

Bluebird Care Gloucestershire November 2016 Newsletter



Staying Warm in Winter

Usually, at this time of year, we write a long article about keeping warm in winter, but this year we don't need to, because charitable organisation Independent Age has written a whole booklet, called *Being Winter Wise*, which tells you everything you need to know to stay safe and well in winter. Visit www.independentage.org, or call 0207 605 4200 to obtain your free copy.

Independent Age has produced a whole series of useful guide books and leaflets which are all available free of charge. *Healthy, Happy, Connected*, gives advice to older people living alone, on how to remain involved in the community. *Advice for Later Life* has information on support and entitlements for over-65s. *Your Health and the NHS* is packed with useful information. If you have a specific problem, you can phone their advice line on 0800 319 6789, also free of charge.

A leaflet *Free Guides for Later Life* gives details of all the guides. We have a supply of these leaflets in the office. Please contact us if you would like one.

Staying Fire Safe

Did you know that Gloucestershire Fire Service provide a fire safety service for older people and people with disabilities? If you give them a call on 01452 888777, someone from their Community Safety Team will come to your home to fit smoke alarms which are considerably better than most of those you can buy in DIY stores, and the batteries should last for about 10 years.

They will also check existing smoke alarms for you, to ensure that they are sited correctly and are in working order, and offer other fire safety advice.

If you are on the Internet, you can visit the Fire Service website at:

http://www.glosfire.gov.uk/ysafety_h_domestic.html

There is lots of useful information on the website, including a Fire Safety Checklist which takes you through your home room by room, pointing out potential hazards.

The Community Safety Team also offers 'Safe and Well' visits, which go well beyond the remit of fire safety, covering health and welfare, and general safety. Call them free of charge on 0800 180 41 40.

Thank you to our customer Paul Rand for suggesting this article and providing some of the information.

Talking Watch

If you have difficulty seeing the time on a watch, the Tavistock and Jones radio-controlled watch may be the answer. It is accurate to the second, never needs setting, and automatically adjusts to British Summer Time, and Greenwich Meantime for the winter. It does have lovely big, clear numbers, but also speaks the day, date and time at the touch of a button. At the time of writing we found it at half price, for £29.99, at EasyLife everyday solutions; www.easylifegroup.com; tel. 0800 055 7766.

Other speaking watches and clocks are available from the Royal National Institute of Blind People (RNIB) shop, together with a variety of other aids for people with visual impairment, at www.rnib.org.uk.

Who knows what these are?



Twiddle Muffs for People with Dementia

A classic behaviour of people with dementia when they are agitated is to fiddle, or twiddle, with things. Women typically rummage through their handbags as though looking for something, but with no idea what they might be looking for. Men might play with the change from their pockets, or either men or women may wander around the room picking things up and putting them down again, and fail to settle anywhere.

The picture above is of Twiddle Muffs. (Please excuse our wrinkled display stand table cloth, which we did not have time to take away and iron before setting up the display for the photo.) Twiddle Muffs are said to have been invented by a woman called Margaret Light for her grandmother Lily. They have now taken off internationally as a brilliant way to meet the need to fiddle with things in a way which is soothing and calming. They are soft and warm, and good for arthritic hands, as well.

The muffs are quick and easy to knit from chunky yarn, or double strands of double knitting yarn. They are then finished with an assortment of items to twiddle, inside and out. Plaited ribbons or strands of yarn, pieces of lace, small zips, large buttons,

crocheted flowers, children's hair bobbles, and little soft toys on tiny wristbands, which usually entertain babies, are all good decorations for a twiddle muff. You can probably think of many more ideas.

Donna Jones, the Dementia Lead in our Gloucester office, has made it her mission to make, and encourage colleagues and friends to make, enough Twiddle Muffs for every one of our customers with dementia. The display above is part of the stockpile ready to go out, or awaiting their twiddly bits. Donna, left, and Care Manager, Debbie Bridgewater, are seen below modelling muffs.



