



# Carers Support West Sussex

## for family and friend carers



### CARERS VOICE

Summer 2017

#### Carers Week 2017

12th - 18th June

##### Building Carer Friendly Communities

- people and places in towns and villages understanding a carer's daily reality and doing what they can to make life a little easier for them.



Our **Carers Week Programme** includes Information Stands at libraries and hospitals and outings for our Support Groups. There will be an event open to all family and friend carers at the Weald and Downland Living Museum (see right for details) and we hope to have a 'pop-up shop' in Swan Walk, Horsham as well as other celebratory events.

We will also celebrate **Carers Week Online** with activities on Facebook and Twitter - giving carers advice and information about support we can offer and for those who may not be sure, focus on the question 'Am I a Carer?'

National Carers Week is asking people to recommend **carer friendly organisations, shops or services**. To make a recommendation go to [www.carersweek.org/get-involved/recommend](http://www.carersweek.org/get-involved/recommend). Please let us have your recommendations as well to help us build a picture of good practice in West Sussex to share with other carers - email [hello@carerssupport.org.uk](mailto:hello@carerssupport.org.uk).

**The Carers Week Programme  
will be on our website  
or call 0300 028 8888 for details**



#### • Join Us for a Special Carers Week Event • The Weald and Downland Living Museum Tuesday 13<sup>th</sup> June

We have been generously given complimentary tickets for carers registered with us to take a break from caring and enjoy the open air, wagon rides and woodland trails in the Sussex countryside. You can take some time for yourself, join one of our hosted groups to explore the museum and make willow headdresses or corn dollies. We look forward to welcoming you with refreshments at either 10.30am or 1.30pm. Lunch is not included - you can buy food or bring a picnic. **Booking is essential for the event to ensure free access on the day** - tickets will be allocated on a first come first served basis from 8th May.

Please visit our website to book  
[www.carerssupport.org.uk/our-events](http://www.carerssupport.org.uk/our-events). You will need to use  
password **carersweek2017**  
or call 0300 028 8888



#### How Well Do Our Services Meet Your Needs?

We have almost 18,000 carers registered with us and would like as many of you as possible to complete our survey online at [www.carerssupport.org.uk](http://www.carerssupport.org.uk). Paper copies will also be available at our events during May and June. We want to give everyone the opportunity to complete the survey - if you do not have access to the internet and would like a paper copy please call us on 0300 028 8888.



#### Please Help Us Save Money to Reach More Carers via Email

Postage charges have increased and so too have our mailing costs. To ensure **Carers Voice** reaches as many carers as possible if you use a PC please register to receive this newsletter by email. Please contact us with your email address. We can then afford to post to carers who are not online.

Call 0300 028 8888 or email [hello@carerssupport.org.uk](mailto:hello@carerssupport.org.uk)



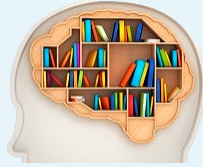
[info@carerssupport.org.uk](mailto:info@carerssupport.org.uk)  
[www.carerssupport.org.uk](http://www.carerssupport.org.uk)

0300 028 8888

• A Local Independent Charity •

fb carers support west sussex  
twitter @carerswsussex

## Crawley Workshops for Carers of someone living with Dementia



Informative and interactive workshops focusing on a different topic each week. Carers can come to all workshops or choose those of interest. The person who is cared for does not need to have a diagnosis of Dementia to attend.

- Week 1 - Understanding Dementia
- Week 2 - Dementia Carer Wellbeing
- Week 3 - Making your Home Dementia Friendly
- Week 4 - Planning for the Future and Legal Issues

**Wednesday 6th, 13th, 20th and 27th September**  
Sessions run from 10.30am to 12.30pm  
Booking is essential - please call 0300 028 8888

## healthwatch West Sussex

### Your Views Can Help Improve Local Health and Social Care Services

Healthwatch aims to make health and social care services better for the people who use them. Their team wants to understand needs, experiences and services and speak out on behalf of people. They will listen, take action and make positive changes.

Tell them about your local health and social care experiences - good and bad. Your story could start the conversation to improve local services.

