

Newsletter

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CAMBRIDGESHIRE HEARING HELP

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Dear All

I hope you are enjoying the summer weather and getting out and about. I've been to the French Alps which was lovely. Although I could not "climb every mountain", I managed a few lower slopes, enjoyed the sound of the cowbells and the delicious cheese and wine. So now it's back to work.

We were really pleased by the number of people who attended the launch of two of the new sessions in Wisbech and March. With the help of the local volunteers we managed to publicise the events widely and in March we were almost overwhelmed with 18 people on the first day. The Mayor and Mayoress of Wisbech attended the session at the St. Raphael Club and we were also delighted that Sue Morris, the Deputy Lieutenant was able to visit and see our work.

There are some further publicity and networking events in the pipeline to make sure that everyone is aware of the availability of the service and I will be talking at the Wisbech Dementia Café and at various Library Engage meetings in the coming months. It has been a pleasure to get to know the north of the county a bit better.

We have an Equipment Demonstration in St. Neots in November and I will be directing our efforts to the West over the next few months, so if any volunteers in that area know of groups that would appreciate a talk or a local magazine where we can advertise, please get in touch with me. Local contacts are always the most fruitful.



A new initiative with Equipment information is a weekly mini-demo at the St Andrew's St Hearing Help session in Cambridge. Eric Brown has very kindly agreed to take responsibility for this. We hope that having a regular event in the County will enable us to direct enquiries more effectively to a point of display. We will trial this for two months and then assess how it is going.

We take safeguarding our service users seriously and we will be asking volunteers who make visits to home and care homes to have DBS checks every 3 years. If you are a home visitor you will shortly be contacted by the admin team with the forms. As you may know you can now register with the Disclosure and Barring Service so that you do not have to go through the process of providing ID every time a DBS check is required. This service is free to volunteers but it is only available online and you have to apply within a tight time scale. You have only 19 days from the date of issue of the certificate. For further information on this go to www.gov.uk/dbs-update-service.

We were chosen by the Mayor of Chatteris as one of his charities for the year and I attended a reception to collect a handsome cheque for £136. The Mayor uses our services at the George Clare surgery and knows how well valued it is by the local citizens.

There is a lot of training in the pipeline. A new volunteer training course starts in September at the Bluntisham Village Hall, then we have Refresher/Open Fits on 12th November in Cambridge. Please save the date for this. This will start at 10am with beginner Open Fit training. At 11am they will be joined by experienced Open Fit volunteers to learn about the new mini fit range. At 1.45pm we will start the regular Refresher Training. Volunteers should attend Refresher training every other year. Lunch will be provided.



Sylvia Tuck, one of the long-time volunteers with Fenland CAMTAD, has decided to retire. Thanks to her for the time she has given to both CAMTAD and CHH and we wish her all the best for the future.

There is some further disappointing news from North Staffordshire. The Clinical Commissioning Group is restricting the issue of NHS hearing aids to those with moderate or more severe loss and only where they can demonstrate that the hearing loss has a significant detriment to their lifestyle. NHS England has refused to intervene saying that North Staffs CCG followed correct procedures in the decision making, something which is disputed by Action on Hearing Loss. This is very worrying as it gives the green light to other areas to restrict hearing aid provision. However national guidelines for commissioning are in the pipeline which it is hoped will at least ensure a consistent nationwide standard.

The items we have included in this edition show the wide range of partners that we now work with in the County. But I am aware that increasingly making contact is via the internet and this may exclude anyone who is not confident with its use from participating in consultations and activities. Where we have phone numbers we will always include them. If you want to get involved with any organisation and don't know how to contact them, we can arrange this for you.

I am looking forward to meeting as many volunteers as possible at the Tea Party in October, it will be a great opportunity to catch up with you all. This is to say a big thank you for your work and as Ruth and Melanie have all bases covered there will be no need for volunteers to help out on the day.



