



- [Page 1](#)  
Welcome
- [Page 2](#)  
Carers Lunches  
Top of the Hops!
- [Pages 3-7](#)  
Updates from Bracknell  
Forest Council  
*Including launch of  
Carer Emergency Card*
- [Pages 8-10](#)  
Support Groups
- [Page 11](#)  
Accessible Information  
Standard  
Community Knowledge  
Needed!  
Ex-carers  
Save the Date!
- [Pages 12-14](#)  
Let's talk about.....
- [Page 15-16](#)  
Training
- [Page 17](#)  
Digital Resources from  
Carers UK  
Grants for Individuals
- [Page 18](#)  
Healthwatch Bracknell  
Forest  
Mental Health Forum
- [Pages 19-23](#)  
SIGNAL Evaluation  
Survey
- [Page 24](#)  
Carer Stories
- [Pages 25-26](#)  
Community Events
- [Page 27](#)  
Useful Contacts  
Contact Details for  
SIGNAL



## WELCOME!

SIGNAL provides free signposting, information, guidance, networking, advice and learning to unpaid (non-professional) carers who care for someone in Bracknell Forest.

A carer is someone who provides unpaid help and support to family or friends. You could be caring for a partner, child, relative, friend or a neighbour who is ill, frail, disabled or who has mental health or substance misuse problems, anyone can become a carer at any age.

Recognising yourself as a carer can be a way of acknowledging that you have an important role. Your role may be rewarding but one which can also be stressful and demanding. As a carer it is important that you are aware of the range of services available to support you in your caring role and to help you manage the impact caring has on your own health and well-being.

### Supporting young carers

Support for carers under 18 is provided by Bracknell Forest Council. We work closely with the service to ensure a smooth transition for carers approaching adulthood.

*Young.Carers@bracknell-forest.gov.uk*      **01344 464731**

### Supporting carers of children and young people with additional needs

Provided by the Information, Advice and Support Service  
*SEND.support@bracknell-forest.gov.uk*      **01344 354011**

### Supporting carers of people who live outside of Bracknell Forest

Please register with us for general information, advice and support. We will also put you in touch with the relevant local carers service.

## Carers Lunches

Bracknell Forest Council provides SIGNAL with funding for 4 carers lunches throughout the year. These are a valuable opportunity for you to have a break from your caring responsibilities, to meet other carers and also to speak to members of SIGNAL staff who are also valuable sources of information. At the last lunch in October Trading Standards gave a talk on how people can protect themselves from frauds and scams and we also received updates from Bracknell Forest Council staff on the new Emergency Card Scheme and the new Domiciliary Care arrangements.

**SAVE THE DATE!** The next carers lunch will be held on Friday 19<sup>th</sup> January 2018 12 noon-2.30pm. An invitation providing more details and an RSVP will be sent nearer the time.

## Top of the Hops!

During Carers Week in June Signal worked with other local groups and organisations to provide carers with the chance to try something new for free. One person who decided to try the activities to see if there was something he liked was Peter.

Peter cares for his wife and said "I did take up the challenge and did attend three taster sessions featured in Carers Week. These were Tai Chi, Yoga and Tap Dancing. Surprisingly, I have decided to continue with the tap dancing classes. Just goes to show, you don't know what will interest you until you give it a try."

Peter has said that tap dancing, as well as keeping him fit, gives him some respite from his caring role and also the chance to socialise and mix with new people. "It is something I can practice at home and be part of a larger group so it suits me - around my role as a carer. I have signed up for classes now and am thoroughly enjoying it. I would encourage all carers to try something new as you never know what you may like."



# Updates from Bracknell Forest Council

## **Conversations Model – Melanie O'Rourke, Head of Adult Community Team**

In November Bracknell Forest Council's Adults Teams adopted a new way of working called Conversations, which is part of the Adult Social Care Transformation Programme.

We have gone back to basics and tried to reduce unnecessary processes and bureaucracy so that we can help people quicker. We want to listen more and question less. So for this reason, some of the forms that people may be currently familiar with have been removed for both individuals and their carers.....So the good news is there is no more 14 page Carers Self-Assessment Form! We will sit down and listen to you.

We hope that the support people receive be it a person with their own care needs or their carer will be more proportionate, and this is where the conversations approach comes in.

