



# Talking Carers

The newsletter for professionals engaging with Carers.

Issue 2—February 2015

## Happy New Year from West Cumbria Carers

Hello and welcome to the first edition of 2015 of our newsletter especially for professionals. Christmas and New Year seem like a life time ago now, and 2015 has already proved to be busy with a number of new referrals, as well as several trips and courses to organise.

2014 was an interesting year for West Cumbria Carers as we successfully bid for a new contract to conduct Carers Assessments in Cumbria along with the four other Carers organisations in the county. We now have a county wide Carers Support telephone number that is operated throughout the year, and we will soon be launching our county wide Carers conferences as part of our collaborative working.

During 2014 there were around 600 referrals for young and adult carers to West Cumbria Carers, many of which went on to have a Carers Assessment and access other services.

We still have lots more to do, there are an estimated 18,000 carers in West Cumbria and so far we've managed to reach about 10% of them. We are very grateful for all of your support during the last year and we hope that we can continue to work together in 2015 to provide support to many more carers in the area.



Carers Christmas Meal 2014

**Help Us Reach The 18,000 Carers In West Cumbria - Refer Online Today.**

You can refer Carers to us safely and securely at:  
[westcumbriacarers.co.uk/professionals/refer-to-us/](http://westcumbriacarers.co.uk/professionals/refer-to-us/)  
Our referral site is fully encrypted and completely secure.

## Benefits Clinics - A Case Study

We launched out benefits clinics in 2014 and they have been very popular so far. Recently, Gillian, our Benefits Support Worker, helped a Carer who looks after his wife who has dementia. George (not his real name), had initially refused any benefit support. He and his wife were both retired professionals and felt that they shouldn't be entitled to any extra money. George also worried about what people would think if they knew he was claiming benefits.

George met with Gillian at a Benefits Clinic held at his local library. He received advice and support to claim Attendance Allowance and he was also found to be eligible for a Council Tax reduction as his wife has an enduring mental illness.

Attendance Allowance is only one of the benefits available to people living with a long term illness or disability. It is a tax free non means tested benefit which helps with the extra costs you incur if you are ill or disabled. The benefit amount is based on the help and support a person needs. George now has a cleaner who helps take a little pressure of him and it frees up his time to support his wife.

Many Carers have contacted us recently contacted us with concerns about changes to their benefits. Gillian is able to look at individual circumstances and identify what support is available. Carers are able to book appointments at a number of libraries around West Cumbria. Contact Gillian Walker for more information.

## NMP Funding For Young Carers

In the summer of 2014 our Young Carers team, led by Michelle Watson, applied to the Nuclear Management Partners Community Fund via Cumbria Community Foundation for a grant to provide additional support to West Cumbria's young Carers. In October we learnt that the bid was successful and we were awarded £33,000.

Michelle said:

*"The West Cumbria Carers Young Carers project is extremely grateful for this funding from NMP. This will help towards support for an often forgot about group in the community and it can be hard to access funding for vulnerable groups of young people."*

As a result of this funding, 65 young people will receive at least six one to one sessions with a support worker where they can discuss their concerns, receive support to attend school regularly and get the best out of their school life, and be provided with opportunities to develop a strategy that reduces the negative impact of caring on their life, as well as support to access ongoing specialist and/or universal youth services. The first project meeting has taken place with a view to starting support as soon as possible. For more information contact Michelle Watson, Young Carers Project Manager.

## Carers Clinics - A Day In The Life of Abbey Williamson - Carers Health Worker

### What does the role of Carers Health Worker involve?

One of my main duties as a Carers Health Support Worker is the establishment and running of Carers Clinics from some of the GP practices in Copeland. There are currently 4 Clinics running in Copeland, some are weekly and some monthly. Each is different depending on how the clinic best fits with the wants and needs of that practice with the main purpose of the clinics being the identification and registration of carers. I am usually based in a private room within the practice holding one to one sessions giving carer's immediate support/help in relation to their caring role.

