



# Rethink Carers Lancashire

**Newsletter**  
**December 2016**

c/o Rethink Mental Illness Station Grove Supported Housing, 28 Scarisbrick Street, Southport PR9 0TU  
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*Season's greetings to all our  
members and friends, and best  
wishes for a peaceful time*

*We will be picking up messages from time to time over the holiday period,  
don't hesitate to call if you need help or a listening ear*

**Next Meeting**      **Monday December 12, 10 am to 1.30 pm**  
**Oswaldtwistle Mill Conference centre**

**This is our Christmas meeting, not as serious as usual and a Christmas buffet,  
plus the chance of a bit of retail therapy at the shopping outlet afterwards.**

**Cost £7.50 per person, we can help if this is too expensive for you.**

**Booking essential (IF YOU HAVEN'T ALREADY) BY TUESDAY DECEMBER 6**

**Let us know if you have dietary requirements and need directions or a lift. We can pay travel  
expenses for anyone coming more than 20 miles or in particular hardship**

*(Unfortunately, we've lost our lovely meeting room and lunches at Chorley Fire Station – the  
Fire service has now put a limit of 25 people, including speakers, which would mean we'd have  
to turn people away. So in the new year we'll sort out another room in a similar area so that we  
can continue with our Lancashire-wide meetings. But see the next page for exciting news of  
how this group is expanding.)*

**Two new  
Rethink  
carer groups  
for  
Lancashire !**

Our group numbers are increasing and this, coupled with the disappearance of other carer support groups because of funding cuts, has persuaded us that there's a need for smaller, more local groups (as well as the county-wide group that meets less often). We also want to provide support for carers who work during the day, so both these new groups will meet on a regular monthly basis in the evening.

Stuart and Toni will be coordinating the **Fylde Coast Rethink** group, with the first meeting **7 – 9 pm** on **Tuesday January 10** at **Grenfell House, Layton, Blackpool FY3 7BP**.

The **East Lancs** group will meet **6 – 9 pm** on the second Wednesday of every month at **Elmfield House, Gatty Park, Accrington BB5 4AA**, with the first meeting being **Wednesday February 8**

**Get in touch for more details. We'll be looking at a local group for central Lancashire as soon as we can.**

**Our October meeting and AGM** was extremely successful. Many thanks to Dr. James Kelly and Dr. Tony Roach for such useful and inspiring information about the Lancashire Early Intervention Service, and the inspiring (but unfortunately as yet unavailable) 'compassion focused therapy' – gave us hope for the future. And we're really grateful to solicitor Steve Howells, who gave us a riveting two hours on the subject of wills and trusts. How did he remember it all and maintain such a level of interest? Steve will be doing individual consultations on Friday December 2, and will be back in the new year to catch up with the people we couldn't fit in this time. **IF YOU MISSED THE MEETING BUT WOULD STILL LIKE AN INDIVIDUAL APPOINTMENT, LET US KNOW AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.**



Many congratulations to Debbie Preston, our Group Treasurer, who won the **Rethink Mental Illness Member of the Year** award at National Members Day in November. Here's Debbie receiving her well-deserved award from Philippa Lowe, Chair of Rethink Mental Illness. You can see a full account of all the awards at <https://www.rethink.org/news-views/2016/11/awards-at-national-members-day>

And we learnt on the same day that Rethink's Advice and Information Service won the prestigious **Helpline of the Year 2016** at the Helpline Partnerships Awards. Of course, we don't need to be told how invaluable this service is, so many of our members have benefited from it, but it's great to see they've been recognised nationally.



The Rethink Advice and Information Service can be contacted by phone weekdays 9.30 am to 4 pm **0300 5000 927** Or email [advice@rethink.org](mailto:advice@rethink.org) (Alternatively, the Group Coordinator can make inquiries on your behalf; the response would also have to go via the Coordinator)

## Have you had to give up work because of your caring responsibilities?

Sarah Pennells, a finance journalist who runs the very useful website [savvywoman.co.uk](http://savvywoman.co.uk) (especially concerned with how women are affected by money matters) wants to find out more about how caring affects women - and men - financially. There are a number of areas she'd specifically like to look at and would be grateful if we could provide her with information about their experience in any or all of the following:

1. Did you stop work or reduce your hours so you could care for someone else?
2. If you gave up work after 2010 to care for someone else, did you know that you could get state pension credits (called the Carer's Credit) for those years when you weren't paying National Insurance?
3. If yes, could you tell her how you found out about this? If no, would you have wanted to claim state pension credits if you had known about them? (There is more information about state pension credits and how they work in my article: <https://www.savvywoman.co.uk/840/getting-national-insurance-credits-for-your-state-pension-if-youre-a-carer/> )
4. Did you get any support from your employer (if relevant), the Department for Work and Pensions or other agencies, (such as your local authority social services department) or a voluntary organisation (such as Age UK or Carers UK)?
5. Is there anything else you'd like to tell me about the financial consequences of caring for someone else?

At this stage, any information you provide is so Sarah can have an understanding of some of the challenges facing carers. If, at some point in the future, she would like to publish any of the information you give, this would be only on an anonymous basis (she wouldn't use your first name, surname or identify the city/area you live in), unless you explicitly gave permission to use your first name or your name in full.

