

# Milton Keynes Carer

carers  
milton keynes



Meet the new very Young Carers Family Support Team (from left to right) Lara dos Santos, Family Support Team Leader; Arnika Bass and Hattie Snowdon, Family Support Workers.

## NEW CONTRACT FROM APRIL 2010

We are delighted to tell you that Carers Milton Keynes has been awarded the contract with Milton Keynes Council and NHS Milton Keynes to run the Carers' Support Service for a further three years from April 2010. The contract is for work to support both adult and Young Carers and reflects a forward-looking approach to working with Carers: you could say Caring is Family Business.

Even before April 2010 we have been able to expand our Team (*see photos above and right*) by recruiting a specialist Adult Support Worker for families caring for an adult with learning disabilities and by forming a new team to work with very Young Carers (5-8 years) and their families. This new team will be doing groundbreaking, preventative work to minimise the impact of caring responsibilities on the child's future.

In the next newsletter we will introduce you to some of the new work which will be done from April 2010.



*Belinda Owiredu, Adult Learning Disability Carer Support Worker*

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## SOCIAL EVENTS

### West Side Story Theatre Trip

Stantonbury Campus Performing Arts Group are the artists for this timeless tale of doomed love. Come and enjoy this performance.

**Thursday 4th March 7pm - 10.00pm.**

### Ramble Around Howe Park

Join us for a walk around Tattenhoe and Howe Park Wood. At this time of year the bluebells should be out to enhance the beauty of the walk. Finish with your own picnic or pub lunch.

**Thursday 6th May 10.30am - 1.00pm approx**

### Aromatherapy

An opportunity to learn about how essential oils can be used to benefit you and the person for whom you care. Simple hand massage technique will also be taught.

**Friday 23rd April 10.30am - 1pm**

### Canal Trip

A special event for you to enjoy. Watching the countryside pass gently by while savouring a Ploughman's lunch, not to mention the wildlife, should be an experience not to be missed! The coach will leave from the MK office at 10.15am approx and take you to Pitstone Wharf where your cruise will depart. Return to our offices by 3pm

**Friday 21st May 10.15am - 3.00pm**

In 2009 Marks and Spencer's celebrated being 125 years old. Our local Kingston, Milton Keynes branch very generously chose Carers Milton Keynes as their local charity to support and this has enabled us to organise this refreshing break for 33 carers. Few things are more relaxing than travelling on an inland waterway (maximum speed 4mph!).

## SUPPORT GROUPS



*Where did you get that hat Steve?  
In festive mood at our Christmas party.*

### Mental Health Group

There are two evening mental health evening groups in the coming months:

**Wednesday 3rd February 6 - 7.30pm**

The speakers at this group are from IAPT - Improving Access to Psychological Therapies - which is a new service that aims to help people suffering from mild to moderate depression and anxiety by providing a range of therapies.

Mild to moderate depression can have a serious effect on people's lives, perhaps affecting their ability to work and fully engage with life. It can also affect their relationships with friends and family.

You are welcome at this group to find out about this service.

**Wednesday 7th April 6 - 7.30pm**

The organisation 'Turning Point' are the first point of contact for people seeking drug and alcohol services in Milton Keynes. They provide services for people affected by drugs and alcohol misuse including those with complex needs. A representative from Turning Point will talk to the group about the services they provide.

**Meetings are at our office in Milton Keynes.**

## TRAINING PROGRAMME

funded by Milton Keynes Council



MILTON KEYNES  
COUNCIL

### Reflexology

These hour long sessions really help you relax and unwind. **Fridays 5th March, 9th April, 7th May.**  
**By appointment only.**

### Meditation & Relaxation

Learn how meditation can benefit your daily life. A way of helping you to de-stress. **First Wednesday every month - 3rd March, 7th April, 5th May.**

### Foot Clinic

These 40 minute individual sessions encourage you to recognise the importance of looking after your feet. **Fridays 12th Feb, 12th March, 9th April, 14th May.**

### Relaxation Therapies

Hourly sessions help you to relax and encourage you to transfer these techniques into your daily life. **Thursdays 18th Feb, 18th March, 15th April, 20th May (10.30am, 11.30am, 12.30am).**  
**Evening sessions also on these days 6pm, 7pm & 8pm.**

