

Newsletter



Welcome to the R&RA(Essex) Summer Newsletter

Welcome to the summer edition of our newsletter.

It's now some nine months since our Launch and we have several new challenges ahead. Not only do we need to consolidate and continue to build on our core services, but we are also determined to make sure that anyone who needs them not only knows how to get in touch, but has the means and the confidence to do so. This is a very big job, since we are covering the whole of Essex, Southend and Thurrock. We know we are making progress, though, as we have seen a very substantial increase in the numbers of calls to the Helpline, as well as lots of excellent feedback.

At the same time, we need to work on the next phase of our development, which is to build up our local networks. We are looking for volunteers in every part of the area we cover, so if you, or someone you know, is interested, we would be pleased to hear from you.

This newsletter contains more information about our ideas and plans. If you would like to share your ideas about the way we should be going, we look forward to hearing from you.

Somewhere along the line, we also picked up an Award. That was a pleasing acknowledgement of the work we have done so far. More details on page 5.

Issue No 4 Summer 2009

Our Services

Helplines:

0845 017 7720

0845 017 7730 (Dedicated line for Care Homes)

Website: www.relresessex.org

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News from the R&RA(Essex)

Six Months On

As the newsletter goes to press the formal evaluation of our first six months of operation has just been complete. This has been undertaken by a very experienced external consultant, Pamela Graham, and is showing some very encouraging results. During that time, the number of calls to the helpline has shot up and we have some excellent feedback directly from our “customers”.

More information about the results of the Evaluation exercise and our plans to respond to its conclusions will appear in our next newsletter.

Our New Development Officer

We are delighted to announce the appointment of our Development Officer, Debbie Tanner.

Debbie came to us from the Dengie Project Trust, where she was managing the Knightswood Day Centre in Southminster. She has lots of experience of working in residential and community care and working with and training volunteers. With Debbie's appointment, we will really be in a position to start to build up our volunteer networks. We are very grateful to Gillian Dalley of the national R&RA, who is employing Debbie on our behalf.

The picture below shows Debbie with Tom Cooper “manning” our display at the recent event held by the Tendring & Colchester Minority Ethnic Partnership in the grounds of Colchester Castle.



Managing the R&RA(Essex)

From September onwards, the formal involvement of the Project Managers engaged to set up the Association will come to an end and the management of the Association will be entirely in the hands of the voluntary Management Committee. The committee be supported by the Development Officer and by one or two others working on a self employed basis for a few hours each week to support the development work and make sure that our activities are co-ordinated and good links maintained with our sponsors, partners and stakeholders.

The Advisory Group

During this development phase we have had sterling support from people from other organisations whose work is relevant to our own. The help and advice we have received from these colleagues has been invaluable to us. We are delighted to report that we will not be losing touch with our old allies, as we are also forming an Advisory Group to work with the Committee, sharing information, ideas and expertise in order, we hope, to support our common aims. Members of the Advisory Group will be drawn from a range of different organisations and fields of work, including the providers of residential care. Knowing how busy people are, we propose a way of working with this group that each member will be able to control and that will not impose significant extra burdens (such as regular meetings) on members.

If you are interested in being part of this group, please do get in touch. We will be pleased to hear from you.

The Honorary President

We would also like to appoint a free ranging “ambassador” who can work outside the constraints of the committee structure to represent the Association and bring his or her experience and contacts to bear on our behalf. If you have a suggestion for a suitable candidate, we will be pleased to hear from you.

The Local Networks – Volunteers

We are still meeting regularly with our loyal group of volunteers who came forward in the early days. These people have made a vital contribution to our development and we thank them all.

In the past few months we have had visits from Chris Ardill, the Helpline Manager, a demonstration of presentation materials that can be used by anyone wanting to give a presentation to local organisations in their area and discussions about many of the ideas and questions that we need to tackle. There's more about this in the item on "partnership".

We also had a very successful outing to London to visit the office of the national Relatives and Residents Association. This gave some of our volunteers an excellent insight into the resources available there as well as the opportunity to meet the colleagues, both staff and volunteers, with whom we work so closely here in Essex.

One of the most important jobs has been to help with the distribution of publicity materials. The success of this effort has been reflected in the rapid rise in calls to the Helpline and visits to the website. This work goes on, of course, but now that Debbie is with us, the task of creating our local networks begins in earnest.

Debbie is currently focusing her work on the Dengie area, where she is making contacts amongst the local homes and other organisations as well as making contact with potential volunteers. She is also attending events all across the county and making links with many other organisations who may be in touch with people who need our help.