We have separated out the 3 key phases of the support we provide

### 1<sup>st</sup> CONVERSATION

- We will always start here and work together to help you to regain control of your circumstances and independence
- We will not focus on eligibility, but on early help and prevention
- Equipment can be provided, be it equipment to help the person mobilise or to manage a sensory impairment as well as Telecare in which we have simple devices to help with everyday life, such as medication dispensers to prompt when to take medication
- We will explore our new customer web page with the person. Help Yourself Online to see if there are any local community groups or support networks you can link in to <http://helpyourself.bracknell-forest.gov.uk/>

If you still need support, or you are experiencing a crisis we would move to a 2<sup>nd</sup> Conversation

## Updates from Bracknell Forest Council (cont.)

### Conversations Model – Melanie O'Rourke, Head of Adult Community Team (continued)

#### 2<sup>nd</sup> CONVERSATION

- We will work with you to identify all the issues
- We will then help you to prioritise which we tackle first
- Where needed we could provide short terms support to get you through the crisis
- Once the crisis is over we will develop a contingency plan to reduce the likelihood of similar issues in the future

If after the second Conversation there are ongoing long term needs we would move to the statutory process of assessment.

#### 3<sup>rd</sup> CONVERSATION

- Complete the statutory assessment
- Create a support package based on your long term needs

If your care needs change again, we do not want to make assumptions so we will go back to the 1<sup>st</sup> conversation and work our way through.

Another matter I wanted to raise was about the timings of carers assessments. Where people have the review of their long term care, there has been occasions when the carers assessment has not been tied in. Carers are asking for their carers assessment to be completed *following* the persons review so that it can reflect any changes of the cared for person's care. We will endeavour to work in this way going forward.

### The new approach to home-based social care – Rifit Hussain-Curtis, Joint Commissioning Manager

Over the past five years, the council has seen an increased demand for social care services with a doubling of costs to support the same number of people. The council has put in place a new approach to help people maintain and improve their independence while ensuring the needs of residents continue to be met.

## Updates from Bracknell Forest Council (cont.)

### **The new approach to home-based social care – Rifit Hussain-Curtis, Joint Commissioning Manager (continued)**

Five domiciliary care providers have been chosen for a new home care framework to deliver and provide support to local people in ways that help them remain as independent as possible. The change means a choice of support is available to enable people achieve their goals, including helping people to access resources in the community.

The new home care framework contract was awarded on the 17 May 2017. People were given the option to continue with an existing provider, who is not on the new framework, through a direct payment or transfer to one of the successful providers. The new contracts with providers started on 14 August 2017, with services gradually transferring to the new providers.

The 5 successful organisations are:

Care 1st Ltd

Loving Angels Care Ltd

Oxford House Community Care

Q Care Ltd

Watershed Care Services Ltd

The new approach to home care focuses on helping people achieve their own individual goals and enhance their quality of life. Providers have a much more active role in working with people to plan their support, helping people to regain their confidence and skills to maximise independence and connecting with the voluntary sector. They are now able to design a personalised well being plan to help the person they're working with achieve their goals, rather than just carrying out specific tasks on their behalf. Support may include providing practical help such as personal care or shopping, emotional support in helping a person to regain their confidence after a fall, or help to increase their independence through supporting them to be part of the community.

The Council are monitoring performance and undertaking regular meetings with Providers and local people to make sure that quality care and support is being fulfilled. For further information, please visit Bracknell Forest Council website or contact the Joint Commissioning Team.

## Updates from Bracknell Forest Council (cont.)

### Change to the Emergency Respite Scheme – Launch of the Carer Emergency Card

Emma Willmott, Carers Development Worker / SIGNAL Team

The Emergency Respite Scheme has been replaced by the 'Carer Emergency Support'. The scheme itself has very few changes.

The key change is that you will not require an assessment and can register through SIGNAL. You will be provided with an emergency card to carry with emergency contact numbers.

If you are already on the current scheme, please do not worry. The changes have been made to make this more efficient and easy to access.

### Carer Emergency Card

Do you ever wonder what would happen if an emergency meant that you couldn't provide the care you usually do? How would people know you were a carer? How would people know WHO to contact?

Having a Carers Emergency Card and making simple plans with family, friends and neighbours who could help in an emergency can help give you peace of mind.

### What is the Carers Emergency Card?

The Carers Emergency Card is a small, credit card sized card that lets other people know in an emergency that the person you care for relies on you. The card should be carried with you at all times, for example in your bag or wallet. This provides the reassurance that, in an emergency, there are backup plans in place for the person you care for so they won't be left without support. A card is also given to the person you care for with your information. The cards are FREE.

### What's included?

This pack includes cards for both you as the carer and the individual you care for, and 2 forms for you to fill out and give to your emergency contacts. SIGNAL, the local carers service, are working with the council to support carers and provide Carers Emergency Card packs. If you have any questions, want support, or need replacement or additional cards, contact SIGNAL.

# Updates from Bracknell Forest Council (cont.)

## Carer Emergency Card (continued)

### Making your plans

- Identify who your chosen emergency contacts are: do you or the person you care for have family, friends or neighbours who could help?
- Talk to them about what would happen in any emergency if they needed to step in
- Fill out the contact form for them so they have all the important information they need
- Think about your overall emergency plans; do you have:
  - A Message in a Bottle?
  - A Keysafe?
  - “In case of emergency” (ICE) numbers in your phone?

