

SignPost

WELLBEING FOR CARERS

Issue 97



Exciting times for
The Heaton's
Centre

CARELINK

Your Link to caring in Stockport



www.signpostforcarers.org.uk

DIRECTOR'S WELCOME

As winter finally gives way to spring, it's not uncommon for thoughts to turn to making the most of the lighter nights and that little bit of sunshine – getting outside, talking to people, doing something that we enjoy.

For those of us that are carers, however, this is not always easy – and sometimes it feels downright impossible. The theme of this year's Carers Week (11th – 17th June) is supporting carers to be healthy and connected, and this is something that is underlying in all of Signpost's work.

We are strong believers in the importance of self-care. How can you look after others if you don't look after yourself, physically and emotionally? Whether you access Signpost for support with Attendance Allowance claims, work with the WIN team who connect carers with local groups, or come to one of the activities that the Carers Connect team have arranged, such as Fish and Chip Friday and our wellbeing days - we're all about you!

We are delighted to announce the start of our Changing

Times project, giving carers who are just beginning or coming to the end of their caring journey some time, space, hints and tips on managing what's to come, as well as supporting those that are in the process of making some tough decisions. We are also proud to be one of the first organisations to receive funding from Stockport Together's Community Investment Fund, enabling us to begin work on a Carers Passport for Stockport – the Connecting Carers Card (read more on page 6). We want you to feel connected to the Signpost community of carers, and a valued part of the wider Stockport community and to think about yourself from time to time. We always welcome your views and opinions on what is working well and what can be improved for carers in Stockport and Greater Manchester; please do not hesitate to contact us if there is something you would like to share.

In the meantime, I hope you enjoy reading this edition of Carelink. I hope to see many of you at the Wellbeing Day on 19th July, if not before.



Janet

DIRECTOR, SIGNPOST STOCKPORT FOR CARERS

Thank you!

Signpost would like to thank all of the individuals, organisations and funders that have supported us over the last six months.

From a few kind words from a carer that we've worked with, to a successful grant application for thousands of pounds, it's always rewarding to know that Signpost is offering the support and services that Stockport carers need. We love to receive feedback from you with regards to the difference that we make to you, and hope to share more of your letters in future editions of Carelink. We also want to take this opportunity to thank our funders, and give you a flavour of what's to come.

Quotes from our carers...

Our claim for Attendance Allowance was successful... Can I say again how much I appreciate your help in this matter.

I want to say a profuse "thank you" for all your kindness over the last few years.

I am enormously grateful for your support. It eased my stress and made a big difference.

Stockport Hydro - £100 to support our carers gardening group.

Just Helping - £300 donation from Charity Christmas Tree Collection

Co-op community fund - £1,100 and counting! If you are a member of the Co-op, please make sure that Signpost are registered as the cause that you'd like to support. This is open until November 2018!

Tesco bags of help – Thanks to everyone that put their tokens in the boxes in Tesco Stores across Stockport throughout February. We have received £3998 for promotion of Signpost and our services!

Ready 2 Grow - £5000 from Stockport Council for Signpost to develop the use of our building so that we can generate our own income – We're going to become a licensed wedding venue!

Equity Housing Small Grants and Community Investment Fund – developing a Connecting Carers Card for Stockport and piloting how it works alongside contingency plans for carers.

Lloyds Bank Foundation - 3 year project supporting carers through transitions in their caring journey.



TESCO Bags of Help



NHS
Stockport
NHS Foundation Trust



STOCKPORT
METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

You are invited to join us for our

Wellbeing Day for Carers

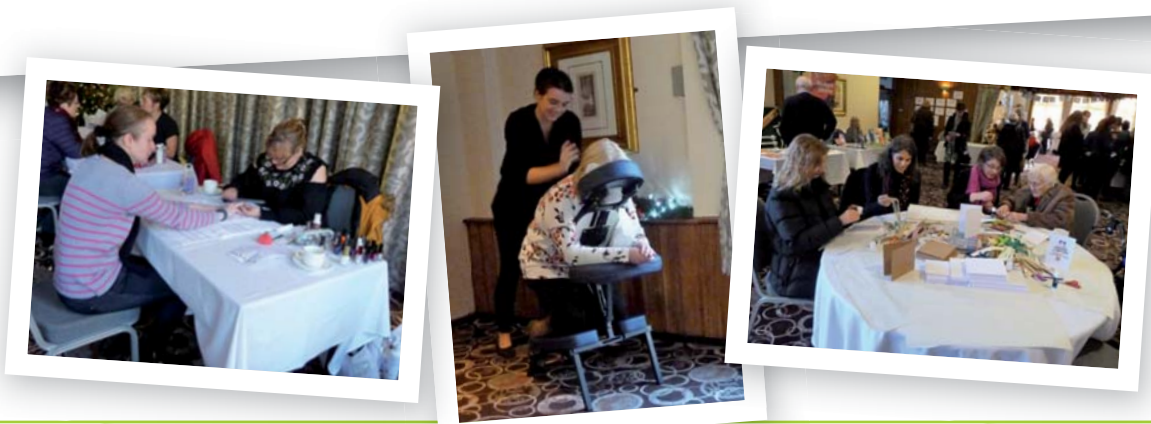
Thursday 19th July 10.30am - 3.00pm
The Alma Lodge Hotel, 149 Buxton Road, Stockport, SK2 6EL

A chance for you to take some "me time" and enjoy some pampering, meet old friends and make new ones.

PLUS:

- Information and advice from a variety of specialist organisations, including our own lovely team.
- A Prize Draw Raffle
- Find out what else is going on in Stockport for carers
- Free tea and cake!

We look forward to seeing you there!



