



WHST Launch Draft Carers Support Strategy for Consultation

Mrs Geraldine Hillick, Director of Primary Care & Older People Services announced the launch of the consultation period for the Western Trust Draft Carers Strategy. Mrs Hillick said “The draft strategy highlights the need for development in the areas of recognition, information, training and support for Carers. It identifies the plight of young carers who may be caring for a parent or sibling, and carers who are juggling a caring role with full or part-time employment. The Western Trust wholeheartedly supports this strategy and looks forward to receiving views from key stakeholders through the consultation process”.

Mrs Hillick wished to thank all those carers who contributed to the document and looks forward to the comments of individual carers and Carer groups.

Cathy Magowan and Lee McDermott the Trust Carer Support Co-ordinator’s added that a copy of the document is available on the Trust website www.westerntrust.hscni.net

Feedback via the consultation questionnaire is welcomed by Friday 1st May 2009.

Alternatively a copy can be obtained by contacting Cathy Magowan directly on 028 66 344 163 or Lee McDermott on 028 71 272 103.

Message from Cathy and Lee

Cathy and Lee are in the process of establishing a Carers Forum in a number of areas across the Western Trust. A forum meeting will take place in each of the following areas, Fermanagh, Omagh, Castlederg, Strabane, L’Derry & Limavady.

All carers will be invited to come along and get involved. The meetings will take place throughout the year and will help to facilitate two-way communication between the Western Trust and carers who reside across its boundary.

It will also provide carers from across a range of care situations to come together to share common interests and offer mutual support. Cathy and Lee will keep you informed of developments.

Thank you to all the Carer Groups who have contributed articles and support group information to this edition of the Carers Newsletter. Apologies to those who we weren’t able to include this time. It’s a good sign when we have more information than space!

Thanks for your support, Cathy and Lee

Contents	
Page 1	Launch of Draft Carers Strategy Message from Lee & Cathy
Page 2	Carer Support Groups Carers Week Survey
Page 3	Benefit news
Page 4 & 5	Carers events and Training
Page 6	Review of wheelchair services New Advocate for older people
Page 7	Carer Co-ordinator contact details

Carer Support Groups

<p style="text-align: center;">Mental Health</p> <p>Carer's group for families with a relative with a mental health problem</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fermanagh on 1st Monday of each month in Ernevale Beacon Centre, Mill St, Enniskillen at 7.30pm Tyrone on 2nd Tuesday of each month in Erne House, Omagh at 8.00pm <p>For further information contact Patricia McGurk, Respite Co-ordinator, 028 82835070.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> CAUSE NW Carers Support Group Last Tuesday of every month Melrose Day Centre, Glendermott Road, L'derry at 7 pm 	<p>National Autistic Society</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> NAS Parent Support Group - every 2nd Thursday of Month at Fermanagh House – next meeting Thursday 12 February Omagh Parent Support Group - 2nd Wednesday of every month, at Rivendell, Omagh - next meeting 11th February 2008
	<p>ERNE CARERS</p> <p>Meeting on the 4th Wednesday every month In the railway Hotel, Enniskillen 12.30 pm Contact Freda Carson 02866322654</p>
	<p>Foyle Parents & Friends</p> <p>(support for carers of those with learning or sensory disability across the Derry City Council area).</p> <p>Regular meetings as and when required. Contact Jacqui on 71271017.</p>
<p>HEADWAY (Brain Injury) Carers Support Group</p> <p>Foyle branch 1st Wed each month, Foyle Disability Resource Centre, Glen Rd, L'derry at 7.30 pm.</p> <p>Enniskillen (Fermanagh/Omagh) Contact Niall McGandy Drumcoo Centre, Enniskillen - Tel: 028 66 324400</p>	<p>Parkinson's Disease Society (Foyle)</p> <p>Carer support meetings on the last Tue of each month, Broomhill Hotel, 7.30 pm</p> <p>Contact Jack Glenn, 92 Duke St, Waterside.</p>
<p>Autism (NI) Foyle Carers Support Group</p> <p>Meets 3rd Tue each month, 7.30 pm, Education Centre, Foyle Hospice.</p>	
<p>SOUTHWEST CARERS FORUM</p> <p>18 February 2009, Carlton Hotel, Belleek, Co Fermanagh 7:30 - 9:30 pm</p> <p>"WHO CARES" Open Meeting with families, friends and carers of disabled and elderly people</p> <p>24 February 2009 , Fermanagh House, Broadmeadow Place, Enniskillen 10:30 am - 12:30 am</p> <p>Direct Payments and ILF Users Group -Workshop on managing budget, providing for holiday pay, recruiting personal assistants.</p> <p>10 March 2009, Fermanagh House, Broadmeadow Place, Enniskillen 10:30 am - 12:30 am</p> <p>Respite Issues - Adult Learning Disability—Carers meeting to discuss lack of resources for provision of respite</p> <p>21 April - 27 May 2009 Fermanagh House, Broadmeadow Place, Enniskillen 9 am - 1 pm</p> <p>Half day workshops over 6 weeks—Training in Advocacy, person centred planning and Circles of Support, registration required</p> <p>Organised by SWCF in association with Fermanagh Voluntary Association of the Disabled (FVAD) For information on these and other events, contact Southwest Carers Forum at Tel 0330-440-1845 or email swcf@disabilitywest.net</p>	

