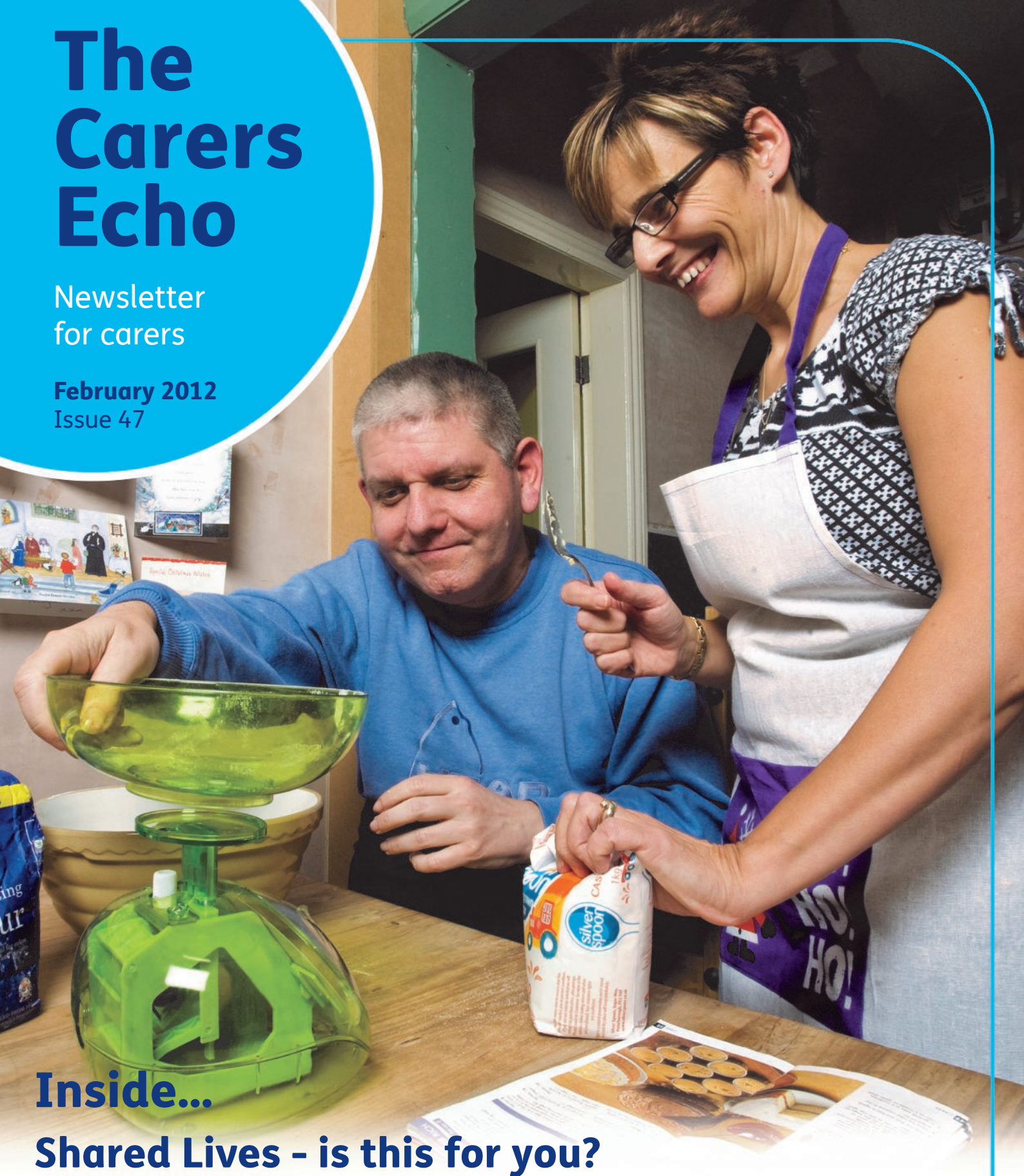


# The Carers Echo

Newsletter  
for carers

February 2012  
Issue 47



**Inside...**

**Shared Lives - is this for you?**



Blue Badge  
changes



The Befriender  
Scheme



Sensory  
Support Day



# The Carers Echo

## Newsletter for Carers

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## Welcome to The Carers Echo

In this February edition we have an important update on changes to household waste collections in County Durham. We also bring you up to date on changes to the Blue Badge parking scheme which came into effect on 1 January across the UK as well as some useful information about who to contact if the person you care for needs help in the switch to digital TV which is scheduled to start in our area this September. We have also included information on a number of new services to help carers across County Durham which you may find of interest.

You'll also find our regular features including a tasty recipe, local Carer Centre information, our competition which this edition has a Culture Card as the prize, providing unlimited access to Durham County Council's museums and art gallery for a whole year. There are also some suggestions as to new things to do during February and March which you may want to try.

