

# "Having a Voice"

The Newsletter for Mental Health Carers

*Summer 2020*

For more information about anything in this newsletter or to find out more about our support for carers of people living with a mental health problem, please contact:

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*Making Carers Count*

## *Welcome*

Hello and welcome to our Summer COVID-19 newsletter. It's been a time of change and challenges and some people are still facing difficulties. We wanted to remind you that Carers in Hertfordshire is still here to support you in your caring role in a variety of ways. You can learn more about how we're supporting unpaid carers on page 2.

The Involvement Team has been hosting weekly online forums using Zoom, where carers can discuss how services are operating under the lockdown restrictions, share coping strategies, and support one another. We plan to include guest speakers in the near future, who will be able to answer some of your questions. If you would like more information on how to join, please contact a member of the team (details to the left).

Also in this newsletter is information about online learning opportunities, an update about Turning Point's Complex Needs Service, and details about Hertfordshire Partnership University NHS Foundation Trust's services through the COVID-19 pandemic and its recovery plans.



*Pictured L-R are Will Davis, Sarah Williams, Rosemarie Muldoon and Nicola Beedell.*

## **Our Carers' Involvement Network Explained**

*We often refer to our "Mental Health Network" or "Carers' Involvement Network", but what does this mean?*

All unpaid carers known to Carers in Hertfordshire are invited to take part in any activities or events that we are involved with. To make sure that we reach as many people as we can, we have set up involvement networks that carers are welcome to join. Those who have joined our networks are kept informed about any relevant consultations or discussions which are taking place. They may also have the chance to respond to online surveys or be invited to join one-off workshops or events. People who join the network also receive notes and minutes from our forums.

If you would like to check whether you are a member of our Mental Health Network, or if you have any questions, please email Nicola Beedell, one of our Carers Involvement and Development Workers, at [nicola.beedell@carersinherts.org.uk](mailto:nicola.beedell@carersinherts.org.uk) or call 01992 58 69 69.

## How Carers in Hertfordshire can support you during coronavirus

Our offices remain open Monday to Friday, 9am - 5.30pm (4.30pm on a Friday) with Carer Support Advisors available to talk to you about your caring role by phone from 9.30am (9am on a Friday).

Other services currently available include:

**Carers' Passport Discount Card** - this gives you access to discounts or offers in businesses across the county and also helps to identify you as a carer for **some** supermarkets' priority shopping hours.

**Keep in Touch calls** - we offer calls to any carers who would like regular support and a chat.

**Bereavement Support** - we offer support during this difficult time. Currently, this would be provided via telephone.

**Make a Difference** - this scheme provides a small one off payment to help you access a break to improve your own health and wellbeing whilst caring. It could be used to access some technology to help communicate with family and friends.

**Website** - At [www.carersinherts.org.uk](http://www.carersinherts.org.uk) you will find some activities to do whilst staying at home or self-isolating, and online learning including our sleep and resilience workshops.

We also provide **mentoring**, a **Young Carers Service**, and dementia specialist **Admiral Nurses**, with support mainly over the phone at present.

If you would like more information, please call 01992 58 69 69.



*Picture from a young carer we support.*

### Turning Point update about its Complex Needs Service and referrals pathway

Turning Point has completed a review of its Complex Needs Service that is delivered to individuals, carers, and professionals across Hertfordshire and has made some changes to its referral pathway to improve service delivery.

Turning Point re-opened its referral pathway at the start of June 2020 and offers a wide and supportive triage system where individuals will be supported in a more effective and dynamic manner.

People referred to the service or self-referring will have initial contact from a dedicated member of the team within five working days. Then a triage system has been designed to provide full and comprehensive needs and risk assessment within 10 working days, followed by person-centered advice, information and signposting support. Where a worker is required, one will be allocated.

A spokesperson for Turning Point said: "Please be assured we are continuing to deliver support at this challenging time and where individuals require further practical support, this is being provided."

If you would like to make a referral to the service or have any queries, please call 01707 891120 or email [cns@turning-point.co.uk](mailto:cns@turning-point.co.uk). You can also visit [www.turning-point.co.uk](http://www.turning-point.co.uk) for help or more information.

### How HertsHelp can help you

HertsHelp is a network of community organisations in Hertfordshire working together. They are there to listen and help you find independent support, guidance and the information you need to get the most out of life. They can point you in the right direction if you don't know where to turn.

During this time, the COVID-19 pandemic, they are helping people with accessing food deliveries, collecting medication and many other things. Their support is available by emailing [info@hertshelp.net](mailto:info@hertshelp.net) or calling 0300 123 4044. For the website visit [www.hertshelp.net](http://www.hertshelp.net)

HertsHelp is currently operating seven days a week, 8am-8pm Monday to Friday and 10am-6pm Saturday and Sunday.



## Spotlight on health trust and how it's making carers and caring visible

As part of Carers Week in June, we invited Hertfordshire Partnership University NHS Foundation Trust (HPFT) to take part in a virtual "Making Caring Visible" event – the theme of the week. Carers could put their questions to Mike Barratt, the Trust's Interim Deputy Director of Service Delivery and Service User Experience.

As coronavirus restrictions are easing, HPFT is now looking at restoring services that had paused and reshaping provision. Co-production - service user/carer engagement - is central to this.

Mike said: "The Trust appreciated being involved in the session. I want to recognise the work unpaid carers do day in and day out and know the toll it can take on you and the person with lived experience of mental ill health. It's important to us that we recognise your role in getting our services right. As we review our services moving forward from the COVID-19 lockdown, carer and service user engagement will be essential."

Here are the key messages that came out of the meeting.

