

Welcome to our Grandparents Newsletter. I can't believe how quick this year is going, and very soon we all face the long summer holidays again...Its been two years now since Age Concern Cardiff and Vale became involved in the Grandparents Support Network and the time has just flown by! We are currently funded to stay involved until the end of September 2011, and are awaiting news of further funding beyond this. We have met many wonderful grandparents in this time, who are doing a fantastic job in raising their grandchildren, not to mention the aunts and uncles who are raising family members. We have learnt so much from them, and from the many speakers who have given their time to speak at the support group meetings.

Thank you for all those who returned the newsletter feedback forms from the last issue. The feedback and comments were really positive and congratulations to Jacqui who won the £20 M&S voucher!

We now have our very own Facebook page, search "Grandparents Raising Grandchildren Cardiff & Vale" and click "like" to become a friend. We will be using the page to keep people updated on the group and to link with other kinship care groups around the UK. In the short time that the page has been up and running we have had quite a bit of interest from other groups, the BBC and people from around the UK. We have even had an enquiry from USA, asking where Cardiff was! Hope you all have a great summer. **Debbie Plenty**

Who Can Help?

As detailed in the last newsletter, earlier this year we received funding to put together a small book of numbers which may be of use to grandparents who take on the responsibility of their grandchildren. A lot of grandparents told

us that when they took over this role, it would have been useful if they had a pack of information, a list of numbers, a starting point for information. So we have taken this on board and produced packs which include a booklet called "Who Can Help?" The booklet includes numbers from Child Benefit Helpline to how to find your local scout group! The packs also contain leaflets from other organisations such as FIS, SNAP and Family Circle.

GlaxoSmithKlein IMPACT Award

Age Concern Cardiff & Vale of Glamorgan has been awarded £25,000 in recognition of its outstanding contribution to improving health and social care amongst older people. The charity beat more than 400 organisations across the UK to become one of 10 winners of the GlaxoSmithKlein Awards run in partnership with health think tank The King's Fund. This is a prestigious award and a real achievement for the organisation. The judges commented "Age Concern Cardiff and the Vale of Glamorgan is a creative organisation, responding to new and emerging issues affecting older people. In the current difficult financial climate, the charity is working hard to continue to show innovation."

Grandparent & Toddler Group

Cardiff Parent Network has helped Anne, a long standing member of our Grandparent Support Group, set up a new Grandparent & Toddler Group. The group is open to all grandparent carers, whether they are raising their grandchildren full time or grandparents providing child care. The group meets every Monday between 1.15 – 3pm at Llanishen Baptist Church, Fidas Road Llanishen. The cost is £1.50 which includes refreshments. **Please ring Cardiff Parent Network on 029 20360556 for further information.**

Children In Wales – Kinship Care Conference

It's official, Mick's a Superdad....!

Many congratulations to Mick Macey who recently won South Wales Superdad 2011. Mick was recognised for his generous and loving care that he, together with his wife Barbara, provide to their grandchildren following the death of their daughter Nicola. The awards were presented by Families Need Fathers Cymru. Paul Apreada from the charity said "Positive male role models are essential to the health, happiness and educational attainment of children. Recognising the diversity of the fatherhood experience is vital to improving the lives of children in Wales". Bethan Jenkins, Assembly Minister presented Mick with his Superdad award and £500 prize money at the Welsh Government Building in Cardiff Bay.

After winning Mick said "We went up to Thornhill Cemetery to see Nicola's grave, and Dan dived out of the car, ran to the graveside and stood like a boxer and shouted "We won mum, we won". That memory will stay with me for the rest of my life. It makes it all worthwhile".

Mick and Barbara are representative of so many grandparent carers throughout the network who have stepped in to provide a loving and stable home for their grandchildren and this award is a great recognition for the invaluable work that you all do. Well done Mick!

In March Children In Wales held a Grandparents and Kinship Care conference in Cardiff to highlight the input that Grandparents make to family life in Wales today. Speakers included Ruth Marks, (Older Persons Commissioner), Lynn Chesterman (Grandparents Association) Nigel Priestley, (Ridley & Hall, solicitors), and Non Tuckey (CAFCASS Cymru). Ruth Marks talked about the invaluable contribution that Grandparents make to family life and Nigel Priestley, who was awarded Solicitor of the Year in 2010, gave a talk entitled "Kinship Care – Is it a Minefield for All?" (The Grandparents who were present certainly had some views on this!)



Left to Right: Maureen, Ann, Diane, Lee, Ruth Marks, (Older Persons Commissioner for Wales) Diane & John (from the Newport Grandparents Group) at Children In Wales Conference

The conference was also used to launch Children In Wales' survey of Grandparents in Wales and 5 members of the Cardiff support group were asked to share with the conference their experiences of kinship care. The discussions were heartfelt and emotive and gave all the delegates present something to contemplate. A talk was also given on the merits of Family Group Conferencing and how it can be used as a positive experience in Kinship care.

