



*Tell the next Government it's time to support carers*

## QUESTIONS FOR YOUR ELECTION CANDIDATES

**Carers' Resource is urging carers and supporters to seek explicit guarantees of better financial support from the incoming Government.**

"Higher benefits to help carers avoid the poverty trap which many of them now experience must be pushed to the top of the General Election agenda," said Carers' Resource Chairman of Trustees Glyn Owen Hughes.

"The Election offers an important opportunity to turn the warm words of politicians into promises of real action in the next Parliament. With social care in crisis and in urgent need of reform, let us grasp the opportunity.

"Six million people look after a family member, saving the state an

estimated £87 billion a year. Yet they themselves pay a heavy price - no money, no breaks, no life of their own and a constant battle for support. Some are near collapse."

Here are some questions carers and supporters may wish to put to their local candidates by phone, fax, e-mail or in person.

**??** Will you press for higher benefits to keep carers out of poverty? The main carer's benefit is worth just £1.52 an hour, well short of the minimum wage of £5.73 (and even less than that if you are retired, disabled or on a low income).

**??** Will your party have a centre like Carers' Resource established in every area, and ensure it receives adequate

funding from statutory sources?

**??** Do you recognise that every carer aspires to a life outside caring - whether to time off or to work or to have hobbies? Carers spend an average of 27 hours a week caring and do so for an average of six years.

**??** Are you aware that over a third of carers do not receive benefits they are entitled to? They don't know they can claim them. Some carers can't understand the eligibility criteria. Others complain about how long it takes to process their claim.

Glyn Owen Hughes said: "Our questions are based on what carers tell us they need to improve their lives. Candidates must break the political silence and state clearly what support carers can expect."

### Welcome to our new home near Skipton

Carers' Resource at Broughton Park has moved just 500 yards to new premises which offer more space for a growing staff



and better facilities including a meeting room for carers and others.

### Carer Trustee sought

If you can spare a few hours most months and are interested in the governance of our charity, this could be a great opportunity to make a contribution by joining our board of trustees.

Expenses reimbursed; training provided as needed.

For more details or an informal discussion, please phone Anne Smyth on 01423 500555

Closing date 31 March 2010

# .. IN BRIEF .. IN BRIEF ..

## Luncheon clubs, coffee mornings, outings....

The Carers' Resource Information Teams are regularly asked for details of local facilities which provide a change of scenery for carers or the people they're looking after.

Do you know of somewhere which would be suitable? Please let us know and we'll pass on your information to other carers.

## Thinking about a holiday?

Where can I find suitable accommodation? What about insurance? Can I get help with funding? If you're arranging a holiday for someone with a disability or illness, our holiday factsheets may have the answers.

Order from your local Carers' Resource office – details on p3.

## Looking after someone 2009/10: a guide to carers' rights and benefits

Free copy available from Carers UK 0808 808 7777 or call your nearest Carers' Resource office – details on p3.

## Dangerous pavements

Keep a look out and report dangerous pavements in your area – don't wait for someone to trip – do it today! You should contact your local council's Highways Department. Alternatively, report online at [fixmystreet.com](http://fixmystreet.com) and details will be sent to the council on your behalf.

## Taking the tablets

can be a problem for anyone who is forgetful, particularly if they live alone.

There are several medication reminders available ranging from a simple watch or clock which gives a 'beep' or 'voice' alarm at specific times to a more sophisticated device which can be programmed to sound an alarm and dispense appropriate medication for a 28 day period.

Call Carers' Resource for more information.

## Blue Badge National Advice Lines

020 7944 2914  
0161 367 0009

## TanniandAnni

offer well-designed, stylish clothing for all ages, adapted and tested to ensure wheelchair users can get dressed, not stressed!

Call 01538 381430 or visit [tanniandanni.com](http://tanniandanni.com).

## The Bladder and Bowel Foundation

is a major UK organisation supporting people who face problems with continence, prostate disease, constipation or diverticular disease.

