



2009 is Year of the Volunteer at the Carers' Resource

Mary and Jean await your call

Two key appointments have been announced by The Carers' Resource in a major drive to recruit more volunteers.

And Jean Eames and Mary Blackwell have begun their new roles as Volunteer Coordinators by

asking *Choices* readers and others: "Can YOU spare a little time to make life better for carers?"

They say: "When people offer to volunteer, we will find what roles are suited to the time and skills they bring. Mainly it depends on what they would like to do. They will be sure of a warm welcome and training can be provided."

Mary (*left*) joined the Craven and Airedale team last autumn after taking early retirement as Support Services Manager at Yorkshire Building Society's head office in Bradford. Jean (*right*), who will run volunteering for Harrogate area, joined from St Luke's Medical Practice in Harrogate where she was practice manager.

Director Anne Smyth said: "We are delighted to have people of their calibre to jointly organise and expand our cheerful band of volunteers. We really do need them to help us maintain our services to carers in the present economic chill."

Volunteers can chose from a



range of opportunities: from mentoring through the Oak Tree Project or at a Drop-In centre to befriending, giving telephone advice to carers or stuffing envelopes. Drivers are needed and so are people to raise funds by selling Christmas cards or helping at a sale of work.

Mary Blackwell says: "Volunteers need not commit to regular times although some do. Just a few hours a week can be enormously helpful. Volunteers become part of a purposeful, happy team."

Jean Eames adds: "It's better to have a lot of people reliably doing a few hours a week. A simple call to a carer under pressure can be an enormous help."

What do volunteers get out of it? "Plenty," says Jean. "They feel part of a team, find a different focus in life, perhaps put something back into a service which has helped them. One lady said volunteering brought her out of herself. She can't wait for Friday afternoons."

VOLUNTEERING CHANGES LIVES SO COME AND JOIN US

Becoming a volunteer is personally rewarding and will help you put something back into the community by improving the lives of carers.

Volunteering can provide you with many benefits. These include a sense of achievement, the opportunity to make new friends and the chance to use your skills or do something you may not have done before.

People of working age gain qualifications and improve their job prospects. Over 70 per cent of employers will hire a candidate with volunteering experience over someone without it.

Across Harrogate, Craven, Airedale and Ripon, volunteers free up our professional staff to focus more fully on supporting carers. Age doesn't matter. You are never too young or too old. In fact age may make you more suitable for certain roles.

If you think you could get more out of life by becoming a volunteer and helping carers in their exacting roles, please contact Mary Blackwell on 01756 700888 or Jean Eames on 01423 500555 to find out what is involved. They would love to hear from you.

Now hear from the volunteers themselves—pages 4,5,6,7,8.

SITS VAC in many areas of our varied work

.. IN BRIEF .. IN BRIEF ..

Planning for the future

Mencap has organised some free information sessions about setting up wills and trusts for the benefit of someone with a learning disability. Sessions are led by qualified local solicitors.
York: Wed 25 Feb 12.30pm – 2.30pm; Beechwood Close Hotel, 19 Shipton Road, York.
Leeds: Thu 26 Feb 12.30pm – 2.30pm; West Yorkshire Playhouse, Leeds.
Further details from *Mencap* on 020 7696 6925

Spotting signs of depression

If you think you or someone close to you may be depressed, new leaflets from Age Concern could help

- **Spotting the signs of depression**
- **Discussing depression with your GP**
- **Coping with depression**
- **Supporting a loved one with depression**

Available from Age Concern on 0800 00 99 66 or online at ageconcern.org.uk.

Still going strong – a guide to living with dementia

A comprehensive guide from the Mental Health Foundation is at mentalhealth.org.uk.
If you'd like more information about dementia, contact the Carers' Resource information team 01423 500555 / 01756 700888

Multiple Sclerosis

Just diagnosed – an introduction to MS - a helpful pamphlet available from the MS Society – call 0808 800 8000. It's also online in print and audio versions at mssociety.org.uk.

Visit **William Merritt Disabled Living Centre & Mobility Service** to see and sample a range of equipment with free and impartial advice from health professionals.

Open days featuring adult equipment on:

**Tue 3 Feb; Fri 20 Feb
Wed 4 Mar; Mon 23 Mar
Tue 7 Apr; Tue 28 Apr**
9.30am – 3.30pm

no appointment needed

The centre also helps with children's equipment and has a specialist motoring and mobility centre.

