

NEWSLETTER July 2020

Dear Carers

Welcome to the July 2020 newsletter I hope that you and your families are well and coping through this very strange year?

The Carers team have been in work since lockdown. Due to the restrictions in place we are offering telephone support calls. If however you are in a crisis team we can do home visits we will have to wear full Protective clothing so please do call us if you are struggling and require support we are here to help.

In this month's newsletter we have articles from the learning disabilities and Children's and adolescent team leaders, I hope that you will find them interesting and useful?

Included in this newsletter are some online links to support caring at home - if you have access to a computer or have internet access on your mobile phone spend a few minutes and check them out. These links are written on the collaborative work they have done with carers like yourselves.

In Sandwell there are thousands of unpaid carers like yourselves. Many carers don't actually know that they are considered as carers. They see themselves as a relative or friend and not realising that the role they carry out supporting someone in receipt of services is the role of 'unpaid carer'.

Some carers offer emotional support and encouragement each day, others collect prescriptions, advocate at appointments & meetings or shop, clean and cook. For many of our patients here in the Black Country they simply are unable to cope living in the community without the care they receive from you.

Many Carers take to caring very easily others struggle. This is not surprising as unpaid Carers are suddenly expected to have the knowledge and skills of nurses and social workers. In Sandwell the Clinical commissioning groups the CCG recognise and value the unpaid work that you do and it is for that reason they decided to commission a carers service in Sandwell.

This Carers service is for you. WE are here to listen to you, advocate where necessary and through groups and one to one sessions offer you education about your relative or friends illness and support you to acquire the skills to care effectively whilst ensuring your wellbeing as the CARER.

Since April 2019 our team expanded to accept referrals from Learning disabilities and Children & Adolescent services (CAMHS) if you know of any friends or family that have not been offered a carers assessment and service and they care for a young person or adult in receipt of services from Black Country Healthcare here in Sandwell - give them the number on this newsletter and let them know that they can self-refer. Help is at hand, just a call away for you and any friends or family- Telephone 0121 612 6000. Take care & stay safe

Linda - Carers service manager

CARING SAFELY AT HOME

The below link is a video-based resource. It is designed to help carers look after someone safely at home. Although it is designed to help during the Covid-19 crisis, it is relevant information for all when carrying out day to day tasks.

<https://www.scie.org.uk/carers/informal-carers>

CARERS TEAM LOCKDOWN STORIES



Living with depression, anxiety, bipolar, PTSD and other mental health conditions can pose a challenge even during “normal” times.

Along comes COVID-19.....

This pandemic has created a storm. The storm consists of people suffering from stress and anxiety and it has been difficult not having the usual ways to talk and connect with other people. We cannot go for a coffee and chat about the way we are feeling due to the many

restrictions in place.

For nearly 4 months now, it's added a new twist to the lives of those with a mental health illness or learning disability, an immense challenge for their families and carers.

There has also been the additional stress about jobs, whether losing one, having to work in public despite the risk of getting sick, or having to adapt to working from home. Worries about getting prescriptions on time or being able to pay for them! So much uncertainty about the future. These are just some of the few challenges that are traumatic enough for us who do not have a mental health condition, therefore can be doubly worrying for someone that does.

However! 'Not all storms come to disrupt our lives, some come to clear your path'.

Despite all of this, keeping a positive mindset can go a long way in managing through this difficult time. Holding onto a positive attitude can help you center on things that provide you with what you need to make it through the day.

Rather than noticing what you don't have, pause and try to show gratitude for what you do have. The trick here is to really immerse yourself in gratitude not only by what you say or writing down a list of what you are grateful for, but by thanking everyone who crosses your path- including the delivery person for the boxed groceries he delivered and also YOURSELF.

I understand that keeping positive isn't simply a 'do-it-yourself' project, but step by step trying to maintain a rhythm and routine for each day can be helpful. For many, there is a community you can turn to, whether its family or friends, a place of worship, or us at the Carer's Service, we are here for you to lean on us!

The last thing I'd say, in terms of filling our spiritual glass, try and take in and admire some of the creation around us. Whether it's looking out at a field or noticing the greenery of the leaves on trees or a flower beginning to bud, that can really fill you up and give you a hopeful sense about the day.

After all when this is over, and things are back to some kind of normality, the only thing that will *REALLY* matter is how we treated and helped each other.

Gurdip.

Promoting Access to Mainstream Health Service (PAMHS)

The PAMHS team (also known as Health Facilitation) sits within Sandwell's Learning Disability Community Specialist Health Services and are based at Quayside House, Oldbury.

The team is multi-disciplinary and works alongside Community Nurses, Behaviour Support, Psychology, Occupational Therapy, Speech & Language Therapy and Physiotherapy. The team boasts years of experience and knowledge on those with learning disabilities and if they can't answer your question they will endeavour to find someone who can!

The PAMHS team consists of Dawn Garbett and Vilma Jureviciute. Both are qualified learning disability nurses. Dawn has worked in the community for over 10 years and Vilma who has recently qualified had a long placement in the team in her last year of studying.

People with learning disabilities experience health inequalities and live years younger than the general population. Health facilitation supports those with a learning disability to access and navigate health services, ensuring that a like for like service is obtained for everyone irrespective of their disability.

