

# Caring with Confidence returns in September



The course is made up of seven weekly sessions, starting Tue 14 September, and it may be possible to get help with paying for respite care and transport. The course runs from 11.00am - 2.00pm and includes a free light lunch.

For details, and to book a place, ring Kayley on 020 8563 8014/8019 or email enquiries@hfcarers.org.uk

This free course is an opportunity to build on your skills, share coping strategies and find ways to balance your caring role with finding time for yourself.

## MONEY MATTERS

### The Carers' Centre keeps you financially fit

**The one-off direct payment for carers is back - but get in quick as the fund may run out**

Ealing Council's scheme has been renewed for 2010-11, though funding for carers of children has already been used up. Other carers should apply now for up to £250 to go towards anything that can help with their caring responsibilities.

The payment can only be accessed via a care manager, following a carer's assessment, so talk to Social Services straight away.

#### Carer's Allowance

Find out if you qualify. Now you only have to be looking after someone for 20 hours a week instead of 35. This can include nights and weekends. If you work, the amount you can earn per week has increased from £93 to £100 (after tax).

#### Carer's Credit

If you qualify for Carer's Allowance, you also qualify for Carer's Credit - but it's not automatic, you have to apply. This will count towards your entitlement for the basic and the second state pension. For an application pack call freephone 0800 220 674.

#### Fairer charging policy

If there is a carer in the household claiming Carer's Allowance, or who has an underlying entitlement (ie pensioners), Ealing Council now disregards the first £40 worth of chargeable income.

## Workshop

led by Rasheed Ibrahim from Twining Enterprise

Participants were encouraged to think about ways in which the skills they've developed as a carer can transfer into the workplace - for instance empathy, or the ability to follow instructions.

Rasheed pointed out there is legal protection for sole carers in the workplace who need time off, and he advised on job-hunting and CV writing.



The workshop closed with Marian O'Brien, who gave advice on achieving a work/life balance.

Marian runs Reception Plus at the Centre on Tuesday afternoons, offering a listening ear to carers who are under pressure or dealing with mental health issues - either their own or the person they are caring for (see the Programme on page 2).

## Carers' Centre mini-conference



Dame Philippa Russell

**The theme of this year's Carers Week in June was 'A life of my own' and the Carers' Centre celebrated by hosting a mini-conference on 'respite'.**

**Guest speaker was Dame Philippa Russell, chair of the Standing Commission on Carers.**

Dame Philippa is determined to put carers at the heart of policy-making and, although much is still up in the air with the new administration and the inevitable budget cuts, she is cautiously optimistic.

The conference divided into workshops and lively discussions took place, with carers being able to articulate what they want from respite and what kind of services they would like to see.

Leanda Richardson, a head of commissioning at London Borough of Ealing, gave the latest on Personalisation and carers. The message was that broadly 'there is no difference for carers with the new system'. Services have always been allocated to the disabled person and this will continue. Therefore, Individual Budgets will be likewise. Carers can, of course, benefit from the potential flexibility offered by the new system.

One clear outcome from the conference was agreement there should be a meeting between carers and the relevant senior staff from finance department, to thrash out problems people are having - such as being billed for unspecified services or for services that had not been provided. This has been arranged for Friday 23 July - see page 3.

Leanda acknowledged that the issue of respite is a complex one. She said, "I'd like to look at how some of the pointers that have come out of today's workshops could fit in to a new way forward."



Leanda Richardson faces the conference

## Weekly - with free refreshments

	When
Drop in for advice and info on <b>Learning disabilities</b>	Thursdays 2.00pm - 5.00pm
Drop in for advice and info on <b>Dementia</b>	Wednesdays 2.00pm - 5.00pm
Drop in for <b>Stretching for Joy</b> - an easy stretch class that promotes relaxation and well being	Mondays 12.30pm - 1.30pm
Drop in for <b>Gentle Keep Fit</b>	Wednesdays 12.30pm - 1.30pm
Drop in for <b>Carers Central</b> - make connections over coffee & cake	Fridays 10.30am - 12.30pm
<b>NEW</b> from 7 July - ring for an appointment for <b>Counselling for carers</b> - talk in confidence to a trained professional	Wednesdays 10.00am - 1.00pm
Ring for an appointment for <b>Benefits Surgery</b> - help with form filling and support with other issues	Mondays, Tuesdays & Wednesdays from 10.00am
Ring for an appointment for <b>Law for All</b> - advice on housing, family, benefits, debt and employment	Thursdays 9.30am - 12.30pm (45 minute appointments)
Ring for an appointment for <b>Holistic Therapies</b> - massage, stone therapy, reflexology, hopi ear candling, facials, manicures & pedicures, eyebrow/lash tint	Mondays, Thursdays and Fridays 10.00am - 4.00pm £20 for 1 hour, £10 for 30 minutes
Drop in or ring for an appointment for <b>Reception Plus</b> with Marian O'Brien - a listening ear for carers dealing with mental health issues	Tuesdays 2.00pm - 4.00pm

