

## Information & Support for Unpaid Adult Carers



**COMPLETE OUR  
CARERS SURVEY  
2017  
PRIZE DRAW TO  
WIN £200  
VOUCHERS!**  
p.13

**WHAT ARE  
PERSONAL HEALTH  
BUDGETS?**  
p.6-7

0191 4900121 [enquiries@gatesheadcarers.com](mailto:enquiries@gatesheadcarers.com)

[www.gatesheadcarers.com](http://www.gatesheadcarers.com)

YouTube   GatesheadCarers



# Advertisement



**Hello,**

I am guessing if you are reading this then you already care for a loved one. I have had personal experience of being a carer and also experience of working with people who have been diagnosed with dementia. This is what led me to becoming a member of Crichton Wills Trusts & Probate. I was all too familiar with the lack of appropriate service provision for people who require a more personal service.

A service that:-

- Makes people feel at ease rather than more anxious – we do home visits which reduces the stress and anxiety of travelling to a formal office in the centre of town!
- Aids understanding rather than hampers it – we take the time to explain things in words and ways that are easy to follow rather than baffle you with legal jargon!
- Provides the time you need to understand things – we go at your pace and never try to rush things!
- Offers a high standard of service at a very reasonable price

QUOTE FROM A CARER: *“I would highly recommend Julie Mc Alpine from Crichton Wills Trusts and Probate. I found Julie a very friendly and helpful person to deal with. She remained very professional as well as her caring approach she guided me every step of the way, nothing was a problem if you needed her help or advice. Can’t thank her enough for her services.”* Maria (carer)

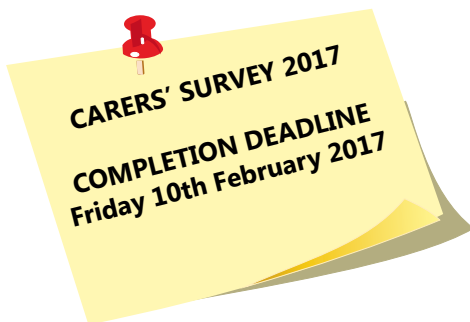
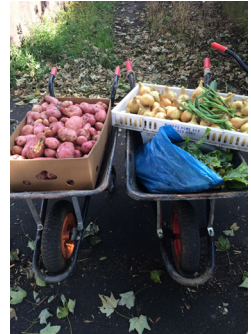
If you want to discuss any aspect of making a Will, setting up a Lasting Power of Attorney, creating a Family Trust, taking out a prepaid funeral plan or dealing with Probate then please do not hesitate to contact me for an informal chat.

Best wishes,  
**Julie McAlpine**

**Contact: Julie McAlpine Tel 0191 432 6860**

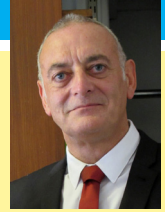
Crichton Wills Trust & Probate (North East) Ltd, 1 Lochfield Gardens, Kibblesworth, Gateshead, Tyne & Wear, NE11 0XQ. Tel: 0191 432 6860 | Email: [jsm@crichtonwtp.co.uk](mailto:jsm@crichtonwtp.co.uk) | [www.crichtonwtp.co.uk](http://www.crichtonwtp.co.uk)

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**Advertisements:** Crichton WTP (pages 2, 9), Healthwatch (pages 14, 15) **Front cover photo:** Tranquility Garden at our Allotment. **Inside right photos:** Allotment bumper crop, Created by Carers, Revive Festival, Caldew House Holiday

# Welcome



*Hello everyone,*

Welcome to our last newsletter of 2016. I've looked back at a few of our previous newsletters from this time of year and I always make a comment about how quickly the year has passed. As I'm writing this I'm thinking how quickly the last three years have passed. It was this time in 2014 that we launched our last Survey of Carers in Gateshead.

We carry out the survey every three years as this allows us to identify how the caring role and its impact on carers is changing over time. I really can't emphasise enough how much we need as many of you as possible to complete the survey. What you tell us is vitally important. The more responses we get, the better the information is and the stronger the voice of carers is within Gateshead. If you know of other carers who don't receive our newsletter please tell them about it, ask them to contact us and we'll make sure they get a copy. The survey should take about 25 minutes to complete and we will be sending it to people by post with a stamped addressed envelope for you to return it to us. It will also be available for you to complete online through our website from December. You'll find more information about the survey and free prize draw on page 13.

We are pleased to have launched our new look website complete with translation, visual and listening options- please take a look.