### How does the Carer Emergency Card work?

- In an accident/incident, the emergency services would find your Carer Emergency Card and contact your emergency contacts so they could step in to provide support.
- If your contacts are not available then as a backup option, Adult Social Care or the Emergency Duty Team would be contacted to ensure that the person you care for is kept safe. (You can put their number on your card).

### Receiving your pack

- If you were registered with the previous scheme with Forestcare you should have already received your Carer Emergency Card pack from Bracknell Forest Council.
- If you are registered with SIGNAL as a carer and receive your newsletter by post it is enclosed.
- If you receive your newsletter by email and we have a postal address for you, we have sent your pack in the post.
- If you receive your newsletter by email and we do not have a postal address for you, we have sent you an email asking for a postal address

\* The pack states the cards are credit card size to fit in your wallet. Bracknell Forest Council, who print the packs, are aware that in the first print run this is not the case and will amend in future. Please let us know if you have any other feedback for us to pass to the council.

## Support Groups

We are trying to map all of the local carers support groups in the area so that we can provide you with a regular up-to-date list. If you are involved in a group please let us have the details. We would rather receive this information multiple times than run the risk of overlooking a group.

### Ascot Area Alzheimer's (Triple A) Carers Lunch

Time: 12 noon – 2.30pm  
Dates/When: Fourth Monday of the month  
Where: Carnation Hall, 29 Chavey Down Road, Winkfield Row, Bracknell, RG42 7PU  
Contact: 01344 486349 or 01344 621491

### Ascot Area Alzheimer's (Triple A) Lunchtime meeting, all welcome (Funded by SIGNAL)

Time: 12.30pm – 2.30pm  
Dates/When: Third Monday of the month (Please check 2018 dates with organiser)  
Where: St Michael's Church Hall, Crowthorne Road, Bracknell, RG12 7ER  
Contact: 01344 486349 or 01344 621491

### Autism Berkshire

Time: 9.30am – 11.30am  
Dates/When: Monthly on Mondays during school term times.  
Where: Forest Park Community Centre, Horndean Road, Forest Park, Bracknell, RG12 0XQ  
Contact: 01189 594 594      [contact@autismberkshire.org.uk](mailto:contact@autismberkshire.org.uk)

### Bracknell Forest Mental Health Carers Support Group

Time: 2.00pm – 4.00pm  
Dates/When: First Tuesday of the month (excluding January & August) – *Dates are subject to change in 2018 so please check with organiser*  
Where: Coopers Hill, Crowthorne Road North, Off Bagshot Road, Bracknell, RG12 7QS  
Contact: 07972 609621



## Support Groups (continued)

### Bracknell Forest Carers Support Group Coffee Evenings

Time: 5.30pm – 7.00pm

Dates/When: Tuesdays (*Dates are subject to change in 2018 so please check with organiser*)

Where: South Hill Park Café, Ringmead, Bracknell, RG12 7PA

Contact: 07972 609621

*Non-alcoholic drinks are paid for by the group organiser*

### Bracknell Forest Carers Support Group Coffee Mornings

Time: 10.00am – 12 noon

Dates/When: Wednesdays (*Dates are subject to change in 2018 so please check with organiser*)

Where: Crown Wood Community Centre, Opladen Way, Bracknell, RG12 0PE

Contact: 07972 609621

*These mornings are mainly for ex-carers but no carer is turned away*

### Coffee and Chat

Time: 10.00am – 12 noon

Dates/When: Every Wednesday

Where: The Look In Café, Great Hollands Square, Bracknell, RG12 8UX

Contact: Bill on 01344 421292

*If you, or anyone you know who is, affected by dementia, memory loss or confusion you are welcome to drop in for tea and a chat*

### Coffee for Carers at Crowthorne Library

Time: 10.00am – 11.30am

Dates/When: Second Friday of the month

Where: Crowthorne Library, 162 High Street, Crowthorne, RG45 7AT

Contact: 01344 776431 *No booking required, donations for refreshments*

## Support Groups (continued)

### Konnections Mums

A support group run by mothers for mothers of children with special needs or disabilities

Time: 10.30am – 12 noon

Dates/When: Friday mornings during school term time

Where: K2 Lounge, Kerith Community Church, K2 Building, Bracknell, RG12 1EH

Contact: 01344 828802                      jo.dawson@kerith.co.uk

### Memory Café

For people with dementia and their carers run by The Alzheimer's Society

Time: 11.00am – 12.30pm

Dates/When: Second Friday of the month

Where: Coopers Hill, Crowthorne Road North, Off Bagshot Road, Bracknell,  
RG12 7QS

Contact: 01344 423583

### Wokingham, Bracknell & District Mencap - Carers coffee mornings/lunches

For families and carers of people with learning disabilities and/or autism

Dates/When: Third Thursday of the month provide either a coffee morning or a lunch

Where: *Coffee mornings:* Suite 2, Oakmeade Place, Terrace Road South, Binfield,  
RG42 4JF

*Lunches:* The New Priestwood Community Centre, Priestwood Court Road,  
Bracknell, RG42 1TU

Contact: 0300 777 8539

Online forums or 'virtual' support groups can also help you meet other carers and share and learn from each other's experiences. Just remember to stay safe online.