As time goes on, Debbie will be focusing on different parts of the County and the two Unitary Authorities. Wherever you are, she will be very pleased to hear from you.

How to contact Debbie:

Phone: 0845 017 1095

E mail: debbie@tanner.eclipse.co.uk

Calling Potential Volunteers!

With the helpline and website well established, we would like to be able to offer local support to people who may need it, to supplement the work of the Helpline. This will be offered by volunteers who will, of course, be suitably vetted, trained and supported.

The kinds of help they may offer could include helping people to read and interpret inspection reports, accompanying people to visit care homes and acting as a support and sounding board to help them ask the right questions and think through their decisions, helping to run local support groups etc. Ultimately, what we can do will depend on the numbers, skills and commitments of the people who come forward to commit some of their time and expertise to this work.

There are many different ways to make a contribution. This may involve working directly with our "customers"; helping with publicity, doing a bit of "backroom" work", helping to train and support other volunteers.... If you would like to help, we will be very pleased to hear from you.

I have the Helpline number....but...

An important point was raised by one of our longest serving Volunteers, who pointed out that many people may be



reluctant to use the Helpline, even though they have the number.

The kinds of people we have in mind are those who may not speak English very fluently; those who aren't sure what a helpline is or how it works; people who are wondering what they might be asked or whether the information they give really is confidential. Others may be hard of hearing or have other disabilities that make it difficult to use the phone. There are many different reasons why just having the number may not be enough for people to get the help they need.

This is an issue that we take very seriously. Please see overleaf for information about our ideas about tackling it.

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The “Partnership Programme”

We need to reach as many people as possible who may need our services, but we also need to make sure they can access the help once they have found us. This is where the “partnership programme” comes in.

The idea is to make contact with as many groups and organisations as possible that may come into contact with our potential “customers”. We hope to work with them to identify someone in each organisation who knows about us, has met the Helpline team, has all the information to hand and who is willing to support people they and their colleagues may come across in whatever way they need to make contact. We will provide information to these “moles” (as we think of them) and keep in contact with them, so that they can help us to help people make use of our services.

If you could be a “mole”, or know an organisation that we should contact about this, please do get in touch!

Membership

Membership numbers are creeping up and we would like to extend a warm welcome to everyone who has joined the Association since the last Newsletter was published.



Our members are a vital part of the Association, both as a source of information and ideas to help us make our services as good as they can be, and also to help us with the second part of our remit – to act as a “voice” for the people who need those services and to represent their interests to the authorities who make the decisions affecting their well being. At the moment we have many excellent contacts with individual members, both personal and corporate, and are always glad to hear from you. To build on this dialogue, we intend to hold a half day conference in the New Year with our members and sponsors. This will give us the opportunity to meet together and discuss a wide range of issues of common interest.

More information in the next Newsletter

The Helpline

We are pleased to note a steady increase in the numbers of people using the Helplines and also the very appreciative feedback recorded in the Evaluation. Wherever we go, we meet people who tell us “if only we could have had that kind of help when....” Happily, more and more people are also telling us that they have contacted the Helpline and that they have nothing but praise for the help they have received.

This is music to our ears. We are very proud of the Helpline service and we would like to record our gratitude to Chris and all the team for the tremendous support they are offering “our” customers.

The Website



If you have looked at the website recently, you will see that we have added a news section on the right of the Home Page. Another addition, accessible from the Home Page (first paragraph of the text) is Tom Cooper’s wonderful monologue, which he has written and performed in order to bring alive some of the issues that the people we serve are facing every day. **Don’t miss this video!** We also have plans to make another video for the site that will show an informal conversation with Chris Ardill, the Helpline Manager, and his team. We hope that this will answer many of the questions, and put to rest some of the reservations, that may make some people hesitant about contacting us.

We are extremely fortunate in having found (or rather, been found by) our volunteer and committee member, Chris Harvey, who is taking our internet presence in hand for us and working very hard to develop it into a really interesting and dynamic site.

As well as the developments that are visible on the site, Chris has added software that can give us a great deal of information about the way the site is being used, which pages attract the most visits etc. We are interested to see that we are getting hits on the site from as far away as the USA. Visitor numbers have been rising rapidly, although we have noticed a drop in July, which is probably due to the holiday season being upon us. Perhaps predictably, the most popular part of the site apart from the Home Page is the section giving information of fees and costs.

As always, if you have comments or suggestions to help us do this, we will be very glad to hear from you.

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Our First Award! “Celebrating Your Achievements”

Back in the early spring, we were invited to submit an application for one of Essex County Council’s annual “Celebrating Your Achievements” awards.

