

Connecting Carers

EssexWorks.

For a better quality of life

Winter 2010 Edition

Produced and distributed by Essex County Council Carers Strategy Team

Your winter edition of Connecting Carers is here. The year has flown by and we are already approaching the end of 2010.

The Carers Strategy team would like to take this opportunity to thank you for all your help and support throughout the year and wish you a very

Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

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No need to worry when your spring Connecting Carers does not arrive. We are now reviewing this newsletter and will be issuing a new look Connecting Carers later in 2011. To let us know your views on this publication go to page 11 and complete our questionnaire.



Essex County Council

Carbon Monoxide (CO) poisoning

When gas, coal, wood or oil do not burn properly excess Carbon Monoxide (CO) is produced which is poisonous. You can't see it, taste it or smell it, but CO can cause permanent damage to your health, or even be fatal, in just a few hours.

The symptoms of carbon monoxide poisoning include headaches, feeling tired and sick, and difficulty in thinking clearly.

If you suffer from these symptoms and you think they could be caused by carbon monoxide exposure then you should:

- stop using all your cooking and heating appliances;
- open the windows in your home;
- see your doctor at once or go to Accident and Emergency;
- call a qualified engineer to check all your cooking and heating appliances.

These symptoms can be confused with a cold, flu or other virus. If they are worse when you are at home, but improve when out and about, CO poisoning could be the cause.

Prevention is better than cure

- Check the colour of the flames in your appliances – if they are orange there could be a problem.
- Make sure your chimney flue isn't blocked.
- Make sure there is plenty of ventilation – check air bricks/vents aren't blocked or obstructed.
- Install a carbon monoxide detector. These

can range from small disposable detectors you can place next to all your appliances, to larger electronic units. These units must be approved to EN50291 standard. You will need to regularly check the unit to ensure it is working and the batteries are good. These units may look like smoke detectors but must not be confused with these – they do not detect smoke.

If you are a tenant your landlord has a responsibility to ensure that gas appliances, fittings and flues provided for tenants' use are safe, including yearly maintenance and safety checks.

Get your appliances checked and serviced every year, and call in an engineer sooner if there are any signs of a problem. Use engineers registered with the appropriate organisations – check their ID's.

BESCA (solid fuel and oil)
Telephone: **0800 652 5533**

Gas Safe (gas)
Telephone: **0800 408 5500**

HETAS Ltd (solid fuel)
Telephone: **01462 634 721**

NAPIT (solid fuel and oil)
Telephone: **0870 444 1392**

OFTEC (oil)
Telephone: **0845 658 5080**

Telecare Home Safety Service

The Telecare Home Safety Service gives peace of mind to the people using the service, their friends, family and carers.

The system can be adapted to support individuals in a range of different situations and there are a variety of telecare items which can make users feel safe and help you to live independently.

Some examples are:

Base unit – This wireless unit connects the sensors in your home to the monitoring centre and it comes with a wireless pendant as standard. Should you press the button on your pendant, the button on the unit itself, or a sensor be automatically activated, a message is sent either directly to your carer or to the 24 hour monitoring centre where trained operators take the most appropriate action. This could be contacting a designated family member, neighbour, doctor or the emergency services.

Carbon monoxide detector – Carbon monoxide (CO) is a colourless and odourless gas which can be released by faulty or badly installed gas appliances. If dangerous levels occur then the carbon monoxide detector will automatically send an alert to the monitoring centre who would then take appropriate action to ensure your safety.

Smoke detector – You can be reassured that in

case of a fire the detector not only activates an audible alarm, but it also automatically calls the monitoring centre on your behalf. Alarms are also available for people with hearing impairments.

Big button telephone – with picture based speed dials – ideal for people in the early stages of Dementia, or limited dexterity. The big button telephone has large black buttons with white numbering, and four “photo” or picture buttons that act as speed dials.

Fall detector – A detector provides you with the reassurance that if you fall, the sensor will automatically raise an alarm with the monitoring centre or a nominated person.

Bed occupancy – for supporting people who are at risk of falling if not supported. Should they get out of bed and not return in a reasonable time an alarm can be raised.

Telecare is available to Essex residents* on a 12 week free trial.