Carers UK Forum: <http://www.carersuk.org/forum>

## Accessible Information Standard

Although we are 'digital by default' it is important that we produce information in the formats people need.

Many of the carers we support have not confirmed with us what format best meets any communication needs or preferences they have.

Please let us know if you need communication in a different format and in the coming months we will be trying to confirm this information with all people signed up to SIGNAL.

## Newsletters

If you have something to include in the next quarterly newsletter please let us know by the start of February 2018.

## Community Knowledge Needed!

We now have a mobile information vehicle which will allow us to travel around the borough. It has a private office, is fully accessible and is 8.5 metres long!

Do you know anywhere that may be suitable for us to regularly visit? We are already talking to local supermarkets but want to reach as many people as possible.

Do you know somewhere that could benefit from a SIGNAL poster or know of a local newsletter where we could place an advert?

**Please contact the SIGNAL office if you can help with any of the above.**

**Thank you**

## Ex-carers

SIGNAL works with current carers and those who have recently stopped providing care and support (6-12 months).

Some ex-carers have said they still want to be involved with SIGNAL.

If you would be interested in becoming a 'Carer Buddy', providing friendly support for new carers, please let us know. If we have enough interest we will hold a meeting in 2018.

## Save the Date!

A 'Burns Night' inspired social event will be held in Ascot on the afternoon of Sunday 28<sup>th</sup> January 2018. This is for both carers and the cared for. Priority will be given to those who couldn't book onto the tea dance.

Invitations will be sent in the New Year.

## Let's talk about.....

### Protecting yourself from fraud, scams and cyber crime

Following on from the presentation from Trading Standards at the last Carers Lunch we have put together some top tips, details of places to get further information and asked Trading Standards to answer a question we received from a carer about contactless cards.

#### Tips to protect yourself from fraud (from ActionFraud)

1. Do not give any personal information (name, address, bank details, email or phone number) to organisations or people before verifying their credentials.
2. Many frauds start with a phishing email. Remember that banks and financial institutions will not send you an email asking you to click on a link and confirm your bank details. Do not trust such emails, even if they look genuine. You can always call your bank using the phone number on a genuine piece of correspondence, website (typed directly into the address bar) or the phone book to check if you're not sure.
3. Destroy and preferably shred receipts with your card details on and post with your name and address on. Identity fraudsters don't need much information in order to be able to clone your identity.
4. Make sure your computer has up-to-date anti-virus software and a firewall installed. Ensure your browser is set to the highest level of security notification and monitoring to prevent malware issues and computer crimes.
5. Sign-up to Verified by Visa or MasterCard Secure Code whenever you are given the option while shopping online. This involves you registering a password with your card company and adds an additional layer of security to online transactions with signed-up retailers.
6. If you receive bills, invoices or receipts for things you haven't bought, or financial institutions you don't normally deal with contact you about outstanding debts, take action. Your identity may have been stolen.

## Let's talk about.....(continued)

7. You should regularly get a copy of your credit file and check it for entries you don't recognise. Callcredit, Equifax, Experian, ClearScore and Noddle can all provide your credit file. An identity protection service such as ProtectMyID monitors your Experian credit report and alerts you by email or SMS to potential fraudulent activity. If it's fraud, a dedicated caseworker will help you resolve everything.

8. Be extremely wary of post, phone calls or emails offering you business deals out of the blue. If an offer seems too good to be true, it probably is. Always question it.

9. If you have been a victim of fraud, be aware of **fraud recovery fraud**. This is when fraudsters pretend to be a lawyer or a law enforcement officer and tell you they can help you recover the money you've already lost.

10. If you need advice about fraud, call Action Fraud on 0300 123 2040 to discuss your situation with one of our specialist fraud advisers. To report a fraud, you can either use our online fraud reporting form or make your report by calling 0300 123 2040.

Visit the ActionFraud website for more information:

<https://www.actionfraud.police.uk/>

To access the online reporting form visit:

[https://www.actionfraud.police.uk/report\\_fraud](https://www.actionfraud.police.uk/report_fraud)

Independent Age also produce a useful booklet called "Scamwise". You can contact the SIGNAL office for a copy.