We were delighted to learn, at the ceremony held at the Weston Homes Community Stadium in Colchester, that we had won the first place in the category “Customer Service”. It is very pleasing to have received this recognition of our efforts to date, but we are not resting on our laurels. There is so much to do!

The picture below shows Barbara Williamson, Tom Cooper and Janet Russell receiving the award on behalf of the Association from Mrs. Elizabeth Hart, the Chair of the County Council and Jenny Owen, Executive Director for Adults, Health and Well Being.



Many people have helped us to get this far and we are grateful to them all – sponsors, partners, members and volunteers. We plan to use the prize money from the award to fund a half day conference in the New Year which will have a dual purpose. In part, it will be a “thank you” party for all of these people. But it will also allow us to meet many more of our supporters and discuss together the subject that is most important to us all – how to go on building and developing the best possible service for the people who need our help.

And From the National R&RA

Health & Wellbeing

Our friends and colleagues at the national Residents & Relatives Association continue to be very active in representing and promoting the interests of care home residents.

A very successful conference in July continued the theme of Health and Well Being, with emphasis on the link between health and dignity in care. Discussion focused on the ways in which dignity can be promoted in practice and on the essential factors of oral health and continence.

Launched at the conference was a new publication on oral health in residential care which may be of interest to many of our members. More details are here:

<http://www.relres.org/publicationspages/KeepSmiling.html>

End of Life Care

The national Association’s pilot project to explore the use of volunteers to help with end of life care in Nursing Homes and Care Homes is now underway. Whilst volunteers are well established as part of the team in most hospices, they have not been so much in evidence in residential establishments, where they may well be able to make a valuable contribution to the well being of residents and families

Kate Durrant, the Project Officer, is herself, a qualified nurse with both hospice experience and a strong personal interest in the quality of life of people living in residential care. The project is located in Essex and several of our Corporate Members are in touch with Kate about the possibility of collaborating with this initiative. We are most grateful for their interest and support.

If you would like to know more about this project, or have ideas and suggestions to contribute, please do get in touch with Kate.

Kate.durrant@relres.org

In the meantime, we will, of course, keep you updated in our newsletters.

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News From Our Members

In this section we are delighted to include news, information and comments from our members. Please do get in touch with anything you would like us to include in the newsletter.

DISCLAIMER

Material included in this section is for news and information from members only. Mention of any specific establishment or organisation does not imply that it is endorsed or recommended by the R&RA(Essex), Essex County Council or any other sponsor of the Association

High Jinks at the Corner House!

"What a fantastic way to celebrate the diversity of staff lots of colour, music, dancing and good food. With all the smiling and laughter it was obvious the residents really appreciated the effort made"

This was one comment, from Jan Lockyer, about a wonderful party day held recently at the Corner House in Clacton. As in many homes, the staff group at the Corner Lodge is truly cosmopolitan, with as many as thirteen different nationalities represented amongst them. What could be a better theme for a party for residents, their families and for the staff themselves?

Everyone was invited to come to work wearing their national dress, or one that represented their own nation, bringing samples of their national dishes for everyone to try. With music and dancing from across the globe as well, this was a memorable day for everyone who was involved, giving residents and staff the opportunity to get to know each other better as individuals and to have a lot of fun together.



At the sister Home in Jaywick, the Corner Lodge, residents enjoyed a rather different kind of party. Since many of them came originally from the east end of London, theirs was a "cockney day", celebrating the music and culture that many would have known in their youth.

The Corner House and the Corner Lodge both have dedicated Activities Coordinators. These are just two of the many and varied activities available for residents, many of which are run in collaboration with local schools and other outside organisations.

We are delighted to hear about this kind of initiative and would like to publish other examples from members across the County. There is so much creative energy out there. If members are interested in sharing their ideas and examples of their initiatives to help both residents and staff to get more out of life, we can start a regular "What's On" feature in the Newsletter.

Please do get in touch if you would like to us to feature activities at your home.

"The great secret that all old people share is that you really haven't changed in seventy or eighty years. Your body changes, but you don't change at all. And that, of course, causes great confusion."

Doris Lessing

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Developments at Down Hall

In our spring newsletter we reported that Down Hall was opening a new Dementia Unit. The Unit is now open, and our colleagues at Down Hall have sent us this update.



Down Hall Residential Home at Bradwell on Sea, Essex, has now extended their services to the elderly by providing a specialist unit for those people 65 years or over, suffering from Dementia. The New unit has been specifically designed and furnished to suit its purpose. A two storey extension has been added to the main house, more than doubling the size of the home.

There are 11 en-suite bedrooms on each floor and a large sitting/dining room and also a smaller quiet room both benefiting from lovely open views of the garden.