Call the William Merritt Centre:

Tel: 0113 305 5332 ;

www.williammerrittcentreleeds.org

Nominations are now open for the brand new **People's Award for Dignity in Care 2009** to say thank you to exceptional health and social care staff.

Any care-giver is eligible – nurses, social workers, hospital porters or care home employees.

Nominations close 6 Mar 2009.

Call 0870 000 1100 or visit the Dignity in Care website at dignityincare.org.uk or contact Carers' Resource on 01423 500555 or 01756 700888.

HELP!

Can you help me find a tin opener to use with one hand?
Is there a gadget to help me to change a light bulb?
Ask the Disabled Living Foundation's Helpline:
0845 130 9177

One Space

parenting site for single parents covers a wide range of topics – behaviour, finances, health, holidays plus a useful local facilities search.

Click on onespace.org.uk

One in twelve children in the UK has a parent with a mental illness. *When a parent has a mental illness* is a new 16-minute film for young people, their parents and professionals.

View it on the Royal College of Psychiatrists' website at www.rcpsych.ac.yk.

More details from the College on 020 7235 2351 (Ext 298 or 127).

A magazine which cares

The "Woman's Weekly" magazine plans features throughout the year to raise awareness of carers and to encourage readers to donate.

It has chosen the Princess Royal Trust for Carers as its 2009 charity and offers carers a 35 per cent discount on subscription.

Details from the Carers' Resource.

Free information on walks with wheelchairs

www.walkswithwheelchairs.com reviews, OS maps, directions as well as opportunities to share routes with other wheelchair users in the UK.

The general walks website go4awalk.com also covers routes for wheelchair users.

 carers' resource



The Princess Royal Trust for Carers

11 North Park Road Harrogate HG1 5PD
Tel: 01423 500555 Fax: 01423 507777

The Wheel House
Broughton Hall Business Park
Skipton BD23 3AG
Tel: 01756 700888 Fax: 01756 799944

Ripon Tel: 01765 690222

e-mail: info@carersresource.org

Director: Anne Smyth



Choices is published by:

The Carers' Resource

11 North Park Road
Harrogate HG1 5PD
Tel: (01423) 500555

Choices production team:

Jack Foster, Frances Williams, Anne Smyth (Ed)

Director

Anne Smyth

Heads of Service

Helen Brown, Carolyn Eastwood, Heather Hickey, Gill Gentle*

Carer Support Team

Mags Allen, Anne Brennan*, Carol Brown, Janet Clapham, Sue Clements*, Pat Dew*, Christine Gleave*, Carmel Hopkins, Jenny Iannetta, Carol Lancaster, Fiona McKinnon-Evans*, Jean Maxwell*, Barbara Mitchell*, Jill Smith, Dawn Tesseyman, Catherine Thompson, Tina Westmoreland*

Children and Families

Stuart Clark, Sheila Constable, Caroline Guillot, Sara Hardaker, Anna Hughes, Dan Marsden, Helen Prince, Jo Webster -*

Reception / Admin team

Anne Anthony, Jeanette Bolton, David Clegg, Jean Eames, Jane Holliday, Steven Hughes, Rosemary Spoor*

Information Team

Ahlyson Hill, Anna Jackson, Gillian Precious, Rachel Waddington*, Frances Williams*

Development and Training

Mary Blackwell, Nina Derbyshire, Stella Elson*, Jenny Sengel, Anne Wells*

Oak Tree

Anne Cook, Geoff Langstaff, Gina Naylor, Karen Parkes, Barbara Williamson**

*Based at our Skipton office

Team Leader

The Carers' Resource is a company limited by guarantee. Reg charity number 1049278.

EDITORIAL CONTRIBUTIONS

Contributions (50 - 500 words) are welcomed but may be edited. The views expressed do not necessarily reflect policy of the Carers' Resource. Reference to any service does not imply recommendation.

The deadline for submissions for next issue is 28 March 2009.

Young carers talk about their lives now and worry about the future

Money short, relations strained and little time to socialise

When young carers reach around 16 they need help to develop a wide range of skills to take them into the next phase of their lives.

Necessary skills might include cooking and first aid, applying for jobs, benefits and college places, writing CVs and finding support from adult social care services.