Email your experiences to [sarah@savvywoman.co.uk](mailto:sarah@savvywoman.co.uk)

## Feeling creative? Want to explore our Lancashire heritage ? Take the Super Slow Way!

Elmfield Hall, in Accrington, where our new group will be meeting, has a new community art project, open to anyone, to share stories and experiment with traditional techniques once used in the hall. Visual artist Claire Wellesley-Smith will be working with local people to explore and experiment with the different processes that were used to create the famous 'Turkey red' dye developed by the Frenchman Frederic Gatty who bought Elmfield Hall on his arrival in 1842. You can drop in on Claire's new studio on December 7, 10 -am to 3 pm, and she will be at the hall every Friday from January. Call 01254 460080 for more information or email [heritageart@csnw.co.uk](mailto:heritageart@csnw.co.uk)



Super Slow Way aims to spark a creative revolution in Pennine Lancashire. They are working with communities along the Leeds & Liverpool Canal, connecting people with local, national and international artists and commissioning projects that allow for collaboration, exploration of new ideas and experimentation with innovative approaches.

**JOIN RETHINK MENTAL ILLNESS** Membership of our local Lancashire group is free, but we'd like everyone to join the national organisation, as this gives Rethink more weight for its campaigning as well as access to your opinions and knowledge. In return you get the quarterly information-packed magazine, access to a special bit of the website, and free conferences (including in November our National Members Day which this year WAS in Birmingham). Look at the website or phone 0121 522 7007

There is now a cheaper membership for people who can do everything online – fewer perks but the same information. If you're already a member, you'll be informed about the alternative at renewal time.

**ONE COMMENT WE HEAR FREQUENTLY NOW IS THAT RETHINK IS THE BEST SOURCE OF MENTAL ILLNESS INFORMATION AND SUPPORT AVAILABLE TO CARERS IN LANCASHIRE.** One way to show your appreciation of this is to join the national organisation.

## **National Audit Office call for government to review benefit sanctions regime** 30th November

The National Audit Office (NAO) has said the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) is not doing enough to find out how sanctions affect people on benefits and recommended it undertake a review of them as it continues to roll out Universal Credit. This call has been backed by mental health charity Mind, which say that sanctions can often push people with mental ill health further from employment, rather than incentivising them to get a job. A benefit sanction is a penalty imposed on a claimant meaning a loss of income when someone does not meet conditions like attending jobcentre appointments. Sanctions are not rare: 24% of Jobseeker's Allowance claimants received at least one between 2010 and 2015. Use of sanctions varies substantially, with some Work Programme providers referring twice as many people for sanctions as other providers in the same area. International studies show people who receive sanctions are more likely to get work, but the effect can be short-lived, lead to lower wages and increase the number of people moving off benefits into inactivity. The DWP has not used its own data to evaluate the impact of sanctions in the UK. The NAO undertook preliminary analysis of the impact of Work Programme sanctions on employment, inactivity and earnings. The results show the DWP should do more to understand these sanctions outcomes.

## **MPs vote to suspend £30-a-week cut to Employment and Support Allowance** 18th November

MPs have voted unanimously to postpone a planned £30-a-week cut to Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) and Universal Credit (UC) following a debate in Parliament. This vote – which was 127-0 – follows more than a year of warnings from the disability community and MPs alike and an open letter from some 70 disability charities – including Rethink - voicing concern at the devastating effects that the £30 weekly cut to ESA and UC would have to people with a disability. The Government had suggested that sick and disabled people who get ESA are not being incentivised to find work because of the £30-a-week more they get compared to those on Jobseeker's Allowance. It decided earlier in the year to implement a cut of £30-a-week from April 2017 for new claimants.

## **Funding boost for mental health services for expectant and new mums** 28th November

Twenty areas in England are to receive a share of £40 million to develop specialist community mental health services for expectant and new mums, with the aim of reaching 30,000 more women a year by 2021, NHS England has announced. The funding will see new or bigger teams in those areas providing specialist care for all new and expectant mums with severe mental illness. It will fund new perinatal consultants, specialist nurses, occupational therapists, psychologists and nursery nurses as well as community peer support for mums, babies and families. There will also be more buddying and telephone support where mums who have had experience of similar issues help other mums in need.

## **Faster improvement needed to improve inpatient mental health care, CQC warns**

18th November

Much needs to be

done to improve how psychiatric inpatient units care for people detained under the Mental Health Act – especially in regards to staff adherence to the Code of Practice – the Care Quality Commission (CQC) has warned. The regulator found a lot of good practice in how psychiatric inpatient units are caring for people in its annual review of the Mental Health Act, which was based on over 1,300 visits to mental health wards and conversations with more than 4,000 patients, but said that progress needs to happen at a faster pace for key issues, such as patient involvement and protection of rights. For instance, more than half of the inpatient psychiatric wards CQC reviewed had not demonstrated that they had trained their staff in the 'Code of Practice' – national guidance that explains how professionals should carry out their responsibilities under the Mental Health Act – and more than half had not updated their policies, despite the Code being introduced in April 2015. Also, in 12% (515 out of 4,344) of the patients CQC interviewed on its visits, there was no evidence that they were informed of their right to an independent mental health advocate, who would offer support to them and enable them to be involved in decisions about their care. Furthermore, there was no evidence of patient involvement in care planning in 29% (1,214 out of 4,226) of the records the CQC examined. But the CQC also outlined how several healthcare services in England are using the Act to maximise people's recovery, wellbeing and support when they have been detained and encouraged all providers to learn from them. This includes where services are meeting and exceeding the expectations of the Act, helping people to understand their rights while detained and involving them in both the planning of their care and future treatment.

Leading the way to a better quality of life for everyone affected by severe mental illness.

For further information on Rethink Mental Illness Phone 0300 5000 927 Email [info@rethink.org](mailto:info@rethink.org)

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