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SPECIALIST CARE SERVICES PROVIDED IN YOUR HOME BY HELPING HANDS

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Taking care to provide vital holiday breaks



Our carers try to go the extra mile to help service users enjoy an active and fulfilling life.

This can be through regular daily or weekly care and support or sometimes by enabling a holiday of a lifetime or organising an away-from-it-all trip.

Such breaks can be a real tonic to the wellbeing of our service users while also offering some valuable support and respite for personal carers and family members.

Helping Hands recently helped Ian Anderson and his disabled 16-year-old daughter enjoy a week-long holiday at Center Parcs, near Penrith, Cumbria.

This important break was organised by care support officer Rachel White with the essential assistance of carers Jen Snaith and Leanne Hall, who travelled with the family and their dog.

A delighted father said: "It was Eve's first, much needed holiday in eight years, since becoming ill with an inoperable, life limiting brain tumour.

"The reception we received at Center Parcs helped us to have a positive, very relaxed, therapeutic and much needed break."

Working with Helping Hands, staff at Center Parcs were also very supportive and gave Eve and her father private access to the pool



before it opened to the public.

Ian added: "I would like to thank Helping Hands, for assisting my daughter Eve with two attentive, sensitive, caring and compassionate carers who accompanied us. Special thanks to Rachel, who was instrumental in organising so much."

Teacher Louise Brennand, of Percy Hedley

School, where Eve attends, informed funding partner Northumberland County Council of the huge benefits of the trip and recommended a second trip should be replicated later in 2019.

She said: "It had been a very positive and beneficial break and it seems everyone gelled. For Ian it was great having a carer just in case, allowing him to relax and enjoy the holiday as well.

"Staff at Helping Hands are to meet our speech and language therapist to look at communications strategies – so that is another positive initiative."

Elsewhere, our carers Tim Storey and Ralph Staines helped organise a surprise trip for service user Kyle Hartley to meet up with old friends at Moss Peteral Farm, Carlisle, between last Christmas and New Year.

Kyle, 26, suffers from juvenile Huntington's Disease and we provide a 24/7 care package to support Kyle with every day needs.

The day trip enabled Kyle to meet long distant friends. This activity was planned by family but was a surprise for Kyle who enjoyed meeting old friends, exploring the farm and indulging in homemade lunch.

Improving service levels by investing in training



Helping Hands is committed to a continuous improvement programme across the organisation.

Training is a vital part of improving quality standards and delivering improved levels of service.

We recently established our own training centre in Cramlington to focus more on this important aspect to support staff across the group.

All carers are currently undertaking a series of e-learning courses. We currently offer more than 30 different courses, from medication and autism through to children's mental health.

The staff in this photo are the first to complete an accredited L2 course. These nationally recognised courses are completed within eight weeks. They are distance learning courses provided by Learning Curve.

North Sea dip for charity



One of our braver service users finished last year with a Boxing Day Dip to raise money for Autism Northumberland.

Kirsty Trimming joined around 20 people to go where many wouldn't follow ... running into a cold North Sea, at Newbiggin-by-the-Sea. She raised £150 to go towards a sensory

room at the Cramlington centre for people suffering from autism spectrum disorder.

Kirsty, who suffers from autism herself and receives valuable help from Helping Hands, regularly volunteers to support others at the Centre. A big, proud 'well done' to Kirsty.

Sing-along party



Christmas didn't pass-off without a slap-up, sing-along party for many of our service users – held at the community hub, in Holywell.

Volunteers at Walk of Life, the North Tyneside charity – sponsored and supported by Helping Hands – laid out a festive spread of home-made cakes, sandwiches and ginger wine. Musical entertainment gave the event a real party celebration.

Managed by Sylvia McBrien, a former team manager at Helping Hands, the Walk of Life charity, works at grass roots level to support vulnerable and elderly people and those suffering from social isolation.

In memory of ...

Christine Bryan, 65, who passed away on Christmas Eve. She is fondly remembered by our specialist team who supported Christine for more than five years and made it possible to live her final years in her own home in Seaton Sluice.

We received a lovely card from her cousin, Anne Nash, who said: "A big thank you to all at Helping Hands for the wonderful care and love that was shown to our Christine over the years."

Jamie Hartley, who suffered from Huntington's Disease, and passed away between Christmas and New Year. His mother Kristina Hartley, who looked after Jamie with her husband Mark at their home in Newsham said: "We are very grateful to all the staff that worked with Jamie over the years; and would like to tell them all that we couldn't have asked for nicer people. Jamie loved them. And our children saw many of them as part of our family as they woke up to them there each morning. We miss them."