordon Paterson – Carers Policy Branch of the Scottish Government and Ann Hatton - Clinical Governance Lead, Dunfermline and West Community Health Partnership answered questions that had been compiled by taking common themes from the responses of carers to the prompt My Secret Ingredient for making life better for carers is...

Councillor Brett started the session by revealing his own experience as a carer and by acknowledging that a great deal more needs to be done for carers although several measures have already been put in place. From Claire and Gordon we heard about the development of a new national carers strategy and learned that carers organisations are working towards strengthening the rights that carers have so that they become an integral part of the system for carers. Carers in the audience appreciated Ann Hatton's honesty but were taken aback to find out that she had been unaware of just how many carers there are in Fife. She stated positively that she was committed to ensuring that carers' contribution was fully recognised. The theme of the afternoon's discussion was the need to continually remind all professionals working with carers that carers are key partners in care and to ensure that their significant contribution to society is no longer a secret.

We have run these events in Dunfermline for the last few years and although everyone who attends enjoys them we know that it isn't always easy for people to get to Dunfermline. It seems sensible to consider having three smaller more local events. We would like to hear what you think would work in your area. Please contact us at Fife Carers Centre on 01592 642999 by email to centre@fifecarers.co.uk or by mail at 157 Commercial Street, Kirkcaldy, KY1 2NS.

My Secret Ingredient for making life better for carers is...

We asked carers what their own secret ingredient for making life better for carers is and we got some great replies. A selection of the replies are shown on page 6. One reply that caught our eye was from carer Kerry Black. Kerry told us her secret ingredient is "Writing poetry – I don't have to go out of the house. All I need is a pen & paper. It's cheap & sometimes I can even give other folk a laugh." Kerry wrote this poem, reproduced here, to mark Carers Week 2009 and its theme of Carers - the UK's Secret Service. Carers at the event were privileged to be present for its UK premiere as Kerry read it for us all! You can also find a copy of it on the Carers' Week Website.

CARERS -THE UK'S SECRET SERVICE!

Nobody sees a carer, nobody sees a spy,
We're an invisible band of workers-have you ever asked yourself why?
While James Bond struts about the place in a dashing dinner suit,
Most carers struggle to recollect the last day that they had out!
He's fortified by gadgets supplied by the amazing Q,
We're lonely and under-funded, always needing an extra (Money)penny or two!
We're always on the go, we rarely get time to relax,
If we were like James Bond, we could escape on big jet packs!
His life is full of glamour. He loves to sip on champers.
Our lives are filled with duty and dirty laundry hampers!
We have no job description, we have no stated hours,
Oh! to be a spy and have some super powers,
To flee our caring duties, to go out and meet a pal.
I'd settle for a cafe - I don't need Casino Royale!
Though we all love our families and live to show our care,
Sometimes it would be nice if someone else was there.
To give a little hand, to provide some great respite.
James Bond doesn't need a befriender to let him out at night!
We're standing in the shadows, we don't wear any disguise.
We're the UK's REAL Secret Service!
We're the carers, NOT the spies!

KERRY BLACK - 12TH MAY, 2009



Kerry reads her poem to a rapt audience



Maryse collects her prize from Mary Stewart Fife Carers Centre Manager

Quizzing carers

We're a bit worried that Lesley is becoming obsessed with quizzes – she even made carers join in a quiz at the event! Carers were asked questions the answers to which they would find at the information stands around the venue. There were some tricky moments but in the end the winner was Maryse Forte who won the £30 Argos Gift Card.

With thanks to...

Thank you to the carers who took time out to come along. We know that being away from the person you care for for a whole day can be a bit of a logistical nightmare at times, we hope you found it worth the effort!

Thank you to all of the therapists and workshop facilitators who donated their time and energy – many carers benefited enormously from the short time they spent with you.

Thank you to our panel members who answered the difficult questions with honesty and straightforwardness.

A big thanks also to the organisations that attended with information stands. All of these things contribute to what everyone agrees is a most informative, useful and, above all, enjoyable day.

Thank you too to Fife Council, NHS Fife and all the other organisations who helped make the event happen.

So - what else did you tell us helps?