I hope you enjoy this issue of the newsletter. Our next one will be in 2017 so I'll take this opportunity of wishing you all a happy festive period and a peaceful New Year.

*With best wishes,*

*Steve Cowen - Chief Executive Officer*

## Staging Carers' Issues

by Northumbria University

Drama & Applied Theatre Performing Arts Students

*Our CEO, Steve Cowen, explains the background to the project.*

"Over the last few months I have been working with Dr. Matt Hargrave, Senior Lecturer, Department of Arts at Northumbria University to develop ways in which we can work in partnership. Last month I was invited to meet third year students who were interested in producing a performance which focussed on carers. This work is to be an assessed part of the Drama & Applied Theatre and Drama & Scriptwriting degree courses.

Since that time the students have identified five themes reflecting carer experiences which they have developed into a performance. They have met with carers we are supporting and gained their permission to record and use the exact words of carers in the telling of their stories. This is an innovative and exciting way of raising awareness about carers and I am extremely grateful to Northumbria University, Matt Hargrave and the students involved for thinking about carers and for all the hard work they have put into this".

The performance will be presented at our AGM on 25th November. Northumbria university have also kindly agreed to film the performances which means they will be available on our website for everyone to see.

### The students' Perspective

by Richard Little, Drama & Scriptwriting

**First of all, we would like to thank everybody who has given their time, words, tea and cake to us.**

**We have also massively appreciated the kindness and openness of everybody who has helped us with this project. In my two and a half years on this course, I have never experienced so many students be so inspired to learn more about a subject (even us lazy ones!).**

**Reading books can only teach us so much, but meeting people who have actually been affected by what we were attempting to portray has been invaluable. We would like to thank you all once again for helping us and wish you the best of luck in the future.**

# Personal Health Budgets

## Personal Health Budgets (PHBs)

PHBs are being introduced by the NHS to help people manage their care in a way that suits them. Within Gateshead there are currently 54 people who have chosen to take a PHB and a smaller number of children. NHS England has set targets for the uptake of PHBs which means that by 2020 there should be over 200 people using them in Gateshead.



### **In Gateshead the following groups of people are currently entitled to ask for a PHB;**

1. Adult patients eligible for NHS Continuing Healthcare Funding
2. Children & young people eligible for NHS Continuing Care Funding
3. Adults and children with complex learning disabilities and/or autism
4. Children under SEND reforms.

A PHB is an amount of money to support your identified health and wellbeing needs, planned and agreed between you and your local NHS team. The aim is to give people with long-term conditions and disabilities greater choice and control over the healthcare and support they receive. PHBs work in a similar way to the personal budgets that many people are already using to manage and pay for their social care. If you or the person you care for are in one of the four groups identified above you can ask your GP about a PHB. You and your GP or other health professional will develop a care plan. The plan sets out your health and wellbeing needs, the health outcomes you want to achieve, the amount of money in the budget and how you are going to spend it. You can use a PHB to pay for a wide range of items and services, including therapies, personal care and equipment.

**You don't have to change any healthcare or support that is working well for you just because you get a PHB.**

## Examples of how people are using PHBs.

• **MARTIN** • Martin is a woodworking machinist who has motor neurone disease and uses his PHB for a modified bicycle and a gym membership at the local rowing club so he can exercise, and a weekly visit to the barber which helps him maintain his independence.

• **DEBBIE** used a PHB to organise flexible nursing care at her home after her father became immobile and needed 24/7 care after a series of strokes

You can see more examples at the peoplehub website:  
<http://www.peoplehub.org.uk/chelseys-personal-health-budget-story/>

## **Can I have a PHB as well as a personal budget for social care and support?**

Yes. If you already have a personal budget for care and support from social services and your NHS team agrees, you can also have PHB and ask for both to be paid into the same account.

## **Do I have to have a PHB?**

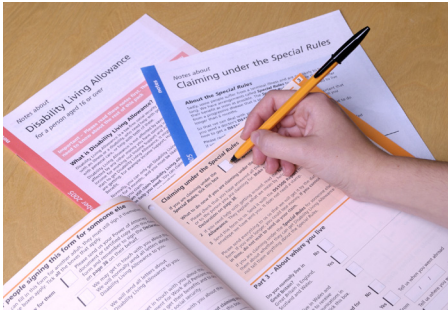
No. If having a PHB does not work for you, your local NHS will provide the care you need as it has always done.