### Challenging Behaviour in the U19's

Looking after a child or young person who has challenging behaviour as a result of Autistic Spectrum Disorders, ADHD and other conditions can be demanding. This course addresses the issues and helps you to find ways to cope. **Monday 8th March 10.30am - 12.30pm**

### Writing Club

This club is for those of you who have a creative streak. The club is ongoing and more attendees will be warmly welcomed. **Tuesday 9th March and Tuesday 11th May 10.30am - 12.30pm**

### Joy of Gardening

Another session for you to enjoy at Frosts Garden Centre. You will learn about a topic appropriate for the season. **Wednesday 10th March 10am - 12pm.**

### Laughter Therapy

Having a giggle makes you feel happier and makes you forget your problems for a while. **Thursday 11th March 10.30am - 12pm**

### Diet

Gerald Remy is concentrating on bowel problems at this dietary session. **Wednesday 17th March 10.30am - 12.30pm**

### Stress & Anger Management

This course explores both anger and stress, their causes and effects. Discover ways of handling these emotions and learn strategies to cope with your own situations. **Thursday 25th March 10.00am - 2.30pm (incl lunch)**

### Lantern Making

This artistic session at Interaction, Peartree Bridge should be fascinating - explore your creativity. **Wednesday 21st April 10.30am - 12.30pm**

### Art of Assertiveness

Learn how to say 'no' as well as ways of communicating clearly and confidently whilst remaining in control. **Thursday 29th April 10.00am - 2.30pm (incl lunch)**

### Urban Art/Graffiti

This session at Interaction allows you to be bold with your artistic temperament. An absorbing session for you to enjoy **Wednesday 19th May 10.30am - 12.30pm**

### How to Communicate Effectively

This course encourages you to understand and discover effective ways of communicating. Explore listening skills, body language and ways of communicating verbally. **Thursday 27th May 10am - 2.30pm (incl lunch)**

## CHANGES TO ADULT SOCIAL CARE

### My Life, My Choice – Your Life, Your Choice.

### Putting People First in Milton Keynes

#### What is Milton Keynes Council doing to transform social care

Milton Keynes Council has a comprehensive planned programme of change, which sets out the key tasks under six priorities; these priorities emerged during a consultation event with service users, carers and staff. The programme is planned to work through to at least mid 2011.

#### The Six Priorities (key programme areas):

- **I am encouraged to be as independent as possible**

This part of the programme looks at ways in which the council helps people to remain independent and living at home.

- **People take time to get to know me and my carer**

This is to ensure that people are really listened to when they are talking about their needs and what they want to achieve.

- **I am responsible for myself – I can take risk**

When people are given more choice and control, they want to be supported to try new things and new ways of getting support. The Council needs to make sure that this is done in a safe and responsible way. They need to ensure that people are given every chance to manage their own affairs, but still want to help them when they need it, or when they feel there could be a risk to them.

- **I know where to go for advice and help**

This part of the programme will look at all of the information sources within the Council, particularly within social care to make sure that people know where to go for help and advice and that the advice they get is accurate and appropriate.

If people get information and advice early on when they have a problem, this can help stop the problem from developing.

- **I have the money I need to buy the support I need**

Building on the successes with direct payments, the Council plan to find a legal, effective and affordable way of being able to give people the money they need to meet their outcomes. This is known as the process of Resource Allocation. Additionally the Council is looking at Milton Keynes as a whole and exploring what opportunities there are in the market place and how they work with partner agencies and companies to get the best range of choices for local people.

- **I can rely on a skilful, confident social care workforce**

The Council will work with all staff to make sure they have the skills and knowledge required to deliver a high quality service to their citizens. They will also work with all providers in the independent and voluntary sector to make sure that their workforces are developing in line with the changes and they will help support them during the period of change to provide a more personalised approach to the service they provide.

#### Find out more on the website

There is now a web page giving information on what Social Care Reform is all about and what Milton Keynes Council is doing to implement those changes. Please keep checking the web site, it's a great way of keeping up to date with the progress being made.