Pop the date in your diary and please let us know if you are coming by calling: **0161 442 0442** or email: **info@signpostforcarers.org.uk**

Benefit numbers UPDATE

There has been a change of phone numbers for benefit forms:

Personal Independence Payment	0800 121 4433
Attendance Allowance	0800 731 0122
Disability Living Allowance	0800 121 4600
Carer Allowance	0800 731 0297
State Pension	0800 731 0469

Benefit Rates FROM APRIL 2018

Attendance Allowance (High Rate)	£85.60
Attendance Allowance (Standard Rate)	£57.30

Disability Living Allowance:

Care:	(High Rate)	£85.60
	(Middle Rate)	£57.30
	(Standard Rate)	£22.65
Mobility:	(High Rate)	£59.75
	(Standard Rate)	£22.65

Personal Independence Payment:

Daily Living Care: (Enhanced)	£85.60
(Standard)	£57.30
Mobility: (Enhanced)	£59.75
(Standard)	£22.65

Carers Allowance

£64.60 – you are eligible if you earn no more than £120 a week (after tax and expenses).

Planning for the future

Decisions to make, steps to take

Sense is a national disability charity that supports people with complex communication needs.

The charity has recently conducted some research into the plans that disabled people and their carers and families have for the future.

75% of disabled people and their families have no long term support plan. They have no plan what to do when they are no longer able to provide the care themselves.

There are many, many reasons why this is the case. It may be that cared for and their families don't know where to start or that they are too exhausted to even think about it. Sense's research found that 67% of carers have profound fears about what will happen to their relative when they are no longer able to provide

care. This fear then translates into worry and anxiety.

We know worries about the future can affect any carer, not just those caring for someone with complex physical needs. Signpost is looking at ways that we can support Stockport carers to feel better prepared for the future, through our Changing Times and Connecting Carers work. We want to start by piloting a contingency planning service, which will run alongside some specialist training and workshops.

If you would be interested in being part of this work, please contact Julia on 0161 442 0442 or email carersconnect@signpostforcarers.org.uk

Date for your Diary We are delighted that Sense will be coming to The Heatons to hold a free information session about their campaign and their toolkit – Decisions to Make, Steps to Take. The session will be on Tuesday 29th May, at 1.30pm – 3.30pm. Please ring Signpost to book your place.

To read more about Sense's campaign visit:

www.sense.org.uk/support-us/campaign/when-im-gone/

You might also be interested in listening to a piece broadcast about this subject on Radio 5 Live's Afternoon Edition programme on 28th March 2018. Please contact Signpost and we will email you the link.



Do you have a story to tell?

I am the Matron for Patient Experience at Stepping Hill Hospital and the purpose of my role is to ensure patients have the best possible experience during their stay.

As part of my role I use patient stories to celebrate success and also where there have been lessons learned and these are shared with all staff through our monthly team brief and also with the board of directors.

I feel it is really important to share both positive and negative stories where lessons have been learned as it really helps focus everyone on why we are all here.

Stockport 
Primary Care Trust

I am therefore asking for your support to please share any stories with me.

You can contact me via email:
emma.rogers@stockport.nhs.uk
or telephone: **0161 419 5203**

Or Write to Emma Rogers, Matron for Patient Experience, Corporate Nursing, Birch House, Stepping Hill Hospital, Stockport, SK2 7JE

Kind Regards, **Emma**

How does Signpost support carers?

We are often asked “How can Signpost support me in my caring role?”

Here at Signpost, we are proud to be able to offer a wide range of information and services for carers. We are currently part of a Greater Manchester network of carers centres looking at the ‘Universal Offer’ and are delighted that we match up well with other areas. From advice and guidance to counselling and group activities, we aim to provide support that is varied, interesting and appropriate for you, whatever stage of

the caring journey you might be at.

Please do not hesitate to contact us if you have any issues or questions regarding your caring role. We would use our extensive knowledge of services to help to find something that is right for you. There may not always be an answer to your problem, but we are here to listen and support you and maybe try and find different strategies to help you deal with your caring role.

FIND OUT MORE at our Signpost info sessions – Thursday 26th April – 11am, Thursday 14th June – 11am, Monday 16th July – 1.30pm



Carers' Counselling at Signpost

Caring for someone is emotionally as well as physically demanding, and responsibilities can creep up on you.

It is common for carers to feel anxious, stressed and depressed yet it is so important they are also cared for and supported, so they can continue to do what they are doing.

I am often asked “How can counselling help me? What difference can it make?” Counselling cannot change your situation but it can substantially improve the way you feel and deal with it, and give you a little time to focus on you. If someone who spends lots of time helping others doesn't care for themselves once in a while, they risk burning out eventually.

In counselling we explore where things currently are for you, any problems you might be experiencing, what you are looking for from the work. We look at building on your resources and finding ways you can better manage and cope to take forward, increasing your resilience. Common themes for carers include loss of identity, struggling because of past relationship difficulties, lack of support from others and dealing with an increase in caring role.

Since our counselling service started just over a year

ago, we have supported 30 carers, 88% of which have completed all 6 sessions with us showing how much they have valued the service. Together they have reported an increase in their wellbeing from 35 points to 46 points out of 70, or from 51% to 66%, a 15% improvement in their wellbeing in just 6 weeks. In our recent evaluation 100% of our carers have awarded our service 9 or 10 out of 10 for satisfaction.

Some of the benefits carers have reported include feeling happier and more positive, being helped to find strategies for use in the situation, thinking more clearly, being given a space to offload and think without judgement, and feeling more equipped and able to deal with the caring role.