Benefits Information

Seasonal Benefits Payments

Winter Fuel Payment: £250 Available to those over 60 years by mid-Sept 08.

(£400 over 80). This is paid automatically but if you have not received it for this year yet you must contact the Social Security Agency before 31.03.09.

Cold Weather Payment: £25 automatically paid to those postcode areas affected by temperature of 0 degrees or less for more than seven days. Payable to those on pension credit, some people on Income Support or other benefits and is means tested.

Additional Christmas Bonus: This amounted to £60 paid automatically on top of the £10 paid to those on qualifying benefits in Dec 08, including those in receipt of Carer's Allowance.

N. Ireland Additional Winter Fuel Payment: Legislation (Financial Assistance Bill) currently before the Assembly may lead to a further payment of £150. Details are expected to be known around March time.

Family Fund (helping disabled children)

If you are a disabled child or young person, Family Fund Extra could make a difference. By becoming a member, you can receive discounts on thousands of products and services from leading high street retailers (such as M&S, Argos, Toys'R'Us) and organizations. The Family Fund Extra also make some grants available to families. You can join online, www.familyfundextra.org.uk or make contact at : Family Fund Extra, Unit 4 Aplha Court, Monks Cross Drive, Huntington, York, YO32 9WN, Tel. 0844 247 3424.

Martial Arts for children with Asperger's Syndrome

Martial Arts for children with Asperger's Syndrome, Ages 10-16yrs

- Every Wednesday in Enniskillen Library 7.30-8.30
- Every Saturday in 200 Centre, N'Stewart - 11.00 - 12.00

For children on the Autistic Spectrum, Martial Arts movements improve balance, focus, concentration, as well as a greater awareness of surroundings and people. We combine safe non offensive movement from the martial arts and brain gym type exercises in order to help the child gain confidence, improve in social interaction, as well as improve muscle control and strength. These initial groups are a pilot exercise, with a view to expanding to other age groups including adults. Please contact Caroline Bogue, Family Support Worker, National Autistic Society, 07917 266 487

Cinema Card

This is a national card that can be used to verify that the holder is entitled to one free ticket for a person/carer accompanying them to the cinema.

To apply for the card, you will need to meet one or more of the following criteria:

- Be in receipt of the disability living allowance or attendance allowance.
- Be a registered blind person.

The card is valid for 3 years from the date of issue. Application forms are available from cinemas across the UK supporting this card. Alternatively, download an application form to print out and fill in. website address

www.ceacard.co.uk

Benefit Rates

Attendance Allowance

High rate	£64.50
Lower rate	£43.15

Carers Allowance

Carers Allowance	£48.65
Adult dependent	£29.05
Earnings Limit	£95
Carer premium	£27.15

Disability Living Allowance

Care component

high rate	£64.50
Middle rate	£43.15
Low rate	£17.10

Mobility component

high rate	£45.00
Low rate	£17.10

Attendance Allowance

Lower rate	£43.15
Higher rate	£64.50

Not sure what benefits you are entitled to?

For independent advice and support contact: -

Omagh Independent Advice Service Tel: 028 82 243 252

Citizens Advice Bureau Tel: 028 66 324 334.

Carers NI also provide advice and support via a helpline Tel: 028 90439 843

Carer Events and Training

Carer 'Health Check' Days

Many (unpaid) Carers put their health second to the person they care for. Looking after your health as a Carer is often low on the list of priorities.