For more information contact Essex County Council and ask about Telecare.

Telephone: 0845 7430 430

Minicom: 0845 7585 592

Email: telecare@essex.gov.uk

Website: www.essex.gov.uk

(*excluding Southend and Thurrock)

ASK VERA (Very Easy Read Associates)



ASK VERA is a social enterprise that helps make life better for people with disabilities.

They provide services that make information easier to read. They consult with organisations about making services accessible for people with disabilities. Ask Vera also offers extensive training and support brokerage for people who want to direct their own support. ASK VERA also

provides training workshops that inform people about disability issues and the barriers that people with disabilities can face every day.

If you would like further information please see their website or contact them direct:

Telephone: 01206 769477

Fax: 01206 767139

Email: vicky@askvera.org or stuart@askvera.org

Website: www.askvera.org

Generations growing together

More than ever, allotments are playing a vital role in connecting people to the process of food production and healthy eating, enabling them to grow fresh, cheap food. They provide valuable urban green space and wildlife habitats.



The Community Wellbeing Team at Essex County Council

has recently launched the 'Generations Growing Together Toolkit'. Jo Churm, toolkit author and project lead, said "The aim of the toolkit is to provide useful information on the project and also valuable links enabling the public to easily locate their nearest community growing areas. We are hopeful that this will encourage increased 'Green Exercise' aimed at reducing social isolation and improving health and wellbeing".

The objective is simple, introduce and develop

an intergenerational approach to social activities, actively encourage the 'breaking down' of barriers and challenge negative stereotypes and behaviour.

Intergenerational activities can actively demonstrate that older and younger generations have a great deal to offer each other in terms of knowledge and experience. It can also demonstrate that most young people are in fact knowledgeable, respectful and well behaved when engaged with older generations, contrary to common depictions in the media.

For further information and to get your copy of the Generations Growing Together toolkit visit:

www.essexcc.gov.uk/vip8/portal/pepf/display/guides/Culture_and_education/index.jsp

Or contact Jo Churm, Project Lead – Generations Growing Together, on:

Telephone: **01245 244 983**

Email: jo.churm2@essex.gov.uk

Who are Mencap?

If you are an older carer and caring for someone with a learning disability Mencap can help. Mencap offer a completely confidential service, for when you need support, information or guidance. They work to ensure carers are aware of all the help that is available to them, to provide a communication link between older carers and the services which can provide support in Essex. Some examples of the type of support and information Mencap can offer are:

- Housing
- Benefits
- Direct payments
- Personalised budgets
- Personal care plans
- Emergency information document
- Local contacts
- Carers' cards
- Adaptations within your home
- Respite care
- Wills and trusts.



If you would like any further information please contact Mencap direct:

Telephone: **01376 510 080**

Mobile: **07795 200 038**

Email: Alison.morgan@mencap.org.uk

Or contact the Mencap Helpline Mencap Direct **0300 333 11 11**



Are you ready for the digital switchover?

TV is going digital all over the UK, and the traditional TV signal will soon be switched off. This means that, when this happens, if you aren't receiving digital TV you will lose your current TV service. The basic rule of thumb is that if you only have five channels or less you are probably not on digital.

The Anglia region, which includes some areas of Essex, will start to switch over from 6 July 2011.



The areas of Essex that fall under the London TV region will be switching over from 2012.

To check which region you are in you can either go to Teletext page 106 or take a look at which local TV news service you receive – Anglia or London.

For further information on the digital switchover go to **www.digitaluk.co.uk** or phone: **08456 50 50 50**.

The Switchover Help Scheme



This scheme, which is run by the BBC under an agreement with the Government, has been set up to help people who are eligible to switch one of their TV sets to digital.

Their standard offer includes:

- easy-to-use digital equipment;
- home delivery and installation if you wish;
- an aerial check and replacement if needed, where they can;
- a helpline and retuning advice;
- a 12 month digital TV aftercare service.

You are eligible if:

- are aged 75 or over; or
- get Disability Living Allowance, Attendance Allowance, Constant Attendance Allowance or mobility supplement; or
- have lived in a care home for six months or more; or
- are registered blind or partially sighted.

Letters are being sent out by the help scheme, to

all eligible people with a TV license.