Signpost are looking to extend the counselling service and we are pleased to report that we now have two experienced trainees working with Gayner. If you are interested in finding out more, and having a chat in confidence, please contact Gayner on

0161 442 0442 or **07392 873812**

Connecting Carers Card

An exciting development for Stockport!

Thanks to some new funding from Stockport Together, and the Equity Foundation, Signpost is pleased to launch the Connecting Carers card.

What is it?

The Connecting Carers card is a way of alerting people to the fact that you are a carer for someone. You may choose to use this in a positive way, such as for a discount at one of the businesses and services signed up to the scheme. It may be that it will form part of your contingency plan and, should something happen to you, a member of the emergency services would be able to use the card to contact a next of kin or social work team. The card will form the basis of Stockport's Carers Passport and we hope that, in time, it will be a way of bringing the commitments made in the Stockport Carers Charter to life!

How can I get one?

Stockport carers that are registered with Signpost **and** have completed a contingency plan with one of our team will be offered a Connecting Carers Card.

If you are interested, please contact us at carersconnect@signpostforcarers.org.uk or ring the Carers Connect team on **0161 442 0442**.

Is this the same as the Emergency Alert Card?

No. Signpost does not have the facility to act as an emergency contact 24/7. We are working with Carecall (who administer the Emergency Alert Card scheme) to see if there is a way we may be able to combine the cards in the future.

Did I see the word 'discounts'?!?

Yes you did! Signpost are in the process of signing up 'carer friendly' businesses and services who are willing and able to offer something extra to carers. The list of places that you can use the card can be found on our website, or you can request a printed copy from Claire on **0161 442 0442**. We are always looking to add to the list so if you, or someone you know, have any ideas please get in touch! Please be aware that the card is non transferable and the businesses reserve the right to ask for additional ID.

For more information about Carers Passports, please visit <https://carerspassports.uk/>

Get involved with Signpost

Since our last Carelink, we've been delighted to welcome a number of new volunteers to Signpost who have got involved in a wide range of activities, from taking the photographs at our winter wellbeing day to planting the bulbs which are currently creating a beautiful display at the entrance of the Heatons Centre!

As part of our Changing Times project we are able to offer another sort of volunteering role, and one that we hope some of you would be interested in... We are looking for people with the



Thanks for the planting, Dave!

lived experience of being a carer, making difficult decisions and coming through the other side. We would really like to get you involved in supporting carers that are currently in a similar situation, and putting that experience to good use. We will be holding special groups, activities and training to support these carers but it would make all the difference to be able to involve those of you that have 'been there'. Training, support and expenses will be provided.

If you would like to find out more about this, and how you can really make a difference please contact Julia on **0161 442 0442** or email Julia@signpostforcarers.org.uk

Thank you!

What's on for Carers

April 2018:

Thursday 19th April - Living with Grief & Loss (taster session) 10.30am-11.30am, The Heatons Centre

Run in conjunction with Self-Help services, this one-hour session will give a flavour of what to expect during our upcoming 6 week workshop on understanding, processing and coping with your loss.

Friday 20th April - Carers Coffee Morning - 'Table Top' indoor gardening, 10.30-11.30am, The Heatons Centre

Bring your green fingers for a special gardening-themed coffee morning. All the usual tea and chat: planting optional!

Thursday 26th April

FIND OUT ABOUT SIGNPOST, 11am - 12noon

Come along to this brief session and find out more about what we do as an organisation and how we can work with you. This session is for new carers, those who have been caring for a while or if you are a professional that works with carers in Stockport.

May 2018:

Thursday 3rd May - Living with Grief & Loss (6 week workshop, Week 1) 10.30am-12.30pm, The Heatons Centre

Run in conjunction with Self-Help services, these six two-hour sessions aim to increase your ability to understand, process and cope with your loss.

Friday 4th May - Carrots & Carers Coffee Morning 10.30am-12pm, The Kindling Trust, Woodbank Old Nursery, 78 Park Lane, Stockport, SK1 4JS (inside Woodbank Memorial Park).

Enjoy a brew inside followed by a guided gardening session led by Corinna from The Kindling Trust. The gardening will be outdoors or inside polytunnels – and is optional!

Tuesday 8th May - Tech Time, 10am-12pm, The Heatons Centre

Sociable monthly meet-up for carers combining informal and everyday technical support from the Carers Connect team with coffee and chat. We can help you with using laptops, smart phones and tablets (including installing apps), and show you how social media can help you connect with others.

Wednesday 9th May - Heart to Heart - 2pm-4pm, Salvation Army, Stockport Road, Cheadle Heath, use postcode SK3 0JE

Afternoon tea, chat, crafts and whatever else you fancy! With supported from Salvation Army volunteers, you are welcome to bring the person that you care for if you are both comfortable to be together but apart (same venue and activity, but different rooms). Free (donations welcomed).

Thursday 10th May - Heald Green Carers Drop In, 10am-1pm, Heald Green Village Hall, Outwood Road, SK8 3JL.

Join Jennie from Signpost for a warm welcome, a lovely cup of tea or coffee, and plenty of time to chat to other carers.

Friday 18th May - 'Fish and Chips' Carers Coffee Morning, 11am-1pm, The Heatons Centre

Join us for the best of British, a cup of tea and a 'chippy' lunch in honour of the Royal Wedding. Red, white, and blue and/or patriotic headwear optional! Suggested contribution £2.

Tuesday 22nd May - Going Roaming, Going Retro, 10am-2pm, meet outside Vernon Museum and the Conservatory Cafe

Nature enthusiast Dave guides us on a walking exploration of the flowers, trees and bugs of Vernon Park. End the day with complimentary tea and cake and a look around the nearby Vintage Emporium. Carers and cared for all welcome. While the pace will be gentle, carers will be on their feet for some time so good mobility is essential.

