

31 July 2024

Dear Member or other Caregiver,

### **IMPORTANT INFORMATION FOR ALL CAREGIVERS IN GATESHEAD**

Gateshead Carers Association's current contract with Gateshead Council and the Integrated Care Board (ICB NHS) for the delivery of carer services in Gateshead ends on 31<sup>st</sup> August 2024. The new contract commencing on 1<sup>st</sup> September 2024 has been awarded to another organisation.

**Unfortunately and with great sadness, I have to inform you that all of our existing services will end on 31<sup>st</sup> August 2024.**

Trustees and all staff are devastated by this news as I'm sure many of you will be. We are expecting hundreds of people, who are receiving support or have previously received support from Gateshead Carers, to be contacting us on hearing this news. As a result, you may find it difficult to reach us by phone due to the volume of calls we are expecting to receive. If you can, please contact us via email with any questions you have and we will respond as soon as we can.

**Attached to this letter are the answers to some of the questions we think people will be asking.** This will be available on our website and will be updated with the answers to any other questions people ask.

The new contract, starting on September 1<sup>st</sup> 2024, has been awarded by Gateshead Council and the Integrated Care Board (IBC NHS) to Carers Federation Limited. It should be fully operational and offering all caregiver services in Gateshead from September 1<sup>st</sup> 2024.

At this point in time, I only have the address and contact details (below) for their office based in Nottingham. I have no information on how Carers Federation Limited will deliver services for caregivers.

**Carers Federation Limited**  
**Christopher Cargill House, 21-23 Pelham Road,**  
**Sherwood Rise, Nottingham, NG5 1AP**

**Tel:** 07740410314

**Email:** [info@carersfederation.co.uk](mailto:info@carersfederation.co.uk)

You can find out more about Carers Federation Limited by visiting their website.

**Carers Federation Limited website:** [www.carersfederation.co.uk](http://www.carersfederation.co.uk)

If you have any questions, comments or queries for Gateshead Council and the Integrated Care Board (ICB NHS), please contact them directly. You can do this by;

**Email:** [CaregiversContractQueries@gateshead.gov.uk](mailto:CaregiversContractQueries@gateshead.gov.uk)

Carers Federation Limited and Gateshead Council have requested that we provide them with your personal contact details. **We cannot do that without your explicit permission as required under the General Data Protection Regulation.**

If you wish us to transfer (pass on) your personal contact details to Carers Federation Limited and Gateshead Council, please confirm this by sending an email or letter to us **by Friday 16<sup>th</sup> August 2024.**

**Email:** [consent@gatesheadcarers.com](mailto:consent@gatesheadcarers.com)

**Post:** Consent  
Gateshead Carers  
John Haswell House,  
8-9 Gladstone Terrace  
Gateshead, NE8 4DY

Our current staff have the opportunity to transfer their employment to Carers Federation Limited under the Transfer of Undertakings Protection of Employment Regulations (TUPE). At the moment we do not know how many colleagues will decide to do that. Some will and some are seeking alternative employment.

Whatever choice colleagues make it is, unfortunately and with great sadness, that I have to inform you that the majority of staff will no longer be employed by Gateshead Carers Association after 31<sup>st</sup> August 2024. We will no longer be able to provide support as we have done.

**Importantly, Gateshead Carers Association is NOT closing down.**

Over the next few weeks, we will be consulting on and developing our new approach. We believe our members and other caregivers in Gateshead will be excited by the opportunities it brings for real change.

We all know that for people providing unpaid care, the demands in terms of number of hours per week providing care and the number of years providing care are increasing. We know the impact of providing care on the physical, mental and financial health of unpaid carers is worsening. We know that unpaid carers effectively contribute £600 million per year to the health and social care system in Gateshead. Despite this, we know that unpaid carers do not feel recognised or valued by national government, local government and health services. We also know that the legal rights of people providing unpaid care are often ignored.

The absolute focus in our new approach will be on 'unpaid carers rights'. Our commitment will be to drive change through formal local complaints procedures, the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman, the Health Service Ombudsman and if necessary, challenge at the High Court through the process of Judicial Review.

We will support people providing unpaid care through all stages of challenging the decisions and actions of health and social care services. We will do that for individuals or groups of unpaid carers with a shared interest e.g. parent carers of disabled children, unpaid carers supporting people with mental health challenges.

We will monitor all Health and Social Care strategies, policies and procedures to ensure people who have an unpaid caring role are consulted, included, listened to and their legal rights are recognised and reflected in practice.