There is a charge for this service, though some people may be eligible to receive it for free.

For more information you can call them free on **0800 408 5900** or e-mail **info@helpscheme.co.uk**

For further information on this scheme go to **www.helpscheme.co.uk**



Help Essex County Council to help you



Essex County Council is committed to involving the people of Essex with all aspects of their service provision.

This includes getting involved with carer issues, helping ECC understand what Carers would like from us and also letting Carers know what ECC can do to support them in the valuable role they play in today's society.

To help move this agenda forward the Carers Strategy team are setting up a group, where carers and professionals can meet, discuss and take forward the issues affecting Carers living in Essex.

We are looking for people who;

- are informal carers;
- will be able to attend quarterly meetings, likely to be held in Chelmsford;



Introductory Workshop

We are holding a workshop where you will be able to learn more about the objectives. There will

be representatives from Essex County Council and other organisations, who are working to support Carers, at the workshop for you to talk to.



All work and no play....

We understand that carers have very little time to themselves and appreciate the effort it will take you to attend the meetings and this is why the January workshop will not be all work and no play.

There will also be leisure based workshops for you to enjoy and you can look at the possibility of taking up a new hobby, learn a new skill or just take time out to relax.

The actual date and venue are still to be finalised but to register yourself for an invite to the January workshop please let the Carers Strategy team know your:

- Name.
- Address (including postcode).
- Email address (if possible).
- Telephone number.

If you would like to attend this event but are unable to do so please contact us.

You can contact the team by:

Telephone: **01245 434 375**

Email: **carerstrat@essex.gov.uk**

or by writing to our Freepost address as on the back of this newsletter.

Winter Wordsearch

Hidden in the grid below are 20 words. They can be horizontal, vertical or diagonal. See how many you can find.

A	H	S	W	Y	B	E	L	C	I	C	I	M	Z	P	A	E
J	C	O	X	A	T	P	B	X	T	N	E	I	I	B	Z	R
P	N	U	T	V	M	X	F	A	Z	I	L	O	Q	E	J	I
S	O	P	A	C	E	G	L	O	V	E	S	M	E	B	H	F
U	G	L	Y	E	H	J	C	Q	C	U	D	R	K	A	L	C
C	Y	P	H	O	T	O	S	I	B	X	F	R	A	C	S	F
H	H	K	B	S	L	Q	C	E	H	T	O	B	G	R	Z	P
R	G	O	A	D	G	X	J	O	O	S	G	C	J	E	D	T
I	W	B	K	S	A	P	Q	H	L	U	J	I	B	T	A	H
S	A	O	T	M	L	H	P	K	I	A	S	E	S	N	G	L
T	S	O	R	F	K	C	A	J	D	H	T	D	Z	I	E	S
M	C	T	I	V	B	U	K	Q	A	P	E	E	A	W	A	N
A	E	S	P	O	T	W	E	C	Y	S	W	Q	P	L	U	O
S	T	J	Q	W	T	H	K	L	B	X	R	I	U	D	Y	W
B	S	K	A	T	I	N	G	S	Z	G	P	M	W	B	A	M
Y	T	W	Q	Z	C	R	B	T	Y	U	Q	X	I	C	S	A
H	M	E	T	W	E	L	Q	K	L	R	A	E	Y	W	E	N

Boots

Christmas

Cold

Fire

Freeze

Gloves

Hat

Holiday

Hot Chocolate

Ice

Icicle

Jack Frost

New Year

Scarf

Skating

Soup

Snow

Snowman

Stew

Winter

Carers Rights Day

Carers Rights Day occurs near the end of each year.

The tenth annual Carers Rights Day, organised by Carers UK, took place on 4 December 2009, under the theme Caring for your income and pension.

Over 1,500 events took place across the UK, with carers centres, GPs surgeries, local councils, libraries, charities, hospices and many other

community groups providing support and information to local carers.

The 2010 Carers Rights Day will take place on Friday 3 December and the theme is 'Know Your Rights'

Check on the Carers UK website at www.carersuk.org/Newsandcampaigns/CarersRightsDay for events in your area.

