



# The MASE Monthly Newsletter

## March 2015



### Winners of Queen's Award for Voluntary Service

### Spring is around the corner!



In March we see the beautiful daffodils in abundance scattered around the countryside, all heralding the start of Spring.

Please don't forget that on **29 March our clocks will go forward** and our Spring will then officially start.

The longer days and lighter nights are something for us all to look forward to, and who knows we may also see a little bit of sunshine, which can make such a difference and may also help to brighten our days.



### Assisted Technology - Are these the solutions to your problems

Are there things that are causing you anxiety in the home? Do you think Assisted Technology could help in any way? If so let us know, as **Jim Ellam**, the Commissioning Manager and AT Project Lead at Staffordshire County Council, will be visiting our Groups in April/May to bring along the items that Carers have requested more information on. On your tables are forms for you to complete, stating what five items would help you in the home. Please complete them and hand in to one of our volunteers.

Jim is an old friend of the MASE Group and will be with us during the evenings, offering help and advice to people to need it. He is a very busy person, but has made time to come along, so let's make it a

### There is no such thing as a free prescription!

Even if you don't pay for your prescriptions, please remember there is still a cost to the NHS.

£1.5M of medicines are wasted locally every year—this money could have paid for other treatment and services.

#### How you can help to reduce medicines waste:

- ▶ Only order what you need
- ▶ Check what you already have at home before you order
- ▶ If you don't order an item this time it will still be on your repeat prescription to order when you need it
- ▶ If anyone else orders your medicines for you, let them know if there are any items you don't need
- ▶ If there are any items that you do not need give them back to the pharmacist **before you leave the pharmacy**
- ▶ Let your GP or pharmacist know if you have any problems with your medicines
- ▶ If you have stopped any medicines let your surgery know to remove them from your repeat prescription
- ▶ If you need to go into hospital, take all your medicines with you

**Remember : It is everyone's NHS so let's use it wisely**

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## Are you getting the Benefits you are entitled to?



**The Carers Wellbeing Fund:** This money is there for you, the Carers, to use. It is a simple form to complete and can be used for: a short break, a meal out, entertainment, relaxation, keeping fit, gardening, hairdressing, learning to drive or perhaps a hobby. It is well worth reading through the leaflet! So many Carers appear to be missing out on benefits they are entitled to. Are you asking enough questions about benefits/allowances that are applicable to you? **If you have a Key Worker/Social Worker, then ask them what benefits you may be entitled to.**

### What is Attendance Allowance? (figures as published April 2014)

**As we get older, many of us need a little extra help to look after ourselves, especially if we have a long-term illness or disability.**

If your ability to keep safe or look after your own personal care is affected by physical or mental illness or disability, you may be able to claim Attendance Allowance.

#### How much is it worth?

**There are two weekly rates. The rate you get depends on the help you need. You'll get:**

- £54.45 if you need help in the day or at night
- £81.30 if you need help both in the day and at night.

These rates apply from April 2014 to April 2015.

Claiming Attendance Allowance won't reduce any other income you receive, and it's tax-free. If you're awarded it, you may become entitled to other benefits, such as Pension Credit, Housing Benefit or Council Tax Reduction, or an increase in these benefits.

#### Can I claim it?

**You could be eligible if you:**

- are 65 or over (if you're under 65, you may be eligible for Personal Independence Payment instead)
- could benefit from help with personal care, such as getting washed or dressed, or supervision to keep you safe during the day or night
- have any type of disability or illness, including sight or hearing impairments, or mental health issues such as dementia
- have needed help for at least six months. (If you're terminally ill you can make a claim straight away.)

Attendance Allowance isn't means-tested, so your income and savings aren't taken into account. You don't actually have to receive help from a carer, as Attendance Allowance is based on the help you need, not the help you actually get.

You don't have to spend your Attendance Allowance on care – it's up to you how you use it. Attendance Allowance can help you to stay independent in your own home. So don't delay in making a claim if you think you could be eligible. **Please note with the forthcoming Election things are likely change.**

If you have a computer please take a look at our website which covers all MASE activities: [www.themasegroup.com](http://www.themasegroup.com)

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