We hope you enjoy reading the magazine and don't forget, if you have something you'd like us to consider for the next issue, you can send it to:

The Carers Echo,  
Adults, Wellbeing and Health,  
Durham County Council,  
The Rivergreen Centre,  
Aykley Heads,  
Durham,  
DH1 5TS

E-mail: [CarersEcho@durham.gov.uk](mailto:CarersEcho@durham.gov.uk)

or

Telephone: 0191 370 8838

Main cover picture: Service user Jefferey Robinson and Karen Ingram, Shared Lives service provider  
Blue badge picture © careimages.com

# Important changes to your rubbish and recycling collections

The way your recycling and rubbish is collected is changing. Between April and June, Durham County Council are introducing a system whereby your recycling is collected one week and your rubbish the next. Derwentside residents have had this service for a number of years and the council has found it increases the amount that is recycled and reduces the amount of waste that ends up in landfill.

A leaflet has been sent to every home in the county explaining the changes and what is going to happen. It was delivered between 16 and 31 January inside the Council's Guide to Services publication. You can also view the information at [www.durham.gov.uk/bins](http://www.durham.gov.uk/bins)

Recycling will be stored in a wheeled bin which residents will receive before collections start in their area. Glass should not be put in the new recycling bin but continue to be put out for collection in the usual box. If you live in Derwentside, you won't be getting a new bin, but your collection day may change. If this is the case, you will be contacted in March. Some properties will not be able to accommodate the new system, and the council will be contacting residents who live in these 'exception properties' to let them know what that means for their collections.

If you live in the **Chester-le-Street area** you will get your recycling bin during February or March and collections will start in April.

If you live in the **south of the county** you will get your recycling bin during March or April and collections will start in May.

If you live in the **east of the county**, or **Durham City**, you will get your recycling bin during April or May and collections will start in June.

If you are getting a new bin, there will be a sticker on it with your collection day and 'start from' date, plus a collection calendar leaflet through your door which also reminds you how to use the recycling bin and box. Residents who receive a garden waste collection will receive a calendar before the service resumes in spring.

## What you can do:

- Ensure the person you care for has received a copy of the leaflet 'changes to your collections' which was delivered inside the council's Guide to Services last month.
- Check whether there are going to be any changes to the collection day for the person you care for. You can go to [www.durham.gov.uk](http://www.durham.gov.uk) and enter their postcode into the 'My Durham' facility. It will tell you what the arrangements will be and when they take effect.
- Apply for an assisted collection if you or the person you care for is unable to manage the bins and recycling box when the new system starts.



If you, or the person you care for have any questions about the new collection system or need a copy of the leaflet 'changes to your collections' call 03000 26 1000.

## Changes to the Blue Badge scheme

During 2011 the Government announced a major programme of reforms to the Blue Badge scheme. The reforms are targeted at improving the scheme and tackling abuse and fraud so that genuine badge holders receive the full benefit. It is estimated by the Attorney General's Office that of the 2.5 million Blue Badges in circulation, 0.5 million are currently being abused.



From 1 January 2012, the new Blue Badge design shown has been introduced which has additional security features. A new national service also allows enforcement authorities to check badge status. There will be improvements to the assessment process, using independent mobility professionals rather than the applicant's GP, so that decisions are fairer and more objective. People will also be able to apply for, or renew, a badge online from early 2012.

For more information visit [www.durham.gov.uk](http://www.durham.gov.uk) and search for 'Blue Badge'.

## Joint Commissioning Strategy for Older People. Progress so far...

Following a 3 month public consultation period in early 2010, the Joint Commissioning Strategy for Older People was finalised in June 2010. Since then, work has progressed to take forward the action plan.

A Joint Commissioning Group including key health, housing and social care partners involved in the delivery of the action plan meet regularly to oversee the work. Some significant achievements to date include:

- Joint commissioning with NHS County Durham of a 3 year contract with Age UK County Durham to provide a range of prevention services for older people
- Development of the Re-ablement Service across the county
- Review of Community Alarm and Telecare Services
- Commissioning of the Equipment Advice Service to replace Home Independence Service
- Development of Older People's Accommodation and Support Strategy
- Contribution to development of County Durham's Housing Strategy, Building Altogether Better Lives
- Research on the health and social care needs of the Roma, Gypsy and Travelling Community

A number of other projects are currently in development.

A copy of the revised action plan and current work plan for 2011/12 can be found at [www.durham.gov.uk/Pages/Service.aspx?ServiceId=7494](http://www.durham.gov.uk/Pages/Service.aspx?ServiceId=7494)

To request a printed copy of the current action plan please telephone 0191 372 5495 or email [acs.commissioning@durham.gov.uk](mailto:acs.commissioning@durham.gov.uk)

## Do you care for someone living with dementia?

Carers of people with dementia living in County Durham can now benefit from the rewards of Alzheimer's Society's year-long charity partnership with Tesco. Funding from Tesco has given the Society the resources to recruit a dementia support worker to offer carers support, guidance and signpost to services that may assist them in their caring role.