This main recommendation comes from an investigation into the experiences and needs of young carers, conducted by the Princess Royal Trust for Carers and Nottingham University.

The report, entitled "*Young Adult Carers in the UK*", is by social care academics Fiona and Saul Becker. It says local authorities and carer services should tell young carers their legal rights including the right to an assessment.

Colleges, employers and others should be aware of the needs of these "hidden carers", and adult

services should lower barriers which inhibit carers aged 16-24 from using their service.

Carers aged 16-17 are found to want to go out more but are expected by the family to take on more caring as they grow older.

Just under two thirds of 18-24 year olds provide emotional care "a lot of the time", which is arduous and restricts their social lives. Nearly a third provide intimate care "a lot of the time".

More than a third have "strained relationships" with the person they care for. Financial hardships are common and some young adult carers choose not to leave home, to spare siblings from the role.

Anne Smyth, Director of the Carers' Resource, commented: "the report reflects problems which young carer workers of the Carers' Resource report daily from the caring front line."

Breakthrough on benefits

The Government has backed away from earlier proposals to move carers receiving income support on to Job Seekers Allowance.

In a recent White Paper, Ministers finally acknowledged concerns from carer organisations including the Carers' Resource that JSA was not an appropriate benefit for carers.

Landmark inclusion for carer services

Carer services have moved up the list of priorities for the NHS. They have been included for the first time in the NHS Operating Framework.

A key component stems from the National Carers' Strategy which gave the NHS £150 million to provide support for carers. Carers will benefit from this and the commitment that if eligible they will get a personal budget to choose how they want help.

Locum Receptionists required

**to cover annual leave and busy periods at the Carers' Resource
approx 10-12 weeks per year - Harrogate Office
and 5 weeks per year - Skipton Office**

Join our busy offices as part of a committed and enthusiastic team.

**For more information please contact: Heather Hickey on 01423 500555
or email: hickey@carersresource.org**

FROM OUR POSTBAG

'You made me feel I was not in the wrong and I was not going mad'

Craven carer Angela W wrote to thank carer support officer Christine Gleave for "wonderful help" over problems at the care home where her sister, aged 57 with Downs Syndrome, had been living for 15 years. Extracts from her letter follow:

"I have not been very well and the stress of trying to cope.....while my sister was left to suffer some very unkind treatment left me traumatised.

"I do not know what I would have done without the very good fortune I had in speaking to you on the telephone that day. You put everything in perspective, made me feel I was not in the wrong and was not going mad, and helped with the letter I did not have the confidence to write. Everything you said has been exactly as you said it would happen.

"I am impressed, amazed and so grateful.

"I met my sister for the first time in two and a half years and we got together as if it had been yesterday. The social worker was astounded at my sister's vocabulary, having been told by the home that she did not speak.

"On the two occasions I have asked for help, the Carers' Resource have been wonderful. I shall be forever in your debt and now look forward to my sister having a better life. I spent two years battling for my sister's rights and you sorted it out in one telephone conversation.

"My dear Mum always said if you take water out of the well always put something back so there will be some for others. If I can help the Carers' Resource to assist other people, I will." more letters page 7



Meet the Turners - one of 50 young carer families who received Christmas hampers. Young carer officer Dan Marsden, pictured right, presented the gifts and toys to Danny Turner with Mum (Jean) and young nephew Evan looking on. Jean suffers from epilepsy and has had two strokes and cancer. She is dependent on her electric wheelchair. Danny worries about her and helps with shopping, food and household jobs. Gifts and cash towards hampers came from many supporters including SI Recruitment £500, Caroline Bayliss £100 and Sarah-Jane Patrick £180 from her "pampered chef party". Cadbury's, Procter and Gamble, Jaguar and Department of Work and Pensions staff gave beautiful gifts and toys.

SHARING FUN AND CAMARADERIE says Jenny Dickinson, youth club volunteer

"I act as escort on the bus which picks up young carers from their homes to join others at the youth club in Starbeck. We meet on Thursday evenings in term time and I fill in around the two youth workers with whatever tasks might need doing.

"The young carers learn new skills like cooking healthily and we organise drama and games, exchange chit-chat, access the internet and generally have fun. I've never asked directly what they get out of it because it's obvious really. They meet other young people who have similar pressures. This can open up real friendships for which they might not otherwise have time.

"We have also had weekend trips away similar to Outward Bound where they can chill away from their normal responsibilities.