[www.healthwatchwestsussex.co.uk](http://www.healthwatchwestsussex.co.uk)

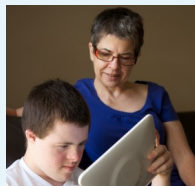
0300 012 0122

[helpdesk@healthwatchwestsussex.co.uk](mailto:helpdesk@healthwatchwestsussex.co.uk)

### Carer Learning and Wellbeing Programme

Ten different topics each month  
for carers to choose from  
- for details

please call us on 0300 028 8888 or go to  
[www.carerssupport.org.uk/our-events](http://www.carerssupport.org.uk/our-events)



## New Horsham Support Group for family and friends supporting someone with Drug or Alcohol Dependency

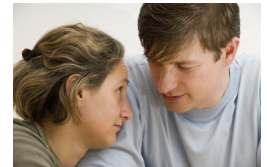
Offering information, support and  
a safe place where you can talk in confidence

**Third Tuesday of each month**

**11.30am to 1.00pm**

**The Capitol North Street  
Horsham RH12 1RG**

Call 0300 028 8888 for details



## Network of Carer Support Groups can be 'A Sanity Saver'

Over sixty Support Groups take place for carers  
at venues across West Sussex every month.

One carer recently wrote "For me, the monthly meetings were a sanity saver. I felt bad that I couldn't make everyone feel good however hard I tried and concluded that I must be a bad, selfish person. After hearing other people's stories I realised it wasn't me and carers all felt the same which made a big difference. Also other people's experiences would often come up with ideas I could use and it was good not to feel so alone with my problems. Thank you."



**For details of all our Support Groups  
call 0300 028 8888  
or go to [www.carerssupport.org.uk](http://www.carerssupport.org.uk)**

## Do You Regularly Need to Find the Keys or Wallet of the Person You Care For?

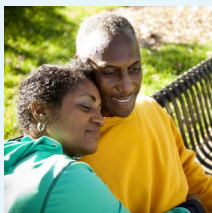
An **Object Locator/Key Finder** may be the answer. Simply attach the object locator via key ring or velcro to the items that often get mislaid. When they can't be found simply press the corresponding label on the remote control to activate the bleeper on the object locator.

**Equipment for Independence Scheme**  
please call 0300 028 8888  
or visit our website  
[www.carerssupport.org.uk/getting-help/efi](http://www.carerssupport.org.uk/getting-help/efi)



### Support for Carers of People with Mental Health Issues

Our specialist team supports carers of anyone with a mental health issue. The experienced carer wellbeing team covers both the North and South of the county.



The team runs twelve **Support Groups** across West Sussex with support from some fantastic volunteers. Two of the groups are run in partnership with our drug and alcohol team providing support around dual diagnosis. There are also two specialist groups in Chichester and Haywards Heath for carers of someone with an **Eating Disorder**. Groups provide a safe space for carers to talk without fear of stigma or shame and offer expert advice and support including from the other carers in the room!

**1 to 1 sessions** are for carers who often have complex and challenging caring roles - they can either be in a community venue or in a carer's own home as appropriate.

A regular **Carers Forum** is held in Horsham - details on our website - we encourage carers to have their say on local mental health services - working closely with Sussex Partnership NHS Trust. Triangle of Care training is in place for staff working within mental health services ensuring carers are seen as 'expert partners'.

May 2017 - in partnership with Coastal West Sussex Mind we will be offering a new group for carers who have their own mental health issues.

**Please turn to page 4 to read how support from our Mental Health Team helped one of our carers**

For more information on these or any of our services please call 0300 028 8888 or email [info@carerssupport.org.uk](mailto:info@carerssupport.org.uk)

### Offering Employment Support for Carers




Looking for employment that fits around your responsibilities as a carer?

Struggling to work and care for somebody at the same time?

Keen to get back to work after a period of caring for someone?

**Employment support for carers**

Impact Workability can offer you practical support and advice.