## Let's talk about.....(continued)

After our lunch a carer was concerned because they had heard that scammers could 'read' your contactless card with a portable reader and take money from your bank account. So we asked Malcolm Phillips from Trading Standards (who gave the talk) for his advice.

### Contactless Cards.

- In order to be able to receive any money from a card payment, a retailer account must be set up with an acquiring bank.
- All acquirers carry out thorough security checks before setting up an account and monitor new accounts for any suspicious activity. Every card payment is fully traceable, right through to the recipient account, meaning if any fraud is reported the recipient is easily identifiable.
- It is theoretically possible that someone could use a registered terminal that is connected to a retail account, but it would be easy to track the thief down.
- All cardholders in the UK and US are fully protected against fraud and would receive money back from their bank.
- If your pocket was picked you would be unable to track the thief down and the banks would not refund you.

### **So it is much safer to use your contactless card when out shopping than cash!**

If you do use your card to withdraw cash at the ATM remember:

- Don't tell anyone your PIN.
- Don't let people distract you while you use an ATM or use it if people are lingering there.
- Don't use an ATM if there are signs it has been tampered with – e.g. a loose keypad or wobbly card slot (cash machines in banks are less likely to have been tampered with)
- Keep your bank's emergency phone number with you in case of emergencies, for example in your phone.

## Training

We have had difficulty sourcing affordable Moving & Handling people (Manual Handling) training for carers and know that some of you have been waiting for this. We are delighted to say, thanks to a local training company iHasco, we can now offer this (see below). We are unable to offer training in using equipment, such as hoists, as these are all different and should be provided by the organisation supplying the equipment.

First Aid. We are now, in partnership with the British Red Cross, able to offer a course for carers rather than the longer more formal, accredited courses. The first of these sessions is on the 8<sup>th</sup> of December so please do let us know if you would like to book. If lack of transport is a barrier to you attending, please let us know and we can arrange this for you.

### Training available:

SIGNAL have purchased the following training courses, whilst they are primarily targeted at people working in the care sector, as carers you should also find them useful.

These courses can be carried out online by yourself at home, at our office with support or in a classroom setting.

If you would like to register for one of these courses online, would like to arrange to complete them in the office or would like to be added to the waiting list for the next classroom session, please let us know.

### Assessing Mental Capacity

This Assessing Mental Capacity training course guides you through the process of assessing a person's mental capacity to make decisions for themselves. It looks at the Mental Capacity Act 2005 and the 5 key principles involved in assessing mental capacity. It also looks at capacity assessment examples and how to deal with disagreements and complaints.

## Training (continued)

### **Moving & Handling People**

This online Moving and Handling training explains the process of moving someone safely and gives step-by-step guidance, showing the most common lifts and moves. This training is ideal for those working in the care sector, where moving and handling people are regular occurrences.

### **Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults**

Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults is a course for anyone who works with, helps, or supports adults at risk. It covers the signs of abuse and explains what to do if you suspect something is happening to a vulnerable adult. It's all about sensitive handling and timely intervention.

### **First Aid for Carers (Delivered by British Red Cross)**

Friday 8<sup>th</sup> December 2017, 10.30am – 12.30pm

Trax, Mill Ride (Off of Fernbank Road), North Ascot, SL5 8JW

Wednesday 24<sup>th</sup> January 2018, 10.30am – 12.30pm

Dedworth Green Baptist Church, Smiths Lane, Windsor, SL4 5PE

You can attend either venue, there is car parking available but please advise us if you have any communication needs. Places are limited so you must call the office to book.

### **Training provided by other organisations:**

There is a six week or 'one-full day' course offered to carers of people with dementia. It is designed to raise awareness of different aspects of dementia. An evening course is now available. As well as providing practical support and advice it also enables carers to meet and interact with others in similar situations.

To find out more please contact the Dementia Advisor, Karen White, on 01344 823220



## Digital Resources from Carers UK

Bracknell Forest Council has joined forces with national charity Carers UK to offer support to carers via an online platform that can be accessed 24/7. At a click of a mouse carers in Bracknell Forest have free access to the Digital Resource for Carers; an online environment that hosts a range of resources to help carers manage care and caring.

Carers in Bracknell Forest can access digital resources from Carers UK for free by visiting:

<http://www.signal4carers.org.uk/bfcarers/bfnoticeboard/39-digital-resources-from-carers-uk>

The resources include:

- **Jointly**, an app that enables people to set up circles of care. Once a user sets up a Jointly circle they can invite as many people as they want to share the care with them at no additional cost.
- **About Me e-learning course**. The topics covered aim to support you in your caring role including how to build up a network of help and support, know your rights as a carer and how to develop strategies to help you to get all the sleep you need.
- **Nutrition e-learning course**. Working with Nutricia, this aims to help carers understand the role of nutrition both for themselves and for the person they are looking after.
- **The Upfront Guide to Caring**. This is an online assessment tool that enables any carer visiting the Carers UK website to be directed to specific sections of the site for information relevant to their situation and then produces a short action plan to help them plan next steps.

