



APRIL MEETING

Our next Meeting of the Family Carers Group will be in April.

Date: 20th April

Time: 09.30 a.m—12.30 p.m. (followed by lunch)

Venue: Hallsannery, Bideford, To be arranged

Speakers will be:-Claire Cotter speaking on DCC Carers strategy for Devon carers.

Agendas will be sent out with the minutes from the February NDFCG meeting

Please can you let Laura know if you will be attending. Her phone number is or e-mail:

LauraC@torridgecvs.org.uk

HEALTH AND WELLBEING CHECKS.

Free Health and Wellbeing checks for all Carers in Devon became a step closer in November with the launch of pilots in the South and in Northern Devon. The North pilots are taking place in four G.P. surgeries in Barnstaple.

Providers in the first phase of the project have been trained and are set up and ready to go. A milestone was reached when the first Carer's Health and Wellbeing Check was completed on the 11th November at The Coleridge Centre in Barnstaple.

Now is the time to make sure that you are registered as a carer with your G.P. It is quite

surprising how many carers have discovered that although they have been registered with the same G.P. as their cared for person for a number of years, they are not officially registered as a carer. There is a special code (the Reed Code) which denotes that the patient is a carer. This is 918A .

LEGAL HISTORY MADE

Legal history has been made with the passing of the Autism Act 2009, the first ever disability specific law for England.

The new Act will guarantee a future Adult Autism Strategy that will introduce a range of legal duties to improve local services. The strategy will cover a range of issues including health, social care, employment and training and, crucially, will be accompanied by guidance which places local authorities and NHS bodies under a legal obligation to meet certain requirements.

The strategy will be published by April 2010 and the accompanying legal guidance by no later than December 2010.

In order that the adult autism strategy is as strong as possible, the National Autistic Society has launched their 'Don't Write Me Off' campaign. This campaign is aiming to tackle the very high numbers of adults with autism who are cut off from employment, support and benefits.

The campaign is supported by over a third of M.P.s and is about the struggles people with autism have in finding work and achieving financial independence. It explores solutions that could be put in place to ensure that people with autism can live with dignity and fulfill their potential.

To find out more visit the website: www.nas.org.uk

Moving on and Planning Ahead

ARC (Association for Real Change) have been involved in a number of pieces of work relating to financial inclusion for people with learning disabilities. This has included training for support staff and guidance to CQC on best practice in looking people's money.

An important part of this work has been the production of a webportal "Making Money Easier." These are a set of guides produced in "easy read" with lots of pictures to help anyone with a learning disability learn about money and life planning. The portal is very easy to access with easy instructions on how to access each website.

There are sites on:

Banking - what is a bank? What is a bank account? Why do I need a bank account?

Your Money, Your Home –managing money and independent living

Moving On and Planning Ahead– planning for the future and living independently.

Your Money, Your Insurance-different types of insurance explained, what to look for and how to buy it.

Talking Money-makes it easier to access banking services.

The portal address is: www.making-money-easier.info/

FLEXIBLE WORKING FOR CARERS

The Work and Families Act 2006 gives carers the right to request flexible working. Although the Act does not give you the right to flexible working it does give you the right to request it and your employer is legally obliged to reply to your written request within 28 days.

Did you know that:-

Carers make up over 12% of the total U.K. workforce - that's one in every eight employees.

Every year over 2million people become carers.

1.5 million carers work full time and of those 140,000 care for 50 hours per week on top of their full-time jobs.

90% of working carers are aged 30+ combining work and care in their prime employment years.

If you care for more than 20 hours per week you are much less likely to be in a higher level job.

Working carers pay a heavy penalty in terms of their own health, they are 2-3 times more likely to be in poor health than their colleagues who do not have caring responsibilities.

If you combine work and care and you don't have flexible working, you should write a letter or fill in an application form to your employer who should reply within 28 days to discuss your application. Within 14 days you should receive your employer's decision in writing and if accepted you should meet with your employer to discuss your new work pattern. If your request is rejected you may appeal in writing.

VOICE U.K.

Voice U.K. is a national charity supporting people with learning disabilities who have experienced crime and abuse. The organization also supports families, carers and professionals.

The organization aims to raise the awareness of crime and abuse against people with learning disabilities and encourage people to report hate crime.

A major part of the project is the Helpline manned by staff trained in communication with people with learning disabilities. There is help, support and advice for victims and their carers.

The helpline number is: 08088028686 and is open Monday and Wednesday 9-7, Tuesday Thursday and Friday 9—5

LEARNING DISABILITIES AND DEMENTIA

Advances in medical and social care have led to a significant increase in the life expectancy of people with learning disabilities. This means an increased risk of developing dementia. Dementia is a general term used to describe a group of diseases which affect the brain leading to a progressive loss of brain tissue and worsening of symptoms.

Symptoms may include loss of memory, difficulty concentrating, difficulty finding the right words or understanding what people are saying, difficulty completing self-care and domestic tasks, difficulty solving minor problems, mood changes and changes in behavior.

There is no evidence to suggest that dementia affects people with learning disabilities any differently but the early stages are more likely to be missed or misinterpreted.

About 20% of people with a learning disability have Down's Syndrome and these people are at particular risk of developing dementia. People with other learning disabilities are also at a much higher risk than the rest of the population.

Carers, friends and family play an important part in recognizing the onset of dementia when they see changes in personality or behavior. It is therefore essential that someone who understands the person's normal behavior pattern, ways of communicating and mood, is involved with professionals when a diagnosis is being made.

Although the condition is progressive the person will be able to continue with many activities for some time. During this period it is important to support the person and to reinforce learned skills. There are several tips that have been developed by The Alzheimer's Society:

Enable the person to have as much control over their life as possible. Use prompts and reassurance during tasks they now find more difficult.

Use visual clues and planners to structure the day.

Use visual labels on doors to help them find their way around.

Try to structure the day so that activities happen in the same order.

Make a 'lifestory book' with photos and momentos from the past to help them reminisce and interact.

If the person is agitated it may be because the environment is too noisy or busy.

Use relaxation techniques such as massage or aromatherapy.

The Alzheimer's Society has a wealth of information on learning disabilities and dementia and the local branch is always willing to help you with advice and information. Our local branch is in Exeter—phone number 01392 421189

To remove your name from our mailing list, please [click here](#).

Questions or comments? E-mail us at someone@example.com or call 555-555-5555