



GWASANAETH CYNNAL GOFALWYR
CARERS OUTREACH SERVICE

The Carer

Issue 97 Spring 2021

Established 1991



Self care is giving the world the best of you, instead of what's left of you.



Give as you Live™

Translated into Welsh by
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Registered Charity No: 1066262



Our Chief Officer reflects on...

Change

Carers Outreach is here to change and improve things for carers, and we have seen many beneficial developments for carers since we started.

Nothing stays the same, change is constant. Over time our appearance will change, as will our habits and routines. Sometimes we can control change, but sometimes it is completely out of our control. It is the way we react to change that matters.

Whilst most of us like to feel safe in our comfort zone, this last year has been one of upheaval, with many changes in quick succession. Maybe this has shown us that change is inevitable and it is impossible to be in control all of the time. Also, we have seen that change can actually be a good thing at times.

It is with a heavy heart that I have decided it is time for me to move on to new challenges in my working life. Over the last 5 years I have focused on making beneficial changes to the lives of carers, such as improved respite provision, and by feeding back on carers' issues to Welsh Government and to Local Authorities. But I know that there is still much to be done to ensure that carers get the recognition and support they deserve.

The Covid-19 pandemic has highlighted the areas in which support for carers is still lacking. Going forward we must ensure that future services are relevant and meet carers' requirements. We need to strengthen existing support and look at what will make a real and valuable difference to their lives.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank, you the carers, our staff, trustees and volunteers for giving me the best 5 years of my working life so far. I have learnt so much from you all and I hope I will carry this wisdom with me. During my time as Chief Officer, I strove to keep carers' wellbeing at the heart of all changes and decisions. In the coming years I will always keep a special place in my heart for unpaid carers. Thank you.

~ Llinos

Annual General Meeting 2020

Our AGM took place in December. Due to Covid-19 restrictions it was held by zoom. Mair Jones remains Chair of the Board of Trustees and Kevin Thomas is now Vice Chair.

If you would like to receive a copy of the annual report by email please contact Julie - contact details are on the next page.



Without change there would be no butterflies



Update from Carers Outreach

Winter grants

There was an unprecedented demand for this funding. Every effort was made to ensure that funds went where most needed. However, we know that many carers have had financial challenges due to the pandemic. If you are worried about your financial situation, Helen Parry, our Specialist Information Officer may be able to help.

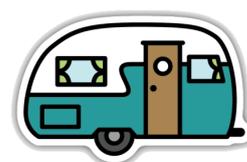
Sunday 21 March 2021 is Census day

The census is a once-in-a-decade survey that provides a snapshot of households in England and Wales, and helps to plan and fund public services. Ultimately, it ensures funds are invested where they are most needed. Carers Outreach is urging all unpaid carers to record their caring roles when they complete the census.

Carers caravan

At the time of writing it is unclear whether the caravan will be permitted to operate this season. We are going ahead with taking bookings to secure dates and we are keeping everything crossed!

✉ caravan@carersoutreach.org.uk to book



Care Packages

The restrictions imposed by the pandemic have resulted in some carers and their cared-for being without a care package. This could change the accepted level of care package provision in Wales, therefore we need to be pro-active in ensuring that all care packages are reinstated when the current restrictions are lifted. There is also a need to find even more solutions and services that are helpful to carers. Please keep feeding back to us on any issues that are affecting you so we can take them to local and Welsh Governments.

Groups and activities

We continue to hold groups by zoom; please contact us to request an invitation to join a zoom session.

Stay in touch



By phone:

Gwynedd & Anglesey: 01248 370797

Conwy: 01492 533714

Email: help@carersoutreach.org.uk

www.carersoutreach.org.uk

Join our zoom groups

Contact Carers Outreach for information or support in your caring role



A carer's story

The Joy of Gardening

I care for my brother who is severely sight impaired. I want to share the benefits I have reaped from having an allotment, especially during the Covid-19 pandemic.

It is always nice to visit the allotment, which is only a short walk from home. Sometimes I just go there to relax, it is always so peaceful. I listen to the birds singing and enjoy watching the seasons unfold and it's like I'm transported to another world. For me, it's a perfect escape; I take comfort from the fact that whatever is going on in the world, nature will continue. If I feel like a chat there is always someone to talk to, or I can enjoy gardening in solitude if that is what I need that day.

And of course, the produce I grow is another bonus. Last year I grew potatoes, runner beans, carrots, tomatoes, beetroot, onions, leeks, and

kale. I don't have a large allotment; it is a manageable size for me to work on. I am happy to pass on any surplus produce to friends and neighbours.