## Grants for individuals

SIGNAL have subscribed to the NCVO database of funders who provide grants to individuals in need. If you, or the person you care for, is in financial need or there is a piece of equipment that would make life better please let us know and we can undertake a search to see if you are eligible to make an application. SIGNAL can help you with any application forms and, if required, help gather the evidence you may need (such as a letter from a GP).

## Healthwatch Bracknell Forest

**healthwatch**  
Bracknell Forest

Helping you get  
**the BEST**  
out of local  
health and social  
care services

Healthwatch Bracknell Forest is your local independent service gathering and representing your views about health and social care.

We want to **hear** your experiences...  
 • What is **good**?  
 • What can be **improved**?

We share your **feedback** with **providers, commissioners and decision makers** to help shape services

**THIS WAY** We help you get the **information** you need and **direct** you to the right services

enquiries@healthwatchbracknellforest.co.uk  
 www.healthwatchbracknellforest.co.uk

Healthwatch Bracknell Forest  
 20-21 Market Street  
 Bracknell, RG12 1JG  
 facebook.com/healthwatchBF  
 @healthwatchBF  
 01344 266 911

Host: The Ark Trust Ltd | www.theark.org.uk  
 Company Number: 04504955 Charity Number: 1098204

Carers often have a lot of valuable experience navigating the local health and social care system. If you, or the person you care for, have any feedback – good or bad – on services please let Healthwatch Bracknell Forest know.

Feedback helps staff represent the views of public at meetings about current local services and services being planned for the future.

Healthwatch Bracknell Forest are also looking for local volunteers for “Enter and View” visits; opportunities to visit and observe services and talk to patients and clients.

## NEW - Mental Health Forum

A place to discuss mental health issues. This is an independent forum, run by Healthwatch Bracknell Forest and financed by the Community Mental Health Team. It is for anyone concerned with these issues, including carers.

The first meeting will be held on Thursday 18<sup>th</sup> January 2018, 11am-1.30pm at Easthampstead Baptist Church. A free lunch is provided so it is essential you let Healthwatch know you are coming and if you have any access or dietary requirements. **01344 266 911** or [enquiries@healthwatchbracknellforest.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@healthwatchbracknellforest.co.uk)

## SIGNAL Evaluation Survey

In late August surveys were sent to everyone, carers, ex-carers and professionals, who were registered with SIGNAL in Bracknell Forest and in Windsor and Maidenhead.

In Bracknell Forest it was sent to 577 people including 46 professionals. The overall response rate for the survey was almost 24% which was fantastic.

People were given the option of providing basic contact details to be entered into a prize draw to receive some shopping vouchers. The winners were: M.Grant, S.Hesling and R.Carter.

If, during the course of the survey, people highlighted issues they needed help with, and contact details were provided, SIGNAL has contacted them to help.

The full 46-page report can be accessed on our website at:

<http://www.signal4carers.org.uk/images/Results%20of%20the%20SIGNAL%20service%20evaluation%20FINAL.pdf>

or you can request a paper copy from the office.

We have summarised the main findings and actions below.

### FINDINGS

- 73% of people completing the survey were carers providing more than 18 hours of care and support a week
- Almost 8% of people completing the survey were providing care to more than one person, often in more than one geographical area.
- 23% of people completing the survey were caring for someone with dementia.

## SIGNAL Evaluation Survey (continued)

### FINDINGS (continued)

- 49% of people completing the survey first heard about SIGNAL from the previous provider, Berkshire Carers
- Other ways people found out about SIGNAL included: GP surgeries, other health professionals, community and voluntary sector organisations, support groups, community events, on the internet, social care staff, word of mouth and posters in the community.
- Not all carers had received a Welcome Pack on sign up (initial months of contract).
- The majority of carers were 'Happy' or 'Very Happy' with the different services they had received from SIGNAL.
- At least two carers reported they were waiting for 'Manual Handling' training (now known as 'Moving and Handling People').
- Some carers were unaware of the range of services SIGNAL offers.
- Out of Area carers (carers that provide care and support to someone who does not live in a local authority area covered by SIGNAL) were more likely to be dissatisfied with the information and services they received.
- Barriers to accessing SIGNAL's services and activities included: carer commitments (especially for carers that are working), lack of support/respite care, too focused on older carers and carers of people with dementia, problems accessing services online, receiving information, lack of awareness of services offered, carers own health issues and transport.
- We asked ex-carers how we could support them after the initial 6-month period after the change in their caring role. One carer mentioned a social group for the recently bereaved and another said to allow ex-carers to attend carers lunches.
- Just under 11% of the professionals registered with SIGNAL responded to the survey; health professionals in particular were underrepresented in the responses.
- It is clear from professionals' responses that many are not clear on SIGNAL's role and the services it should be offering.