Tuesday 29th May - When I'm Gone, the Heatons Centre, 1.30pm- 3.30pm

A workshop around planning for the future, led by Karl Shore from Sense. Find out about the toolkit, the campaign and how putting plans in place can be a weight off your mind.

Wednesday regulars

Carers Art Group - 10am-12pm, The Heatons Centre

Led by a professional artist, this is a relaxed and friendly drop-in group open to any carer, arty or not! Something different every week, £5 voluntary contribution for materials.

SMILE gentle exercise 1.30pm-2.30pm, The Heatons Centre

Delivered by Life Leisure, SMILE is a fun and gentle exercise session; take part seated or standing at a pace that is right for you. This is a very friendly low-key group with a cup of tea to finish! Drop-in, open to all: free for carers, £3 for non-carers.

Call **0161 442 0442** or email carersconnect@signpostforcarers.org.uk
TO BOOK YOUR PLACE ON ANY SESSION!

What's on for Carers

June 2018:

Friday 1st June - Carrots & Carers Coffee Morning, 10.30am-12pm, The Kindling Trust, Woodbank Old Nursery, 78 Park Lane, Stockport, SK1 4JS (inside Woodbank Memorial Park).

Enjoy a brew inside followed by a guided gardening session led by Corinna from The Kindling Trust. The gardening will be outdoors or inside polytunnels.

Saturday 9th June - Bee Keeping Experience, Woodbank Community Food Hub, Session One: 10am-11.30am, Session Two: 1pm - 2.30pm

The bee keepers will provide suits, but you will need wellies and a pair of marigold washing up gloves for this activity. Please make sure you bring those along as you won't be allowed to join the activity without them. Booking essential on 0161 818 8384. Open to all, £5 per person - HALF PRICE FOR CARERS - mention you're registered with Signpost when booking .

Tuesday 12th June - Tech Time, 10am-12pm, The Heatons Centre

Sociable monthly meet-up for carers combining informal and everyday technical support from the Carers Connect team with coffee and chat.

Wednesday 13th June - Heart to Heart, 2pm-4pm, Salvation Army, Stockport Road, Cheadle Heath, use postcode SK3 0JE

Supported by Salvation Army volunteers, you are welcome to bring the person that you care for if you are both comfortable to be together but apart (same venue and activity, but different rooms). Free (donations welcomed).

**Thursday 14th June
FIND OUT ABOUT SIGNPOST, 11am - 12noon**

Come along to this brief session and find out more about what we do as an organisation and how we can work with you. This session is for new carers, those who have been caring for a while or if you are a professional that works with carers in Stockport.

Thursday 14th June - Heald Green Carers Drop In, 10am-1pm, Heald Green Village Hall, Outwood Road, SK8 3JL.

Join Jennie from Signpost for a warm welcome, a lovely cup of tea or coffee, and plenty of time to chat to other carers.

Friday 15th June - Carers Coffee Morning, 10.30-11.30am - The Heatons Centre

A special coffee morning this month, to celebrate it being Carers Week!

Thursday 28th June - Air Raid Shelters Historic Tour, 12.45 pm, meet at the entrance to the Air Raid Shelters, 61 Chestergate, Stockport, SK1 1NE

Join a private guided tour of Stockport's intriguing network of underground tunnels offering visitors an unparalleled insight into life in wartime Britain in the 1940's. We will finish the afternoon with complimentary tea and cake at the Plaza café. Carers are welcome to bring friends and those they care for. Cost: £3 for carers, £5.75 for everybody else.

Friday 29th June - Fit and Friendly Friday. Rose Walker Community Centre, Cheadle Heath, 10.30am - 1pm (or later if you want to stay)

Join us for a gentle stroll along the Mersey before finishing with a hot lunch at Friendly Fridays. Open to all, free for carers, £2.50 for everyone else!

FOCUS ON... Coffee mornings & afternoon teas

Signpost hold a number of monthly coffee mornings across Stockport, and we're really pleased with how they are growing.

They are a chance for carers to come together, talk to a member of our team or just sit quietly, on your own with a brew and a biscuit (other refreshments are available!). We know it can be difficult to just turn up to a group if you don't know what to expect or who else is going to be there, so please just drop us a line and we can meet you beforehand or put you in touch with a regular. You're more than welcome to bring a friend too - whatever will give you a chance to relax and rejuvenate.

OFFERTON - Woodbank Park nurseries (1st Friday of the month)

CHEADLE HEATH - Salvation Army (pm, 2nd Wednesday)

HEATONS - Signpost, Heaton Centre (am, 3rd Friday)

HEALD GREEN - Village Hall (am, 2nd Thursday)

Wednesday regulars

Carers Art Group - 10am-12pm, The Heatons Centre

Led by a professional artist, this is a relaxed and friendly drop-in group open to any carer, arty or not! Something different every week, £5 voluntary contribution for materials.

SMILE gentle exercise 1.30pm-2.30pm, The Heatons Centre

Delivered by Life Leisure, SMILE is a fun and gentle exercise session; take part seated or standing at a pace that is right for you. This is a very friendly low-key group with a cup of tea to finish! Drop-in, open to all: free for carers, £3 for non-carers.

Call **0161 442 0442** or email carersconnect@signpostforcarers.org.uk
TO BOOK YOUR PLACE ON ANY SESSION!

Signpost Stockport for Carers, The Heatons Centre, Thornfield Road, Heaton Moor, Stockport, SK4 3LD

What's on for Carers

July 2018:

Friday 6th July - Carrots & Carers Coffee Morning , 10.30am-12pm, The Kindling Trust, Woodbank Old Nursery, 78 Park Lane, Stockport, SK1 4JS (inside Woodbank Memorial Park).