"I began volunteering after moving to Harrogate two or three years ago. I'm now 26. I work full-time at a special needs school in Ripon. I was nervous at first thinking, 'Oh dear - working with teenagers I've not met before', but I get a really positive feedback helping young people who are helping others and by seeing them share some fun and camaraderie."

"There has rarely been a more critical time to invest in volunteering" - management expert Linda Graff



WITH A LITTLE HELP FROM OUR FRIENDS

From Glyn Owen Hughes, chairman of the Carers' Resource:

William Booth famously said charities spend too much time pulling bodies out of the water downstream when they should be upstream stopping people falling in in the first place.

I am confident the founder of the Salvation Army would approve of the Carers' Resource. He would find us "upstream", reaching out to carers and supporting them before their lives become intolerable.

In today's tough economic climate however, charities like ours are struggling as never before to secure funding to meet the surging demand for our services.

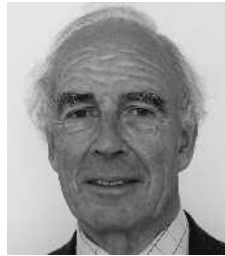
For this reason, and believing passionately as we do in the cause of carers, we make no apology for returning to our appeal in the last *Choices* firstly for donations and secondly for volunteers to help us sustain our services.

We are stepping up our fundraising and will shortly be writing to some newcomers on our mailing list to become Friends and make a donation. Anyone else who would like to know more about our Friends scheme should contact Anne Wells.

Of course giving will not be possible for some. No-one who receives a letter should feel bad or pressured if they can't afford to give but we hope they will understand that we need to ask.

And while giving money to a good cause is important, it takes special people to afford a little of their time to make a real difference to the lives of others.

We are making volunteering a



major focus of this edition of *Choices*. Throughout, we show how we are reorganising volunteering, spotlight those who are already making that difference and invite more people to join in this rewarding work.

Coun John Fox, the Mayor of the Borough of Harrogate, is organising a series of events and, as one of his two chosen charities, we benefit from this fundraising. Why not get some friends together and come along?

** Friday 20 February: Mayor's charity dinner at Crown Hotel, Harrogate with Gervase Phinn as guest speaker, tickets £27.50 each

** Sunday 26 April: Clay Pigeon Shoot at Knaresborough Gun Club

** Thursday 30 April: Golf Day at Oakdale Golf Club, Harrogate

For further information about any of these events contact Anne Wells on 01423 500555.

Calling all knitters and stitchers

We have patterns for knitted chicks and baskets and a template for felt ducks. Can you help by using your craft skills to make these fun Easter gifts which we can stuff with a Cadburys crème egg?

Last year our team knitters managed to raise £530 - a wonderful boost to our fundraising. Cadburys have very kindly offered us as many eggs as we need. Please let Anne Wells (on 01423 500555) know if you can help us to do even better this year.

Most can spare a couple of hours says Jenny Smith, befriender and corporate help

"Brenda is very self-sufficient and can shop on line but she's trying to look after Roy at home which leaves very little time to get out. I try to call for a chat at their home in Ripon once a week. I posted some Christmas parcels and cards so Brenda could be sure they would arrive on time. A friendly face from the outside world, that's me.

"I'm 31, single, live in Ripon and work for Jaguar in corporate sales. Before Christmas I rang round Jaguar dealerships for donations and we got about 40 gifts including model cars and Teddy Bears to include in hampers for young carers. I also helped at a sale of clothes in Harrogate. I contacted the Carers' Resource after reading a Sunday Times article. It's a fantastic organisation and I'm pleased to be on the fundraising committee.

"I work full-time and am away quite a lot but I do enjoy volunteering. It's only giving time, isn't it? I know time is important but most people can spare a couple of hours a week. As a volunteer for the Carers' Resource, you don't have to commit to the same time every week and you will find a role that fits your lifestyle.

"When you see how carers cope, you realise there are people who get left out of the loop and you know you are lucky to have your health and a supportive family."

Research shows that taking on voluntary work around retirement age prolongs life even more than exercise does.

Christian provided the Midas touch on a grand night for singing and young carers

In addition to his many other roles, which include caring for both his parents, 16-year-old Christian Lunn has acquired the Midas touch.