Frances

Launch of Wisbech & March Sessions



Frances with Sue Morris,
the Deputy Lieutenant



The Mayor & Mayoress of Wisbech
with CHH Trustee Paul McCloskey



The Mayor & Mayoress of Wisbech
with our first service users

Carers Trust “What if” Scheme

Any carers can now have a “What if” plan which they can register with Carers Trust. This will have a list of people to contact in case of emergency and the carer will be issued with a “What If” card which gives peace of mind, knowing that in the event of emergency the contingency plan can be accessed through an emergency number available on a 24/7 basis. If the contacts number are not reached a professional Carer Support Worker will respond free of charge for 24 hours.

To find out more contact Carers Trust Cambridgeshire 0845 241 0945

Best Practice

The Best Practice Advisory Group has prepared a Care Home Information file, which contains a record of the services provided to the residents and useful information about hearing aid maintenance and where to go for advice. We have been trialling this with a few homes for the last 6 months with mixed results. Some homes have made full use of it and it has been readily available when the volunteer returned for the next visit, others could not find the file and it was felt did not regard hearing aid maintenance as a high priority.

But the volunteers felt it was useful and gave them some authority and back up for the service they provide, so we have decided to make it more widely available. It will only go to homes where a volunteer regularly attends and can monitor the use as we do not want to waste our efforts and have the file lost or neglected. If any volunteers would like files to take to the Care Homes they visit please contact the office, and we will provide them.

Diabetes UK Peer Support Group for Type 2 Diabetes

This service is available to anyone living with Type 2 diabetes in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough. The aim is to set up 25 peer support and education groups in the area - so people living in these here are bound to find one near them. The groups will give people the chance to meet others with diabetes, support each other and make friends, and share experiences and information. We're looking for a total of 50 volunteers to facilitate the groups (Diabetes UK will provide all the training) as well as people to come along once they're up and running and be members of the group.

To find out more about volunteering or attending a group, people can email Type2Together@diabetes.org.uk or call 0345 123 2399 to speak to the relevant co-ordinator for their area.

Congratulations

Ron Loewenbein and Sue Kruczynska receiving 10 Year Awards



Graham writes to thank us for our help and to report on the outcomes of Cambridgeshire Alliance's Voice Network Project

During the last year our Voice Network Project team have been warmly welcomed at CHH sessions across the county. We would like to say a big thank you to Frances, Fran, Gaynor and all the volunteers who have helped us so much at the sessions.

Our Voice Network Project talks with people about their experiences of living with disability and the issues that make life that bit more difficult. We then raise these issues with the relevant authorities to see if a change can be made to make life easier – not just for people with disabilities but also for everyone in the community.

The main issues that have been raised with our team involve transport and the highways and byways; that is buses, roads and pavements!

The big issue with the buses is that people would like all buses to have audio and visual announcements so that people know where the next stop is. This is especially helpful when visiting an area that people don't know or it is difficult to ask fellow passengers or the driver about stops.

When it comes to roads and pavements people have told us about potholes and uneven pavements and obstacles on the pavements and how these make life very difficult when going to the shops or seeing friends and family.

What we have done:

We have asked the local bus companies about audio and visual announcements and if they can be installed on buses. They have told us that this would be very expensive.

We talked to Guide Dogs for the Blind about this issue and they have launched a campaign to have all new buses fitted with audio and visual announcements. You can find more information about the campaign and sign the petition on the Guide Dogs website! <http://www.guidedogs.org.uk/supportus/campaigns/talkingbuses/how-you-can-help-the-talking-buses-campaign#.VV8f7PldV1Y>

When it comes to the roads and pavements we have been logging concerns on the County Council website. We have also held a meeting with the Highways Manager to discuss the concerns that people have.

The 1980s Highways Act makes the placing of boards and goods on the pavement illegal, unless that part of the pavement happens to belong to the business in question. Boards on our pavements can make getting around even more difficult and pose a risk to safety.

One of the key issues that we have identified is that people don't know how to report these issues. You can write to Cambridgeshire County Council Highways to complain about obstacles. You can also complain to the Access Officer of your district council.

To report issues such as graffiti, fly tipping, broken paving slabs, or street lighting etc:
www.fixmystreet.com

To report problems with the highways you can phone the County Council on 0345 045 5212 or report it through their website www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk

We are working with the council to raise awareness of the ways to promote concerns.