The society has appointed Cathy Clifford to fill this crucial post. Cathy is a former volunteer for the Society with experience of working in social care. She works from the Society's office based in Chester-le-Street.

Cathy is able to offer home visits to carers to talk through any issues related to dementia and caring for someone with dementia. Cathy has full access to all the Society's information, factsheets and publications and has an excellent knowledge of other support services in the County Durham area. In early 2012 Cathy will also be starting a Carers and Information Support Programme (CrISP) for those supporting a person who has received a recent diagnosis of dementia. Sessions include understanding dementia, legal and money matters, providing support and care, and coping on a day-to-day basis.



Cathy Clifford

“Caring for someone with dementia can be a challenge. However with the information and support I am able to offer, tailored to individual circumstances, we can help people to feel that they are not alone in their caring role.”

If you are in need of support or would be interested in the CrISP course, don't hesitate to contact Cathy at Alzheimer's Society, South Approach, Bullion Lane, Chester-le-Street, County Durham, DH2 2DW. Telephone 0191 389 0400.

## Digital Switchover - are you ready?

The Switchover Help Scheme has assisted hundreds of thousands of people switch to digital TV. If you or the person you care for are eligible, they can arrange for an approved installer to supply and install everything you need to switch one of your TV sets to digital.

This service is free if the eligible person also gets pension credit, income support, income-related employment and support allowance or income-based jobseeker's allowance. There are other options available at an extra cost.

The switchover is due to start in our region in September. For more information, call free on 0800 40 85 900 or visit [www.helpscheme.co.uk](http://www.helpscheme.co.uk)



# The Befriender Scheme – support for adults with learning disabilities and their carers

The Befriender Scheme is a registered charity based in Spennymoor. It offers a befriending service to adults with learning disabilities (clients). They match clients with a member of their team who then becomes a regular companion and helps the client to choose and participate in social and practical activities of their choice in the community.

Current clients enjoy a mixed range of activities including playing darts and pool, allotment gardening and horse riding. Some clients enjoy occasional bar meals and shopping trips, others enjoy sharing a beer or a cup of tea while they watch a game of football. Some like to visit family and friends – in short they help them to enjoy the same things that others do and take for granted.

As well as benefiting the clients, the scheme also offers a short period of respite for carers. For a few hours they can relax knowing that the person they care for is in safe hands, with someone they have grown to like and trust.



Here's how some of the clients and carers feel about the service:

**“I look forward to [my befriender’s] visit each week – he’s become a really good friend to me”**

**“Without the befriender scheme we wouldn’t be where we are today – it has changed our lives”**

**“My son has a wonderful befriender – and when he’s happy, I’m happy. Long may it continue”**

Although the majority of clients are referred to the scheme via their care manager and pay only for the direct costs of any activity, services can also be offered at a modest cost to others who are using Personal Budgets or independent funds.

For more information visit [www.befriender.co.uk](http://www.befriender.co.uk) or to discuss the services on offer contact The Befriender Scheme on 01388 816784 or e-mail [befriender@spennymoor.eclipse.co.uk](mailto:befriender@spennymoor.eclipse.co.uk)

## How the internet can support carers

A report published by The Princess Royal Trust for Carers and Crossroads Care outlines the valuable role the internet can play in providing access to services and in supporting those who have difficulty leaving their home to find the information they need.

Discussions with providers of online services and carers about their experiences have shown that the internet is a vital tool for keeping in touch and reducing social isolation. Carers have said that the internet also gives them the opportunity to take a break from caring through online entertainment and gives them the ability to keep up with friends and family through social networking.

If you don't currently have access to the internet you can use it free of charge at any Durham County Library. Many libraries also offer courses on how to use the internet for anyone who needs help, a refresher, or to get started from scratch. For details of your local library visit [www.durham.gov.uk/libraries](http://www.durham.gov.uk/libraries) or call 0300 123 7070.

Don't forget, lots of local and national services and community groups can be found within Durham Information Guide [www.durham.gov.uk/dig](http://www.durham.gov.uk/dig)



## Are you unhappy with changes to a Care Plan?

The Carers Echo team and local carer centres have had a number of comments and queries regarding recent changes to people's care plans.

If you feel that changes to a care plan are incorrect you can challenge the decision by contacting your social worker or care co-ordinator: by telephone, in person, via a letter or by e-mail.

If you have tried one of the above options and are still unhappy you may complete a complaints form available at [www.durham.gov.uk](http://www.durham.gov.uk) selecting the contact us option. You can also write to us at the address below.