## **What is the difference between a PHB, a personal budget, and a direct payment?**

- A PHB is for your NHS healthcare and support needs.
- A personal budget is for your social care and support needs.
- A direct payment is one way of managing these budgets, where you get the cash to buy the agreed care and support you need.

## The right benefits

We offer a completely confidential and impartial support service to help carers manage their money and finances more effectively. We make sure carers are receiving the right benefit for their situation and can guide them through any application processes. Being a carer for someone could also mean that you are managing their personal finances as well as your own. We can also support you with this.



*"All of our benefits had been stopped after review. My husband was refused further payments of ESA and PIP despite being in receipt for several years and his condition having got worse. Our GP referred us to GCA and the decisions were reversed on appeal. The benefits worker went out of her way to help us. Thank you ..... you saved our family life as things had been so very stressful and put a strain on all of the family." Carer*

### • Did you know?

Estimates show that the care provided by friends and family members to ill, frail or disabled relatives is equivalent to £119 billion every year ('Valuing Carers' Leeds University / Carers UK 2011)

### • Did you know?

Gateshead Carers achieved for carers in Gateshead £8,250,736 in state benefits, which they had previously been told they were not entitled to or did not know they were (2012 to 2016).



**Don't go without; make sure you get the right financial support for being a carer. Get in touch with us today to see how we can help you.**

**Tel: 0191 4900121**





**Question:**

My mum has been diagnosed with Alzheimer's and the bank is threatening to freeze her bank account. Help! Mum wants me and my brother to take over.

**Answer:**

If your mum has capacity then she should do a Lasting Power of Attorney (LPA). This is a legal document which allows the 'donor' (your mum) to appoint one or more people known as 'attorneys' to manage her financial affairs.

**Question:**

My husband is in a care home. I have a terminal illness and I wish to leave my assets to my children but my house is owned 'jointly' with my husband.

**Answer:**

You will need to make a Will which names your children. If you own any assets 'jointly' with your husband, then these assets will automatically pass to your husband on your death. You can sever the tenancy on your house so you own it as 'tenants in common' and this will enable you to leave your half to your children in your Will.

**Question:**

I have three children but one has a disability. How can I leave him something in my Will so that his sisters can manage it on his behalf?

**Answer:**

If you create a Discretionary Trust in your Will this will give the trustees the flexibility and discretion as to how, when, and for whose benefit to use the trust fund.

Any queries? Contact:

**Julie McAlpine Tel 0191 432 6860**

Crichton Wills Trust & Probate (North East) Ltd, 1 Lochfield Gardens, Kibblesworth, Gateshead, Tyne & Wear, NE11 0XQ. Tel: 0191 432 6860 | Email: [jsm@crichtonwtp.co.uk](mailto:jsm@crichtonwtp.co.uk) | [www.crichtonwtp.co.uk](http://www.crichtonwtp.co.uk)  
Registered in England | Company No. 8397661 Regulated by the Society of Will Writers & Estate Planning Practitioners

## Dementia Training by Paul Forster, Support Worker

I attended training organised by the Social Care Institute for Excellence, the national agency that aims to improve how social care is provided across the UK. I did the training as sadly a lot of my work involves supporting carers who are affected by dementia.

An important point to make is that dementia is just a generic term for a range of conditions- Alzheimer's disease, Vascular dementia, Frontotemporal dementia, Dementia with Lewy bodies- are the main forms we may have heard of but there are other, rarer types too. How the dementia affects people can vary but the main symptom of all of them is a progressive cognitive decline. This is very distressing for the person with dementia and those family and friends who may be caring for them.

**If anyone is worried about their memory the best thing to do is to tell your GP as early as possible as intervention and diagnosis can help alleviate and slow down the illness, in many cases.** However, a 'miracle cure' is a long way off.

A very important part of the training is that people living with dementia should be treated as individuals. Understanding their needs should be based upon getting to know them, their lives, work, relationships, likes and dislikes- just as you would anyone else. This understanding comes directly from the person but also it is essential that professionals and paid care staff speak to family carers as they know the person best. It was also highlighted that it can't be underestimated how stressful it can be for carers who have to cope 24/7 with their loved-one. Giving carers time to themselves, regular respite, and good quality advice and information is fundamental to helping carers continue to cope. This should be both based from the home but also in public services and out in the wider community.