- Admissions to Kingfisher Court, Radlett, are based on each person's needs.
- Community staff have been brought into in-patient settings to ensure safe cover where staff are ill or self-isolating and provide additional support as and when needed.
- There is a 24/7 helpline for people in a crisis, which is **0300 777 0707**. Alternatively, Hertfordshire residents can access support via NHS 111 by selecting option 2 for mental health services, or for non-urgent enquiries email [hpft.spa@nhs.net](mailto:hpft.spa@nhs.net). The Crisis Team is enhanced with additional clinicians and there are established A&E Diversion Services (hubs at the Orchards in Hemel Hempstead and Lister Hospital in Stevenage). These will remain for now as they seem to be beneficial, but HPFT want to hear from carers and service users about how well they are working.
- Prior to COVID-19, HPFT had identified 40 people who regularly use emergency services. They were allocated specific consultant and psychology support, but unfortunately during COVID-19 this was put on hold. This work will be picked up again and HPFT will look at the impact of COVID-19 on this group.
- A positive outcome of COVID-19 is the advance in use of technology, such as meetings via video. HPFT are surveying some service users with a learning disability and their carers about their experience of the use of technology during the coronavirus. Text services and other ways of communication may be considered in the future.
- Care co-ordination is a key role in supporting someone's mental health, and equally involving the carer if that's agreed in the care plan. There should be an opportunity to change Care Co-ordinators if it's not working out and if a Care Co-ordinator or member of staff that supports you or the person you care for is leaving HPFT, you should be informed and transition arrangements discussed. During the pandemic, with many community staff working from home, the usual Care Co-ordinators' contacts may have been disrupted. However, if people were not going to be contacted for a period of time or supported by a different person to whom they usually work with, they should have been informed of this. The Care Co-ordinators were contacting those at higher risk, although not necessarily their regular contacts, and those involved would have been advised about what was happening. Care co-ordination is now being restored to more normal provision along with other services.
- The Triangle of Care is considered a key element of HPFT's support and treatment of individuals

where service users, carers and clinicians work together to form the strongest possible team to address issues and provide care. E-learning for HPFT staff about the Triangle of Care has been developed involving carers and service users and will be implemented in the near future.

**For a copy of the presentation or minutes please call 01992 58 69 69 or email a member of the Involvement Team (details on the first page).**

**To learn more about HPFT visit [www.hpft.nhs.uk](http://www.hpft.nhs.uk) or call 0300 777 0707.**



*Our Carers Week Q&A session with HPFT.*

# Learning skills during lockdown and beyond

Hertfordshire's New Leaf Recovery and Wellbeing College offers a range of free educational short courses to give adults in the county the practical skills and knowledge to better manage their emotional and physical wellbeing.

The college offers students a range of opportunities, inspires hope, and provides tools and information to help people take back control of their life. Anyone aged 18 or living in Hertfordshire can attend or access the college's free courses.

Previous students have reported that they benefitted by:

- ◇ Feeling more in control of their situation or empowered to change it.
- ◇ Overcoming fears and anxieties.
- ◇ Learning life skills to cope with pressure.
- ◇ Identifying and eliminating stressors in their life.
- ◇ Lifting their depression.
- ◇ Having the time to reflect.
- ◇ Becoming more creative.
- ◇ Learning how to improve relationships with others.
- ◇ Feeling less isolated and gaining new friends.
- ◇ Improving self-awareness and mindfulness.
- ◇ Starting new or rediscovering favourite hobbies.
- ◇ Building opportunities within their existing situation.



Due to the coronavirus, the college converted their courses into online versions, delivering them via Zoom. This has given them an opportunity to reach more adults in Hertfordshire.

There are also new courses to help with improving peoples' moods during the lockdown, such as the 'Keeping Well during Social Isolation' course. Those who attend this course report that they feel better about the current situation, find it easier to relax and feel inspired by hearing others' stories.

In addition to the courses, the college has some other online resources, such as breathing exercises, tips for keeping well at home and suggestions about what to do during the lockdown. Students can get involved with the college or even join workshops to help with future employment.

The New Leaf College is run by Hertfordshire Partnership University NHS Foundation Trust and funded by Hertfordshire County Council and the NHS. If you want to join a free course you can book online at [www.newleafcollege.co.uk](http://www.newleafcollege.co.uk) or call 01442 864966.

## Other free learning opportunities

**We, Carers in Hertfordshire**, have produced some workshops you can do online at your leisure, including one with tips for getting better sleep and another about managing stress. In addition, we have created some resources about suggestions to keep well or occupied during the coronavirus restrictions. They are available on our website at [www.carersinherts.org.uk](http://www.carersinherts.org.uk)

We also have developed some online courses for carers, delivered via Zoom. Upcoming sessions include first aid and falls prevention. We regularly update our website with details of our free learning opportunities at [www.carersinherts.org.uk/events](http://www.carersinherts.org.uk/events) or you can call us on 01992 58 69 69.

**Mind in Mid Herts** also has some living well and mental health courses online until at least early August 2020. For more information visit [www.mindinmidherts.org.uk/training-and-workshops](http://www.mindinmidherts.org.uk/training-and-workshops) Alternatively, you can call 03303 208100 or email [training@mindinmidherts.org.uk](mailto:training@mindinmidherts.org.uk)

**Open University** has a range of free online courses via OpenLearn. Find out more at [www.open.edu/openlearn/education/free-courses](http://www.open.edu/openlearn/education/free-courses) Although, the organisation is unable to take calls about courses it does offer a web chat function or you can email [openlearn@open.ac.uk](mailto:openlearn@open.ac.uk)