Support given could be as simple as helping people become desensitised to interventions, i.e. blood tests to chairing best interest meetings. PAMHS nurses work alongside all health services and professionals and help set up and develop services specifically to help those with a learning disability access mainstream health services.

Joint work has been undertaken with Sandwell & West Birmingham's Breast Unit for several years and the numbers of successful mammograms has increased significantly. Reasonable adjustments are made to ladies eligible for a mammogram and are given longer appointments, accessible information and radiographers have been given training on learning disability awareness.

No one day is the same and our work is varied. PAMHS also deliver training to GP surgery staff around annual health checks and how to deliver them. All people aged 14 and over with a learning disability have the right to receive a health check and work is continuing to ensure surgeries' learning disability registers are correct so people can be invited.

The team accepts referrals from all sources, including self-referral or from families. An assessment will be completed and a plan produced of what support can be offered. Discharge will not take place until all health outcomes have been reached.

The team can be contacted at Quayside House-Rounds Green Road-Oldbury-B69 2DG

0121 543 4287

Black & Asian People and Coronavirus

You may have read or heard lots of stories in the news about the high levels of Black and Asian people contracting coronavirus. This kind of news is understandably causing people to worry and be concerned. The following articles have been published and we thought we would share them with you.

The British Medical Journal (2020) published a report stating COVID-19 (Coronavirus) mortality disproportionately impacts BAME (Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic) UK individuals, African Americans, Swedish Somalis and the institutionalised; particularly care-home residents.

Public Health England (PHE) have stated that COVID-19 severity and mortality, appear related to vitamin D deficiency helping explain higher COVID-19 mortality rates in BAME and the obese as people from these groups are shown to produce less Vitamin D.

Furthermore Gov.co.uk states that characteristic skeletal disorders from vitamin D deficiency and low vitamin D status are increasingly linked to a wide range of health problems.

Exposure to sunlight is the major source of vitamin D synthesis. It is also found in a small number of foods. Those at risk of vitamin D deficiency are those:

- people from a minority group, such as African, African-Caribbean or South Asian
- who spend little time outdoors, housebound or institutionalised people
- those who, for religious or cultural reasons cover their entire body surface when they are outdoors
- whose diets do not contain an adequate vitamin D supply (vegetarian or vegan)

People with pigmented skin require considerably greater sun exposure to get the same level of vitamin D synthesis as fair skinned people.

The British Nutrition foundation found during the national surveys in the UK, that across the population approximately 1 in 5 people have low vitamin D levels.

People from minority ethnic groups might not get enough vitamin D from sunlight in summer so it is recommended that they should consider taking a daily supplement of vitamin D throughout the year.



If we take all this current and ongoing research into consideration during this pandemic: it may be useful to check with your doctor to see if you have a Vitamin D deficiency. Try to get as much sunshine and fresh air that you can and stay safe by adhering to the latest government guidelines.

In the next newsletter we will let you know if any of the health & wellbeing centres in Sandwell have re-opened so that those of you who wish to, can start your fitness programmes.

<https://www.nutrition.org.uk/nutritioninthenews/new-reports/983-newvitamind.html>

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/vitamin-d-deficiency-migrant-health-guide>

Sandwell CAMHS

We are living in times of uncertainty and massive change with the current health pandemic so here are some hints and tips and information you may find useful during this time.



The extensive media coverage provides helpful information but this can also be overwhelming and confusing to some young people. Family members can support children and young people to find positive ways to express their worries and anxieties. Every child and young person has their own way to do this. Sometimes engaging a child in drawing or an arts and crafts activity can help, others may prefer exercise or schoolwork. Experiment and try a variety of things and let your child decide which works for them.

It's really important to keep to a good bedtime routine, even if there is no school the next day; Baths, music, nice smells and massage can all help to improve sleep.

Wake up, get dressed and stay out of bed during the day, even if you have no plans.

Make a timetable or a list of things you can do to help remind you when you are feeling low, anxious or just bored.

Arrange video calls with family members and friends that you are not able to see at this time.

Spend at least 30 minutes each day outside, no matter what the weather!

For further resources for parents, carers and young people go to <https://www.blackcountryminds.com> and click on the resources page. CAMHS contact number: **0121 612 6620**

NEW 24/7 MENTAL HEALTH HELPLINE FOR BLACK COUNTRY RESIDENTS

The helpline is manned by specialist mental health staff who will provide advice and support and can also signpost to other mental health services if these are required.

Call **0345 646 0827**.

Existing service users are encouraged to maintain their existing contact with our services.

The banner is blue with white and yellow text. At the top right is the NHS logo. The main text reads "24/7 helpline" in large white letters, followed by "here to support you with your mental health" in smaller white text. Below that, in yellow, is "Feel unable to cope and need to speak to someone urgently?". At the bottom, it says "Call 0345 646 0827" in white. To the left of the call number is a white telephone handset icon. Below the call number, it lists "Press option 1 If you live in Sandwell or Wolverhampton" and "Press option 2 If you live in Dudley or Walsall".



FACE MASKS MUST BE WORN!

In line with government guidance face masks **MUST** be worn. Please ensure when out shopping and in crowds you are prepared and have a mask. Please ensure you continue regular hand hygiene, social distancing.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/how-to-wear-and-make-a-cloth-face-covering/how-to-wear-and-make-a-cloth-face-covering>