Find out more information at <http://www.scie.org.uk/dementia/>



## Created By Carers

*The Created by Carers Group was formed by Carers who wanted to give something back to Gateshead Carers for the help they have received.*



All the items are hand made by carers using skills they have acquired within the Craft Group and Needles & Pins Group. They have attended a number of events throughout the area including Crawcrook Fair and Party in the Park at Saltwell Park. As well as helping to promote our organisation, the group has fundraised £180 for the Carers activities to continue! They have a large range of gifts for people to choose from from hen doorstops to knitted baby cardigans. **New members are always welcome! Contact Joanne Wilson. See what's on offer & come to our Winter Welcome on the 1 December 10.00am-12.30pm at John Haswell House.**

## BEFRIENDING

**One-to-one companionship and support for adult carers**

**Do you miss having an active social life?**

**Does your caring role often make you feel isolated from your community?**

**Could you benefit from a social visit from someone who understands?**

Gateshead Carers are currently running an exciting new befriending pilot scheme that could be the solution to these problems! This project has been set up as a way to support carers who have become socially isolated and lonely from caring pressures. It aims to offer our carers a weekly visit from a friendly and compassionate befriender.

**1 hour makes a difference!**

**Would you like to know more?**

**0191 4900121**

**enquiries@gatesheadcarers.com**

## e-Learning website

The Working Carers Team has been working on an e-Learning website in collaboration with Northumbria University Design School since March 2016.

Working with employers and working carers gave us an insight into what types of information is currently available and accessible online on topics such as caring and employment, working carers' rights and carer friendly practices. We live in a world where we have access to so much information, yet we have found it difficult to find and access all the relevant information for Working Carers from one source.

We wanted to ensure that employers and line managers can easily find information in relation to carers and are aware of simple methods of supporting carers in the workplace. We also wanted to ensure that our Working Carers can access up to date information about their rights and support available for them.

Our other main aim was to raise awareness about what having caring responsibilities can mean and to increase the knowledge of co-workers, family members, friends and professionals or any other interested parties that would like to know more about balancing caring and employment.

Find out more about the launch by visiting [www.gatesheadcarers.com](http://www.gatesheadcarers.com)

Our Working Carers for Employers e-Learning site will be easily accessible, flexible and free to use at your own pace, time and location. In addition to the written materials, you will find videos, templates, self-assessment forms, case studies, links to online resources, recommended reading and relevant research. Learners can also test their knowledge by taking our online quiz.

### CASE STUDY

#### LIFE OUTSIDE OF A CARING ROLE

**This working carer works full time and has had a substantial caring role for several years resulting in isolation.**

The carer was being supported with navigating health and social care services, and negotiating with their employer for a more carer friendly working pattern. Through this involvement the carer attended a specific GCA working carer event, and they agreed to participate in an on-going project to explore the experiences of working carers to be adapted into short webinar training sessions aimed at other working carers and employers. This was particularly meaningful to this carer as they have had a number of difficulties with managing their working and caring roles and felt that they wanted to voice their experiences to reach out and help other working carers and employers. This project has involved them meeting with many other working carers and sharing their experiences at a time when they were feeling socially isolated and also provided them with a means to channel their negative experiences into a positive outcome. This carer also attended a specific working carer social event at a local restaurant organised by GCA held in the early evening.



## HAVE YOUR SAY! COMPLETE OUR CARERS' SURVEY 2017



It is vitally important that we gather up to date information on unpaid carers who live or work in Gateshead so that we can continue to offer the most relevant services to you. Our survey should take no more than 30 minutes and can be completed online or on paper by contacting our reception. Enter our free prize draw by completing your contact details at the end of the survey.

**FREE PRIZE DRAW**

**TO WIN £200 SHOPPING VOUCHERS!**

**Our survey and prize draw close at noon on Friday 10 February 2017.** One name will be drawn out of the hat following the closing date and declared the winner. **Our online link is:**  
<https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/Gatesheadcarers2017>

### HOW DOES YOUR INFORMATION HELP US?

- To know the type of support you most value from us and others
- To raise money for carer services because it gives us strong evidence of need in our funding applications
- To develop our own Strategic Plan which outlines what we plan to do over the next 3 years to support carers
- To shape and influence strategies and policies across health and social care within Gateshead
- To inform and raise the awareness of Gateshead councillors and MPs of the caring role
- To raise the profile of carers across the media
- To identify particular difficulties facing carers and challenge others who are denying carers their legal rights and entitlements



## A New Website

[www.healthwatchgateshead.co.uk](http://www.healthwatchgateshead.co.uk)

You can now leave feedback on any health or social care service 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, rate services using star ratings and leave comments.