**Visit [www.milton-keynes.gov.uk/socialcare-reform](http://www.milton-keynes.gov.uk/socialcare-reform). Alternatively you can call Samantha Samuels on 01908 253817.**

## MONEY MATTERS

### Saving Gateway Scheme

This government scheme to encourage saving in people who are on very low incomes, starts in April 2010. Savers will be able to save up to £25 a month for 2 years at the end of which the government will make a contribution of 50 pence for each £1 saved. To qualify for a Saving Gateway Account you must receive one of the following benefits:

- Income Support
- Jobseeker's Allowance
- Incapacity Benefit and Employment Support Allowance
- Severe Disablement Allowance
- Working Tax Credit (with income below a specific level)
- Child Tax Credit (with income below a specific level)
- Carer's Allowance (you must be in receipt of the allowance and not just have an underlying entitlement).

A letter of invitation will be sent to everyone who is eligible starting in April. You then need to take your letter to any approved Saving Gateway provider to open your account.

**Further details can be found at [www.direct.gov.uk](http://www.direct.gov.uk)**

### Donate Online

Carers Milton Keynes can now accept donations online via the Justgiving web site, which helps charities of all sizes raise funds using the internet. If you would like to organise a fundraising event on our behalf or make a one-off donation then visit **[www.justgiving.com](http://www.justgiving.com)** and type Carers Milton Keynes into the Find a Charity box. Eventually we hope to have this facility available on our own web site but in the meantime this should make giving to Carers Milton Keynes much easier!



### Did You Know?

Since November 2009 child benefit no longer counts as income when housing benefit is calculated. Similarly a change in housing benefit rules in October 2008 means child maintenance has also ceased to count as income in this instance. Families may not know about either of these changes as the Department for Work and Pensions have not publicised them, yet they could make a huge difference to some families. If these changes affect you contact your local Housing Benefit department and check with them.



*A welcome cup of tea following a walk around Salcey Forest.*

#### Energy Saving Tip

*Keep out the cold by closing your curtains at dusk to stop heat escaping and draughts coming in.*

### No Bonus for Carers

The government has decided not to pay carers an additional Christmas payment, unlike last year when carers received a £70 "bonus". Carers will receive an increase of just 80 pence in their Carer's Allowance this year taking it to £53.90. This means that Carer's Allowance remains the lowest income replacement benefit.

## FUEL MATTERS

### Warm Front Scheme

Warm Front Grants of up to £3500 are available to pay for insulation and/or central heating repairs and installation.



If you do not qualify for a Warm Front Grant you may still be eligible for a £300 rebate. This is available to householders aged 60 or over who own their home or rent it from a private landlord, who either have no central heating system or one which is inoperable.

To be eligible for a Warm Front Grant you, or a spouse or partner you are living with, need to be a homeowner or a tenant of a private landlord and **either** aged 60 or over, or someone with a child under 16, or a pregnant woman **and** be in receipt of certain benefits; **or** of any age and getting certain benefits including Working Tax Credit which must include a disability element (with an income of less than £16,040); Disability Living Allowance; Attendance Allowance; Child Tax Credit (with an income of less than £16,040); Housing Benefit (which must include a disability premium)

**For further information or to apply for a grant call Freephone 0800 316 2805 or visit [www.warmfront.co.uk](http://www.warmfront.co.uk)**

### Cold Weather Payments

Cold Weather Payments of £25 are paid for each seven-day period when the average temperature is at or below zero degrees Celsius. You should be eligible to receive them if you are in receipt of certain benefits such as: Pension Credit; Income Support; income-based Jobseeker's Allowance or income-related Employment and Support Allowance in the assessment phase (although this needs to be combined with certain premiums)

Between 1st November and 25th January 2010 three Cold Weather Payments were triggered in the postcode area of MK9 (Carers MK office). To check your own postcode visit **[www.direct.gov.uk](http://www.direct.gov.uk)** and search for Cold Weather Payments.

If you are eligible you should receive your payment automatically. Tell your Pension Centre or Jobcentre Plus if you think you should have received a payment but haven't had one.

