

“Recall”

The Newsletter for Dementia Carers

Issue one of 2021

For more information about anything in this newsletter or to find out about our support for carers of people living with Dementia, contact:

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Making Carers Count

Anyone in Hertfordshire feeling stressed or anxious can call the Hertfordshire Crisis Helpline for emotional support. You can also call if your mental health is impacted by the coronavirus pandemic or you are worried about someone else. The helpline is open from 7pm - 1am, 7 days a week, 365 days a year, although these times may change so please check at www.hertsmindnetwork.org/crisis-helpline

Crisis Helpline

01923 256391



The Samaritans is also there 24/7 to talk to about anything that is upsetting you - call for free on 116 123.

Welcome

What a year 2021 has already been with the third coronavirus lockdown. However, the government announcement of a road map for the easing of restrictions offers some light at the end of the tunnel.

This newsletter provides you with updates from organisations and services that are available to support you, including us, Carers in Hertfordshire, as well as the Alzheimer's Society and Hertswise. You can also find out about some of the work that has been going on to co-produce local services, including a review of day opportunities for adults in Hertfordshire with physical or learning disabilities or mental health needs.

Our meetings for Dementia carers (previously called Forums) are taking place online via Zoom because of the coronavirus. Meetings are run regularly to give carers an opportunity to get together to chat and learn about health and community services and help shape them for the future. When COVID-19 restrictions ease we hope to provide a variety of virtual and physical meetings. Details of our upcoming meetings are below (clicking on the date will take you to our website where you can book a place).

Dementia Carers' Meetings

Thursday 11th March 2021, 2pm-3.30pm: Find out what the Dementia Co-production Board is working on and share your thoughts on the next steps.

Tuesday 20th April, 11am-12.30pm: This session will focus on prevention of and response to crisis and we will be joined by staff from Hertfordshire Partnership University NHS Foundation Trust.

Meetings for Carers of Someone with Young Onset Dementia (diagnosis before the age of 65)

Wednesday 17th March, 2pm-3.30pm: We will discuss the Bladder and Bowel Community Service that has provided a presentation as they cannot join the session.

Thursday 22nd April 11am-12.30pm: We will be discussing the services available for people with Young Onset Dementia and their carers and gaps in provision.

To book onto any of these meetings please email contact@carersinherts.org.uk or call 01992 58 69 69.

You can also book via www.carersinherts.org.uk/events

Sally Stratford, Involvement and Development Worker, Dementia and Older People, pictured above.



Update from Hertfordshire Partnership University NHS Foundation Trust

Robert Standen, Interim Service Line Leader at Hertfordshire Partnership University NHS Foundation Trust (HPFT) and pictured below, describes how the COVID-19 pandemic has affected people and the Trust's services.

"COVID-19 has provided many challenges for people over the last year. One of the biggest challenges is not seeing loved ones and the impact that this has on everyone's mental health. Many people in care homes or hospital have not been allowed to have visitors. This is something that I have found personally to be very difficult. The emergence of technology has started to fill the gap, but it is not the same as seeing someone in person.



A reduction in community services, for example day centres, or even shops during the lockdown, has meant a vastly reduced social network. Caring for people is a real challenge, and gives you a feeling that life is somehow cut off. There is hope that life will return to some sort of normality in the future with the roll out of the vaccination. Until then it is important to look after yourself. Talk to friends and family, talk to the shopkeeper or the milkman. Social interaction is so important. Try to do things that give you enjoyment, such as a hobby. Remember that you are not alone, there are many people going through the same challenges.

At HPFT, services have continued throughout the pandemic, albeit with some tweaking. In Mental Health Services for Older People (MHSOP) where I work, we changed how the community teams worked during the first lockdown, but have returned to normal business since. We are wearing PPE (personal protective equipment) to protect people, and working with people who are anxious about our visits to find different ways of doing this – for example by video call or telephone. Our wards have continued to look after people who have needed that enhanced 24 hours hospital care. In our Early Memory Diagnosis and Support Service (EMDASS) we have started offering carers the opportunity to be referred to Carers in Hertfordshire at the point that their loved one receives a diagnosis of Dementia. We have also started a pilot with blue boxes, which allows people to take their own physical observations at home without the need for healthcare staff to visit. This will be useful when people start certain medications.

If you need support please contact your GP, but don't forget that HPFT is there too. The number for the Single Point of Access and Mental Health Helpline is 0800 6444 101."



Hertfordshire Partnership University
NHS Foundation Trust



Support for Dementia carers through Hertswise

People in Hertfordshire with Dementia and their families can get help from Hertswise, which involves a partnership of nine organisations working together to provide information and support through the service. As part of Hertswise, we, Carers in Hertfordshire, support family and friend carers by running groups and training sessions.

During the coronavirus pandemic we have continued to support carers by holding regular groups and training online via Zoom. One successful training session was about the SPECAL (Specialised Early Care for Alzheimer's) Method to understand Dementia from the viewpoint of the person with the condition. It uses an analogy of memory as a photograph album to explain how normal memory works and what happens when someone develops Dementia (they may find it hard to store or recall new information). The SPECAL method suggests pre-Dementia memories can be linked to the present to aid short-term memory or help the person with Dementia feel contented. There are three main rules to the SPECAL Method – don't contradict the person with Dementia; don't ask them direct questions; and listen to them (don't interrupt them).