Once again, many thanks for all your help and support.

Graham Lewis
Voice Network Coordinator
Cambridgeshire Alliance for Independent Living
Tel: 0300 111 2301
Email: graham@cambridgeshirealliance.org.uk

Improving the life of your Hearing Aid Battery

Ethan Manuell is a young audiology patient from America who wears one hearing aid. He began a study, looking into the effect wait time has on hearing aid batteries, which is the time between activating the battery and placing the battery in the hearing aid.

To activate a hearing aid battery, users need to remove a sticker on the battery which allows oxygen to mix with zinc-oxide inside the battery. What he found was if users wait 5 minutes after pulling off the sticker, the battery will last 2-3 days longer, which is significant considering batteries usually last anywhere from 2-7 days depending on the model.

Ethan explains “The more energised zinc you have, the longer it lasts. So this discovery I made, if you wait five minutes, it improves the battery life by up to 80%”

Ethan has won several awards and received recognition for his “5 minute rule” discovery, including earning a US Naval Science Award.

Source:

<http://kimt.com/2015/05/05/student-makes-discovery-when-it-comes-to-extending-hearing-aid-battery-life/>

Message from the Office

- ✚ If you are a Home Visitors please input 141 before the number you are phoning when you arrange your visit, this then withholds your number
- ✚ We are now generally operating an appointment only system in the office. If possible please ring prior to your visit

Tough Mudder Challenge

A round of applause goes to Norman's son Gary Hardy and grandson, James for undertaking the Tough Mudder challenge in aid of Cambridgeshire Hearing Help. Their gallant efforts raised the grand total of £1,157.

Tough Mudder is a 10-12 mile obstacle course designed to test physical strength and mental grit. The idea of the Tough Mudder Challenge is for participants to finish with a story to tell alongside raising funds for a selected charity. Well done Gary & James!



A message from AGE UK about advocacy services for older people

You may or may not be aware that the County Council is taking the implementation of the Care Act 2014 as an opportunity to commission a new integrated advocacy service delivered through a single contract across Cambridgeshire. This will replace the current seven individual advocacy contracts with various providers, of which Age UK Cambridgeshire is one. In addition, the Council is required to provide advocacy for carers.

We currently provide what we call an advocacy plus service for all people in Cambridgeshire over the age of 65. The plus element is support when possible to complete some of the task elements which enable people to remain independent for longer. We believe it gives our clients a louder voice.

We are running a consultation with people who currently use advocacy services or who may do so in the future, as well as current and potential providers, for their views on what would make a good and effective single advocacy service. The Council will use this feedback to help design the new single advocacy service.

The consultation is running from 13th July to 12th October 2015 and an online survey can be found on the County Council website:

http://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/site/custom_scripts/cons_details.aspx?ref=371

Please would you consider completing the short online survey, to help in the decision making?

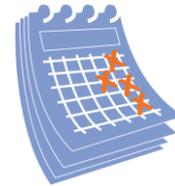
Chris Kitson
Service Manager
Information, Advocacy, Visiting Scheme & Day Services
AGE UK CAMBRIDGESHIRE
T: 01354 696541

Golden Age Fair

Roger Hill and Brian Sandall representing Cambridgeshire Hearing Help at the Golden Age Fair in Wisbech. The Fair has around 30 stalls promoting practical help and advice for older people.



Dates for your diary



Thursday, 17 th September		New Volunteer Training starts Bluntisham Village Hall
Thursday, 24 th September	2pm – 4pm	Mini Demonstration of Equipment Vicarage Close Community Room, Vicarage Close, Melbourn, Royston. SG8 6DY
Wednesday, 7 th October	2.30pm – 4.30pm	Volunteers Tea Party The Maltings, Ship Lane, Ely CB7 4BB (Please let the office know if you would like to attend)
Thursday 12 th November		Refresher/Open fit Training St Philips Church, 185 Mill Road, Cambridge. CB1 3AN
Friday 13 th November	10am-12 Noon (Drop in anytime)	Equipment Demonstration at The Priory Centre, St Neots. PE19 2BH

Chair: Ruth Kern 01954 202093

Vice Chair: Roger Hill 01353