Enjoy a brew inside followed by a guided gardening session led by Corinna from The Kindling Trust. The gardening will be outdoors or inside polytunnels.

Tuesdays: 3rd July, 10th July, 17th July Caring with Confidence, the Heatons Centre, 10.30am -12.30pm.

A short course of sessions led by our Changing Times project for people new to caring or experiencing changes in their caring role. Sessions will cover looking after yourself, contingency planning, finances and other sources of support.

Saturday 7th July – Floristry Workshop, Woodbank Community Food Hub, 10am – 12 noon

Join experienced horticulturalist Fran for a workshop that will cover flower arranging skills, information about seasonal flower varieties and tips on how to care for your flowers. Booking with Corrina on 0161 818 8384 essential. Open to all, £12 – HALF PRICE FOR CARERS – mention you're registered with Signpost when booking.

Tuesday 10th July - Tech Time, 10am-12pm, The Heatons Centre

Sociable monthly meet-up for carers combining informal and everyday technical support from the Carers Connect team with coffee and chat. We can help you with using laptops, smart phones and tablets (including installing apps), and show you how social media can help you connect with others. Room is booked

Wednesday 11th July - Heart to Heart, 2pm-4pm, Salvation Army, Stockport Road, Cheadle Heath, use postcode SK3 0JE

Afternoon tea, chat, crafts and whatever else you fancy! With supported from Salvation Army volunteers, you are welcome to bring the person that you care for if you are both comfortable to be together but apart (same venue and activity, but different rooms). Free (donations welcomed).

Thursday 12th July - Heald Green Carers Drop In, 10am-1pm, Heald Green Village Hall, Outwood Road, SK8 3JL.

Join Jennie from Signpost for a warm welcome, a lovely cup of tea or coffee, and plenty of time to chat to other carers.

Thursday 12th July - The Wimbledon Experience, 12.30-3pm, The Heatons Centre

Cucumber sandwiches, strawberries and cream, and non-alcoholic Pimms (or tea!) served up to a backdrop of the Wimbledon Women's Semi-Finals on the television. The game starts at 1pm.

Monday 16th July

FIND OUT ABOUT SIGNPOST, 1.30pm – 2.30pm

Come along to this brief session and find out more about what we do as an organisation and how we can work with you. This session is for new carers, those who been caring for a while or if you are a professional that works with carers in Stockport.

Thursday 19th July - Summer Wellbeing Day, 10.30am-2.30pm, Alma Lodge Hotel

Treats, tea and taster sessions for carers! A chance to indulge in some me-time, meet old friends and make new ones, take part in free workshops, and find out about some of the other things going on in Stockport for carers. Pop the date in your diary now.

Friday 20th July - No Carers Coffee Morning at The Heatons Centre given this week's Summer Wellbeing Day.

Call **0161 442 0442** or email carersconnect@signpostforcarers.org.uk
TO BOOK YOUR PLACE ON ANY SESSION!

Carers Network

Thanks to all the carers, professionals and speakers that came along to the carers network back in March.

The theme of *"Small measures, Big impacts"* was brought to life through discussions on free coffee for carers, the Red Bag Scheme and Stay Steady (falls prevention) amongst others.

If you would like to receive the notes and handouts from the network, please email: julia@signpostforcarers.org.uk

Carers Charters

Have you seen the Greater Manchester Carers Charter and the Commitment to Carers?

Both documents are well worth a read and enhance Stockport's own Carer's Charter that was launched in November. Search online for GM carers charter and let us know what you think. Signpost are working with the statutory organisations that have signed up to the documents to ensure that they are more than just a piece of paper (or page on a website).

If you want to know more, or get involved, please drop us a line.



ABOVE: Using your tablet course -
*"I learnt a lot in the 6 weeks ...
 it opened my eyes to the applications...
 and its usefulness and enjoyment."*



BELOW: Nature Walk -
*"It was really nice to meet
 people and chat"*



ABOVE: Carers Art Group - drop in
 every Wednesday 10am - 12pm led by
 a local professional artist.



ABOVE: Introduction to Aromatherapy -
*"Thank you for this wonderful course,
 very enjoyable with friendly people."*



ABOVE: Canal Boat Trip -
"The trip was really enjoyable"

RIGHT:
 Bramhall Hall Tour
*"A great
 afternoon was
 had by all
 followed by cake
 in the café."*



LEFT:
 M&S fashion show
*"It really made a
 change and a
 lovely one"*



RIGHT:
 Cook Your Way
 To Health -
*"The teacher
 was superb
 and I really
 enjoyed all
 the classes"*



ABOVE: First Aid - *"I didn't think it was possible to learn so
 much in such an enjoyable and relaxed environment."*



Carer's Voice

Thanks to Alison for telling us a bit about what being a part of Signpost means to her. If you would like to write something for the next Carelink (recipes/poems/short stories welcomed too) please let us know.

I returned to Stockport two years ago to care for my sister when my father became seriously ill. Initially I attended a Carers Network Meeting at the Heatons to find out what was available locally and was impressed by the support offered by Signpost staff. As my father's health improved and our situation stabilised we were discharged from the statutory agencies and left to our own devices. We then became more involved with the activities Signpost offer through Carers Connect as



we were keen to maintain links with a team that provide excellent support.

My father has participated in the 6 week healthy cookery and IT courses, I'm enjoying the nature strolls and the book club and my sister loves the SMILE exercise class at the Heatons which I take her to every Wednesday. Everything is well organised, Signpost staff are always helpful and we feel that they have genuine concern for our wellbeing. Being able to continue to participate in activities arranged by Signpost Carers Connect has reassured us that we would have somewhere to turn should another crisis occur. Becoming a member of Signpost has enabled me to meet with like-

minded people who are willing to share their knowledge and experiences.