Supported by Investing for Health we have been able to fund three Carer Health Check and Information Days. There will be a number of organisations present with information stands i.e. Benefits info, Home safety, Young Carers Project and positive mental health.

The Oak Healthy Living Centre is running a day in the Castle Park Centre, Lisnaskea.

Date: 19th February 2009

Time: 11 am – 1.30 pm

Light refreshments available.

If you need alternate care please approach your social worker in the first instance or alternatively ring Cathy Magowan 028 66 344000.

Booking is not necessary just turn up.

Carers Moving and Handling Training

(Free to unpaid /family carers)

Castleberg (10 places)

Training agency: Derg valley Care

Venue: Derg Valley Care, Castleberg

Date: Wednesday 18th February 2009

Time: 10 am – 3 pm (Light Lunch included)

Strabane (12 places)

Training agency: Glen Caring

Venue: Orchard Road Enterprise centre, Strabane

Date: 10th March 2009

Time: 10 am – 3 pm (Light Lunch included)

Enniskillen (10 places)

Training Agency: Extra Care

Venue: Extra Care, Queen Street, Enniskillen

Date: 24th March 2009

Time: 10 am – 3 pm (Light Lunch included)

To Register please ring Louise Preston on
028 8283 5712

Hidden and invisible?

Carers are invited to take part in the 2009 Carers Week survey, which can be completed at www.carersweeksurvey.org.uk

The survey will be seeking answers to the following questions:

- * Is the contribution that carers make recognised by society?
- * Do carers need access to better support and services?
- * Would increased recognition by professionals, and by others who impact on carers day-to-day lives, make a difference to carers lives?

The survey will bring to the fore the issues carers say are the most important to them, and will give carers the opportunity to share their experience of caring; the personal stories of the stresses and strains; the ups and the downs.

The stories and experiences that carers describe will together create an overall picture and a set of results, which will be at the centre of Carers Week 2009. All information provided by carers will be private and confidential.

Carers Event and Training

EFT (Emotional Freedom Technique) combines ancient Chinese medicine with modern psychology to create a remarkable new approach to stress.

It's an easy-to-learn technique that is *profoundly simple and simply profound* in its effects. If a four year old can do it, so can you... It's a self-help method that is safe, non-toxic and calorie-free! GP's, psychiatrists, psychologists, nurses and counsellors worldwide use it to help their clients help themselves and lessen the need for medications in the process.

EFT involves tapping on acupressure points on the face, hands and upper body while stating an affirmation.

Sounds complicated? Actually it's so easy to get a hold of that you can, **within ten minutes**, get the hang of how to do it, when to do it, and how to measure the effects. It is advisable to engage the services of an experienced professional for complex issues e.g. trauma on hearing a diagnosis. You do not need to believe it will work to experience success.

Carers could themselves use, or ask for EFT for their loved one for e.g.

- overcoming physical and emotional problems clearing with the feelings/thoughts/beliefs surrounding why loved one has the disease, disability, e.g. *"I have to please my Dad!"*
- easing the grief regarding loss of job, status, independence, etc
- assisting with the emotional roller-coaster of operations/treatments/recovery, or
- naturally reducing pain experienced during interventions/as a part of daily life preparing for a pending demise
- overcoming life traumas even many months and years after the event.

Carers Course – Emotional Freedom Technique (EFT)

One day course by a trained and experienced therapist, Julie-Ann Mullan, combines Chinese medicine and modern psychology and involves tapping on acupressure points of the body. The course will be run in a relaxed fun atmosphere WITH REFRESHMENTS AND LUNCH PROVIDED and has proven very successful in the management of stress, trauma and emotions. The course is **free** to carers.

Course days are

16 March, L'Derry,

20 March South West College, Omagh.

Contact Louise on 028 8283 5712 to book a place (09.00 - 14.30).

So that Julie-Anne can gear the course towards the needs of carers please give some information on the area you care in e.g. Older People, Learning disability, Physical disability, Mental Health.

Also if you have any emotional issues you would wish to use the technique for. E.g. stress, anxiety, pain etc.

Everybody hurts sometimes

If you're in distress or despair, call **Lifeline free on 0808 808 8000**

Calls to **Lifeline** are answered by trained counsellors who can provide help and support.