#### **Energy Saving Tip**

***Don't dry your clothes on the radiator - it makes your boiler work harder than it needs to and costs you more.***

### Boiler Scrapage Scheme

The government launched its Boiler Scrapage Scheme at the beginning of January. Under the Scheme up to 125,000 homeowners in England could receive a £400 discount on a new boiler if their existing one meets the Scheme's criteria.

To qualify, homeowners need to have a working G-rated boiler which is the main boiler used to heat the home (if you are over 60, the boiler does not need to be in working order). Your boiler is likely to be G-rated if: it has a permanent pilot light; it is gas fired and over 15 years old; it is oil fired and over 25 years old.

The Energy Saving Trust (EST) will issue vouchers worth £400 on receipt of relevant

paperwork ie quotation, details of existing boiler etc. Once the boiler is fitted the homeowner pays the bill in full and then claims the £400 back from the EST using the voucher.

It is worth shopping around before settling for the government's scheme as various energy suppliers, including npower and British Gas, have their own Scrapage Schemes and, in some cases, are offering better discounts.

**For further details of the Scrapage Scheme visit [www.energysavingtrust.org.uk](http://www.energysavingtrust.org.uk) or telephone 0800 512 012. The EST also provides free, independent energy saving advice.**

## SERVICES AND INFORMATION

### Designs for Life

Evie-Designs is the brainchild of the mother of a severely disabled daughter who saw a gap in the market for brightly coloured, good quality buggy/wheelchair covers and fleece blankets. Her sewing skills inspired her to create an easy to use 'cozy cover' for her daughter to wear while in her wheelchair, especially as she found that others on the market tended to be waterproof but not warm and were boring in design.

All covers and blankets are handmade and are reasonably priced: blankets cost from £15 - £35 and covers between £15 to £45. They are also available for adults.

**Contact Evie-Designs on 07956 006127 or visit [www.evie-designs.co.uk](http://www.evie-designs.co.uk)**

Ian Douglas, a paraplegic, believes there are not enough disability products on the market. As a result he has developed an umbrella holder that attaches to any type of wheelchair. The idea is to free up the carer, whilst giving independence and dignity to those cared for person.

**For more details visit [www.dougchair-innovations.vpweb.co.uk](http://www.dougchair-innovations.vpweb.co.uk) or telephone 01604 247931.**



LINK:MK along with Health:mk and NHS Milton Keynes have been working together to encourage GP Practices in Milton Keynes to form Patient Participation Groups (PPGs). These are groups formed in GP practices to enable people to work with their practices to provide practical support and to help patients give strategic input and advice. They are based on cooperation between the practice staff and the patients to help to improve two way communications. Patients are thus able to voice their opinions on the services provided for them.

There are currently 23 PPGs in Milton Keynes and more are developing. LINK:MK hosted the launch on 21st January of the PPG Network where over 50 members were brought together from across the whole of Milton Keynes. It is hoped future network meetings will be held.

**Further information is available by contacting Carol on 01908 266696; email [carol.linkmk@ageconcernmk.org.uk](mailto:carol.linkmk@ageconcernmk.org.uk)**

*See back page for LINK:MK events*

### Saga Respite for Carers

The aim of Saga Respite for Carers Trust is to give unpaid carers a well earned break away from their caring responsibilities by providing them with a holiday for themselves and a companion. Priority will be given to carers over 50 who have had caring responsibilities for longer than 12 months and who have not taken a holiday away from their caring responsibilities within the last year.

Beneficiaries will receive a holiday for two (the second person ought to be over 40) plus appropriate spending money and, if required, the payment of professional substitute care.

**Nominations can be made on line at [www.sagacarerstrust.org](http://www.sagacarerstrust.org) or nomination forms are available at Carers MK telephone 01908 231703.**

## PARENT CARERS

### What is PACA MK?

PACA MK stands for Parents And Carers Alliance, and is a voluntary group based in Milton Keynes. We all care for children and young people with special needs, and we all want to help shape the services used by our children and young people in Milton Keynes.

As parents and carers, we understand all the problems associated with having a child with special needs: the extra effort and time it takes to give your special child everything they want and need, the stresses placed on other children in the family, the isolation of being a family that is 'different'.