## SIGNAL Evaluation Survey (continued)

### FINDINGS (continued)

- When asked what additional services SIGNAL should be offering 23% of people mentioned services SIGNAL already actually provides; this again highlights that many carers are unaware of the range of our services.
- In addition to these services already provided, the four most popular categories of services people think SIGNAL should provide are:
  - More face-to-face longer term emotional support/befriending
  - Services for the cared for
  - Respite and sitting services
  - Services aimed at younger/working age carers
- When asked how people rated the SIGNAL service overall of those that responded over 67% rated it 'Happy' or 'Very Happy'.

### MAIN ACTIONS

- To make sure the range of services that SIGNAL provides are well promoted and reinforced repeatedly in newsletters etc.
- To promote the service widely within the community including community and voluntary sector groups.
- To reinforce to carers that they need to contact us if they have any issues; we cannot check in with them all personally on a regular basis due to the numbers we support and the resources available.
- To reinforce to carers that more intensive support is available at times of particular need or crisis.
- Continue working with GP surgeries and attending CCG wide training sessions periodically to inform and update on the service.
- Continue to request to meet with social care teams to inform and update on the service.

## SIGNAL Evaluation Survey (continued)

### MAIN ACTIONS (continued)

- Develop the online and social media engagement plan to utilise internet search engines and increase social media audiences.
- Review and update the content of the Welcome Packs and agree them with the relevant local authority and then send to all carers registered in the corresponding area.
- In quarter 3 (October-December 2017) we will collate information into bi-monthly electronic mail outs (bulletins) and will only send urgent information in between (if necessary).
- Find locations and develop a regular schedule around the areas covered by SIGNAL where the mobile information vehicle, which is fully accessible and has a private office area for confidential advice sessions, can visit. We will look at the viability of evening/weekend sessions.
- Promote the newly sourced “Moving & Handling People” course that can be delivered online or face-face and other training available from ourselves and other organisations (including Carers UK).
- Support Bracknell Forest Council to launch the Emergency Card Scheme in November 2017.
- To work with other local groups and organisations to identify existing groups and activities for carers, particularly those of working age, and, if necessary, work with them to set up new activities to meet any gaps in need.
- To make sure carers of people out of area are aware of the limitations in the help and support we can provide to avoid raised expectations.
- Promote activities and support available to help carers maintain their own health and well-being.
- Where possible vary times, dates and locations of events such as socials and carers lunches. Replicate training sessions at different times and/or in alternative formats such as online. Make sure carers are aware we can meet them in the evenings and weekends.
- To undertake more research to see if a new social group for bereaved carers is needed or if there are already organisations, such as CRUSE, providing this.

## SIGNAL Evaluation Survey (continued)

### MAIN ACTIONS (continued)

- To undertake a “professionals only” survey before the end of this contract year and encourage all professionals (including volunteers) from all sectors to respond – this will give SIGNAL a more accurate response.
- SIGNAL does not have the resources nor is commissioned to provide long-term befriending activities for carers. This lack of personal, emotional support has been raised with us many times over the last 18 months. Although there are other organisations offering this type of service they are either linked to certain conditions and/or have a waiting list. SIGNAL will bring this matter to the attention of the commissioners so they can consider increasing the capacity of these other organisations and/or SIGNAL.
- SIGNAL’s main focus is on unpaid carers but it will continue to signpost to other organisations that provide services to the cared for.

Thank you to everyone who replied to the survey. We know that, as a carer, time is precious.

Thank you for all the lovely comments and for all your feedback – SIGNAL can only improve and meet the needs of carers if we listen to what carers are saying.

Please get in touch if you need any type of help or support. If we are not in the office leave a message and we will get back to you. We can arrange to see carers at any time; evenings, weekends – whenever it suits you!

“They are just a friendly first port of call and I have always gone back to them many times.  
Always extremely friendly and a wealth of information.”

“Very caring and helpful advice. I appreciate the non-invasive approach by your staff.”

Our aim is that these are the experiences of everyone who uses the SIGNAL service

## Carer Stories

Lorraine provides care and support to her daughter Candice who has Prader Willi Syndrome. She was referred to SIGNAL by Wokingham, Bracknell & Districts Mencap although The Ark, who manages SIGNAL, knew Candice quite well as she attends Friday Night Project.

Although Lorraine is Candice's carer, she also receives help and support from her too - as she has mobility issues and has to use crutches and a mobility scooter. They care for each other.