Eleven rooms are still retained in the original house to care for those who are suffering from ailments and disabilities associated with old age. There is also a treatment room for visiting doctors/nurses, opticians, chiropodist and our hairdresser and a purpose equipped sensory room.

The next phase for the project will be a secure sensory garden, enabling everyone to enjoy the outdoors safely.

If you would like more information about these developments, or would like to visit the Home, please phone 01621 776509. The address is: Down Hall Residential Home, Bradwell-on-Sea, Southminster, Essex, CM0 7QP

An Anniversary at Grapecroft

Grapecroft Care Home in Tilbury celebrated its 1st year anniversary on 16 June 2009. Deputy Mayor Councillor Eddie Hardiman, and representative from R & R (Essex) attended, as well as residents and their families.

The celebration was a great success. The Manager would like to thank all of the residents, their families and all the staff for their support during the last year. For further information on Grapecroft Care Home please visit the website www.grapecroft@festivalcare.com or telephone 01375 852020

Presentations and Groups

Several of our members have asked us to provide speakers for meetings of their own residents and relatives or for other organisations they think will be interested. We are pleased to provide speakers and presentation materials and will be glad to hear from you if you would like someone to come along to a meeting at your establishment or organisation. Although our resources are not unlimited, we will always do our best to help.

If you just want a static display, we can also usually provide backdrops and publicity materials, along with someone who will be able to talk with individuals about the Association and what it can provide.

We have also heard from some members who are interested in setting up local Relatives and Residents Groups for their own Home or in collaboration with other Homes in the area. We fully support this kind of initiative and will be glad to offer any help that we can.

News from My Home Life

We reported in the last newsletter that Jan Lockyer had been appointed the Project Manager for Essex County Council's initiative in response to the "My Home Life" Project. Jan has been working with Tom Owen from the City University to establish three main strands of activity in pursuit of the objectives of My Home Life, all of which add up to a programme to promote and support quality of life in residential care. The intention of the project is both to explore and experiment with a range of diverse ways to achieve this, using a solid base of evidence that points to the areas in which improvements can make a real difference to the quality of people's lives. Not only do we want to demonstrate some of the possibilities in practical ways, but also to reflect of what is learned and share and disseminate the ideas and the learning that emerge from the initiative.

One strand of activity is with a group of Care Home Managers who are working together to develop their leadership capacity, share and support each other in making a real impact on quality of life in their establishments. Another is with a group of senior representatives of the different organisations, both providers and commissioners, who can help to facilitate change. The third is with senior managers from other departments within the County Council and from schools, who are working together to explore new ways to make the facilities they offer to the community as a whole more available to care home residents and to promote the integration of these residents more fully with the surrounding communities.

Of course, many of our members will be aware of the "My Home Life" Agenda and we have had great co-operation from several of our members who own or manage care homes. We are most grateful for their generous contributions of time and expertise to support this important initiative.

If you would like to know more, contact Jan Lockyer (see the contact details on page 10)

"Their Past Your Future"

"I never knew old people were so cool!"

This was one reported comment from a young lady of fourteen who took part on the "TPYF" project run by the Imperial War Museum.

In connection with the "My Home Life" Initiative. Janet Russell attended a most interesting conference organised by the Imperial War Museum at Duxford. The conference was part of the "TPYF"

project run by the Museum over the past five years. The purpose of this project was to bring together young people with those who have been involved in conflict. The intention was not only to involve people who had fought, but also those who had



experienced conflict as civilians or even as children or innocent bystanders. What was the impact of conflict their lives? What are their reflections now? What they learned from these experiences?

Of course, not all those who have contributed to this project have been older people. In some cases, young soldiers have shared their experiences with people only a little younger than themselves. Inevitably, however, there has been a great deal of interaction between children and people now in their eighties and nineties who took part in the second World War and the subsequent engagements in places like Malaya (as it then was) and Korea. Nobody hearing some of the stories of mutual discovery and emerging friendship between younger and older people could fail to be moved and excited by the great benefits that were evident on both sides. The impact on some of the young participants was evident, but it was also moving to hear one of the WW2 veterans present at the conference talk of the way in which his participation had helped him to come to terms with some of the terrible things he had witnessed.

For more information and access to a wide range of resources, visit the website:

<http://www.theirpast-yourfuture.org.uk/>

The Project has produced a diverse range of useful resources for people planning any kind of intergenerational work. For other materials and guidelines, see:

<http://www.tpyf.specialistnetwork.org.uk/resources>

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Introducing SAL!