PACA MK is indeed 'aiming high for disabled children', chasing a common goal - better services for all children with special needs in Milton Keynes:

- Representation - we already have several parents and carers as members of the Council's decision-making committees.
- Negotiation - negotiating for improved services in health, education and social care.
- Consultation - regularly consulting with parents and carers to discover what is happening at ground level.
- Awareness raising - of parents' and carers' real concerns.
- Networking - building a network of contacts within the service providers.
- Buddying - providing opportunities for like-minded people to share experiences.
- Signposting - providing parents and carers with useful sources of information.
- Training - providing training opportunities for parents and carers.

You'll find PACA MK is a welcoming and friendly group, ready to listen to parents and carers and offering a forum where ideas and experiences can be shared. We have regular meetings so why not come along and bring a friend?

PACA MK is the collective voice speaking on behalf of local families with children with special needs. Everyone's opinion counts so make sure you have your say, and help shape services for a better future in Milton Keynes.

**There's lots of information on the PACA MK website [www.pacamk.org](http://www.pacamk.org) and we can be contacted by phone 07852 526057; by e-mail [pacamk@gmail.com](mailto:pacamk@gmail.com) or by post through Carers MK at the David Baxter Centre.**

### Useful Website

IPSEA is a national charity providing free legally based advice to families who have children with special educational needs. All advice is given by trained volunteers. Visit [www.ipsea.org.uk](http://www.ipsea.org.uk)

### Aiming High

Aiming High is an initiative to enable children and young people with disabilities and their families to participate and help in planning to improve services for children and young people.

The top priority is implementing the Short Breaks strategy and MK Council has funding from the government for the next two years to help them to do this. Short Breaks are part of a planned programme of support to enable children and young people to engage with play and leisure activities, and where appropriate, have access to care. It is aimed specifically at those with the most complex and challenging needs who otherwise would be excluded from mainstream activities.

The aim is to create opportunities for as many young people as possible to be able to access as many activities and breaks in a wide range of settings.

**For more information contact Charlotte Davies at MK Council on 01908 254849; email [Charlotte.Davies@Milton-keynes.gov.uk](mailto:Charlotte.Davies@Milton-keynes.gov.uk)**

## PARENT CARERS

### Parent Carer Support

These Monday sessions are an ideal opportunity to find out about different services in Milton Keynes as well as meet other parents and enjoy a sandwich lunch! You are all very welcome.

These are the forthcoming meetings for 2010:

#### Monday 22nd February

Jane Cliff from the School Choice Service will be talking about the work of the Service which deals with admission difficulties between primary and secondary schools, including children with disabilities.

#### Monday 15th March

Care Forum provides support services to families caring for a child or young person with a disability, under the age of 19. Kerry Swan, who owns and runs the Care Forum will be our speaker.

#### Monday 26th April

PACA stands for Parents and Carers Alliance – a developing service run by parents for parents to help shape services for children with special needs. One or two of their representatives will come to talk to the group about their aims and progress.

#### Monday 17th May

This month we will hear about the Young Carers branch of our organisation. Some of you will have a child affected by the disability of the person and who may be undertaking a caring role within the household. This service provides invaluable support to those young people.

**All these meetings run from 11am-1pm and end with a sandwich lunch.**

The first Friday of every month is our **Coffee Morning at Greenleys Family Centre** where you can bring your child(ren) if you wish as there are toys and the ball pit to entertain them. You are warmly welcomed to this social group – no pressure just a chat amongst ourselves.



*Showing off a new face at the young carers Christmas party!*

### Free Laptops for Families

Home Access is a government initiative to help low-income families have access to a computer and the internet to get online. The aim is to boost the achievements of children from lower income families.

The grant allows eligible families to buy one of the following:

- full package (a computer, one year's internet access, service and support)
- a computer with service and support only
- one year's internet access only.