Candice was very excited as she was due to start part-time work at the new Primark in Bracknell but unfortunately her health took a turn for the worse and for the last 4 months she has been experiencing absences and seizures. Initially SIGNAL supported the family by communicating with her GP to get an urgent neurology appointment and liaising with Primark on Candice's behalf.

After several trips to Accident & Emergency Candice was admitted to hospital and remained there for nearly 3 months while the cause was investigated. SIGNAL has supported the family throughout that time including:

- Contacting the Learning Disability Nursing Coordinator
- Helping to arrange a reclining chair for Lorraine, who stayed with Candice during her stay
- Contacting social care and requesting a joint needs assessment
- Referring Candice and Lorraine to SEAP advocacy services
- Providing emotional support through telephone calls, emails and hospital visits
- Sourcing support groups when Candice was finally diagnosed with NEAD



Candice is now out of hospital but is temporarily in a wheelchair. They pop into the SIGNAL offices at least twice a week for a cup of tea, chat and even some craft!

*“We would never had got through this without your kindness help and support” - Lorraine*



## Community Events

|  |  |  | <p>Event details</p>  |
|---|---|---|---|
| <p><b>Sunday 3<sup>rd</sup><br/>December<br/>2017</b></p>                         | <p><b>Starts at<br/>5pm</b></p>   | <p>Bracknell Leisure Centre, Bagshot Road, Bracknell, RG12 9SE</p>                | <p>A Christmas carol concert featuring Corelli Orchestra from Bracknell Music Centre and massed choir of over 300 school children from Bracknell.</p> <p>Ticket price: £7<br/>Box Office: 01344 782970</p>  |
| <p><b>Wednesday 6<sup>th</sup><br/>December<br/>2017</b></p>                      | <p><b>Lunchtime<br/>(further details from<br/>organiser)</b></p>                  | <p>Lili Pottery, Unit 3, Fernygrove Farm, Hawthorn Hill, Warfield, RG42 6HN</p>   | <p><b>Wokingham, Bracknell &amp; Districts Mencap.</b></p> <p>A session for carers (of people with learning disabilities and/or autism) at Lili Pottery. The session, which will last 2-3 hours, will allow carers time to paint and decorate a bauble and/or an ornament whilst relaxing and chatting to other carers. Lunch including cake will also be provided.</p> <p>Cost: £5 per person.</p> <p>Call 0300 777 8539 for more information.</p> |

## Community Events (continued)

|  |  |          | <p>Event details</p>  |
|---|---|---|---|
| <p><b>Tuesday 12<sup>th</sup><br/>December<br/>2017</b></p>                       | <p><b>Starts at<br/>10.30am</b></p>   | <p>Frost Folly<br/>Country Car Park.<br/>Map grid ref:<br/>874 726.</p>                   | <p>A ranger led walk. This is a ramblers walk - it is up to 7 miles and will last up to 2 and a half hours.</p>   |
| <p><b>Wednesday<br/>20<sup>th</sup> December<br/>2017</b></p>                     | <p><b>2pm – 4pm</b></p>   | <p>New Priestwood<br/>Community<br/>Centre, Bracknell,<br/>RG42 1TU</p>                   | <p><b>Age Concern Bracknell Forest</b></p> <p>Aimed at local older people – carers welcome!</p> <p><i>Festive Fun</i> – themed activities and entertainment</p> <p>Cost: £3.50 per person including refreshments, £1 for carers.</p> <p>No need to book – just turn up.</p> |
| <p><b>Thursday 18<sup>th</sup><br/>January 2018</b></p>                           | <p><b>11am –<br/>1.30pm</b></p>   | <p>Easthampstead<br/>Baptist Church,<br/>South Hill Road,<br/>Bracknell,<br/>RG12 7NS</p> | <p><b>Mental Health Forum</b></p> <p>A place to discuss mental health issues. For everyone concerned with these issues – including carers. Lunch provided. Call Healthwatch Bracknell Forest on 01344 266 911 to book.</p>  |

IF YOU KNOW OF ANY COMMUNITY EVENTS THAT MAY BE OF INTEREST TO CARERS PLEASE LET THE OFFICE KNOW SO THAT WE CAN INCLUDE THEM IN FUTURE NEWSLETTERS, THE WEBSITE AND E-BULLETINS. THANK YOU

## Useful contacts

Adult Social Care, Bracknell Forest Council – 01344 351500

This will redirect to Emergency Out of Hours Service outside of office hours.

NHS Out of Hours call 111

## SIGNAL Contacts

You can contact us on:

01344 266088

[info@signal4carers.org.uk](mailto:info@signal4carers.org.uk)

Visit our website:

[www.signal4carers.org.uk](http://www.signal4carers.org.uk)

Postal address:

The Space, 20/21 Market Street,  
Bracknell, Berkshire, RG12 1JG



<https://www.facebook.com/signal4carers/>



@Signal4BFC