We'll be in touch with you again about this new approach over the next two or three weeks.

I would like to thank you all, on behalf of all trustees and staff, for choosing to come to GCA for support. It has been an honour and a privilege for us to work alongside you. Whilst our way of working will change moving forward, we will do so with energy, passion and determination for the benefit of all caregivers in Gateshead and the surrounding areas.

With best wishes,



**Steve Cowen**

**Chief Executive Officer**

# Ending of Gateshead Carers Association's contract for the delivery of adult carer services in Gateshead.

## Frequently Asked Questions

### Why has the contract been awarded to another organisation?

The new contract was offered through the open tender process which means any organisation could submit a tender. Carers Federation Limited submission was scored higher, by Gateshead Council, than all other organisations bidding for the contract.

### Who are The Carers Federation Limited?

Please contact Carers Federation Limited or Gateshead Council.

### Will I get the same service as I got at Gateshead Carers Association?

We are not in a position to comment on this as we do not know how Carers Federation Limited intends to provide carer services.

Please contact Carers Federation Limited or Gateshead Council.

### What will happen to the Carer Wellbeing Fund?

Due to the ending of our existing contact, applications for Carer Wellbeing grants are now closed.

If you have recently submitted an application for a grant, this will be processed in the next two weeks and you will be informed of the outcome of your application.

The Carers Federation Limited will launch a new scheme on 1<sup>st</sup> September 2024. In the new contract there is tighter eligibility criteria and a reduction in the amount of money available, meaning fewer people will receive a grant award.

Please contact Carers Federation Limited or Gateshead Council for more information.

### What about Carer's Assessments?

If you are in the process of working with a colleague here on your Carer's Assessment, we will complete it with you before 31<sup>st</sup> August 2024.

From Friday 2<sup>nd</sup> August 2024, we will no longer be taking any new referrals for a Carer's Assessment. If you want a Carer's Assessment after this date, you should contact Adult Social Care Direct (**Tel: 01941 433 7033**). Carers Federation Limited will be responsible for carrying out Carer's Assessments from 1<sup>st</sup> September 2024.

## **I'm currently receiving support from a Carer Wellbeing Facilitator at GCA, what will happen to that?**

If you are receiving general support work (information, advice and guidance) we will continue to work with you until 31<sup>st</sup> August 2024.

Please note that we are unable to take new referrals to this service from 16<sup>th</sup> August 2024. This is to enable us to complete our work with people we are supporting prior to the service ending on 31<sup>st</sup> August.

From 1<sup>st</sup> September 2024 Carers Federation Limited will be providing caregiver support in Gateshead. We have no information on how they propose to deliver carer support in Gateshead.

Please contact Carers Federation Limited or Gateshead Council for more information.

## **I am being supported by GCA with a benefits claim, what does this mean for me?**

If you are currently receiving benefits support from GCA, we will continue to offer that until 23<sup>rd</sup> August 2024. We are unable to take any new referrals for benefits support from 31<sup>st</sup> July 2024.

From 1<sup>st</sup> September 2024, Carers Federation Limited will be providing benefits advice.

Please contact Carers Federation Limited or Gateshead Council for more information.

If you need benefits advice urgently, please contact Citizens Advice Gateshead (Tel: 0808 2787902).

## **I've got a short break at Caldew House booked. Can I still go?**

Yes, the great news here is that Caldew House has nothing at all to do with Gateshead Council. The beautiful and newly refurbished countryside retreat is almost fully booked for the rest of the year. All current bookings will go ahead. Contact us for more information or to make a booking.

## **Can I still get a short break through GCA from CareFree?**

Our Trusted Referrer status with CareFree means unpaid carers referred by GCA do not have to produce 'proof of being an unpaid carer' in order to access a break. Unfortunately, we will be unable to continue this relationship with CareFree after 16<sup>th</sup> August 2024.

Individuals can apply directly to CareFree but must produce proof of being an unpaid carer, e.g. Carer's Allowance or a Letter from GP.

We do not know if Carers Federation will seek trusted referrer status from CareFree.

Please contact Carers Federation Limited or Gateshead Council for more information.

### **What is happening to the Carer Cafés?**

We will continue to offer the popular Carers Café at John Haswell House for as long as unpaid carers want us to. Our weekly Online Carer Café sessions will also continue.

### **Will the GCA interpreting service still be available?**

The interpreting service will be available until 16<sup>th</sup> August 2024.

We have no information on whether or not Carers Federation Limited will operate an interpreting service.

Please contact Carers Federation Limited or Gateshead Council for more information.