

Writing the newsletter

One of my favourite jobs is compiling the quarterly newsletter, The Carer.

It may only be six pages long but there is a lot to consider:

- Is the information relevant to unpaid carers?*
- Is the information relevant to carers in all 3 of the counties we cover? I.e. Conwy, Gwynedd & Anglesey.*
- Is there something for younger carers e.g. parents of children with additional needs?*
- Is there something for older carers? (and those in-between)*
- Have we covered any recent legislation for carers?*
- Is the information clear and easy for all to understand whether they have visual problems, limited reading skills etc?*
- Are complicated issues made clear and concise for busy carers to grasp?*
- Will it make carers want to contact us when they need help?*
- Will it make carers feel valued and supported?*
- Have we got a carer's story; feedback shows that carers love to read these; if it is a story of triumph over adversity, it can give hope to others who are still struggling; if it is a story of challenges and heartache it helps other carers to know that they are not the only ones in a challenging situation. Carers tell us that the carers' stories help them to feel less isolated.*

When I have difficulty with an article I imagine speaking to someone I know who would like to understand the issues being covered. This helps me to put it in the right context. I'm lucky that I work in the busy Bangor hub which helps me to keep my finger on the pulse of what carers are currently asking for help with. Our monthly staff meeting is another useful arena for information gathering. My colleagues often suggest topics for the newsletter.

When the first draft is done I like to take it home with me, switch caps, and read it over a coffee break, as if I were a carer. It helps that I have been a carer and still remember how it felt and that I also have relatives that are either carers or being cared for.

Once I'm satisfied with the first draft, and the Chief Officer has approved it, I ask Enyd, our Bangor hub volunteer, to phone round and check all the phone numbers are correct. I also try to get a stock of any leaflets that are mentioned before we go to print. Finally it is sent to Angharad for translating and then to the printers. The whole process takes about 8 weeks.

We are always grateful for suggestions of topics for the newsletter and for carers' stories!

Julie

Julie Oatey

Administration Officer and Executive Assistant