### What happens at a Carers Clinic?

I have a presence in the waiting room, speaking to patients with a view to identifying unpaid carers and registering them with the practice. From there we usually strike up a conversation about their caring role and have a chat about the kind of support WCC can offer them. There are times when talking to patients in the waiting room can lead to quite sensitive conversations about a person's caring role and how they feel. In these instances having a room within the practice has been very beneficial as a means of offering that person a quiet and confidential space to talk if need be.

### What do you hope to achieve from Carers Clinics?

Through Carers Clinics we hope to increase referrals into West Cumbria Carers Project and increase the number of patients registered as carers with the practice to ensure Carers have access to the free flu jabs they are entitled to. We want to increase awareness of the project and support available and we aim to avoid un-necessary clinical appointments which are sometimes taken because carers don't know where to turn for support. Furthermore we want to support surgeries to meet CQuin targets. For details, including dates, times, and clinic venues, please visit [westcumbriacarers.co.uk/for-adult-carers/reaching-us/](http://westcumbriacarers.co.uk/for-adult-carers/reaching-us/)

## Forthcoming Events

Listed below are our events for Young and Adult Carers. If you know of anyone who may benefit from these activities please refer them to us.

- 19/02/2015 - Carers Meet - Learning Disability - Cockermouth
- 24/02/2015 - Free Carers Cinema Trip - Testament of Youth.
- 25/02/2015 - Carers Meet - Learning Disability - Egremont
- 11/03/2015 - Basic First Aid Course for Carers - Oval Centre.
- 25/03/2015 - Carers Meet - Mental Health - Workington
- 26/03/2015 - Carers Meet - Mental Health - Whitehaven
- 22/04/2015 - Carers Meet - Dementia - Millom
- 30/04/2015 - Carers Meet - Dementia - Wigton
- 21/05/2015 - Carers Meet - Physical Disability - Cockermouth
- 27/05/2015 - Carers Meet - Physical Disability - Egremont
- 02/06/2015 - Baking Course for Carers - Lakes College
- 23/06/2015 - Back Care Training for Carers - Oval Centre

In addition, Young Carers have a number of groups starting, as well as planned trips to the cinema and the ice skating rink at Dumfries.

## The Care Act and Carers Rights

In April 2015 the government's new Care Act will come into force. According to Carers UK, "The Care Act replaces most current law regarding carers and people being cared for. It outlines the way in which local authorities should carry out carer's assessments and needs assessments; how local authorities should determine who is eligible for support; the new obligations on local authorities; and how local authorities should charge for both residential care and community care. "

For Carers, the new act means that they will no longer have to show that they provide "regular and substantial care" in order to be entitled to a Carer's Assessment. Instead, Carers will be entitled to an assessment where they have needs that "match the rights of the person being cared for." Our Adult Carers project manager is currently working with a group of involved parties in the north west looking at the implementation of this act and how it affects the work we do. For more information about the act visit [carersuk.org](http://carersuk.org)

## Learn More About West Cumbria Carers.

If your team or organisation would like to learn more about the services that West Cumbria Carers provides, we can come and visit you in your place of work to do a short presentation. We would particularly like to visit those in the legal and housing professions.

We can provide information on identifying and supporting Carers, as well as discuss the various volunteer roles that are available within our organisation. If you think this would be of benefit, please contact us to get in touch.

*We hope you find our new newsletter for Professionals helpful and interesting. If you have something you would like to be included in the next edition, please email [emmaclark@westcumbriacarers.co.uk](mailto:emmaclark@westcumbriacarers.co.uk)*

*To subscribe to this newsletter, visit <http://www.westcumbriacarers.co.uk/professionals/e-bulletin/>*

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Find out more about our services, visit  
[www.westcumbriacarers.co.uk](http://www.westcumbriacarers.co.uk)

Follow us on Twitter @wcumbriacarers

## New Online Service For Young Carers

The Carers Trust have recently launched a new online support service for Young Carers. Similar to other social media platforms, Babble enables Young Carers to share thoughts, photos, and comments, all underpinned by a professional support structure



provided by the Carers Trust. This online community offers Young Carers a safe space to share their experiences with other young people in similar situations, as well as get information and advice on a range of issues. For more information visit: <https://babble.carers.org/>.