



# Carers 4 Carers

Finding support through supporting each other

March 2016

It doesn't seem long since I was compiling the February Newsletter but with Easter early this year, we have had to bring forward the date of our March meeting to the 18th.

Last year we were approached by a research team from the Warwick Medical School at the University who have been working on developing an online, interactive support tool for carers and cared-for. They were keen to know whether carers would find such a tool useful and also to learn how much members use technology. I'm pleased to report that the team is now ready to start work on an initially simplified version of the toolkit. The overall vision for the toolkit is ambitious and the development period quite lengthy but I feel sure it will be worth it in order to have a resource—ultimately national—that will be of real use to carers and, crucially, all in one place. I'll keep you posted.

Also progressing well are investigations with Age UK Warwickshire into how more support can be offered to transition carers, those whose loved ones are in care. All support seems to stop once you hand over the reigns but caring doesn't stop, it changes and many experience emotional turmoil, often quite alone. If your loved one is in care or spent time in residential care and you would like to share some of your experiences, please get in touch. All information will be treated confidentially and can be anonymous if you wish.

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## OUR MONTHLY MEETINGS

Carers 4 Carers' monthly meetings take place on the **fourth** Friday of the month. We meet at the Kineton Village Hall, Mill Street, Kineton, CV35 OLB between 10.30 and 12 noon. We always start with time for coffee and chat and then, if a speaker or workshop is scheduled, this will usually begin at about 11 o'clock. Come when you can and stay for as long as you are able.

**18th March**— Len Mackin from Health-watch Warwickshire is investigating the experiences service users and carers have of Mental Health Services. He is particularly

interested in how service users respond to a diagnosis, if there is one.

**22nd April**— Ashley, the Independent Living Adviser from Stratford DC will be available to offer advice on various items of assistive technology and also energy efficiency in the home. Anita will also be with us and has some new mini-treatments to tempt us with—a Shiatsu pressure point scalp massage and an Exquisite Eyes massage.

**27th May**—Kate Richmond from Head of Age UK Warwickshire Psychological Services will be with us.

Carers4Carers is part of the network of Omega Care for Life Meeting Point Support Groups

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## HEALTHWATCH DISTRICT WORKSHOP

Healthwatch have been running district workshops to give service users an opportunity to feed back on their experiences of health and social care services. They want to hear about both the good and the bad, what works and what doesn't. What is said could help to shape the future of provision across Warwickshire in the future.

The nearest workshop for our members is in Leamington on 14th April at the Presbytery, 3A Dormer Place. If you would like to know more, please telephone 01926 453964 or email [robyn@healthwatchwarwickshire.co.uk](mailto:robyn@healthwatchwarwickshire.co.uk).

## UTILITY COMPANY PRIORITY SERVICE REGISTERS FOR THE VULNERABLE

Recently, with Storm Imogen roaring outside, our village experienced a five hour power cut. A power cut of that length for most is an annoying inconvenience but for a carer to be cut off from electricity, heat or hot water can be a major concern. Did you know that your utility company has a Priority Service Register? This is a list of customers who may have additional needs in relation to energy. You can sign up if you are:

- a pensioner
- disabled or chronically sick
- have a hearing or visual impairment.

Benefits of registration include :

- a password scheme to protect from

cold callers,

- free quarterly meter readings if you can't read it yourself,
- advance notice of interrupted power supply,
- **priority reconnection** if your supply is interrupted,
- alternative facilities for cooking and heating if your supply is interrupted.
- Your meter moved free of charge if it's hard for you to use or read.

To sign up, contact your utility company and ask if you are eligible. Don't forget that if you have two suppliers you will need to register with both and also re-register if you change suppliers.

## CARERS UK STATE OF CARING SURVEY 2016

This wide-ranging survey is run annually to provide evidence of what life is like for those who care and what needs to change to make life better. It is important this year in England as the cross-government Carers Strategy has been launched. The survey will provide evidence on a range of topics for submission into the strategy including finances,

technology, housing and employment.

The survey is available online at [www.carersuk.org](http://www.carersuk.org). I hope to bring some paper copies to the March meeting.



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