There are also a range of advocacy services available to support you in challenging decisions and/or making a complaint. For more information visit: [www.durham.gov.uk/Pages/Service.aspx?ServiceId=728](http://www.durham.gov.uk/Pages/Service.aspx?ServiceId=728)

Complaints Officer  
Quality Standards Team  
Adults, Wellbeing & Health  
Durham County Council  
County Hall Room 2/9  
Durham  
DH1 5UG  
Tel: 0191 372 5486  
E-mail: [AWHComplaints@durham.gov.uk](mailto:AWHComplaints@durham.gov.uk)

# New policy developments in Personalisation - Making it Real

Think Local Act Personal is a sector wide commitment to transform adult social care through Personalisation and community based support. It has committed over 30 national organisations to work together and to develop, as one of the priorities a set of markers. Making it Real is a series of these 'markers' which identify what a person would expect to see and experience if Personalisation is working well in an organisation. The markers have been written by service users and carers like you.

The markers will help organisations look at current practice, identify areas that need improvement and develop plans for change. Early next year, everyone involved in social care will have the opportunity to;

- declare a commitment to use the markers
- publicly share actions that they will take to make progress towards achieving those markers most meaningful to the people they support

For more information about Making it Real visit:

[www.thinklocalactpersonal.org.uk/Latest/Resource/?cid=9091](http://www.thinklocalactpersonal.org.uk/Latest/Resource/?cid=9091)

As a carer, we would like to hear from you. Do you have a view on the markers and what do you think are the main priorities? Please e-mail your views by the end of February to: [personalisation@durham.gov.uk](mailto:personalisation@durham.gov.uk)

## Is using the phone a problem?

Did you know several different types of telephone are available to help people who have dexterity problems. These phones include large, easy to use buttons, easy volume controls, hands free systems, wireless phones, hearing aid compatibility and headsets. Some common features which can help include:

- **Hands-free:** If you have difficulty holding the handset for long periods of time, hands-free means you can hear the voice of the person you are calling through a loudspeaker on the base unit of the telephone and you can reply to them out loud as the telephone includes a small microphone.
- **Large buttons:** A telephone with large, clear keypad buttons may be useful if you have difficulty controlling hand or arm movements.
- **Easy grip handset:** Some telephone handsets have been designed to make them easy to pick up and hold, which makes calling less of a problem.
- **Memory buttons:** Memory buttons are used to save the numbers you dial most often. This feature helps if you have difficulty dialling.



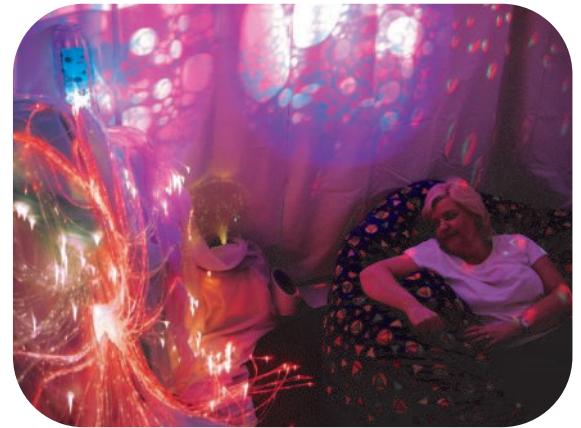
If you, or the person you care for have dexterity problems, products are widely available from good electrical retailers and department stores. You can also visit the BT website at [www.bt.com/includingyou/products-phones-dexterity.html](http://www.bt.com/includingyou/products-phones-dexterity.html) to view their range of user-friendly telephones.



## We can CREATE

CREATE Arts and Activities service offers a stimulating and diverse choice of activities and resources for older people and people with special needs across the county.

The team offer social and recreational support to carers throughout County Durham to encourage and stimulate positive physical and mental wellbeing. Workshops designed for both service users and carers offer a fun and inspiring opportunity to share ideas, gain expertise and support. Easter craft workshops will run throughout the county during March and activities will include making Easter decorations, Easter gifts and fundraising sessions.



Sensory session

Throughout the year, the team also run a number of themed events, where all service users are encouraged to join in and show off their creativity with well-deserved pride.

The talented team have a vast array of skills to offer including creative crafts, reminiscence work and holistic therapies plus many more, and are always looking for new opportunities and clients to share these with.

If you are interested in attending any of our workshops, accessing our vast library of resources and activities or would like further information, please contact us on 03000 261387 or e-mail [awh.sicreate@durham.gov.uk](mailto:awh.sicreate@durham.gov.uk)



Crafty and creative adults celebrating success in annual Christmas Competition



## Cirque du Ciel - ShangHi

The most breathtaking family entertainment show ever seen at Gala.

**Tuesday 17 & Wednesday 18 April 7.30pm**

Gala Theatre, Durham Tickets: £20 (£18 concession)

Box Office 0191 332 4041 [www.galadurham.co.uk](http://www.galadurham.co.uk)




## A New Year, a New Beginning

Jobcentre Plus and Hillcroft College for women are working together to bring a new and empowering course to women in County Durham.