Nurse helpline: 0845 345 0165;  
Counsellor Helpline: 0870 770 3246;  
[www.bladderandbowelfoundation.org](http://www.bladderandbowelfoundation.org)

Keep up to date with all the Carers' Resource events for carers – click on [carersresource.org](http://carersresource.org) or call us – contact details are on page 3.

## BackCare

all about healthy backs  
National Helpline: 0845 130 2704.  
Contact Carers' Resource for details of your nearest BackCare support group.

## "Exchange and Mart"

Do you want to acquire specialist equipment?  
Do you have your equipment to sell or donate?

### Why not start at the Carers' Resource?

We may be able to help.

We can't store goods but we can act as a "clearing house" for wheelchairs, bath lifts, mobility aids and other equipment for people with disabilities....

Contact: Carers' Resource on 01423 500555

## When someone dies

there's inevitably lots to do, usually at a time when people feel least able to cope. It can help to know what's involved beforehand.

Carers Resource can provide a number of free pamphlets published by Age Concern/Help the Aged and the DWP (Department for Work and Pensions). Call Carers' Resource – our phone numbers are on p 3.



## carers' resource

Carers' Resource gives tailored support and information to unpaid carers and vulnerable people.

It is an independent, award-winning Yorkshire charity which is open to everyone and offers emotional and practical help to enable them to cope.

*Choices* is published by Carers' Resource production team:  
Jack Foster, Frances Williams,  
Anne Smyth (Ed)

### Director

Anne Smyth

### Head of Operations

Alison Straw

### Head of Development

Anna Jackson\*

### Head of Admin and Facilities

Heather Hickey

### Service Managers

Helen Brown, Nina Derbyshire, Carolyn Eastwood\*, Stella Elson+, Geoff Langstaff\*, Jo Webster,

\* Based at our Skipton office

+ Based at our Bradford office

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 14 May 2010

## carers' resource



The Princess Royal Trust  
for Carers

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

Griffin House  
Broughton Hall Business Park  
Skipton BD23 3AN  
Tel: 01756 700888 Fax: 01756 799944

15 Park View Court  
St Paul's Road, Shipley BD18 3DZ  
Tel: 01274 449660 Fax: 01274 449673

Ripon Tel: 01765 690222

e-mail: info@carersresource.org

Director: Anne Smyth

# CARING IN THE UK IS A NO MAN'S LAND

Says **Alex Fox**, Director of Policy and Communications at The Princess Royal Trust for Carers

**Why should support for an illness like cancer be free on the NHS but support for an illness like dementia be rationed and means-tested?**

Other countries in Western Europe approach social care quite differently from the UK. Lots have health insurance schemes, some of which everyone over a certain age pays into, to cover costs of care they might need as older people.

One way in which care in the UK is almost unique is that it is not "carer-blind". This means the more care you receive from family, the less social services will provide.

Others countries offer a level based on your eligible social care needs, regardless of whether your family will meet them unpaid. Some combine this with extra support such as several weeks' unpaid leave for carers each year.

Carers in the UK are caught in a

no man's land. In theory everyone has the right to choose how much care they provide. If a carer decides to give up caring and return to work, that is their right and social services must provide a new assessment and care package to meet the needs of the person who needs care.

But many carers are unaware of their rights or feel that if they gave up caring there would be inadequate support for the family member or friend. Instead they are offered breaks from caring, but this offer can be extremely limited.

Far preferable would be a clear choice for families about caring, and a guarantee of recognition from professionals, financial support and back up by specialist services such as Carers' Resource in every area.

*Alex Fox was formerly Young Carer Development Worker at Carers' Resource*

## Experts report on implications of social care crisis for NHS

**The cost to the State of failing to provide carers with enough support has been highlighted in a authoritative study published by Birmingham University.**

In a compelling contribution to the big debate on costing social care, the study finds "substantial evidence" that health and care services frequently fail to give enough support for carers to continue in their role and lead a full and satisfying life.

Professors Jon Glasby, Steve McKay and Chris Ham with Rosemary Littlechild from the Institute of Applied Social Studies

list the problems which persist despite "the official commitment to 'caring about carers'."