Young Carers Awareness Day Competition

What an incredible response we had from our Secondary schools across Stockport for our competition to raise awareness for young carers' awareness day! The competition was 'If I was a local MP what would I change/introduce for young carers in the Stockport area'.

Each of the entries had brilliant suggestions ranging from 'I would help disabled people get an adapted house like mine' to 'I would make it compulsory for Schools to support young carers' 'I would make sure that Stockport has full disability access'. All of which were brilliant suggestions and would make a huge difference if they were to be introduced in Stockport.

It was extremely difficult to decide a winner, however our well-deserved winner was Georgie Cavanagh from The Kingsway School – below is her extract and Georgie will receive her £10 Amazon voucher, very well done!

"If I was MP for a day I would help raise awareness that not all disabilities can be seen and not all disabilities "tick the box". I would campaign to make the world a more accessible place, I would help remove the barriers but more importantly, I would want to put better systems in place to identify young carers and give them the help and advice they need. I would also help make people aware that behind every disabled person there is always someone there helping them along the way, which in some cases may be a young person who is barely old enough to look after themselves let alone a person with a disability."



Young Carers Awareness Day

Thursday the 25th of January marked the National Young Carers Awareness Day and this year we made sure Stockport really got behind it.

We ran our very own 24 hour 'Tweetathon' with support from; Stockport Family, NHS services, local MP's, schools, social care and the general public. Throughout the day our team were challenged to visit as many Stockport Schools as they could. Firstly they visited St. Elisabeth's in Reddish, where headteacher Mr Tootle had the whole school ready in the hall to hear a special Young Carers assembly. The next stop was All Saints Primary School in Heaton Norris to deliver an assembly to the whole school. After that they visited Outwood Primary in Heald Green, where they were invited into 'circle time' with a Young Carer explaining what her life is like and answering questions about her caring role. We then picked up 2 Young Carers from Alexandra Park Primary ready to take them to gold Young Carer Award winning Stockport Academy, where they hosted their very own Young Carers Awareness Day celebration. Young Carers from all feeder schools were invited to join the Academy Young Carers for pizzas, games and prizes. We then attended bronze Young Carer Award winning St James' Catholic High School for a private Young Carers afternoon tea, hosted by head Young Carer lead Caroline Chadwick. Afterwards we headed across to Marple High School where Young Carer lead Matt Woodcock had been hosting many Young Carer awareness lessons through drama and PSHE. Throughout the day we received some wonderful pledges of support for Young Carers from schools, colleges and Stockport Agencies. We even got a like and retweet from Stockport's very own Blossoms band! We would just like to say a HUGE thank you to each and every person that was involved in making Young Carers Awareness Day such a success this year. Below are some of the highlights from the day.

In aid of Young Carers Awareness Day we also held an art competition across the Stockport primary schools and a 'Politician Competition' across the secondary schools.

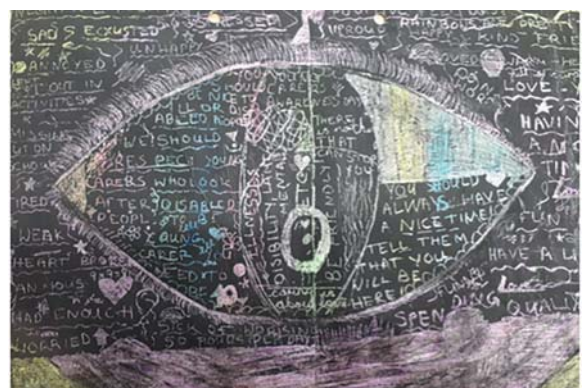
The primary school 'Through the eyes of a Young Carer' Art competition proved very popular, with us receiving over 300 entries! All the entries we have received have been of an excellent standard with a clear understanding of what life is like for a Young Carer. We are so pleased with all the entries and, as a result, have decided to display them at the Centre. We found the judging process very hard but, after much deliberation, we picked our winners;



Abbie, aged 5. St Elisabeths, Reddish



Aisha, aged 9. Lum Head Primary



Faryaal, aged 9. All Saints, Heaton Norris



Tis a farmers life for us

12 young carers and 3 eager staff met up in the midst of a torrential downpour – we were off to a working farm, this could be one heck of a wet day.

All arrived in good time, boarded the bus and settled down with doubtful faces about the trip ahead. We didn't want a soaking that was for sure! We travelled down the motorway and as we did the sky brightened and so did our hopes as we chitted and chatted and wondered what the day would bring. 30 minutes later, after a quick pop off to Tesco's because our forgetful group-worker Jenny turned up without any lunch, we arrived at our destination to be welcomed by Stephen Booth (the farmer) and Suzanne Godfrey (The Farm Discovery Coordinator of the North West & North Wales), 2 delightful people who entertained us all throughout the next 4 hours.

First things first and after introductions and a health and safety chat we took a stroll past the Dexter Cows, along an open field and to the local nature pond. Along the way all manner of information was passed on with details on the breed of cow, the local interaction between farm and nature and the crucial necessity of natural trees, the Common Reed and stubble fields. It was rewarding to hear that the farm had its own flock of Tree Sparrows (a species on a terrible decline) and had recently had the joy of breeding Barn Owls with 3 chicks fully fledged, now that is a success story. Smooth Newts were in the local pond, Harvest Mice were using the phragmites stands and I noted that there were several wild flowers still in bloom that one doesn't see on a regular basis – Field Pansy being a lovely example. After a troop about we headed to the classroom to watch a short film about life in a nestbox with all eyes enthralled by the sight of seeing a pair of Blue Tits rear their clutch of squawking youngster over the course of a 21 day period. From mere eggs to bug eyed beauties in the flapping of a wing it seemed and it was good for all to witness a real miracle that is too often, overlooked.