The New Beginnings course is a one day course devised to help women discover their potential. Through self assessment, participants can find out their current skill level and look at what they would like to do in the future. They can also gain specialist information as to the steps they need to take to help achieve their goals.



New Beginnings has been devised to help women, giving them the confidence to become more active within their community and to progress in education and employment.

Support may be available to carers with travel, childcare and replacement care. The New Beginnings programme is scheduled to run in March and is available to all women aged 19 and over. The Hillcroft outreach project is funded by The Big Lottery.

For more information about the New Beginnings programme, Hillcroft College or the support available from Jobcentre Plus please contact Enid Dalton on 0191 382 4192 or e-mail [enid.dalton@jobcentreplus.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:enid.dalton@jobcentreplus.gsi.gov.uk)

## Opportunities for Learning

Durham County Council's Adult Learning and Skills Service is offering new courses that could provide you with the opportunity to learn something new or brush up your skills. They aim to provide a programme of learning that is flexible enough to fit in with your caring role. Courses are offered at various venues across County Durham and, for learners in receipt of certain benefits or levels of education, course fees will be reduced.

Courses are offered in the following areas: Team Leading; First Line Management; IT Users (ITQ); Customer Services; Business & Administration; Retail; Certificate to Teach in the Lifelong Learning Sector; Information, Advice and Guidance; Skills For Life including literacy and numeracy; Employability; English Speaking for Other Languages; Family Learning.

Apprenticeships at both Level 2 (Apprenticeship) and Level 3 (Advanced Apprenticeship) are also available, which include functional skills in English and Mathematics at the appropriate level for the qualification. Apprenticeships currently delivered are: Team Leading; First Line Management; IT Users (ITQ); Customer Services; Business & Administration and Retail.

To find out more about what the service has to offer you e-mail [alss@durham.gov.uk](mailto:alss@durham.gov.uk) or telephone on 0191 383 4683.

## Shared Lives

Are you a caring person looking for a rewarding career with flexible hours? Could you care for and support adults with learning disabilities in your own home? If so, you could become a Shared Lives Provider.

Shared Lives offers short term, long term or emergency care for adults with learning disabilities. You will need a spare bedroom as all placements involve overnight stays, and be willing to share your home and family life with an adult who needs support.

In return you will receive training, support and generous allowances for these rewarding self-employment roles.

If you are interested in finding out more call us for an informal chat on 0191 370 6255 or e-mail [sharedlives@durham.gov.uk](mailto:sharedlives@durham.gov.uk)



## Do you provide unpaid care and support for a relative, partner or friend?

Maybe we can help by giving you a break so that you can recharge your batteries and have some 'me' time.

Visit [www.durhamcarers.info](http://www.durhamcarers.info) or contact **Social Care Direct** ☎ 0845 8 50 50 10 during normal office hours.

### Caring for carers



  
County Durham and Darlington



## Hate Crime

Everyone has the right to live free from fear of harassment. Hate crime and hate incidents are where someone is targeted because of their race, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, disability or gender. Hate crimes and hate incidents can be committed against a person or property. Research shows that disabled people are at specific risk of hate crimes and hate incidents.

The Safe Durham Partnership has produced a leaflet giving advice and information on reporting hate crime and hate incidents and where to go for help and support.

If you would like a copy of the leaflet visit [www.durham.gov.uk/hatecrime](http://www.durham.gov.uk/hatecrime) or telephone Durham County Council on 0300 123 70 70.



## Helpful information on staying safe this winter



Tips and advice on staying safe, warm and well during winter are now available at [www.durham.gov.uk/warmandwell](http://www.durham.gov.uk/warmandwell) including a downloadable 'personal winter plan', which features checklists, useful telephone numbers and space to add extra information for you or the person you care for to complete.

If you need help during winter weather or are concerned about someone else's welfare, including the person you care for if you are unable to get to them during severe weather, contact Social Care Direct, details below.

### Useful contact numbers:

- Highways Action Line (HAL): 0191 370 6000 or email [HAL@durham.gov.uk](mailto:HAL@durham.gov.uk) - for enquiries about the salting of roads and footpaths.
- Social Care Direct: 0845 8 50 50 10 – for concerns about someone's welfare.
- Durham County Council: 0300 123 7070 for all other issues, or visit [www.durham.gov.uk](http://www.durham.gov.uk)
- NHS 111: if you need medical help but it isn't an emergency.

## NHS winter health checker now available online

A list of common, winter-specific injuries and ailments can now be viewed online at NHS Direct with ways they can be treated as well as advice on how to avoid them.