- Accept the things you cannot change. Know that other people don't walk in your shoes – it's not their fault they don't "get it". Learn to ask for help ... also Mars Bars!
- Being able to keep in contact with the outside world, therefore having daycare or respite is essential so that I can have some free time to enjoy meeting with friends, shopping etc. This gives me time to relax and then I am able to cope with caring for my husband.
- Caring. Compassion. Understanding. Listening. Action.
- Trying to keep cool, sometimes carers get very stressed. Difficult in cases of dementia – easier if the person would accept help.
- More time to spend on myself and to care for myself.
- Having a respite carer every week to give the carers a few hours to themselves without worrying what the person they care for is doing. Knowing that someone is with them makes the freedom feel better, and lifts the spirits.
- Loving compassionate recognition for the role we fulfil.
- Good quality, flexible respite care. Agencies and Organisations working together in partnership to improve the quality of life for both the cared for person and the carer.
- Having adequate respite so that carers can recharge their batteries.
- A holiday for themselves and their loved ones.
- Keeping self respect and self worth.
- Having a friend who listens to my moans and groans without judging me and gives me a hug when I feel down.
- Planning and organisations. (Just wish the statutory authorities could manage this!).
- To make sure the person who is receiving the care and the carer get the support financially, spiritually, emotionally and physically from both conventional and complementary resources.
- To listen to carers; find out what their needs, wishes and problems are. Provide support, respite and other practical help.
- Try to think positively about all the negatives in life.
- EMPATHY – (not sympathy). Carers love the people they care for, but they are not born carers. It is an ongoing learning process and no one is superhuman. Only people who have cared for someone can really know the ups and downs.
- A bit of respect. A bit of fun; and be thankful for the help given.
- Ongoing support from family & friends – regular visits from counsellors etc from Alzheimer Scotland etc
- Good planning with a second option: and there is always a next day to try out new approaches to daily programmes.
- Not so much red tape – and to be looked upon as people and not just numbers.
- Accept help when offered, don't struggle on regardless. Carers need to be cared for and health looked after. A carer needs to be on form.
- Appreciation for what they do!!!
- Having a good friend who is willing to listen when you feel you need to "offload" your worries and frustrations.

Was the day helpful?

As always with any event intended to have a positive outcome we wanted to find out if carers had gained any benefit from attending the event. At the start of the day we asked carers to score how they felt physically, mentally and emotionally on a scale from Awful to Fantastic. At the end of the day we asked them to score themselves again using the same scale.

Of the 56 attending delegates 42 (75%) chose to take part in the evaluation.

Of those:

69% reported feeling better physically by the end of the day.

76% reported feeling better mentally by the end of the day.

83% reported feeling better emotionally by the end of the day.

One of the lessons we can draw from these results is that even a small amount of time spent paying attention to our physical, mental and emotional well-being can have a beneficial effect. Several carers we spoke to said that they would try to find ways of building on their experiences of the day, seeking out carer support groups, trying to find ways of accessing complementary therapies and taking a bit of exercise were all ways they mentioned.

GETTING INVOLVED

Lots of organisations are looking for people to become involved in making a difference. Many of them don't need you to give up much time and are more interested in your input as a carer than in formal qualifications. Here are some of those who have asked us to help reach out to carers and encourage them to join in.

A Message from Crossroads - WANTED!! New Committee Members.

If you are reading this Newsletter then you know about carers, and probably about Crossroads too. Crossroads Fife Central — an amalgamation of the schemes which previously covered the Kirkcaldy, Glenrothes, Levenmouth and North East Fife areas — is looking to expand the membership of the Management Committee.

We like to think that "everybody" has heard of Crossroads but, of course, this may not be the case. For those of you who don't know about us, the aim and purpose of Crossroads is to provide high quality short-term care to enable the full-time carer to have a little time to themselves - and draw breath. The Care Attendants are carefully and extensively trained and will do whatever the carer would do. All ages, illnesses and disabilities come within our remit and the service is flexible and free.

If you have an interest in carers' issues and feel that you can bring your experience — as a carer, or perhaps an involvement within the voluntary sector — to assist in the management of our service, then we would like to hear from you. There are no "qualifications". Please contact Fiona at fiona@crossroadsg.co.uk or on 01592 610640

Improving the quality of Care

Making the decision that the person you care for would be better off in a Care Home can be a difficult one to come to terms with. One of the questions we are often asked is "How do I choose the best place for the person I love to go to?". One of the tools you have at your disposal is the Care Commission report on the service. The Care Commission registers and inspects care services in Scotland. Anne Haddow, vice chair of Fife Carers Centre, also works with The Care Commission she says "To do our job well we need to know what you think. We want to involve people in our work." How can you become involved? There are three main ways:

- You can become a member of our Involving People Group. This group works with us and influences the work we do by giving their views and experiences of using services in Scotland.
- You can join our Lay Assessor Scheme. The scheme involves going into services with inspectors to find out what the quality of a service is really like by asking people who use it. Lay assessors get ongoing training and support.
- You can become a member of our Equality Consultation Panel. This group advises us on equality issues and helps us to improve the way we involve everyone with the work we do regardless of age, disability, gender, race, religion or belief or sexual orientation.