We have now decided that we don't want to stop there. We want to make Twiddle Muffs available for everyone in our local communities who would benefit from one. We cannot do it alone though. If you are a knitter, and would like to join our band of volunteers, please contact Donna on 01452 414952, and she will send you a twiddle muff pattern. You could also help by donating any unwanted yarn and/or suitable items for sewing onto the muffs. Any contribution will be much appreciated.

Our New Quality Assurance Coordinator

We are pleased to welcome Poppy Yolland-Jones, who joined us on 14th November. Poppy is working with both office teams to ensure that we keep our standards up to the highest possible level.

Poppy introduces herself below.



I have always been passionate about health and social care.

My previous experience includes working as a domiciliary carer, and also as an NVQ trainer.

I have worked in quality assurance within work-based learning, supporting assessors to deliver high quality training.

I have also taught on the BTEC health and social care course at a local college, leading a team of lecturers and ensuring consistency across all teaching.

Living locally to the Gloucester office, I have heard positive feedback about Bluebird care and when I saw the role advertised I jumped at the chance to become part of the team.

I am very much looking forward to my new role and supporting the team to deliver outstanding person-centred care.

New Arrival

Some of our customers have been waiting, since Cassie Fowler went on maternity leave, to hear news of the baby. Here is Cassie with her partner Tom, and their gorgeous baby girl, Esme Georgia who was born on 13th Nov 2016, weighing 7lb 2oz.



Here are the happy family with newborn Esme on the left, and on the right, Stroud and Cirencester Care Manager, Vicky Hewer, claiming first staff cuddle on Cassie's visit to the office to show off her lovely daughter.

Carer of the Month

The Carer of the Month for November for the Gloucestershire North area is **Marcos Leite**. Office staff said about Marcos:

Marcos has over the last couple of weeks had some very challenging situations to cope with. On the first occasion the customer was really unwell and Marcos ended up calling the paramedics out. He kept the situation as calm as possible and stayed with the customer for over two hours until the paramedics had his condition under control. During this period he also supported the customer's wife. She sent an email thanking Marcos and saying how good he is with her husband and how good he is as a carer.

Marcos has phoned into the office on a couple of occasions to see if there are any updates on how the customer who was poorly is doing, which shows his genuine concern for the customers he cares for.

New staff have said how well he supports them when they are shadowing, or working with him in a double team.

Marcos is really flexible and will pick up calls in any area. He is confident going to customers he has not met before, and works to the care and support plan really well.

Customers have said about Marcos:

I am very happy with Marcos and Miguel, in equal measure. Both are willing and caring, with a ready smile.

Marcos has lots of respect for my husband, and any friends or family who may be here at visit times. He has shown enormous patience in the last few weeks, after a most stressful time in respite. His sense of humour is a tremendous help.

Thank you for all the help when Marcos and Miguel found Dad quite poorly. Miguel had to go on to another call, but Marcos stayed, and was just brilliant. I want to send my personal thanks to Marcos for the way in which he looked after my father whilst dealing with the situation in a very calm and professional way. Marcos is a brilliant carer, and I couldn't ask for any more.

I would like you to know how very grateful I am to Marcos for his help with Michael on Saturday. He was extremely supportive and was determined to wait until the ambulance arrived to assess the situation, and did not leave until Michael was taken to hospital.



Marcos is shown here receiving his certificate from Donna Jones, Recruitment Liaison and Dementia Lead.

He chose a One4All gift card, which is what Donna is holding in her left hand.

Stroud and Cirencester Carer of the Month

Unfortunately, the Stroud office team missed the deadline to provide the Carer of the Month information for the newsletter. We hope to include this in the December newsletter.

Newsletter items

If there is anything you would like to have put in the customer newsletter next month please call or e-mail us.

Please let us know if you would like this newsletter in large print, in Braille, on CD or on tape.