During the lockdown one of the other allotment holders saw an appeal from the Welsh Mountain Zoo in Colwyn Bay. Due to the restrictions, they were losing ticket sales and needed food for the animals. We all banded together and donated our surplus to the zoo. The good thing was that the animals were not fussy, and the zoo was happy to take our remnants.

I really recommend getting an allotment. It is good to share gardening knowledge and feel part of a community. Being outdoors is really good for one's mental health and watching something that you have planted grow and ripen is a wonderful thing.

~ Lynne Davies, Conwy carer



Find your wonderful

Finding that thing that makes our heart sing is so good for our mental health and wellbeing. However, sometimes we need a specialist service to help us to live our best life.

We are now a year into living throughout a pandemic and the effects may be starting to show on our mental health.

It is important not to suffer in silence. We all need support at times, even if we are strong! There are a variety of different tools available to support mental health.

We have a Carers Support Officer who supports carers where there is a diagnosis of mental ill health.

We can refer you to appropriate support. There are also several online courses and apps that you may find beneficial to use to support your mental health.



Live Laugh Love

SilverCloud

SilverCloud is a free online course to help you manage stress, anxiety and depression. You work through a series of topics selected by a therapist to address specific needs. The eight-week course is designed to be completed in your own time and at your own pace.

Anyone aged 16 or over can sign up at: nhs.uk/silvercloudhealth.com/signup/

App Corner



Stress and anxiety companion

Helps to fight negative thoughts and help manage stress and anxiety.

MyLife Meditation app

Helps you to meditate, relax and sleep better. The app is personalised to how you feel with the aim of getting you to a better place, in just a few minutes a day.



STOP, BREATHE & THINK

Taking care of our mental health

1. There are no hard and fast rules. Do what works for you. Don't be hard on yourself by trying to live up to unrealistic standards.
2. Set yourself up for success, simple tasks like making the bed can be your achievement for the day.
3. Sometimes a small change can make a difference to how we feel. Make that phone call you have been putting off, or attend that appointment. Having a reward ready for after can help.
4. No matter how far down the wrong path you have travelled, you can always choose to take a new path.
5. It's good to talk.
6. Go for a walk or exercise when/if you can.

BCU Health Board Self Care courses

These free courses have been held in local communities for many years and are now available online.

Some of the topics on offer include:

- Caring for You and Me
- Diabetes Self Management
- COPD Self Management for Life
- Chronic Pain Self Management
- Cancer: Thriving and Surviving
- Emotional Resilience Training

In addition there is a new course aimed at people who are experiencing **Long Covid** and would benefit from self-management techniques to help to manage the recovery process.

Contact Carers Outreach for more details and a referral.



My wife asked if I'd seen the dog bowl... I replied, "I didn't even know he played cricket!"



Spring is a time of new beginnings





If you are not online it can be difficult to know where to find information.

Contact Carers Outreach; we can signpost you to relevant organisations. We can also go online for you and print off application forms and information.

We have an extensive library of fact sheets for carers that we can post out.

Fire Service Free Safe and Well checks can provide:

- General home safety check where they can ensure exits are clear, provide free smoke alarms etc
- Free smoking pack with fire retardant bed covers, chair throws and self-extinguishing ash trays
- Heat sensor for oven hob that will automatically switch off if no one is cooking.

For more information

Visit www.nwales-fireservice.org.uk

Or contact Carers Outreach to request a referral.

Check out our Padlet

A padlet is an online bulletin board. As we can only include a small fraction of information in this newsletter, we now have a padlet. Check out our Facebook page for a link to this useful information for carers.

Coming soon for parent carers - **Planning for the Future** padlet.

Check if you can get a free over 75 TV Licence

In August 2020, the BBC introduced a new scheme that offers some over 75 households a free TV Licence. You can get a free TV Licence if:

- You, as the licence holder, are 75 years or older AND
- you, or your partner living at the same address, receive Pension Credit.

Blind (severely sight impaired) customers can get a half price TV Licence. You can apply by completing an online application form.

<https://www.tvlicensing.co.uk/>

Are you or your cared-for person Registered Blind or Severely Sight Impaired?

Blind Person's Allowance is added to your yearly Personal Allowance - the amount of money you can earn before you start paying Income Tax. For the tax year 2020-21 this amount is £2,500.

You can transfer your Blind Person's Allowance to your spouse or civil partner if you do not pay tax or earn enough to use all of your allowance.

For more information visit:
www.gov.uk/blind-persons-allowance