

21 Brayford Square, Stepney, E1 0SG
Tel: 020 7790 1765 Fax: 020 7791 5575
Email: enquiries@carerscentretowerhamlets.org.uk
Website: www.carerscentretowerhamlets.org.uk



CARERS CENTRE TOWER HAMLETS

A Carer is someone, who, without payment, provides regular and substantial help and support to a partner, child, relative, friend or neighbour, who could not manage without their help.

Editorial

This summer has been a busy one for the Carers Centre. As you'll see in this edition we have quite a bit to look forward to with the Carers Strategy Launch, the anytime Leisure Card pilot and the Health Checks project. This is an exciting time for the Carers Centre as our services for carers will get even better.

Best wishes,
Neil



Closure of Young Carers Project

From 1st September 2009, we will not be able to provide young carers with any carers support services due to ending of the funding for this service.

Launch of New Carers Strategy

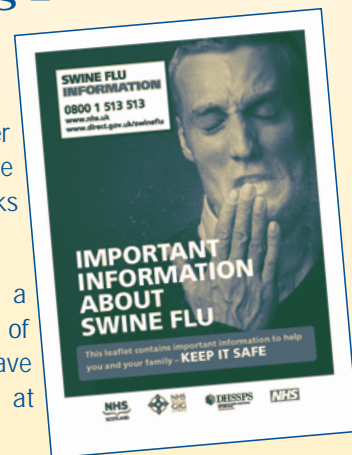
The London Borough of Tower Hamlets is launching the New Carers Strategy and the Young Carers Strategy and will be holding a launch event on **24th September** from 4pm to 6pm at the Urban Adventure Playground in Mile End.

Food and refreshments will be provided along with a head massage and henna tattooist for everyone. All carers are invited to attend.

Swine Flu Precautions – Cancellation of Carers Groups & August Relaxation Day

Due to the Swine Flu epidemic earlier this summer and staff falling sick with the virus, we made the decision to cancel all groups, Additional Breaks and Relaxation Day throughout August 2009.

This decision was not taken lightly and was a precaution taken to help prevent the spread of Swine Flu among carers as many cared for have underlying health problems which puts them at risk.



Annual Flu Jabs Reminder

While Swine Flu has fallen off the headlines in the news, the threat remains that it is likely to return over the winter.

Keeping this in mind, you should by now be arranging for the person you care for to visit their GP surgery for their flu jab. Don't forget to book an appointment for yourself too, as all carers are entitled to a flu jab from their GP surgery.

Tower Hamlets Carers Centre provides advice, information and support services to all Carers in the borough. Services include:

- Adult Carers Support Service
- Bengali Carers Support
- Care-Plus for carers looking after someone with End Stage Heart Failure
- Mental Health Carers Support
- Welfare Benefits Service
- Sessional Breaks Service
- Individual Counselling & Support
- Weekly Men's Group
- Fortnightly Crafts Group
- Monthly Former Carers Coffee Morning
- Mental Health Carers Forum
- Carers Forum for All Carers
- Monthly Relaxation Days
- Complementary therapies – massage, reflexology, acupuncture & shiatsu
- Crisis intervention & advocacy
- Emotional support
- Carers One-Off Direct Payments
- Fundraising for individual needs
- Representing Carers views
- Quarterly newsletter
- Annual survey
- Raising awareness of carers' needs for support
- Referral & signposting to other services
- Carers Computer Suite
- Basic Computer Training

Please contact the Carers Centre if you would like more information on any of our services

Carers Health & Wellbeing Checks



Following a joint bid between LBTH Adults Health & Wellbeing, NHS Tower Hamlets, East London Foundation Trust, LBTH Children's Services and the Carers Centre, the Department of Health has selected Tower Hamlets to be a Carers Health Checks Demonstrator Site, one of only 6 areas in England to be funded for this type of work.

This means that funding is being provided for 18 months to pilot & develop Health & Wellbeing Checks for any carer, irrespective of age & caring for anyone of any age with any disability or long term condition living in Tower Hamlets.