We are currently working with Healthwatch Newcastle to ascertain **What Urgent Means To You**. Take part in our survey here <https://surveymonkey.co.uk/r/urgent-survey> or visit our website <http://healthwatchgateshead.co.uk/have-your-say/surveys/> or just call us free of charge.

Come and tell us your experiences of health and social care services, to find out where we are next just ring us free on **0808 802 3000** or see our calendar at <http://healthwatchgateshead.co.uk/events/> If you have a smart phone you can scan the code below which takes you straight to our website.



## Healthwatch Gateshead

Helping you get the best out of local health & social care services.



[www.healthwatchgateshead.co.uk](http://www.healthwatchgateshead.co.uk)

## Proposed Changes to Charging and Financial Assessment for Adult Care and Support Services in Gateshead

Income from charges for social care and support helps to help pay for Adult Care and Support Services. Gateshead Council are looking to change the way they set charges and want to hear your views.

For more information and to take part visit <http://bit.ly/2dGkoo0>

**Closing date is 13 December 2016**



## CQC and local Healthwatch Caring across generations campaign

A growing number of people now have caring responsibilities for both young children (or grandchildren) and older loved ones and are caring across generations. A survey from CQC found that nine in 10 (92%) people felt that choosing care for a loved one is stressful, and that more than half (52%) don't feel they have enough information to make decisions about their loved one's care. CQC are launching Caring Across Generations campaign to help members of the public make informed decisions about care. For more information on the campaign visit: [www.cqc.org.uk/caringacrossgenerations](http://www.cqc.org.uk/caringacrossgenerations).

### State of Care 2015/16

The Care Quality Commission (CQC) have published their annual 'State of Care' report. This is an annual report on the quality of health and social care in England.

Full report: <http://www.cqc.org.uk/content/state-of-care>

Summary: <http://bit.ly/2eptaXu>

Easy Read: <http://bit.ly/2ep1VPA>

**Ring us free on  
0808 801 0382**



### Kinship Care

Grandparents and other family members often raise a child because their parents are unable to care for them, often because of very difficult family circumstances. These grandparents, aunts, uncles and other relatives or family friends are known as 'kinship carers' and they often struggle to cope, receive very little support and can feel isolated and alone.

### Kinship Care Support Group

Are you bringing up a relative's child? Why not come along and meet other kinship carers. We run a group in the Gateshead Carers Centre (no need to book). Meetings take place on the 2nd Thursday in the month: 10am -12 noon (meetings do not take place during school holidays).

**Volunteering** as a befriender with the Relative Experience Project could be your chance to make a positive difference in the lives of local kinship carers and the children they care for. You will only be required to volunteer for a couple of hours each week, or even fortnightly. Ongoing free training and support is provided, with the opportunity to gain a Level 2 accreditation in Befriending.

For more information contact the Relative Experience Project: 0191 2572504 or [relative.experience@gmail.com](mailto:relative.experience@gmail.com)  
[facebook.com/therelativeexperience](https://www.facebook.com/therelativeexperience)  
twitter @RelativeExp



**In October, Ms. Laura Mathieson (Director, Selling on ebay UK Ltd) delivered a specially designed course to meet the needs of carers who wish to generate income from the sale of unwanted personal belongings and home-made art and craft items as a source of casual or consistent self-employment. 5 carers accessed the course and all agreed they had learnt something new:**

"Very clever advice about how to be a savvy seller on ebay and information about options to sell." "I became more aware about the importance of the number of reviews a seller has, on their rating." "The bit about how to take good photographs of various sales items was really good." It puts you in the mind of the buyer."

### **What did you like most about the session?**

"The tutor was very nice and knowledgeable." "Ease of asking questions about particular aspects of selling." "Informal." "The tutor being a carer gave me a lot of hope that I can make a life for myself on ebay if I set my heart to it."

### **Would you do anything differently as a result of attending the course?**

"Make accurate listings." "Try to sell more items." "List items differently on ebay, when selling to make more money." "Start selling small items to test and get used to the system, then possibly business." "Try and improve my photography as the key to good presentation of sales items."