The History of Christmas Trees

The idea of decorating a tree as part of seasonal celebrations is an old one that comes from many lands and cultures. A decorated tree is now an inseparable part of the festive season but evergreens have always been important at the time of the winter solstice. Plants that remained green in the winter reminded primitive peoples that spring was bound to return and that once again the land would be lush and abundant.

- Evergreens have been associated with seasonal celebrations since ancient times.
- Seasonal celebrations occur at the time of winter solstice.
- Evergreens have been used as symbols by various nationalities and/or religious groups, including: Egyptians, Romans, Druids, Vikings, Anglo-Saxons, Spaniards and Slovaks.
- Yule log traditions contributed to superstitions, as well as the traditions of gift giving and decorating the log or tree.

The seasonal celebration occurs at the gloomiest time of the year: the days are short, cold and



damp and darkness falls early. The festivities take our minds off the weather however, by making us think about warm kitchens, gift giving, decorating our surroundings and decorating evergreen trees. Similarly, ancient celebrations such as the Saturnalia in Rome and the feasts that were held in the Nordic countries to honour Balder, the god of the sun, served the same purpose.

Although Christmas is intimately associated with the Christian belief in resurrection, the ancient peoples also celebrated the solstice as a time of renewal and rebirth and as a promise, always fulfilled, that soon the land again would be green and lush.

Information extracted from Christmas Tree Farmers of Ontario website. For full article see: www.christmastrees.on.ca/ednet/lesson1.html

Does someone collect library books on your behalf?



If you are unable to get out and about and have a friend or relative who collects library books on your behalf, you may be interested in the "Housebound Personal Ticket".

Rather than have a friend or relative get books out for you on their library card, you can have a library card of your own with them listed as your representative. This Housebound Personal Ticket would be issued in your name, free of charge, and would allow you to have up to 28 items at a time. You will also have the added advantage of no fines or charges for late returns.

Added to this there are the many on line services offered by Essex Libraries which, as a member of Essex Libraries, you would be able to access from home.

You, or your friend/relative/carer on your behalf, can apply for this ticket by either contacting your local library or Answers Direct on **0845 603 7628**.

Have you visited Directgov?

Directgov

Public services all in one place
www.direct.gov.uk

Directgov is the UK government's digital service for people in England and Wales. It delivers information and

practical advice about public services, bringing them all together in one place. You can access Directgov on the web, on your mobile or on your television.

Directgov gives you easy access to government information and services. It uses simple language and presentation across the web, TV and mobile. Content is written in plain English, and you can read most of it in Welsh.

Directgov works closely with government departments to bring information for the public all together in one place.

Directgov can help you with many things, for example:

- booking your driving test
- finding a job
- paying your road tax
- finding local services such as NHS clinics, solicitors or nurseries.

The government uses Directgov to get information to the public in times of crisis or emergency, such as the swine flu outbreak.

Directgov on your mobile:

If your mobile has internet access you can get to the directgov mobile website in two ways:

- enter **m.direct.gov.uk** into your phone's internet browser
- text **MOBILE to 83377** – you'll get a text message with a link to view Directgov mobile (standard rates apply).

Directgov on your TV

If you are a Virgin Media customer:

- press the 'interactive' button on your remote
- select 'News and Information' and then 'Directgov'.

If you have Sky:

- press 'interactive' on your remote
- select option 'eight', Directgov.

Ask Sal

Keeping adults safe across Essex

If you are being treated badly, taken advantage of or injured – or you know an adult who is – Ask Sal can help.

Report your concerns to Ask Sal – what you tell them will be treated with sensitivity and in confidence.

They will then make investigations to ensure the person you are worried about is safe.

For more information visit **www.asksal.org.uk** or to receive information as a text message text **ASKSAL** to **60777**

Ask Sal Telephone: 0808 80 10 345 (number will not appear on itemised phone bills)



Keeping adults safe across Essex

Christmas crumble

Ingredients

- 180 Grams Granulated Sugar
- 120 Grams Butter or Margarine
- 150 Grams Flour
- 2/3 cooking apples
- 2 tablespoons' sweet mincemeat

Method

Turn your oven on now so that it's pre-heated ready to cook later on! Heat settings are 180C / 350F / Gas Mark 5.

Base

- Lightly cook the apples in a saucepan with the sugar and a little water.
- When cooked put in an ovenproof dish and mix with the mincemeat.