If you would like more information about these groups please call 0845 603 0890 or email equality@carecommission.com or visit our website www.carecommission.com

YOUR HEALTH, YOUR SAY

Do you feel you would like to be more involved in how health services in your area are provided and developed? Health is everybody's concern and Dunfermline & West Fife CHP Public Partnership Forum (PPF) offers you the chance to have a say in what you think is important.

The Public Partnership Forum aims to:

- Inform local people about the range and location of community services;
- Engage with local users and cares in discussion about how to improve services and information;
- Support wider public involvement.

If you would like to find out more about Dunfermline & West Fife CHP Public Partnership Forum, you can:

- Log onto the CHP website - www.dwfchp.scot.nhs.uk
- Email the CHP website administrator on enquiresdwfchp@fife-pct.scot.nhs.uk
- Contact the PPF Administrator [Lorraine King] on 01383 565325 or email lorraineaking@fife-pct.scot.nhs.uk

Anyone can become a member of the Public Partnership Forum. As a member you can expect to receive information and invites to forthcoming learning/training events and conferences; the CHP quarterly newsletter, and if indicated, information and consultation documents on areas of specific interest - you can choose the level of involvement you want.

Articles for sale

Acorn Stairlift

The stairlift is unused. It's a 13 step and will fit any typical straight staircase. The original price was £2800 and the asking price is now £1500. The price includes delivery plus installation by an engineer. For more information or to arrange purchase please call 01383 720945.

A GREAT MODERN POWERCHAIR IN VERY GOOD CONDITION

Sale Price £2000

Invacare Storm3 TT -10KPH Model GB Motors - Flex Seating System

The chair is Blue with Blue upholstery and is 3 Years old and Taxed.

The chair is fitted with True Track Technology that allows the chair to go across gradients without crabbing like other wheelchairs. GB motors have a lifetime warranty and are gearless/blushless so there is minimal maintenance with superior reliability.

It has:

- Electric Tilt in Space Seat
- Electric Seat Lift
- Electric elevating leg rests
- Kerb Climber
- Multi-adjustable Headrest
- Lights and indicators
- Also has Fitted Tie downs and Luggage Rack and Swing away controller.

The seller can deliver up to 100 Miles on purchase for fuel cost. If you are interested in buying or would like more information please call David 01333 426370.

Tell it like it is ... Reviews from carers.

We would like to hear from carers if they have experienced or used something that they think other carers would benefit from or simply enjoy. It could be anything from a book you have found useful, a film you've enjoyed or a restaurant that you found catered well for special diets or disabled access. With the holiday season upon us we are particularly interested to hear from anyone who has found a hotel or holiday provider who is particularly geared towards the needs of carers and those who need care.

If you have something you would like to tell us please drop us a line by email or post or give us a call.



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Opening times

| | |
|-----------|-------------|
| Monday | 9.30 - 1.00 |
| Tuesday | 9.30 - 4.30 |
| Wednesday | 9.30 - 1.00 |
| Thursday | 9.30 - 6.30 |
| Friday | 9.30 - 4.00 |

Advice, Support & Information for all Carers in Fife

Mary Stewart -

Centre Manager

Mhairi Lochhead -

Carer Support Worker

Cindy Souter -

Carer Support Worker

Grant Kidd -

Carer Support Worker

Angela Angel -

Administrator/Finance Officer

Irene Jones -

Administration Assistant

Lesley Childs -

Information Officer



Princess Royal Trust
Fife Carers Centre

This Newsletter is published quarterly by The Princess Royal Trust Fife Carers Centre, 157 Commercial Street, Kirkcaldy, KY1 2NS. Please contact us if you have any articles you would like to contribute or if you would like your details added to our mailing list.

Printed by Thos. McGilvray & Son Ltd.
Wemyss Road, Dysart, Kirkcaldy KY1 2XZ