Next, and it was a 'pig'-tastic pootle with a journey around the pens to see many honking delights with their suckling young. From piglets a few days old to great clonking specimens of advanced years we cast our eyes on the curly tailed critters that snuffled about with curiosity or simply lazed in pure, wallowing indolence. The Saddle-Backs

were particularly attractive with their bi-coloured bodies and the hefty Large Whites were ugliness incarnate but in a kind of perverse, appealing way. We learned about the feeding procedure, the food chain and what made for a good show pig and as we passed many a pen it was good to see the different sized animals and the cheeky faced young. Again all very rewarding for kids from an urbanised setting and with much stress in their lives.

Onwards and to lunch, it was a feast and enhanced by a cupcake for all to help celebrate the birthday of one of our young chaps – Hip, Hop, Hooray and have a splendid day young sir. Scram devoured, liquids slurped and into the stubble field we went. Suzanne took up the helm from now on, and gave the kids a right old run-around with several games that they all enjoyed. Foxes and Rabbits was a joy, The Great Caterpillar Hunt kept eyes zoned in and Bat Catch The Moth saw the ears used to great effect and highlight how those mysterious night time flyers hunt their prey.

The young carers threw themselves into the activities with great gusto and ran themselves ragged and took in lungful's of fresh air – there was many a rosy cheek on show.

Finally, it was back to the barn where we made up some bird feeders using peanut butter, seed and a pine cone. This was a nice wind down after the previous gasp inducing games and it was nice to see all kids be creative and have something to take home after a memorable day out. We duly packed up, paid our thanks to our fine hosts and drove off in search of a snack. We found another farm nearby where a playground was enjoyed as well as an ice cream and drink. Crikey that cuppa was needed. A chit and chat with a few who cared to unwind and back on the bus and home.

Now that is what I call a good day. It cost nothing, we came home with heads filled with knowledge, a great experience gained and an insight into the natural world and the workings of a real farm

achieved - and all done with the weather being mighty kind. As I write we have another trip planned for next year, this will be another farm with a different set-up – I reckon it could be another worthwhile adventure.

Thank you to all who made this one a cracker – Suzanne, Stephen, my colleagues and the Young Carers crew – here's to many more.



Safe and well home visits

Have you had a Safe and Well visit from Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Service (GMFRS)?

Did you know that they can advise on health and home security, as well as keeping people safe from fire? A visit is well worth having. As well as peace of mind (and food for thought) it includes:

- Fitting smoke alarms if needed
- Identifying risks and offering advice about fire safety and home security
- Providing risk reduction equipment
- Info about other services and activities.

To find out more call **0800 555 815** or email **contact@manchesterfire.gov.uk**

Are you a lady of a certain age?

If you are female, born between 6 October 1953 and 5 November 1954 and are a permanent resident in Greater Manchester then you qualify for a Women's Concessionary Travel Pass from Transport for Greater Manchester (TfGM) from the date that you would have reached pensionable age before the 2011 Pensions Act came into effect.

With this pass, you can travel free on buses, trains and trams in Greater Manchester during off-peak hours.

For more information contact TfGM on:

Phone: **0161 244 1000**

Monday to Friday: 7am to 8pm

Weekends and bank holidays: 8am to 8pm

Email: **concessionary.travel@tfgm.com**



The CEA Card is a national card scheme developed for UK cinemas by the UK Cinema Association (UKCA).

The Card enables a disabled cinema guest to receive a complimentary ticket for someone to go with them when they visit a participating cinema.

The Card is also one way for cinemas to make sure they look after their disabled guests. If you require an adjustment to visit a cinema because of your disability, cinema staff should make them for you whether you have a CEA Card or not.

The Card is developed by UKCA's Disability Working Group, whose members include film exhibitors and distributors, and national disability charities such as Action on Hearing Loss, the RNIB, Dimensions and Muscular Dystrophy UK

If you would like further information, or simply have a query telephone: **01244 526 016**, email: **info@ceacard.co.uk** or have a look at their website: **https://www.ceacard.co.uk**



Do you care for someone who has dementia and worry that they might go missing?

There is nothing more frightening or distressing than when a loved one, friend or neighbour fails to return when they should.

For people living with someone with dementia, this could be quite common and The Herbert Protocol could give you some peace of mind.

The Herbert Protocol is a national scheme being introduced locally by Greater Manchester Police and other agencies which encourages carers and family members to compile useful key information which could be used in the event of a person with dementia going missing.



DOWNLOAD THE FORM AND FIND OUT MORE AT: www.gmp.police.uk/Herbert

GREATER MANCHESTER POLICE



Weddings at the Heatons Centre

Signpost are very excited to announce that, thanks to a Ready 2 Grow grant, we will shortly become licensed to hold wedding ceremonies at The Heatons Centre.

As those who have attended events in our building will know, it has some beautiful original features from the sweeping staircase to the stained glass to corncicing and fireplaces and we feel it is only right to give it the attention it deserves.

The conference room will be a blank canvas for wedding parties to decorate as they wish (within reason!) and the training room will be available for drinks receptions (refreshments and service to be provided by wedding party). We're not planning on hosting wedding breakfasts yet, but you never know what may happen in the future!

This is a real opportunity for couples to start their big day in style in the beautiful village of Heaton Moor.

If you, or someone you know is planning a wedding in 2018/2019/2020 please contact Claire on **0161 442 0442** or email **weddings@signpostforcarers.org.uk** for details of pricing & availability and to book a visit!