Crumble topping

- Mix the butter / margarine with the flour in a dry bowl using a fork until you have a texture like breadcrumbs.
- Put crumble mixture on top of fruit mixture.
- Cook for 30/35 minutes until golden brown.



To finish off with simple Christmas Cream...

Ingredients

- 300ml Low fat Crème Fraiche
- 5 teaspoons Icing Sugar
- 1teaspoon Cinnamon

- Mix all of above together and serve with the crumble

Serves 4

Quick Cheats

You can replace the cooking apples with tinned, cooked apples.

You can also use crumble mix instead of mixing your own.

And finally

If you have any queries or suggestions, would like to submit an article for consideration or would like your name removed from our mailing list please contact the Carers Team:

Contact Essex: **08457 430 430** Minicom: **08457 585 592**

Email: **carerstrat@essex.gov.uk** Phone: **01245 434 375**

Free post: Essex County Council, Carers Strategy Team, Freepost CL317,
(no stamp need- A8 County Hall, Chelmsford CM1 1YS

To view back issues go to **www.essex.gov.uk** and navigate to the Adult Carers pages.

If this publication was sent to you via a third party, such as a carers support organisation, their details will appear here.

If you need to be removed from their mailing list please contact them direct.

Please note: Many articles in this newsletter were gathered from other sources. The information was checked and believed to be accurate at the time of printing. However, ECC does not accept any responsibility for the accuracy of articles or actions taken in response to articles.

How are we doing?

We hope the Connecting Carers magazine is a valuable resource for our carers, but we need your help to ensure we are giving you the best value for money.

Please can you take some time to answer the following questions and return them (no stamp needed)

to us at Carers Strategy Team, A8 County Hall, Freepost CL3636, Chelmsford, CM1 1YS.

We need your responses in by 31st December 2010

Name (optional)

Address (optional)

1. How much of Connecting Carers do you read?

- ☐ I read it from cover to cover
- ☐ I read a few articles that catch my eye
- ☐ I skim through, but don't read much
- ☐ I don't read it

2. What do you do with Connecting Carers when you have finished with it?

- ☐ I pass it on to another carer
- ☐ I keep it in case I want to refer back
- ☐ I throw it away

3. How useful have you found Connecting Carers?

- ☐ I have found a great deal of information given useful
- ☐ I have found some information given useful
- ☐ I haven't found any of the information given useful

4. How many times a year would you like it?

- ☐ Four times a year
- ☐ Three times a year
- ☐ Twice a year
- ☐ Once a year
- ☐ Not at all

5. What sort of articles would you like to see MORE of (you can choose more than one)?

- ☐ Articles about Essex County Council services
- ☐ Articles from voluntary support organisations
- ☐ Articles about social networking, days out, holidays
- ☐ Finance and benefits advice
- ☐ Competitions and quizzes
- ☐ Recipes and hobbies



6. What sort of articles would you like to see LESS of (you can choose more than one)?

- ☐ Articles about Essex County Council services
- ☐ Articles from voluntary support organisations
- ☐ Articles about social networking, days out, holidays
- ☐ Finance and benefits advice
- ☐ Competitions and quizzes
- ☐ Recipes and hobbies

7. Would you recommend Connecting Carers to other carers?

- ☐ Yes ☐ No

8. How did you receive Connecting Carers?

- ☐ It was posted directly to me
- ☐ It was e-mailed directly to me
- ☐ It was given to me by a friend
- ☐ I picked it up in a public place (ECC reception, GP, Carer Organisation)

8a. If posted to you, would you like to help us reduce costs and our carbon footprint by receiving Connecting Carers by e-mail?

- ☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes please provide an E-mail address:

(please ensure your name and address details are completed so we can remove you from the postal mailing list)

8b. If not sent direct to you would you like to be added to our mailing list?

- ☐ Yes ☐ No

E-mail address:

Post - please ensure your name and address details are completed

8c. Would you like to be removed from our mailing list?

- ☐ Yes (please remove me from the mailing list).
- ☐ No

9. Do you have any other comments to make about Connecting Carers?

please comment

Thank you for taking the time to fill this in – your views are important to us.