Counsellors are experienced in dealing with suicide, self-harm, abuse, trauma, depression, anxiety and many other issues.

Lines are open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Calls are free from all landlines and mobiles.

(Text phone: 18001 0808 808 8000)

Lifeline 0808 808 8000

The Reform of the Northern Ireland Wheelchair Service

In recent years Northern Ireland's Wheelchair Service has been experiencing increasing pressures. It is recognised that an increasing number of children and adults can regain independence through using a wheelchair that meets their individual need.

The Department of Health, Social Services and Public Health commissioned a review of the Regional Wheelchair Service through the Southern Health and Social Services Board in December 2006. The aim of this review was to work in partnership with all agencies including, statutory, voluntary, commercial, and more importantly wheelchair users to develop and agree proposals. This document is available to download at;

<http://www.whssb.n-i.nhs.uk/publication/04Strategies.html>

The reform report recommended that the Wheelchair Service will be 'an equitable, accessible, person centred and responsive service. It will ensure that people are provided with appropriate wheelchairs and accessories to enable them to participate fully in society.'

Michael McGimpsey, Minister for Health, Social Services and Public Safety launched the report 19 August 2008 and asked that work proceed to implementation phase. Implementation teams are currently being established to take forward the recommendations in the report.

If you would like any further information about the Reform of the Wheelchair Service in Northern Ireland, please contact the Project Manager, Mrs Audrey Lockhart at SHSSB Offices, Tower Hill, Armagh BT61 9DR. Tel. No. 078 25 146511.



Photo: Minister McGimpsey and Kellie Larkin

Older People's Advocate



There's a new voice speaking out for older people in Northern Ireland.

The former head of the Equality Commission, Dame Joan Harbison (pictured) has been appointed as Older People's 'Advocate' with Junior Ministers Gerry Kelly and Jeffrey Donaldson jointly announcing the appointment on 3 November.

They said this is an interim measure, commencing December 1st, pending the establishment and appointment of a regular Commissioner for Older People.

Mr Kelly said: "Minister Donaldson and I are committed to addressing the issues which affect older people and this announcement clearly demonstrates that we are delivering on our 'Programme for Government' commitment to provide a strong, independent voice for older people.

"I have no doubt that given Dame Joan's experience and commitment she will make a significant contribution towards tackling those issues which are causing concern for older people."

Mr Donaldson added: "This is an important development for all older people in Northern Ireland - particularly given the current economic downturn and the problems faced by older people in dealing with rising costs. Dame Joan will help us to not only identify and address the current problems faced by all older people but she will also provide us with independent advice on what needs to be done, based on her extensive experience of working with older people and the many age sector organizations."

New research unveils extreme hardship among Northern Ireland's carers

- number of carers struggling to make ends meet rises dramatically since 2007
- three-quarters in fuel poverty; half in debt; half cutting back on essentials like food or heating to make ends meet.

Alarming new statistics released Thursday 4th December 2008 by the campaigning organisation Carers UK, reveal that carers are under even more pressure as living costs rise and the economic crisis affects ever more families. Nine in ten (86%) say their financial position is worse than 12 months ago. Yet they provide vital support, unpaid, for their elderly, sick or disabled relatives, making a contribution worth £87 billion a year to the UK economy.

Half of all carers are cutting back on food just to make ends meet, more than double the rate only a year ago (52% in 2008 compared to 19% in 2007). 32% of those paying a rent or mortgage say they cannot afford to pay it. Three quarters (74%) are struggling to pay utility bills – up from 33% last year. 78% cannot afford essential repairs to the home – a situation less than one third found themselves in last year.

Northern Ireland carers reported the highest levels of fuel poverty, with 75% in fuel poverty (paying more than 10% of their income on fuel bills) compared to a UK average of 65%.

The findings of the new poll of 1,700 carers reveal just how hard carers have been hit by rising living costs and the economic downturn in the last year. Perhaps most worrying is that half of carers questioned are now in debt as a result of caring, compared to a third last year. In struggling to make ends meet, many carers were resorting to borrowing. Nearly one third of those owing money (20% in Northern Ireland) already had over £10,000 worth of debt.

Carers can face higher bills than the rest of the population (including extra heating and transport costs) and two thirds are spending their own income or savings to pay for care for the person they look after (up from 35% in 2007).

Most of the respondents care for more than 50 hours per week, some of the 1.3 million carers across the UK who provide full time care.