A carer said: "Thank you for the training session, it was informative and will help me so much I'm sure."



To find out more about carers' groups or training visit www.hertswise.org.uk or call us on 01992 58 69 69.

Spotlight on the Carer's Assessment and making an emergency care plan

Hertfordshire County Council has listened to feedback from carers and made changes to how it carries out Carers Assessments and how carers can plan what would happen in an emergency and they were unable to provide care. Here Joy Watters, Advanced Practitioner and Carers Lead at Hertfordshire County Council, explains the changes.

Carers Assessments

The Care Act (2014) recognised carers for the first time in law in the same way as the people they care for. It gave local authorities a responsibility to assess a carer's need for support. A Carer's Assessment is not about making a judgement on the standard of care being provided, it is an opportunity for a carer to have a conversation with a Social Care Practitioner about their caring role and how this may impact on their day-to-day life.

In January 2020, some carers met with staff from Carers in Hertfordshire and Hertfordshire County Council's Adult Care Services to discuss the development of a new format for the Carer's Assessment. This new format is now being used and the assessment is led by the carer and is more of a conversation rather than the person who is carrying it out working through a list of questions. The carer has an opportunity to focus on the areas of their life and caring role that they want to discuss and suggest solutions to help address any issues they identify.

However, Joy said: "Not everyone will know what solution is best for them or what support is on offer. This is where a Social Care Practitioner can help to identify what support is available from friends, family and services in your local community and also discuss assistance or opportunities around work or training if that is important to you, or being able to have time out from caring."

The Council hopes by supporting carers from the start of their caring role (or as early as possible) and making them aware of their rights and services available that this will prevent the carer's situation getting worse or delay a need for more extensive assistance. Although, it recognises circumstances change and a carer can request a review of their needs.

If you want to talk about your caring role or the Carer's Assessment you can speak to a Carers in Hertfordshire Carer Support Advisor - email contact@carersinherts.org.uk or call 01992 58 69 69.

In Case of Emergency Plan

Hertfordshire County Council offers carers the chance to make an In case of Emergency Plan (previously known as a Contingency Plan). The name was changed at the request of carers as they felt the new name more clearly explained the purpose of the plan.

The plan lets the Council know that you care for someone, so that if there is an emergency and you are unwell or unavailable, services can access information to quickly arrange care. You can record details of the care that is provided and of the people you want to be contacted.



Carers can request support from Council staff to complete a plan by phoning 0300 123 4042 or they can now complete a form on the Council's website.

Once you have made a plan you will be sent a letter with a card that says you are a carer and it has a reference number that can be used to access the details of your plan. The idea is that you keep this card in your purse or wallet so that it can be found easily if you do have an emergency.

You can complete an In Case of Emergency Plan or request a Carer's Assessment on the Council's website at

www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/services/adult-social-services/carers/how-to-get-help.aspx

If you live elsewhere you should contact your local council to find out about getting a Carer's Assessment or making an emergency plan for in case you cannot provide care.

Carers and a Council working together to transform adult day services

Unpaid carers have been working with Hertfordshire County Council on a review of day opportunities in Hertfordshire for older people and adults with physical or learning disabilities, mental health problems or Dementia – what works well and how they could be improved.

The Council is keen to work with people who access day services, their families and others including the voluntary sector, to co-produce a transformation of day opportunities.

In November 2020, we organised two online meetings where Hertfordshire County Council staff - Sarah Copeland, Transforming Day Opportunities Programme Manager, and Margaret Jesalva, Project Officer – asked unpaid carers about their experiences and views of the current provision and what is needed.

Questions put to carers included:

- What one thing would make life easier for you or the person you care for?
- What does a day opportunity look like in an ideal world?
- What is important with regard to a day opportunity (e.g. the service being close by, transport provided, or flexibility)?



Among the feedback from carers was that:

- They found it difficult to find out what is on offer for them and the person they care for.
- They felt there were limited opportunities involving exercise or getting outside when it is nice.
- There needs to be more provision where people can do the things they like or that are important to them.
- It was difficult to get people living in residential care homes to support in the community.

The Council is still gathering feedback, which it hopes to have completed by the end of March 2021. The feedback will be reviewed and any plans or next steps put together and then shared.

Alzheimer's Society in Hertfordshire expands its support for carers

The Hertfordshire branch of Alzheimer's Society is again offering the Carer Information and Support Programme (CrISP) to carers of someone with Dementia after a short pause.

CrISP aims to improve the knowledge, skills and understanding of people caring for a person with Dementia, by providing effective support and up to date and relevant information. Each programme is delivered to small groups of up to eight people over a four-week period, and at the moment it is delivered via Zoom.

The programme has been specifically designed for carers and relatives of people with a recent diagnosis of Dementia. Each session will last two hours and during the course the following topics will be covered:

- Understanding Dementia.
- Providing support and care.
- Legal and money matters.
- Coping day-to-day and looking after yourself.

If you are interested in the course, please contact the Herts Dementia Support Team on 01707 378365 or email central.herts@alzheimers.org.uk for further information.

