

Home Choice Care

“Supporting Your Freedom”

Cold Weather

Winter warming

It seems obvious that you should want to keep warm and safe in the winter but many people don't realise the serious threat to health posed by not keeping warm. As weather gets colder we are all more susceptible to colds and 'flu, a drop in body temperature can increase the risk of heart attack, stroke and breathing difficulties. Older people and people with a serious disease or disability are particularly vulnerable to the effects of cold weather.

You

There are some simple things that you can do to keep warm and keep well such as eating well, drinking hot drinks, dressing warmly and exercising regularly.

It is also important to have a 'flu jab annually as the vaccination is modified slightly every year due to the 'flu virus changing. The 'flu jab is available free to anyone over 65 and people who are in 'at risk' groups. For more information go to : NHS Immunisation Website.

To reduce the risk of slipping on icy or wet pathways, seek out dry areas to walk if possible, putting new rubber tips on any canes or walkers, and wearing boots with non-skid soles.

Your Home

Keeping your home warm should become a top priority in the winter months. There are some small steps you can take to make sure your home is as warm as it can be such as draught proofing windows and doors and getting your heating system checked annually to make sure it is working properly. Before the season starts, you should also have your chimneys cleaned and checked out.

People who are relying on space heaters for warmth should keep them at least three feet from anything flammable, such as curtains and furniture. It is also wise to keep a working smoke detector and fire extinguisher in your home for peace of mind.

Financial Assistance

Depending on your circumstances you may be entitled to a winter fuel payment. This is a payment of up to £200 for people aged 60 or over with an extra £100 for people aged 80 or over. For more information go to www.thepensionersservice.gov.uk/winterfuel or call the Winter Fuel Payments Helpline 08459 15 15 15.



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Home Choice Care - “A 3-Star Provider”

Home Choice Care have achieved 3 star status, the best you can get, in a recent inspection by CSCI. I am pleased to be able to share with you the accolades we have been getting from the Commission for Social Care Inspectorate (CSCI) regarding the standard of the care you provide. Of our 6 branches 3 have been inspected under the newly introduced star rating scheme. In all cases we have gained 3 stars, the highest level a company can get.

Well we're now well into October and the evenings are getting rapidly darker with a real nip in the air morning and night...what happened to that Indian summer we were promised! I guess you didn't need to take any notice of the heat-wave guidance in the last Newsletter.....there wasn't one!

Anyway before we know it Christmas will be upon us. We will be contacting you soon, as we have in previous years, to find out your plans and service requirements over the Christmas and New year period.

Once again I am pleased to report the number of compliments for our staff continues to increase. This is very pleasing and much appreciated by all the staff concerned. It's certainly good for people to realise just how much they are appreciated, often for the little things that they do. I was certainly touched by some of the heart-felt comments and praise for the things that we have done well and the quality of the care provided.



John Giffney, Care Director

Open House

Farewell!

I have now been with Home Choice Care for 18 months and seen more than a few changes, dealt with more than a few challenging situations and been lifted by the improvements that I have seen.

I have however decided that I need to look for some fresh challenges and yes, perhaps spend some more quality time with my family and friends.....if they can remember who I am! Although I have decided to leave for pastures new, I would just like to say just how much have enjoyed my time with Home Choice Care and value what I have learned from the staff, service users and relatives that I have met.

Strangely enough I will miss the Newsletters, which I have come to appreciate as an excellent method of communication.....I even received a compliment recently from a service user who told me how much she enjoyed them.....we'll at least I know that is one person who has appreciated my contribution.

Essex Branch News

Well summer is over and the nights are drawing in. That means we all need to prepare for winter. Don't forget to get your flu jab, it should be free of charge for every one of our service users and Home Choice Care encourages all our care workers to have a flu vaccination to protect themselves from flu and accidentally passing it to you or your families. Also remember to claim your winter fuel payment. It is now £250 for the over 60's and £400 for the over 80's you can claim your payment using the winter fuel payment helpline.

Finally, with dark mornings and long nights please try and make sure that your outside lights are working-to avoid any of our care workers stumbling about in the dark trying to get to your door or key safe.user's safety and activity without being in their home.

Best wishes for Autumn - Jane Orr Campbell, National Care Director

No Response Calls

At times we arrive at a service users home to find that there is no response. This can be for a multitude of reasons but we have a set procedure in place for our staff to follow for your safety and protection.

Common causes, taken out by family and friends, hospital/doctors appointments but emergencies do also arise.

We would therefore be grateful if we could be kept up to date with names and telephone numbers for emergency contacts such as family, friends or neighbours and also advise us of appointments or outings where you can, an expected return time can also be useful if you will be late or staying overnight. It is also particularly useful for us to be aware of emergency keyholders.

For those that are finding it a bit of a struggle to get to the door or purely for emergencies a Keysafe is an excellent idea, the office or social services will be pleased to provide you with further information on this.



Out of Hours Emergency

Our dedicated On Call Team are available to support both you and our care workers outside of our normal office hours of **Monday – Friday 08.00 – 17.00.**

Our On Call Service operates from 17.00 – 23.00 Weekdays and from 07.00 – 23.00 on Weekends and Public Holidays. As you are aware we maintain our service continuity by the provision of one contact number which is: - **01245 450995**

Please remember that outside of our normal office hours the On Call Service is in place to deal with emergency enquiries, resolving potential service failures, no response calls and generally ensuring that the service is maintained in order that all planned visits are achieved. If you have a non urgent enquiry I would ask that you refer these to our staff team within our normal office hours.

Training

Such is our commitment to training our staff not only for their own development but also and primarily to increase the quality of care offered to you, we hope to offer more opportunities to obtain higher level qualification NVQ3 and 4 where appropriate to our staff. This is in addition to the development opportunities in our On Line Training Academy which has had a very positive response, not only from our staff but also Essex County Council.

If you have any suggestions for areas of training that you feel would benefit our staff please do not hesitate to contact Wendy Dockrill our Training Officer at the Essex Branch.

Compliments

Letter received today from the daughter of Mrs K M. She wanted to compliment Margaret, who visits her mother once a week, on how extremely caring and conscientious she is and is very grateful to her.

Letter from daughter of Ms M. She said that Kim was very reliable, very helpful and gave her mother excellent care and attention and could not praise her highly enough.

Letter from daughter of Mrs O. She said that Gail was very reliable, very helpful and gave her mother excellent care and attention and she could not praise her enough.

Telephone call from Mrs. V H regarding Gill. She said that Gill is just wonderful and would like her every morning please.

Daughter of Mrs. C called to thank Sharon for her care and concern for her mother. She would like it noted that Sharon shows care for her clients beyond the basic care and her attitude is to be commended.

Welcome - New Starters

Amy Eastwell, Carol Sinnott, Lesley Arnold, Fiona Kemp, Melanie Phillips, Claire Davidson, Kate Jarrett, Claire Hughes, Aysha Grayer, Gillian Morris, Sarah Field, Karen Lindsay, Mary Chimba, Janet Elmy, Michelle Osborn, Jan Vallis,

Future Newsletters

Any suggestions, tips, off the cuff ideas, useful advise or recipes etc that you feel could be included in future editions of this Newsletter then please contact me or my Deputy Care Director Val Dewhirst.

Good luck for the future

Sonia Brewster, Emma Balch, Kim Perry, Anthousa Wood, Epi Muin-disi, Mark Norman, Karen Lindsay, Janet Elmy