We have copies of the speaker notes from CAFCASS, The Grandparents Association, Family Group Conferences and Nigel Priestley. If anyone would like a copy of them, please contact me.



Mick receiving his award from Bethan Jenkins, Assembly Minister.

contact Debbie or Angela on 029 20683687 and we will find out what's available.

Buttle UK Research Findings

Following an investigation, Children's charity Buttle UK and the University of Bristol recently released its report on children in Wales raised by family members. It reported that there are

approximately 9,200 children – 1.4% of Wales' young people - were living with family members. The Spotlight on Kinship Care Report reveals that 1 in every 72 children were being looked after by a relative – predominately grandparents. 93% of such arrangements were informal agreements between parents and family members, meaning carers were often not entitled to any financial help from Social Services. The highest rate of kinship care was in Merthyr Tydfil where 3 in every 100 children are looked after by relatives. The report also found that two thirds of children were being brought up in households in the poorest 40% of all areas.

Keith Towler, Children's Commissioner for Wales, has called for more support from the authorities for grandparents who have full time care of their grandchildren. He said " These figures highlight just how much of an impact grandparents have on children's lives and it is support which often goes unnoticed" He added "We need to ensure the courts, the UK and Welsh Governments recognise and reinforce the importance of those relationships". Gerri McAndrew, Chief Executive of Buttle UK, said "Kinship carers are an invisible population who have little contact with Social Services. This report shines a light, for the first time on this hidden group who play a critical role in raising a generation of children with little assistance, financial or otherwise". A full copy of the report can be accessed via the Buttle UK Website www.buttleuk.org.uk

Amendment

In our last addition we printed an incorrect telephone number for the Vale Family



Holidays for Kinship Carers

For many family and friends carers, the idea of a holiday is a distant dream, but thanks to special offers available from the The Grandparents Association, families may be able to get away for a much needed break.

To qualify, families need to meet the following criteria:

- not had a holiday for four years or more as a family.
- be on a low income.
- care for a child or children between the ages of 3 and 18.
- able to take a holiday during school term time.
- think your grandchildren deserve a break.

If you can answer yes to all the above then you may be able to take advantage of this opportunity. The holidays are for Haven or Butlin's caravans on various sites around the UK. They come with a pass for activities and a small contribution to travel costs. Sue Stewart from the Grandparents Association said " There are only a few summer caravans left, but if you are willing to go away later in the year you may have a better chance of availability".

For more information please contact Sue at The Grandparents Association on 0113 242 9922 or

Information Service. It should have read **01446 704704**.

The website for Cardiff Family Information Service has also changed to: www.childcareincardiff.info/fis There is a link on Cardiff's website for Grandparents. Apologies for the error.

Family Circle

At a recent Grandparents Support meeting, Emily Batchelor from Family Circle gave a very informative talk on the project. Family Circle is a project of Tros Gynnal and work in partnership with Cardiff Council to provide Family Group Meetings (Sometimes known as Family Group Conferencing). A FGM is a way for family members, including those in the wider family and friends to meet together to find solutions to any difficulties which they are facing. They provide an opportunity to make plans about a child / young person. The meetings put the onus on the family to assume responsibility in deciding how to meet the child's needs. It is for each family to create their own plan. Initially an independent co-ordinator will meet with family members beforehand to explain the process and will make all the arrangements for the meeting. The child/young person will be offered an advocate, someone to work with them on a 1:1 basis to ensure that they fully participate in the process and say the things they want to say. Any professionals that the family are working with, either statutory or voluntary sector, and teachers etc, may also be invited to give information on how they might help the family.

The actual meeting is in three parts, the first being information sharing, then the family will be offered private family time to talk things through between themselves and come up with a plan. The final part is the presentation and agreement of the plan.

Research has shown that there are overall, positive outcomes associated with FGM with families tending to reach more creative solutions to their difficulties than those proposed by professionals.

We have some information and DVD's. The DVD's show FGM process using family members from five different families from

Cardiff who have all been through the FGM process. The family members act out a role play, whilst the characters and the scenario is fictitious and in no way reflect any of the family members personal circumstances, the DVD was devised to show what a FGM meeting is like. If you would like a copy please contact Debbie on 20683687. Unfortunately this service is only available in Cardiff.

Dates for up and coming Grandparents Support Group at City Hall:

19th July – Room 100 – Barnardos

August – No Meeting

20th September – Room 100 – Grandparents from Newport Support Group join us

18th October – Room E

15th November – Room E

13th December – Room E

If you haven't yet been, or haven't been for a while, why not come along for a cup of tea and a chat. We usually have a speaker and it's FREE!!

Contacts:

Debbie Plenty & Angela Jones,
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AGE concern
Cardiff & The Vale of Glamorgan

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Advocacy

Q P M

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