## **FREE 'Employer Carer Awareness Training'**

**If you are an employer, business owner (large, medium or small) or part of a personnel team and wish to access our FREE 'Employer Carer Awareness Training', please contact our Carer Training Officer, Kelechi Dibie, at [enquiries@gatesheadcarers.com](mailto:enquiries@gatesheadcarers.com) or call (0191) 4900 121.**



## AN INTRODUCTION TO A CARER'S ASSESSMENT A bespoke session for unpaid carers

**Sessions start 2nd December 2016 (every other month thereafter)**  
**Book early - maximum of 16 places available per session**  
**Check our website for future dates**

Feeling daunted about a 'Carers Assessment'? Well, there's no need to feel that way. Don't be put off by that word 'assessment' because it's not really as bad as it sounds. Understanding what an assessment means in your own right as a carer is half way towards making it work for you. That is why GCA has developed the brand new session: A Carer's introduction to Carers Assessments. It breaks down the entire process to enable you to understand what it's about and how to prepare; and deal with each stage of your assessment. It is jargon-free and allows you to understand your rights within a carer's assessment. Our session takes the fear out of 'assessment' by allowing you the privacy and opportunity to:

- **Discuss and communicate in an effective manner, all aspects of your needs as a carer;**
- **Share how caring affects your life; the kind of life you want to have outside of your caring role;**
- **Talk about future plans and whether you are still able or willing to carry on with your caring role.**

You will be able to discuss and learn from case study examples about other people's experiences to help you correct potential mistakes in your assessment. Since the Care Act 2014 became law, it has made it possible that a Carer's Assessment is offered to anyone who identifies as a carer. Our session will provide you with the necessary knowledge and understanding of your entitlements within the law to ensure that you would never have to reach breaking point before receiving or asking for the support you require for your caring role.

**Contact our Carer Training Officer, Kelechi Dibie, 0191 4900121**

# Short Breaks

## Take a well earned break!

Art . Crafts . Gardening . Creative Writing

Digital Photography . Male Carer Club

**CLUBS:** Peer/Carer Support . The BILD Group

LGBT Carer Support . BME Carer Support



Contact Laura  
to book or  
for more information  
Tel: 0191 4900121

## SOCIAL GROUP ACTIVITIES SCHEDULE 2017



### Cinema Night 5-8pm

**Tues 17 January**

Enjoy a free night at the movies complete with popcorn & friendly company! At Gateshead Vue Cinema - film to be chosen nearer the time. Entry, popcorn & snack included.



### Breakfast at The Tilley Stone 10-11.30am

**Wed 15 February**

Meet up with fellow carers to enjoy a sociable breakfast get together at this central location. Food only provided.



### Mini Spa Day at Chase Park 12-4.30pm

**Sunday 19 March**

Book early to reserve your place on this popular Mini Spa Day at Chase Park Health Club. Relax and unwind in the hydro pool, enjoy a blissful spa treatment, light lunch and refreshments. Refundable deposit required.



### Spa Treatment Days at Gateshead Carers

Treat yourself to 30 minutes of 'me time', during one of our monthly Spa Treatment Days. For only £10 our qualified therapist can offer Aromatherapy, Sports or Indian Head Massage, Reflexology, Manicure, Pedicure or Facial.

**Mondays on 5 December, 16 January, 13 February, 13 March.**

Call 0191 4900121 to book your appointment slot (between 10am-4pm)

## CRAFT GROUP SCHEDULE 2017



Our craft sessions are designed to offer carers a relaxing way to make new friends and learn various creative skills. Each session includes a different activity and will enable you to create a unique hand-made item within the 2 hour session. We sometimes invite guest facilitators to demonstrate ideas and techniques. We also encourage any willing participants to come forward and share their skills with other members of the group.

Our Craft Group meets fortnightly on a Tuesday at 10am - 12 noon.

DATE	ACTIVITY	TIME
January 17th	Creative Dream Catchers	10am – noon
January 31st	Upcycled Craft Tins	10am – noon
February 14th	Fabric Hanging Hearts	10am – noon
February 28th	Pretty Paper Cut Outs	10am – noon
March 14th	Tassel Bag Charms	10am – noon
March 28th	Decoupage Spring Pots	10am – noon



## INTERESTED?

**If you would like to gain further information, express interest or book for any of the above activities please call 0191 4900121 and speak to Sandra, Jess or Laura. If you book for an activity, we will send a confirmation letter with full details (including meeting time, place etc.) in the two weeks before the event. Please note that where a deposit is required, your place will not be secured until this payment is received.**

## The Carer's Column **Beth's Story** (anonymised)

Thank you to 'Beth' for sharing her story.  
A £10 shopping voucher is on it's way to you!