## Monthly - with free refreshments

	When
<b>Ealing Mencap Transition Group welcomes carers of young people with learning disabilities.</b> For info call Gabriel Jones 020 8567 9185	The next daytime meeting will be on Wednesday 22 Sep, 10.15am - 12.00pm
<b>Ealing Mencap Carers Together Group - campaigning around learning difficulty.</b> For info call Alka Tripathi 020 8280 2263	10.30am - 12.30pm on: Thu 22 July, 26 Sep, 21 Oct
<b>Coffee mornings for former carers of people with dementia.</b> For info call Isabel Kosky at Alzheimer's Concern Ealing 020 8568 4448	Thursday 10.30am - 12.30pm on: 15 July, 19 Aug, 23 Sep, 28 Oct

### Don't look back!

Several visitors to the Centre have asked for advice on the correct way to move and lift the person they're caring for, to minimise strain. We are offering a workshop on manual handling and back care on Wednesday 21 July, 10.00-12.00, led by a chartered physiotherapist. A contribution of up to £10 is requested, payable to Reception.

Places are limited, so please book on 020 8840 1566 or email [carers@ecil.org](mailto:carers@ecil.org)



## Counselling service comes to the Carers' Centre

In response to requests from carers, free counselling is now available at the Centre on Wednesday mornings. Our trained counsellor is Susie Hack (pictured) and you can refer yourself directly to her at the Carers' Centre - details below. Your first appointment will help you decide if regular counselling is right for you. If so, Susie will offer an average of ten sessions of fifty minutes each - usually weekly or fortnightly.



"You may be finding it hard to cope with your emotions and how you feel about caring" says Susie. "I can provide a confidential, non-judgemental and safe environment for you to talk about a wide range of issues, both past and present."

**To book an appointment, talk to Reception on 020 8840 1566, or email [carers@ecil.org](mailto:carers@ecil.org)**

## Focus on young carers

In May a new Facebook site was launched to help young carers connect with each other. Facebook members should look for **Ealing Carers**.

Following on from this, the Carers' Centre threw a party for young carers and invited them to bring in an idea for a song. Teenagers from KIDS Ealing Young Carers Project came along and, using the voluntary services of a professional music producer and a singer, developed an electronic backing track and recorded a song, from a lyric they'd written. It could well become an anthem for young carers everywhere. Keep an eye - or even an ear - on the Facebook site!

Young carers seeking support can not only contact the Carers' Centre, but also Sarah at KIDS Ealing Young Carers Project, which provides activities and outings during school holidays, 1-1 and peer support, advice and advocacy for young carers aged 9-18 years.



She can be contacted on: 020 8843 2941, 07891 941478 or email [sarah.clark@kids.org.uk](mailto:sarah.clark@kids.org.uk)

Emma McFeeley, one of the Centre's volunteers, herself became a carer after her mother had a breakdown when Emma was only 16. Her mother lost both her job and their home, and Emma had to work full time to help support her mother and sister.

"It was hard to motivate my mum to get any help," says Emma. "It didn't occur to her to look for any support for herself. "It's great that there's now some support for young people out there."



## Ton-up with caring bikers

Carer? Biker? Why not come on our Carers' Centre excursion to the Ace Café on Sunday 25 July - 9.00am for a biker's breakfast? The day features classic British bikes.



Call Chris Thomas on 020 8840 1566 for full details and to book.

## Carers Central

- our Friday networking session

Carers at the June conference demanded a meeting with the council's finance department. This has been arranged for Friday 23 July, 10.30am-12.30pm.