The aim is to recruit 4 carers' nurses and a project manager who will all be based at the Carers Centre to carry out Health Checks across the borough.

So, if you find it difficult to get to a doctor for your own health needs or tend to think that those little health niggles will go away on their own, this will be your chance to get help that is geared to you and your specific needs as a carer.

Because we know that carers tend to suffer a common range of conditions including bad backs, knees or feet, depression, constant tiredness, social isolation and stress etc, we've decided to make this a Health & Wellbeing check rather than just a pure physical Health Check. Carers' nurses will be looking for ways to prevent carers' health from being adversely affected by their caring role and will refer you in to other services where a need is identified.

If you need to arrange replacement care to enable you to attend a Health Check then the project will pay for that care and wherever possible Health Checks will be carried out in your own local area or at venues which are more convenient to you. For those carers who are housebound, the Health Check nurse will be able to come to you.

It will take a few weeks to recruit staff and get the project up and running so look out for publicity information in East End Life, via agencies that you or your cared for has contact with in and around Tower Hamlets then all you will need to do to book a Health Check is to contact the Health Checks Team at the Carers Centre.

In the meantime, if you'd like to register your interest in having a Health Check please call us and we will record your contact details and get back to you once the project starts.

Carers One-off Direct Payments

Following recent consultations with Tower Hamlets Adults Health & Wellbeing, Carers one-off Direct Payments will shortly be changing to Carers Personal Budgets as part of the council's move towards personalisation of social services.

If you would like to apply for a Carers Personal Budget, you must be caring for an **adult** with a disability or long term condition who would be eligible for local authority services in their own right. Even if the person you care for has previously refused social services support you can still apply for a Carers Personal Budget. What matters is that you are providing substantial care on a regular basis to a relative who couldn't manage to live independently without that help & that by doing so, the caring role has a major impact upon your life. You can apply once a year.

Carers Personal Budgets are intended to provide something which you believe would significantly lessen that impact on your own life so that could mean using it for:

- a break for yourself away from your caring role;
- a laptop computer to allow you to stay in touch with family & friends;
- a course of massage or other complementary therapy sessions to help you to manage stress;
- driving lessons;
- a LBTH Leisure Card to enable you to maintain your own health and give you a break from caring on a regular basis;
- a replacement washing machine;
- an evening class or other course of study;
- a hobby
- or even a new bed to ensure that you get a good night's sleep



What matters is that the money is used for you, the carer and not for the person you care for.

The process is quite simple – to apply, all you need to do is to contact the Carers Centre and we will arrange to carry out an assessment of your needs.

LBTH Leisure Cards for Carers of People with Mental Health Conditions

Following on from last year's successful trials using Carers One-off Direct Payments to buy off peak Leisure Cards for carers, the council has been asked by carers to consider extending the Leisure Card scheme to include peak time use of local leisure services.

The council has agreed to pilot Leisure Cards for Mental Health carers initially and if this is successful will then open up the scheme to carers of people with other disabilities and conditions. By mental health carers, we are including those carers who care for people with dementia and Alzheimer's disease as well as those with specific mental health conditions such as schizophrenia, personality disorders, long term depression, addictions, etc.

To apply you:

- **must already be known to a carers' or health & social care organisation in Tower Hamlets as being the primary carer of someone with mental health difficulties who receives or is entitled to receive health or social services support in their own right;**
- **have a substantial caring role**

Please note: The applicant must be the main person who actually provides the day to day care – it cannot be for any other member of the family. Applications are limited to one per family.

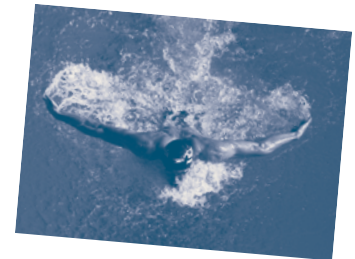
Referrals for anytime Leisure Cards will be accepted from other organisations in Tower Hamlets. We cannot accept Leisure Card applications from anyone not previously known to either a carers or mental health organisation. If an organisation wishes to refer a carer for a Leisure Card they must be prepared to confirm in writing their knowledge of the caring role being undertaken by that carer.