Name our rooms competition

As part of our wedding venture we are looking to rename our rooms upstairs. We would like to give you, our carers and supporters, a chance to be involved in this exciting adventure. For an opportunity to win a hamper of luxury items please let us know what you would suggest as alternative names for:

- **The Meeting Room** (will be used for bride/wedding party to get ready and wait for guests)
- **The Conference Room** (where the ceremony will take place)
- **The Training Room** (for drinks receptions)

Entries must be in by 1st August 2018 – email **weddings@signpostforcarers.org.uk** or give us a call on **0161 442 0442**



Massage | Tanning | Nails | Beauty

Relaxations

Sarah-Jane, owner of Relaxations beauty therapy, is kindly supporting Signpost as her charity of the year.

She says "I am a mobile beauty therapist based in and around Stockport. I have been working in the industry almost 2 years and have a real passion for all things relaxing! I have decided that every year I will choose a charity to donate to. For 2018 I have chosen to donate £1 from every treatment I do to Signpost Stockport For Carers."

Thank you Sarah-Jane! If you would like to give yourself a treat, and raise funds for Signpost at the

same time, just visit her facebook page @Relaxations1 or contact her on **07825 020210**.

Alternatively email **carersconnect@signpostforcarers.org.uk** and we'll email you the treatment menu – you'll be spoilt for choice.

Goodbye Louise!

We are sure you will join us in wishing a fond farewell to Louise, who is leaving the team after 11 years at Signpost.

She's not going far (just to the mental health team at The Meadows) but we will really miss her and want to thank her for the enormous difference that she's made to carers in Stockport. See you soon, Lou!

DIRECTORY OF Services in Stockport

Age UK Stockport

Tel: 0161 477 1213

www.ageukstockport.org.uk

We offer a free information and advice service at our office in Merseyway Stockport, either face to face over the telephone or by home visit if required.

Alzheimer's Society

Tel: 0161 477 6999

www.alzheimers.org.uk

Alzheimer's Society is the UK's leading dementia charity. Provide information and support, improve care, fund research, and create lasting change for people affected by dementia.

ARC (Arts for recovery in the community)

Tel: 0161 968 1800

www.artsforrecovery.org.uk

Promoting the wellbeing of those experiencing emotional or psychological distress by encouraging creativity through the arts.

Blue Badge Scheme

Tel: 0161 474 3422

To discuss how best to apply email: blue.badges@stockport.gov.uk

The Blue Badge scheme is a national scheme for local people

Beechwood Cancer Care

Tel: 0161 476 0384

www.beechwoodcancercare.org.uk

Providing help & support to patients, Carers and family members who are affected by cancer or other life limiting illness.

Choosing & Purchasing Team

Tel: 0161 218 1953

choosing&purchasing@stockport.gov.uk

Help with support planning, managing all aspects of personal budgets and more.

Disability Stockport

Tel: 0161 480 7248

www.disabilitystockport.org.uk

Advice and practical support for those with a disability or sensory loss.

Headway

Tel 0161 442 5552

www.headway.org.uk

Providing information, support and services to people with a brain injury, their families and carers.

Help with Benefits

Tel: 0161 217 6003

email: benefit.appeals@stockport.gov.uk

Free, independent help and advice on how to claim benefits and support with appeals.

Home Library Service

Tel: 0161 474 5600

homelibrary@stockport.gov.uk

Free delivery of books, talking books, music and films to those who are unable to visit the library due to age, disability or caring role.

My Care, My Choice

Tel: 0161 217 6029

www.mycaremychoice.org.uk

An information, advice and signposting website that enables people in Stockport to find social care information that can help them.

Oasis for Carers

Tel: 0161 292 7270

Support and care for those who care. Providing help and support to revitalise carers.

RADAR Toilet Key

Tel: 0161 218 1220

Providing independent access to public toilets for disabled people.

Shopmobility Stockport

Tel : 0161 666 1100

www.shopmobilityuk.org

A scheme which lends wheelchairs to members to shop within the town.

SMBC Adult Social Care

Tel: 0161 217 6029

Information on all Adult Social Care Services or visit: www.mycaremychoice.org.uk

SMBC Children's Social Care

Tel: 0161 217 6028

Find out more about Children's Social Care and Safeguarding
Out of hours contact number:
0161 718 2118

Stockport Car Schemes

Tel: 0161 476 2812

www.stockportcareschemes.org.uk

Providing transport for Carers and people with poor mobility, to enable them to attend medical appointments and some social activities.

Stockport Advocacy

Tel: 0161 480 8979

www.stockportadvocacy.org.uk

Support to understand your rights and options and have a say in decisions that affect your health or social care.

Stockport Citizens Advice Bureau

Tel: 0344 4111444

www.stockportcab.org.uk

Free impartial, independent and confidential advice and information on a range of issues.

Stockport & District Mind

Tel: 0161 480 7393

www.stockportmind.org.uk

An adult mental health service offering friendly and accessible support to promote wellbeing in the community.

Stockport SEND

stockportsendfamilies@gmail.com

FaceBook: Stockport Send Families

Friendly support group for parents with a child with educational needs and/or disability.

Stockport Talking Newsletter

For more information call Paul on 0161 439 4873 or Keith on 0161 430 7808

The Stockport talking newsletter is a free service for the visually impaired providing audio recordings of local news.

Stockport TPA (The Prevention Alliance)

Tel: 0161 474 1042

www.stockporttpa.co.uk

A service for anyone who wants to make change happen in their life.

Walthew House

Tel: 0161 480 2612

www.walthewhouse.org.uk

Extensive support for those who are blind, visually impaired, hard of hearing or have dual sensory loss.

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