**"Gateshead Carers put a smile on my face.  
I can come in feeling down and when I come  
out I feel like a million dollars."**

"For a number of years my son has had a problem. He is 35 and he has a problem with alcohol and drugs. Around 18 months ago I got into contact with Gateshead Carers because I was going to probation [services] with him and I got myself into that much of a state that they said to me: "you might need some help". As a carer, when you are alone you just think that is what you do. You just have to get on with it. I needed help and I couldn't stop crying, I just didn't know what to do to help him. Gateshead Carers came to my house for a visit to check out my situation and that's how things started. I just didn't understand my son's problems and I was in limbo. The support worker made an appointment for me to come to Gateshead Carers to talk more about things. I talked more about the situation that my son was in and what he was on. I learned more about drugs and how it was affecting him because I didn't understand. I learned more about alcohol too. I thought "why can't he stop drinking?... it is all Why? Why? Why? It made me understand that he started drinking for a reason and he took drugs for a reason.

I am now joining some classes that are also helping. I go to a Knitting group and a Creative writing group. The classes get me out of the house and it is helping me meet other people in the same situation. It is about sharing that experience".

Continued...page 21.



"Sometimes we go on trips together, which I look forward to because I get on well [with the other people using the services]. We have been to the cinema and to coffee mornings. Me and a few others have made good friends and we go to each other's house for coffee. I don't think I'd be here without Gateshead Carers because the stress was just horrendous."



I haven't received support from other organisations. Gateshead Carers help me get on and rebuild my life. I wish I could come every day. Though if I have a problem I can get on the phone and they'll get back to me right away. In terms of other support that is out there, I don't have much. I talk to my sister; she is really good but she doesn't understand. Other people don't understand the situation. One time my son was in crisis and he tried to kill himself because he didn't like himself. He couldn't look in the mirror. I got on the phone to Gateshead Carers because I felt that they'd know what to do, I was asking "what do I say to him?". My son was [physically assaulting me], he [attacked me] but he is in jail now for what he did to me. It is very hard for me but by talking to Gateshead Carers they help me to be strong. They helped me deal with the abuse. Now I understand that I am really helping him by going to the trial. I am saving his life and Gateshead Carers have helped me with all of this; it has nearly killed me. If it hadn't been for Gateshead Carers, then there was no way that I could have went to the trial. He is my only child. Now I volunteer, I help out at some events. It is nice to be part of it. The people here have direct experience of the issues I am facing, they are amazing. They put a smile on my face. I can come in feeling down and when I come out I feel like a million dollars."



## Get in touch...

Send your letters, stories & photos to: The Carer's Column, John Haswell House, 8-9 Gladstone Terrace, Gateshead, NE8 4DY or email: [enquiries@gatesheadcarers.com](mailto:enquiries@gatesheadcarers.com)



Win a £10 Shopping Voucher!

# Competition - Name our Newsletter!

Win a £20  
Shopping Voucher!

Can you think of a suitable 'name' for our newsletter to give it its own identity! The best suggestions will be put into a hat with one 'name' picked at random. The winner will not only receive a £20 shopping voucher but will also get to see their 'name' on the first newsletter of 2017, our 21st Anniversary year!

**Closing date for entries is 6 January 2017. GOOD LUCK!**

To get the ball rolling, here are some 'out there' suggestions...

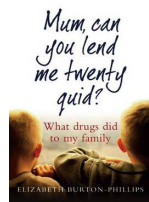
**Valeo.** This latin word means 'to be strong, powerful, effective and have worth'. A really powerful way to describe carers!

**Greengage.** Based on the greEngage plum which is a fruit that is surprisingly hardy and thrives in different climates around the world. It is sweet, delicious and has an exceptional flavour, although has some susceptibility to blossom, wilt and fruit splitting!



## Book Reviews by carers

**Mum, Can You Lend Me Twenty Quid?:  
What Drugs Did to My Family**  
by Elizabeth Burton-Phillips



**A Carers Review:** *"As a carer/mum of children who started to use illegal drugs, I found this book to be my 'lightbulb' moment in how to cope with this new lifestyle that I found my family in. My son's had been using drugs for a few years before this book was published and I did not know what to do for the best for me or my son's. Once I read this book I realised that I was actually enabling their addiction and becoming more isolated from my friends and family due to the stigma surrounded by drugs. Elizabeth's words helped me to gain knowledge and understanding of addiction and changed the way I started to help my son's in a positive way. This book is an interesting read if you find that you are the same situation as myself and Elizabeth. I thought it helped me to find a positive life out of a negative situation that you have no control over as a carer/mum of an addict".*

**If you have read a book that has helped you in your situation or that you have found uplifting and you would like to share it with other carers, please send your review to us. We will try our best to include it in our next issue.**

## Reiki ~ A Tranquil and relaxing healing experience

**25% discount**  
off Reiki therapy for  
Gateshead Carers

Christine Hanmer, the owner of CH Holistics, has kindly offered Gateshead Carers a special discount off her Reiki therapy. Christine is a holistic therapist specialising in promoting and enhancing client well being.