Few of these carers are able to work, meaning they are reliant on benefits that have not kept pace with the spiralling costs of food and fuel.

Helen Ferguson, Director of Carers Northern Ireland, comments: "Rising costs and the economic downturn are turning what is already a bad situation for carers into a financial crisis. Many struggle day in day out to provide care for someone they love who is disabled or ill, and have found they have no choice but to give up work in order to care. Whilst the physical and mental demands of caring often make carers' own health worse, the appallingly low level of Carer's Allowance, worth only £50.55 per week, is only making life even harder."

"The irony of this situation is that our economy and our communities depend heavily on the care provided by carers - worth a staggering £3.12 billion a year in Northern Ireland alone. We must support them more and not force them into financial hardship as a result of their caring role. Government recently pledged that, by 2018, carers will not suffer financial hardship as a result of caring. Our survey shows that they are suffering right now and we need immediate action to stop carers from sliding into even further into poverty."

"We're also urging carers to get in touch with Carers Northern Ireland for our free Carers Rights Guide to make sure they get every penny they're entitled to. There has never been a more important time to find out what financial help you might be entitled to."

The Carers Rights Guide has been produced to coincide with Carers Rights Day, (Friday 5th December 2008) set up to help raise awareness of the needs of carers, increase take up of benefits and provide clear information to make sure carers know their rights. The guide is available from www.carersni.org or by calling Carers Northern Ireland's enquiry service on 028 9043 9843, from 10am-12noon and 2-3pm each weekday. Over 20 information events will be held across Northern Ireland to make sure that carers are getting the support and benefits that they deserve.

For further information, please contact:
Helen Ferguson, Director, Carers Northern Ireland
T: 028 9043 9843 M. 07793 937068
Helen.Ferguson@carersni.org

Thank you to Carers NI for the above article.

Page 7

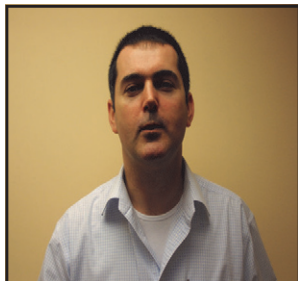
Carer Support and Carers Register

Cathy Magowan and Lee McDermott



Cathy Magowan (Southern area of the Western Trust)
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 Enniskillen
 Co. Fermanagh BT74 7HG

Tel: 028 66 344 163
 Email: Cathy.Magowan@westerntrust.hscni.net



Lee McDermott (Northern area of the Western Trust)
 Carer Support Co-ordinator
 Riverview House, Abercorn Road
 L'Derry BT47 6SB

Tel. 028 71272103
 Email: lee.mcdermott@westerntrust.hscni.net

Carers Register — If you don't receive this Newsletter or other Carer information by post directly to your home, you can, by registering on the Trust Carers Register. Complete the slip below and return to Cathy or Lee.

(This does not affect your benefits nor will your details be passed on to any other agency).

If you are not already on the Trust Carers Register and would like to be included please fill in your details below and return to Louise Preston, WHSCT, Holly Villa, T&F Hospital, Omagh, Co. Tyrone

I give permission for my details to be included on the Carers Register with the WHSCT

Title: *Mr / Mrs / Miss / Ms (*please delete)

First Name _____ Surname _____

Address _____

Postcode _____ Telephone _____ D.O.B. _____

Email: _____

So that we can make sure information being sent to you is relevant , we need some information about who you care for.

Please tick below

Age 0—18	<input type="checkbox"/>	18—65	<input type="checkbox"/>	65 and over	<input type="checkbox"/>
Learning Disability	<input type="checkbox"/>	ASD	<input type="checkbox"/>	Physical Disability	<input type="checkbox"/>
Dementia	<input type="checkbox"/>	Arthritis	<input type="checkbox"/>	Diabetes	<input type="checkbox"/>
Alzheimer's	<input type="checkbox"/>	Heart condition	<input type="checkbox"/>	CVA/Stroke	<input type="checkbox"/>
Renal/Kidney disease	<input type="checkbox"/>	MS	<input type="checkbox"/>	Parkinson's disease	<input type="checkbox"/>
Old and frail	<input type="checkbox"/>	Downs Syndrome	<input type="checkbox"/>	Brain Injury	<input type="checkbox"/>

Other (please specify) _____