Visit [www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk/CheckSymptoms/Topics/WinterHealth](http://www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk/CheckSymptoms/Topics/WinterHealth), or access via a free app on your smartphone. Initial assessments are available for conditions such as diarrhoea, colds and flu which are common at this time of the year. The site also provides advice on how you can treat problems such as injuries after slipping on ice.

# Universal Credit - carer's element to continue

The Department for Works and Pensions (DWP) have recently announced that Carers Allowance will continue to exist as a separate benefit outside of Universal Credit. It was also announced that the carers element of Universal Credit will continue for as long as the carer provides 35 hours of care per week for a severely disabled person. The DWP hope that the decisions will help carers to continue to provide the support needed to some of the most vulnerable people in our communities.



## Universal Credit: the future of the benefits system

The Government plans to introduce a Universal Credit in 2013 that will replace most means-tested benefits. Exact details of the way Universal Credit will work have yet to be published, and the principles of the scheme are still being debated in Parliament. However, several of its features have been set out, some of which might be especially important to carers.

The scheme will be means-tested, and there will be a standard allowance for all claimants. On top of this standard allowance you will be able to claim additional amounts for a child, for a disabled child, for having limited capacity for work, for being severely disabled, for being a carer, and for having a mortgage.

One significant change is in the way the extra amount for caring can be paid. Currently in means-tested benefits there is a carer premium that can be paid alongside any other premiums. So for example, if you are a carer and also have health problems that mean you are incapable of work, at present you can get both a carer premium and a disability premium, or an extra amount for limited capability for work if you claim Employment and Support Allowance. Under Universal Credit you would only be allowed to receive one of those amounts, not both.

One new feature that might make some carers better off is the fact that the new carer amount does not require the carer to also be entitled to Carer's Allowance. The Government has said that any carer who has 'regular and substantial caring responsibilities' will be entitled to the extra carer amount. What this means is yet to be defined in law, but as long as the test of 'regular and substantial caring' is not too strict, then some carers who do not qualify for the current carer premium because they aren't entitled to Carer's Allowance, might gain because of the change.

There is still much uncertainty about the details of Universal Credit and it is difficult at the present time to work out how it will affect any particular individual. However, many carers who receive a means-tested benefit will be affected in some way, and such is the scope of the changes that we will return to this subject again when more details are forthcoming. In the meantime, you can check on developments by visiting any of the websites dealing with carers issues, such as Carers UK ([www.carersuk.org](http://www.carersuk.org)) and the Princess Royal Trust for Carers ([www.carers.org](http://www.carers.org)).

## Prevention Services for older people

In the past, the Council and NHS County Durham have funded Age UK County Durham (formally Age Concern Durham County) to provide a range of support to help older people to stay active, fit and healthy, and support them with advice and information on subjects such as health and wellbeing, benefits advice and keeping warm and well in winter.

Following contract reviews in 2009/10, the Council and NHS County Durham agreed to join together the available funding. A joint tender process ran earlier this year and the three year contract was won by Age UK County Durham.

The contract started in July 2011 and Age UK County Durham are continuing to provide a range of services for older people under the new joint contract arrangements. These include a range of exercise activities, craft and social groups and a wide variety of information and advice including welfare benefits advice.

There are also some additional areas of work that are now being progressed including the development of initiatives to help older people access affordable and healthy food.

If you would like further information about the full range of services provided by Age UK County Durham please contact Helen Sams, Operations Manager on 0191 374 6364.



## Shaping the NHS

Legislation to reform the NHS is currently going through Parliament. Under the proposed legislation the following will happen:

- GP's and other health professionals will take on responsibility from Primary Care Trusts (PCT's) for planning and purchasing local health services, ensuring the right services are in place to meet NHS needs.
- A variety of public health services will transfer to local councils such as tobacco control, alcohol and substance misuse, obesity and community nutrition initiatives.
- New Health and Wellbeing Boards will be responsible for more joined-up working between social care and NHS services.
- Healthwatch, a new local 'champion' organisation, will support service users and carers across health and social care. They will assist people to make choices, support people to make a complaint and inform councils of the views of service users and carers.

More information can be found on the Department of Health webpage [www.healthandcare.dh.gov.uk](http://www.healthandcare.dh.gov.uk) and to keep up to date on developments in County Durham visit the Durham County Council webpage at [www.durham.gov.uk/nhsreforms](http://www.durham.gov.uk/nhsreforms)

# Sensory Support Awareness Day

To raise understanding of issues affecting hearing and sight loss, Durham County Council's Sensory Support Team are hosting an awareness day at County Hall, Durham City between 9:00am and 4:00pm on 28 March.

Exhibitors on the day will include The Bionic Ear Show, an interactive and educational show promoting the importance of looking after your hearing and safe listening. The show, which will hold three sessions throughout the day, will demonstrate how sound travels through the ear to the brain, what happens in different parts of the hearing system and how individuals can protect their hearing.