To be eligible you need to be a parent or guardian responsible for and living with a child:

- who is in school years 3 to 9
- who attends a state-maintained school
- who has not already had a computer from a Home Access Grant or similar programme

**and** receive at least one of the following:

- Free school meals
- Income based Jobseeker's Allowance
- Income support
- Child Tax Credit but not Working Tax Credit and an income of less than £16,040
- Guaranteed Pension Credit (not Savings Credit)
- Income-based Employment Support Allowance

If you think you are eligible and would like to apply **call the Home Access Grant Helpline on 0333 200 1004 for an application form.**

## February

### DIARY OF TRAINING AND EVENTS

Tues 2nd	Yoga at Heron's Lodge 11.30am-1pm
Wed 3rd	Meditation & Relaxation 10am-11am
	Digital Photography at Interaction, Peartree Bridge 10.30am-12.30pm
	Mental Health Evening Support 6pm-7.30pm
Fri 5th	Parent Carer Coffee Morning at Greenleys Family Centre 10.30am-12.30pm
	Reflexology 1pm, 2pm, 3pm by appt
Tues 9th	Yoga at Heron's Lodge 11.30am-1pm
Thur 11th	Former Carers 1.30-3.30pm
Fri 12th	Foot Clinic 10am, 10.40am, 11.20am by appt
Thur 18th	Crafty Carers 10am-1pm
	Relaxation Therapies 10.30am, 11.30am, 12.30pm by appointment
	Evening Relaxation Therapies 6pm,7pm,8pm by appointment
Mon 22nd	Parent Carer group 11am-1pm
Tues 23rd	Yoga at Heron's Lodge 11.30am-1pm
Wed 24th	Newport Pagnell Support group 1.30pm-3.30pm
Fri 36th	Coffee morning 10.30am -12.30pm

## March

Tues 2nd	Yoga at Heron's Lodge 11.30am-1pm
Wed 3rd	Meditation & Relaxation 10am-11am
	Bletchley Support Group 1.30-3.30pm * <i>note change of date</i>

## March (continued)

Thurs 4th	Theatre Trip to West Side Story Stantonbury Theatre 7pm-10pm (approx)
Fri 5th	Parent Carer Coffee morning, Greenleys Family Centre 10.30am-12.30pm
	Reflexology 1pm,2pm,3pm by appointment
Mon 8th	Challenging Behaviour in the under 19s. 10.30am-12.30pm
Tues 9th	Writing Club.10.30am-12.30pm
	Yoga at Heron's Lodge 11.30am-1pm
Wed 10th	Gardening at Frosts Garden Centre. 10am-12pm
Thurs 11th	Laughter Therapy 10.30am-12.30pm
	Former Carers, Wyevale Garden Centre. 1.30pm-3.30pm
Fri 12th	Foot Clinic 10,10.40am,11.20am by appt
Mon 15th	Parent Carer Group 11am-1pm
Tues 16th	Yoga at Heron's Lodge 11.30am-1pm
Wed 17th	How Diet Can Improve Bowel Problems. 10.30am-12.30pm
Thurs 18th	Crafty Carers 10am-1pm
	Relaxation Therapies 10.30am,11.30am,12.30pm by appt
	Evening Relaxation Therapies 6pm, 7pm, 8pm by appt
Tues 23rd	Yoga at Heron's Lodge 11.30am-1pm
Thur 25th	Stress & Anger Management 10am-2.30pm incl lunch
Fri 26th	Coffee Morning 10.30am-12.30pm
Tues 30th	Yoga at Heron's Lodge 11.30am-1pm
Wed 31st	Newport Pagnell Support Group 1.30-3.30pm
	Bletchley Support Group 1.30pm-3.30pm

## DIARY OF TRAINING AND EVENTS

### April

Wed 7th	Meditation & Relaxation 10am-11am
	Mental Health Evening Support 6pm-7.30pm
Thurs 8th	Former Carers 1.30pm-3.30pm
Fri 9th	Foot Clinic 10am, 10.40am, 11.20am
	Parent Carer Coffee Morning, Greenleys Family Centre 10.30am-12.30pm
	Reflexology ? 1pm, 2pm, 3pm by appt only
Thurs 15th	Crafty Carers 10am - 1pm
	Relaxation Therapies 10.30, 11.30am, 12.30pm by appt
	Evening Relaxation Sessions 6pm, 7pm, 8pm by appt
Mon 19th	Parent Carer Group 11am-1pm
Tues 20th	Yoga at Heron's Lodge 11.30am-1pm
Wed 21st	Lantern Making at Interaction, Peartree Bridge 10.30am-12.30pm
Fri 23rd	Aromatherapy 10.30am-12.30pm
Tues 27th	Yoga at Heron's Lodge 11.30am-1pm
Wed 28th	Newport Pagnell Support Group 1.30-3.30pm
	Bletchley Support Group 1.30pm-3.30pm
Thur 29th	Art of Assertiveness 10am-2.30pm (lunch incl)
Fri 30th	Coffee Morning 10.30am-12.30pm