[www.ch-holistics.co.uk](http://www.ch-holistics.co.uk)

**What is Reiki?** It is a well established Japanese technique for stress reduction and relaxation that also promotes healing. Reiki treats the whole person including body, emotions, mind and spirit, creating many beneficial effects that include relaxation and feelings of peace, tranquillity and wellbeing. Reiki is a simple, natural and safe method of healing and self-improvement that everyone can use.

We sent one of our wonderful volunteers to try out Christine's treatment and let us know what she thought afterwards:

**Melanie's experience:** "I absolutely loved it! I thought it was amazing and would definitely go again. The room itself was beautiful, like a boudoir, and the ambience was really calming. Christine was so lovely; she really made me feel at ease. She began by explaining about Reiki as it was not something I had experienced before. She then used a cosy blanket to help me feel warm and comfortable on the bed. The treatment itself is hands off meaning that Christine barely touched me, but I felt a warmth through me during the treatment. The fact that I didn't have to take any clothes off to have this treatment meant that it was less intrusive than having a massage. I had had a particularly stressful day and Christine's treatment really helped me to unwind and unburden. I usually find it quite difficult to relax to such a level as this but I actually nodded off during the treatment which was amazing! The only downside was that the time passed so quickly and I wish it could have lasted longer! Christine agreed to call me in a few days to check how I felt and advised me to drink plenty of water to stay hydrated and flush out toxins. I would recommend this treatment to anyone who needs to relax and unwind and devote some time to themselves."

**How to book?** Contact Christine Hanmer, Cln.Hyp  
[chris@ch-holistics.co.uk](mailto:chris@ch-holistics.co.uk) 07969613064 Facebook: [choholictherapies](https://www.facebook.com/choholictherapies)  
Based at FACT, Clasper House, Clasper Way, Swalwell (opposite Skiff Inn)

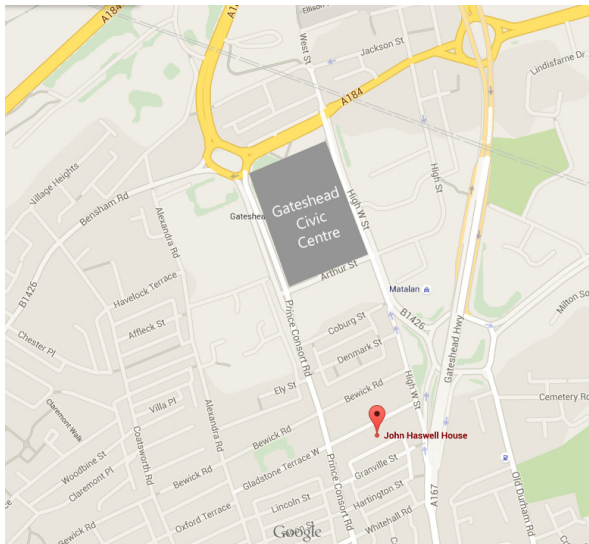
# Are you an unpaid carer?

A carer is anyone who cares, unpaid, for a friend or family member who due to illness, disability, a mental health problem or an addiction cannot cope without their support. The reasons and causes of someone taking on caring responsibilities are varied but can include:

- Serious physical illness
- Long-term physical disability
- Learning difficulties
- Mental health problems
- Dementia
- Alcohol & substance misuse

## Get in touch...

**GET FREE  
HELP &  
SUPPORT  
TODAY!**



**Gateshead Carers  
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NE8 4DY**

**Tel: 0191 4900121  
Fax: 0191 4900128**

**NEW LOOK WEBSITE: [www.gatesheadcarers.com](http://www.gatesheadcarers.com)**

**0191 4900121**

**[enquiries@gatesheadcarers.com](mailto:enquiries@gatesheadcarers.com)**

   **GatesheadCarers**

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