For further details contact Impact Workability  
01903 730044  
[workability@impact-initiatives.org.uk](mailto:workability@impact-initiatives.org.uk)  
[www.impact-initiatives.org.uk](http://www.impact-initiatives.org.uk)

### Change of Day for Southwick Carers Group now meets 3rd Tuesday of the month 10.00am to 11.30am



Please feel free to drop in and join us  
Southwick Community Centre  
24 Southwick Street Southwick BN42 4TE  
For further information please call 0300 028 8888

### New Support Group in Broadfield for Carers of People living with Dementia



Come along to our friendly Carers Group for support or information and to meet other carers  
**Last Thursday of the month - 2pm to 3.30pm**  
**Broadfield Library 46 Broadfield Barton**  
**Crawley RH11 9BA**  
For further information please call 0300 028 8888

### Three Ways to Help Change the Life of a Carer in West Sussex

please visit <http://www.carerssupport.org.uk/get-involved-1>

Donate

Volunteer

Fundraise



## Voucher for Free Relaxation Therapy

### Partner Relaxation Therapists across West Sussex offer Free Taster Sessions for Carers

Registered carers can call us on 0300 028 8888 to request a voucher and a list of therapists. If you have a voucher numbered up to and including 2000, please can we ask that you use it within the next 6 months.

We hope you enjoy your chosen therapy, it may be just what you need!

## A Mental Health Carer Tells Us Their Story

- I slowly began to feel proud of what I do, not shame •

“It was a February more than a decade ago when it began. On the 8<sup>th</sup> my son passed his driving test, on the 18<sup>th</sup> we celebrated his 18<sup>th</sup> birthday and on the 28<sup>th</sup> he attempted suicide. Nothing can prepare you for the reality of sitting with your child through the night knowing their life hangs in the balance by their own hand. He spent a few days in hospital and was then discharged with a prescription for anti-depressants and a follow up GP appointment. **We were horrified, but we muddled through the next few weeks;** our raw emotion transforming into watchful anxiety. In some ways our family became stronger. We talked more about emotions, feelings, despair and *real* issues. In another sense, however, our complacency had been ripped apart.

My son passed his A Levels, went to university for a year, but dropped out and returned home. He had a few low level jobs, but couldn't hold any of them down. During this time he continued taking anti-depressants, constantly reassuring us that he was fine and was just trying to find his niche in life. He became withdrawn yet intense, fearful, suspicious and emotionally volatile. His GP prescribed strong anti-depressants but there was **no offer** of counselling, Cognitive Behavioural Therapy or family therapy. He slept during the day and prowled around the house at night. As the months went on, he barely left his bedroom, still refusing to talk. One Sunday night he completely broke down and he agreed to let me take him to A&E. Eventually, he saw a psychiatric nurse and she was so alarmed by his state of mind that he was detained under the Mental Health Act and spent his 21<sup>st</sup> birthday in a psychiatric hospital. His suicide attempt was torment of the highest order, but this was a close second. **Being thrown into the depths of the mental health world was desperate.** We began a life influenced by a cycle of hospital appointments, medication, a period of calm, refusing medication and then back to hospital.

Those next few years were a blur of calm periods and ‘flash-bulb’ memories, seared into my mind. I became knowledgeable about his illness **but I carried fear, shame, guilt and stigma very near the surface** and I was **emotionally fragile**. I don't remember how I found Carers Support West Sussex but I recall my first meeting; slipping in at the back and listening. I was amazed at the experience and knowledge of the group. How welcoming they were, how helpful and realistic. How unobtrusively the facilitators guided the group. For the first time I could talk without stigma and shame. It didn't matter that I cried, was angry or quiet, everybody there understood and respected each other. **Up until that point I hadn't recognised myself as a carer. I was in paid work, he is my son and that's what we do.**

Through Carers Support I accessed counselling and a behaviour management course but just as importantly I learned from other experienced carers. **I slowly began to feel proud of what I do, not shame.** About 5 years ago I retired and used part of my free time to learn more about mental illness and the recovery principle. Last year I recognised that Carers Support had enriched my life so much that I wanted to give something back to the organisation, so I applied to help at a local carers group. **Already it is giving me as much knowledge, pleasure and fun as anything I give to it”.**