Taking his cue from the King of Phrygia whose touch turned all to gold, Christian obtained a £397 Community Foundation grant and staged a "Celebration of Music" which produced a profit of £1600 for young carer activities.

Harrogate Mayor Coun John Fox, who has made the Carers' Resource one of his two charities of the year, attended the event at the St John Fisher School where Christian is a sixth former, and presented him with the Mayor's Award for community services.

MP Phil Willis, who also attended, said: "Christian does so much at home yet still thinks of others."

Christian's mother Berenice suffers

from a form of leukaemia. His father John has schizophrenia and heart problems and Christian wakes at 6.30 each morning to cook, clean and care for them. He says: "I care for my parents because I love them. We've been through a lot. It's pressure but I get my schoolwork done."

And not just schoolwork. A singer of real promise, Christian loves performing. He joined Knaresborough School of Speech and Drama (KSSD) aged four and has taken part in many of its



Christian (centre) with performers.

Photo: Ackrill Media Group

productions. He reached the "Festival 4 Stars" final and wants to study drama at university.

KSSD and the Fisher Singers were at the heart of "Celebration of Music". The event was compered by Berenice Lunn and her husband John was in the audience along with 20 young carers for whom Christian had saved seats.

IT MEANS A LOT TO BOTH OF US says Nicola Woods, befriender

"Once a week I meet this very nice carer for a coffee and a natter. She is a single mother with teenage children, and I think she sees me as someone who will listen and understand if she feels stressed or depressed. She gets out of her home town which is Boroughbridge and we meet in Harrogate or Knaresborough. She knows that if she has a problem, I am a friend she can share it with. It's really a listening role.

"Why do I volunteer? Well my own children have just started school and because I know what wonderful people carers are, I want to do something to help.

I do believe that if I did not see my carer friend, her life would lack something. She knows she can offload any problems and I will listen. Does it mean a lot to her? I think it means a lot to both of us. I look forward to our meetings just as she does. I would say we both benefit."

eBay for Charity

When selling items on eBay you can donate a percentage of your final selling price to The Carers' Resource.

Look for the charity box just below where you set your price and select The Carers' Resource to receive between ten and 100 per cent.

Don't forget to tick the Gift Aid box. For every pound you give, we receive an extra 28p from the Government.

If any of you have received gifts that you don't really want and you don't want to use eBay to sell them, please might we have them for fund-raising purposes?

"A national strike by volunteers would bring the nation to its knees" - Carers' Resource Director Anne Smyth



MORE FROM OUR POSTBAG

From Liz Douthwaite, Collingham

A donation for your fantastic service

Thank you for the newsletters. My Mum is now in a residential home in Leeds so I am no longer her carer. I enclose a donation for your fantastic service and wish you well.

From Paul Lehman

Mum always looked forward to a chat

"Please find enclosed a small donation as a thank you for the care and support Mum received from your organisation.

"She had been visited by members of your support team for a number of years, most recently by Barbara Mitchell. Mum always looked forward to seeing Barbara and the opportunity for a chat. She also greatly appreciated the practical help Barbara provided on several occasions.

"With an ageing population and increasing levels of dementia, support for carers has never been more vital. I hope the Carers' Resource will receive the funding it needs to carry on its excellent work."

From Tim Paylor, Craven

Face to face care really made the difference

"I would like to thank everyone at the Carers' Resource and in particular Christine Gleave for the tremendous support provided for my parents. I sometimes wonder where we and specifically my Dad would be without the help of Christine.....

"I believe that personal and face to face care was what really made the difference when it came to understanding my parents' challenges and needs, If there is anything I can do for the Carers' Resource, please do not hesitate to let me know."

Paying for a care home

Carers face a traumatic time if the person they care for can no longer remain at home. They may have to find a suitable care home, often at short notice, and arrange finances to pay for care.

Contact Social Services in the first instance – essential if local authority funding is needed. Try to do some groundwork so you know what's available and likely costs.

Carers' Resource can provide details of homes in the area and information on financial aspects. Our leaflet *Choosing a care home* highlights some of the questions you need to ask. Call us on 01423 500555 or 01756 700888.

Carers hit by rocketing bills

Many carers are facing a personal financial crisis and struggling to pay for heating and food, says Carers UK.

After interviewing 1,700 carers, the charity said two-thirds were in fuel poverty and over half were in debt, with many cutting back on essentials like food and heating to make ends meet.