### May

Tues 4th	Yoga at Heron's Lodge 11.30am-1pm
Wed 5th	Meditation 10am-11am
Thurs 6th	Ramble Around Tattenhoe & Howe Park Wood 10.30am-1pm
Fri 7th	Parent Carer Coffee Morning, Greenleys Family Centre 10.30am-12.30pm
	Reflexology 1pm, 2pm, 3pm by appointment
Tues 11th	Writing Club 10.30am-12.30pm
	Yoga at Heron's Lodge 11.30am-1pm
Thurs 13th	Former Carers at Dobies Garden Centre. 1.30pm-3.30pm
Fri 14th	Foot Clinic 10am, 10.40am, 11.20am
Mon 17th	Parent Carer Group 11am-1pm
Tues 18th	Yoga at Heron's Lodge 11.30am-1pm
Wed 19th	Urban Art/Graffiti at Interaction, Pear Tree Bridge 10.30am-12.30pm
Thurs 20th	Crafty Carers 10am-1pm
	Relaxation Therapies 10.30am, 11.30am, 12.30pm by appointment
	Evening Relaxation Therapies 6pm, 7pm, 8pm by appointment
Fri 21st	Canal Trip, Pitstone Wharf 10.15am-3pm
Tues 25th	Yoga at Heron's Lodge 11.30am-1pm
Wed 26th	Support Group, Newport Pagnell UR Church 1.30pm-3.30pm <b><i>Bletchley group moved to 2/6</i></b>
Thurs 27th	How to Communicate Effectively 10am-2.30pm inc lunch
Fri 28th	Coffee Morning 10.30am-12.30pm

Please note all activities are at our offices in Central Milton Keynes (63 North Seventh Street) unless otherwise stated.

## EVENTS

### LINK:MK Events

RNIB & LINK:MK have teamed up to host 'Losing Patients Campaign' which seeks to create awareness of the impact of losing sight, and other issues faced by the blind and partially sighted. Everyone invited to attend. This event takes place on **Friday 19th February 1.30pm - 4pm** at Peartree Centre, Peartree Bridge.

There is a Citizen's Meeting on **20th May**, everyone welcome, come along and find out more about LINK:MK - venue to be confirmed.

**Further information on both events is available from Carol on 01908 266696; email [carol.linkmk@ageconcernmk.org.uk](mailto:carol.linkmk@ageconcernmk.org.uk)**

### Friendship

Where would I be without you?  
Days and years pass by  
People I know are busy  
Getting on with their lives.  
Time passes by so quickly,  
There you are,  
Christmas, birthdays,  
Good and bad days.  
I can't always tell you my pain  
Which is often too much to bear.  
You helped me through  
Despair and torture.  
When I became brave  
I stayed close by  
With my support for you.  
I did what I could  
With love and understanding.

*A poem by Karen, a carer.*

### Carers' Choir



We would like to thank Simon Berridge from the Music service for his enthusiasm in supporting our carers' singing group (*pictured above*), despite only having a few practice sessions the carers sang beautifully at the Christmas party.

If you would like to come to one of our singing sessions please give us a call on 01908 231703 – all levels welcome.

### Stop Press – dates for your diary

Just a reminder that Carers' Week takes place from June 14th - 20th. There will be various events going on during that week. More details in the next newsletter.

**If you have problems reading this newsletter or would like to receive it via email or in a different language please let us know. A copy of the latest newsletter is available on our website at [www.carersmiltonkeynes.org](http://www.carersmiltonkeynes.org)**

**We are always keen for Carers to contribute to the newsletter. Any contributions should be sent to us at Carers Milton Keynes preferably via email to [mail@carersbucks.org](mailto:mail@carersbucks.org)**

## CARERS MILTON KEYNES

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