The new Adults Safeguarding Helpline

0808 80 10 345

Monday 8th June 2009 saw the official launch of Ask SAL (the adult safeguarding helpline for Essex) at the Weston Community Homes stadium in Colchester. The launch was part of the SET safeguarding conference, a whole day event with in excess of 300 people present. The helpline is the result of a unique partnership between Southend, Essex and Thurrock Safeguarding Adults Boards and two leading national voluntary sector organisations: Action on Elder Abuse and Voice UK. The helpline provides a service for anyone concerned about an adult at risk of abuse, equivalent to that provided for children through Childline.

Daniel Blake of Action on Elder Abuse and Kathryn Stone OBE of Voice UK announced the launch and spoke of the importance of the new initiative in protecting adults who find themselves in vulnerable circumstances. Other speakers on the day included Anna Morgan of the Department of Health, Superintendent Paul Giannasi of the Race Confidence and Justice Unit, and Ralph Jones gave a presentation on forced marriage.

Aidan Thomas Chair of the Essex Safeguarding Adults Board and Chief Executive of NHS West Essex, said:

"The statutory agencies have a duty to protect vulnerable adults; those who are in need of care services and are unable to protect themselves against harm or exploitation. We know that adult abuse is a very real and serious problem and hope that the helpline will mean that people at risk will more swiftly receive the help they need to prevent them coming to further harm."

Are you concerned?
Do you know an adult who is being treated badly, taken advantage of, or injured?

Who is a vulnerable adult?
Someone in need of help because of a disability, illness or age and is unable to take care of themselves or stop someone else from harming or exploiting them.

What is abuse?
Abuse in my home:
• Neglect
• Physical abuse
• Financial abuse
• Sexual abuse
• Psychological/Emotional abuse
• Discriminatory abuse
• Institutional abuse

Call today
0808 801 0345

ask saL

Keeping adults safe in Essex

www.asksal.org

For more information on the Helpline and to access promotional materials such as leaflets and posters as well as a short informational video, visit:

<http://asksal.org.uk>.

For access to hard copies of leaflets and posters or other material in alternative formats, e mail:

ESAB@essex.gov.uk

or call (01245) 506642.

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Mini Feature 2 - Deprivation of Liberty

The Mental Capacity Act of 2005 includes specific safeguards to make sure that people living in hospitals and care homes are not deprived unnecessarily



of their liberty. The task of implementing this requirement falls to the Best Interest Assessors, who are there to help care providers to find the best possible solution when deprivation of liberty is on the cards.

Carol Sacker, a Best Interest Assessor with Essex County Council (and a great supporter of the R&RA(Essex) writes about her work:

Our job is to respond to Deprivation of Liberty (DOL) requests that are received from Managing Authorities - the residential care home or hospital - to the supervisory body, which the Local Authority or Primary Care Trust. The request is, in effect, an application to authorise a perceived deprivation of liberty for a resident that is currently in their care home or establishment.

My role as the Assessor is to respond to this request by visiting the resident in the care home to establish whether an authorisation is warranted. I do not visit patients in hospital, as the hospitals are covered by their own Assessors.

Not every case will warrant an authorisation, as there may be less restrictive ways of managing the situation. By carefully examining all care plans, talking with family, care staff and managers and even GP's, we may be able to avoid depriving someone of their liberty. This sometimes means that the home will have to be very "person centred" in their approach. We examine existing care plans and explore other things that will, or may, enhance their lives – perhaps by going out more, getting involved with specified needs activities, looking at past lifestyle choices:

Did they, for example, like gardening, cooking etc.? Sometimes increased staffing levels may be needed to meet an individual need for periods of the day. There could be many options and suggestions that may improve choice and wellbeing and ultimately raise standards.

The Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards policy states that care homes cannot ask or expect an authorisation because they are short of staff! But they may need to be mindful for the future that in order to meet the new regulations; more time and effort needs to be sought to reduce the need for severe restrictions or deprivation.

This is a very brief overview of DOL. Needless to say, Managing Authorities cannot now legally deprive someone of their liberty. The key words are **capacity** – being unable to make informed choices - and **Best Interest** – meaning that we must act best interest of that person and the least restrictive option which must always be explored.

Contact Details

Address

The Relatives & Residents Association (Essex)
PO Box 10597
CMO 8WG.

E Mail

info@relresessex.org
membership@relresessex.org

Personal Contacts

Debbie Tanner (Development Officer)
0845 017 1095
debbie@tanner.eclipse.co.uk

Jan Lockyer (Essex County Council)
01206 845131
Jan.lockyer@essex.gov.uk

Janet Russell (Joint Project Manager
& Membership Secretary)
01621 868984
russell.jm@btinternet.com

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