The Action for Blind People information bus, which will be present at the event at County Hall, has interactive displays and equipment for people to look at before they purchase. The bus will also visit Barnard Castle and Peterlee on the 27 and 29 March respectively between 9:30am and 4:00pm.

Deafness Research UK will provide free hearing screening to anyone over the age of 16, reinforcing the importance of looking after your hearing and encouraging regular checks to ensure problems can be dealt with. Screenings take approximately 5-10 minutes and can screen up to six people at one time.

Other organisations that will be present include Action on Hearing Loss, County Durham Society for the Blind and Partially Sighted, Guide Dogs UK, Durham Deafened Support and The Equipment Advice Service.

For further information on the awareness day or the Sensory Support Team and the work the service does, please visit [www.durham.gov.uk](http://www.durham.gov.uk) and search for 'Adult Sensory Support Team'.



### Sedgefield Locality Carers Centre

In 2011 the Police Authority launched a community awards scheme to acknowledge individuals and groups who have had a positive impact on community safety and public assurance across County Durham and Darlington.

We are thrilled that volunteers from Sedgefield Locality Carers Centre were recently nominated and were amongst the winners in the caring category for their roles as volunteer sitters and



Volunteers Ron Passfield and Margaret Smith receiving their award

drivers, outreach work and behind the scenes admin and reception work. The awards were presented at Ramside Hall Hotel, Durham on the evening of Thursday 1 December 2011.

Joanne Jones volunteer co-ordinator who accompanied the volunteers said "All of these services are vital and extremely well appreciated by all beneficiaries and it is our volunteers who make the service what it is."

"Many of our volunteers have come to us because they have been in a caring role themselves and want to help give something back to the community, because they appreciate how vital the service is. Some are still carers and manage their volunteering around their own responsibilities. Some have work commitments and volunteer in their spare time, many have their own health related problems but refuse to let this stop them volunteering."



### The Bridge Young Carers

Last autumn the charity Family Action launched The Bridge service for young carers in County Durham with the aim of supporting young people who have challenging caring roles to achieve their full potential.

The Bridge runs regular **local forum meetings** where young people can find out more about the service and get involved with future developments.

The Bridge are hosting an **information day** where young carers will give a presentation about their caring roles and the impact caring has on their lives. Everyone is welcome Wednesday 8 February 2012, 2pm -7pm. The Rivergreen Centre, Aykley Heads, Durham DH1 5TS

The Bridge is running **home safety courses** for young carers in County Durham. The course provides an opportunity for young carers to meet and share their experiences and ideas through group activities, arts and crafts and games and gives them time and space to have fun and learn at the same time. The groups look at a variety of issues to do with home safety including recognising hazards, preventing accidents and dealing with them appropriately, fire safety and internet safety. They also have the opportunity to complete an Accredited Young Persons First Aid Course and visit a Fire Station

Young people should speak to their link worker to find out about attending the course in their area.

For more information about The Bridge Young Carers Project and for details of local forum meetings please contact:

The Bridge Project, 4 Red Hill Villa's, Durham City DH1 4BA  
Tel: 0191 3832520 Fax: 0191 3860277  
Durhamyoungcarers@family-action.org.uk

Family Action. Charity no. 264713



**Derwentside Carers Centre**

**A poem from a carer who enjoys attending Stanley drop-in:**

What can I say about Stanley Carers  
They are different from the rest  
The members are so individual  
They put me to the test.

There`s Jim who likes to grump a lot  
And put the world to rights,  
Then Anne who argues back at him  
In this she takes delight.

Barbara is so reliable  
Arriving early to make the tea,  
Vivienne is the quiet one  
In that we all agree!

Margaret and June are such good friends  
And are always very quiet,  
Ian and Elizabeth are quite new to the group,  
But Selina`s sense of humour can cause a riot.

Christine always chats non-stop  
With always a tale to tell,  
Doris listens for a while  
Then tells her to go to hell.

Vi is always so naive  
With Betty her trusted friend,  
Doreen and Betty like a giggle  
On that we can depend.

Sylvia and Alma, you just never know  
They often just pop in  
While Audrey and Gillian come for a chat  
And shout up through the din.

They are all so individual,  
I said this once before,  
But if you arrive and don`t know a soul  
There is a friendly welcome at the door.

They make you laugh and sometimes cry,  
But always have some fun,  
They can have some disagreements  
But then it`s over with and done.

The members of this carers drop-in  
Have sent me round the bend  
But hand on heart I can honestly say  
In each I have made a friend.



**Have your details changed?**



You can update your details by completing and returning the form below.

**Name** .....

**Previous address** .....

..... **Postcode** .....

**Contact number** .....

**New address** .....

..... **Postcode** .....