As with Carers Personal Budgets, the Carers Centre will carry out an assessment of the carer's needs. Once your application is approved, the Carers Centre will give you a letter of authorisation to take to either Whitechapel or Tiller Leisure Centre to open a Wellness Membership. You may use any leisure centre services in the borough but registrations will only be accepted at these two centres for the time being.

You will need to provide evidence of your address for registration of your membership.

A Wellness Membership will entitle you to:

- **Inclusive access to swimming**
- **Inclusive access to Fitness Centres**
- **Inclusive access to Group Exercise classes**
- **Members joining pack, etc.**



You will not need to pay any money as payment for memberships will be made directly from LBTH Adults Health & Wellbeing to the leisure centres.

Review of Carers Centre Services

In line with our ongoing commitment to ensure that our services remain appropriate to local carers needs, we are currently reviewing the services provided for particular groups of carers. As part of our contract with LBTH Adults Health & Wellbeing to support carers, we are required to monitor who uses our services and that they are targeted at the people who need them most.



As part of this review, we would appreciate your help and suggestions as to how we might improve what the Carers Centre does or perhaps doesn't do but should.

To make it possible for everyone to have their say on what they need from the Carers Centre, we are using a range of ways to gather as many opinions & ideas as possible, no matter how far-fetched they may seem.

1 A questionnaire is included with this edition of the newsletter for you to write down your comments. You can mail it back, phone in your comments or send them by email.

OR

2 You are invited to a Carers Services Makeover session at the Carers Centre. Join us for cake & coffee/tea and give your views in person.

OR

3 Come to the Carers Forum on 13th October 2009 at 1.30pm to have your say.

Former Carers

The Carers Centre is funded to support former carers for up to two years after their caring role ends therefore if you have been a former carer for more than two years, you will shortly receive a letter informing you that you will no longer be entitled to use any of the Carers Centre's services.

Giving Gifts to Staff



It is that time of the year when you think about expressing your gratitude to staff members who have helped you throughout the year and an obvious way is to make a gift.

Please remember that staff members are not allowed to accept personal gifts from carers or an external organisation as this can expose that member of staff to allegations that they have abused their position by giving favourable treatments to certain carers for material gain.

However, you are more than welcome to send a Christmas card to the Carers Centre – it is a simple and cheaper and greatly appreciated way for you to tell us that we are doing a good job.

Carers Christmas Party

Christmas seems a long way off but please put it in your diaries that we will be holding the annual Carers Christmas Party on Thursday 17th December from 11am to 3pm. A cold buffet will be provided. The team looks forward to seeing as many of you as possible for a last big get together for 2009.



Welcoming back Tamara Hamilton



We are delighted to welcome back Tamara Hamilton who did her student placement here last year ending with her qualification as a learning disabilities nurse/social worker so a big congratulations to her. She has taken up the post as Care-Plus Carers Support Worker and we hope that Tamara will continue to enjoy her time at the Carers Centre:

Diary Dates

Relaxation Days

Thursdays, 29th October, 26th November

10am – 3pm

Additional Therapy Sessions

Wednesdays, 14th October, 11th November, 9th December

10am – 7pm

Carers Craft Group

The Carers Craft Group will not run from October to December pending the result of the service review

Carers Forum

Tuesday, 13th October

1.30 - 3pm

Mental Health Carers Forum

Tuesday, 10th November

11am – 1pm

Former Carers Coffee Morning

Thursdays, 8th October, 12th November, 10th December

10am -12:30pm

Mens Group

Weekly – Wednesdays

1.30 - 3pm

Basic Computer Skills

Weekly – Fridays

Basic computer training provided – using e-mail, Internet & basic Word for writing letters

10.30am-12.00 noon