Carers UK Chief Executive Imelda Redmond said the "appalling low level" of the carers' allowance, worth £50.55 a week, had contributed to the crisis.

Carers of disabled people faced higher fuel costs than other groups, for instance from running the washing machine more often.

JUST TRY VOLUNTEERING says Christine Feather, befriender and more

"To anyone thinking of volunteering, I would just say, Give it a try. There's no pressure. Those caring people at the Carers' Resource will find you a role which helps carers and is personally fulfilling.

"I worked in social services but your background doesn't come into it. Everyone is made to feel comfortable. Take me. I'm not the outgoing leader type. More a one-to-one person who is willing to do a variety of things. For example every week I call in on a lady who is 97. It started when her daughter was the carer but under pressure with a very poorly husband. He has now died but I like the lady very much and have carried on visiting her.

"I also help with telephoning from the Broughton Park office - such as reminding people about the lunches and finding how many are coming. Sometimes I have been to the lunches and to the Drop Ins. For the professionals I'm another pair of hands. For the carers I'm someone else to talk to.

"There's such a variety of jobs waiting for new volunteers. I try to do what I'm asked - sell Christmas cards, help with the SCAD boat trips and other events. I suppose I'm involved half a day a week. If I can't make it I don't, but I really love it when I can."

"Volunteering has helped reduce my cholesterol levels and blood pressure and has kept me young" - volunteer Jack Foster

Thank you to

All who have recently made donations, some anonymously, or have become Friends of the Carers' Resource regularising your giving. To learn how to become a Friend, please contact Anne Wells.

engage Mutual Assurance for £600 in Debenham's vouchers to give carers a surprise Christmas present and for sending us a cheque for £416.79 raised via donations at their staff Christmas lunch. Rather than staff paying the company for the lunch, the firm opted for a minimum donation to the Carers' Resource.

Waitrose for £450 from their Community Matters initiative and to customers who voted for us

Royal Bank of Scotland for having three Dress Down Days and raising a total of £592 in 2008

Silsden Parish Church for collecting £158

Carol singers in Burn Bridge and St Michael's and All Angels Church, Littlethorpe for raising £138 and £150 respectively

Helga Gale for baking magnificent Christmas cakes for us to raffle.

The Thompson Boys, Ian and his sons Adam and Jason, for taking part in the Great North Run and raising £332. Well done!

Harrogate Male Voice Choir and Churchdown Male Voice Choir for a concert at Holy Trinity Church, Ripon raising £221

Organisers of the Nidderdale Messiah, John Hodgson and John Mitchell, the conductor Marilynne Davies, the soloists, accompanists and all who came along to sing or listen, raising a wonderful £2001.

Belmont Grosvenor school - as well as supporting us at their Annual Ball, organised a Bag Pack at Morrisons supermarket in Ripon (photo below). The students who packed bags for a busy two hours on a Friday evening raised a marvellous £300.

Our neighbours: Westcourt Group for floor space to assemble the Christmas hampers for young carers and their families; Cedar Court Hotel for parking spaces for December; Fisher Group for the use of their photocopier when ours broke down again (!)



We'll do the finding for you!

To find out about local or national organisations which provide help, support or social events for people with a specific illness or disability, call Carers' Resource Information – 01423 500555 or 01756 700888.

I WANT TO GIVE SOMETHING BACK

says Andy Pearson, Changing Lives tutor

"Having received support from the Carers' Resource over our disabled son Mark, I wanted to give something back using the skills I possess.

"I have my own IT business called AC Services so I know about computers and am trained to deal with them. The help I can give is unpressurised and unstructured, tackling a person's needs - letters, e-mailing, tracking down something online etc - on a one to one basis. That's important because everybody's needs are different.

"I go to the office in North Park Road a couple of times a week but the Carers' Resource has laptops to loan out and I'll call at someone's home if requested. Many carers are deprived of a social network and IT can offer a social network and develop useful skills at the same time.

"Coming from a caring background, I appreciate the difficulties involved as well as the joys. I like meeting and talking to people, and if they want to do the talking that's fine by me."

Volunteers who wish can receive training and gain qualifications through schemes like "Train to Gain" run by the Learning and Skills Council.

"With volunteer help, we can maintain our services despite the financial challenges which we, like many others, are facing" - Carers' Resource Chairman Glyn Owen Hughes