

### **Braintree Carer Wellbeing sessions**

This briefing has been produced in response to a request from Lydia Chao to explain the work of this charity and specifically the Carer wellbeing programme, Feeling Good, Caring Well.

One key element of the range of services that Action for Family Carers offers is our Feeling Good, Caring Well programme which is focussed on the wellbeing of Carers. Typically, Carers will put the person they care for first, ignoring their own wellbeing needs and coping as best they can with the stresses of their role. This programme aims to communicate the message that Carers matter too, and to provide Carers with some tools that will help them manage their own wellbeing including the most stressful times.

Lydia is a member of our Feeling Good, Caring Well Steering group. This is a group of Carers who are willing to meet with the senior Leadership team and Care Wellbeing Leads to shape and monitor the Feeling Good, Caring Well programme which is funded by the Lottery Community Fund for 4 years.

Part of this programme has included the delivery of wellbeing sessions in Braintree for Carers which ran earlier in 2019 and which Lydia was instrumental in setting up, indeed it Lydia who identified the need and opportunity there.

We are grateful to Lydia for having researched and found both a trainer for the sessions and a venue. This made our arrangements much easier and as Lydia also personally spoke to other Carers who are interested in this type of session so that we could be better informed about what would be appropriate for them.

We have now run wellbeing sessions in several areas of Essex and are able to share the learning. The original contact for the trainer that we used in the Braintree area, Marisa Swain, came from research that Lydia had undertaken. We know that she is in tune with Carers needs, and that she can deliver sessions that mean Carers time is used most effectively. Marisa is very willing to be involved in delivering further sessions in Braintree using the same successful format.

Because we run these sessions in a variety of locations including community halls, very little is required in terms of setting up or clearing away. The organisation required to run the sessions is kept to a minimum once the group has been recruited and the sessions booked. Refreshments are usually offered to the Carers which means that they also have a chance to socialise at the sessions, an element which is very important to many Carers who experience isolation due to their caring role.

Lydia has participated in our wellbeing sessions as well as the arranging and delivering of them. As a Carer herself she is in a good position to understand what will appeal to other Carers and what their needs may be.

We hope that we will be able to support Lydia to continue to work for Carers in Braintree and across Essex by providing her with advice as well as other support.



Heather Beach

23<sup>rd</sup> September 2019