**No longer wish to receive**

Return this completed form to: The Carers Echo, Adults, Wellbeing and Health,  
The Rivergreen Centre, Aykley Heads, Durham DH1 5TS

We know it's cold, but getting outside for a few hours fresh air and gentle activity is good for you. Whether you want some 'me' time or are looking for something to do with the person you care for, wrap up warm and join in one of the many events in County Durham.

### Community Conservation

Durham County Council's Countryside Service run monthly Community Conservation events - short sessions where people can help with really simple tasks such as planting heather, removing vegetation or picking up litter.



Come along by yourself or with friends and family. You don't need any experience and we explain how to do things on the day. We try to have a variety of tasks so if the person you care for can't manage one thing, they may be able to do another. Every contribution helps.

Some sites are more accessible than others. Find out more about community conservation events in your area by phoning 0191 372 9100 or go to [www.durham.gov.uk/countryside](http://www.durham.gov.uk/countryside)

### Gladiator exhibition now open

An exhibition of skeletons excavated by York Archaeological Trust during 2004-5 is now on display at Millennium Place in Durham. About 45 of the 80 skeletons show injuries which have sparked theories that these people could have been a group of gladiators, who lived and fought in York during the Roman occupation.

There are six skeletons in the exhibition which is now open. Admission costs are £2.00 per adult, £1.00 concession and child. For further information call 0191 332 4041.

### Golden Days at Gala Cinema, Durham

Gala houses a two-screen cinema showing a mix of blockbusters and independent films.

The first screening every Tuesday is exclusively for the over 60s. With complimentary tea and scone included in the ticket price (just £5), it's a chance to meet up with friends while catching up with the latest blockbusters. If you're coming by car, don't forget the Walkergate Car Park is accessible by lift from just outside Gala.



Carers accompanying someone over 60 will also be able to attend the cinema screening for **free** and can purchase a selection of drinks and snacks from Intervals Cafe.

For information on our screening times and to book tickets, please see the website at [www.galadurham.co.uk](http://www.galadurham.co.uk) or contact the Box Office in person, on 0191 332 4041.

# The Carers Echo competition

Visitors to museums in County Durham can now buy a Culture Card and enjoy free entry for a whole year to Killhope the North of England Lead Mining Museum, Binchester Roman Fort and the DLI Museum & Art Gallery. This means an adult will save at least £4 if they visit each venue once and the more you visit the more you save!

Killhope is a multi-award winning Victorian mining museum and offers a great day out for all ages. Explore the impressive remains of a Roman bath house at Binchester Roman Fort with its amazing 1,700 year old under floor heating system. The DLI Museum tells the story of County Durham's own regiment and Durham Art Gallery hosts an exciting, wide ranging programme of exhibitions and events.

Passes are available to purchase from all 3 venues and are priced at:



Adults - £8.75  
 Concessions - £7.00  
 Child (4-16yrs) - £4.50  
 Under 4yrs - free

Please note additional charges may apply to special museum events and activities.

We are offering readers the chance to win a Culture Card, don't forget all accompanying carers get into our venues for FREE.

**Question:** How much is an adult Culture Card?

Closing date for entries is **2 March 2012.**

**Answer from October edition** - The name of Jack and Jill's cow was Milkshake.

Congratulations to our two winners Ms Lamb and Miss Stubbs.



Killhope Lead Mining Museum



DLI Museum and Art Gallery



Binchester Roman event

✂

## ANSWERS

Return this completed form to: The Carers Echo, Adults, Wellbeing and Health, The Rivergreen Centre, Aykley Heads, Durham, DH1 5TS

The answer is .....

Name .....

Address .....

.....

..... Postcode .....

# A light spring recipe for you



This quick and simple pasta dish makes an economical midweek supper that's suitable for vegetarians.

## Sweet potato pasta

- 300g sweet potato peeled and cut into small cubes
- 300g dried pasta shapes
- 100g frozen peas
- 2 tbsp 1% fat milk\*
- 150g low-fat natural yoghurt
- 40g reduced fat parmesan finely grated
- 1 pinch ground black pepper

Serves: 4 adults

Preparation time: 10 mins

Cooking time: 15 mins

\* Carers Echo suggest semi-skimmed milk if 1% fat milk is not available locally.

1. Cook the sweet potato cubes in simmering water for 12-15 minutes, until tender. Drain well.
2. Cook the pasta shapes in a large saucepan for 6-8 minutes, or according to pack instructions, until tender. Drain well then return to the saucepan.
3. Stir the sweet potato cubes and frozen peas through the pasta. Add the milk and yoghurt and heat gently for 1-2 minutes. Serve, sprinkled with the cheese and a little ground black pepper.

Tip 1: You could use butternut squash as an alternative to sweet potato.

Tip 2: Add extra vegetables if you like, such as chopped red pepper and sweetcorn.

If you have any articles you would like to submit then please write to us at the address on page 2.

The Carers Echo is produced by Durham County Council's Adults, Wellbeing and Health, for carers.

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The editor's decision is final.

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