These include at best financial disadvantage, added stress and exclusion, and at worst potential damage to their own physical and mental health, deteriorating relations with the person they care for and a complete breakdown of support.

The study declares: "When this happens, there can be significant adverse consequences for people - and the impact on carers' own physical and mental health also has resource implications for the NHS."

# 'SOMEONE IS THERE FOR US, SOMEONE IS ON OUR SIDE'

## When a kettle is more than just a kettle- plus lots of others useful facts you may not know

**If two men on the Caring with Confidence course hadn't talked to Maureen Mence, would they ever have known about kettle tippers?**

Anyone who thinks a kettle is just a kettle should have a word with Maureen, and she will introduce them to the tilting kettle which releases hot water steadily and safely to make a cup of tea.

Just the job for someone who can't lift - and just one of dozens of invaluable tips which carers have been learning and sharing during Government-funded *Caring with Confidence* sessions run by Carers' Resource.

Maureen says: "Sharing experiences, concerns and ideas about best practice has been a breath of fresh air in my life. Any carer joining *CwC* will meet other people out there who know what life is like. It helps you stay sane.

"The atmosphere has been light-



hearted and the presentations spot on. I've felt someone is there for us, someone is on our side."

Maureen who cares almost 24/7 - for her mother-in-law three days a week and for a disabled friend - says the course has given her almost a library of information: "Instead of thousands of phone calls, I now have names and numbers at my fingertips."

She and **Alison Cook**, who have become friends on the course, both say they have learned a great deal. Alison whose mother had dementia and died last October, is retiring aged 60 after 30 years in the police, most recently teaching diversity in York.

"I've learned about finances,

getting the right equipment, filling in forms, finding help from doctors and social services and about useful websites. I've acquired a lot of knowledge and insight and, yes, about caring with greater confidence."

For **Sylvia Hutchinson**, who has cared for her husband with cancer for ten years, the *CwC* experience has been simply "tremendous - the best thing I have ever done".

Sylvia says: "I never classed myself as a carer and I was at a low ebb until I found Carers' Resource. It's amazing what I have learned on the course - railcards, disabled badges, respite care, wheelchairs, showers, and lots I did not know.

"How to describe it? The courses have allowed me to open up by meeting other people and getting a new perspective on my caring role. I feel uplifted and that has made my husband Alan feel uplifted too. He's really seen a difference in me."

### Who can fill this role? All carers eligible!

#### Essential qualities:

- patience
- strength of character
- physical strength
- financial management skills
- able to work on own initiative and be a team player
- able to deal with a wide range of professionals
- able to survive on little sleep
- excellent communication skills and good telephone manner
- flexibility
- ability to prioritise and manage heavy workloads
- multi-tasking
- dedication
- availability to work bank holidays, nights and weekends
- training skills
- excellent domestic skills
- transport management skills preferred

Pay: £1.52 per hour. Minimum 35 hours per week. Additional hours will be required - no extra pay. All ages considered.

### Where did I put it?

Do you spend precious time and energy ploughing through mountains of paperwork in your search for that urgently needed document?

Age Concern has introduced *LifeBook* a system which can help you to store and find information more efficiently. Your *LifeBook* could also, with your approval, enable family or friends to access essential information in an emergency.

Order your FREE *LifeBook* by phoning 0845 685 1061 (quote ref. ALL721) or complete online at [ageconcern.org.uk](http://ageconcern.org.uk)



# A CHAMPION IDEA? WE'RE TRYING TO FIND OUT

**Carers' champions are being appointed by Jobcentre Plus (JCP), with advisers offering direct support to carers.**

How the move will fit with services like *Changing Lives*, which has successfully helped many carers return to study and employment over the past nine years, is being investigated by support officers from Carers' Resource.

Jobcentre Plus has been given the lead role in *Work Focussed Support for Carers*. It can offer access to JCP approved activities, help with expenses and financial incentives, in-work support and advice on work benefits and tax credits.

Carer support officers are seeking to establish if JCP advisers' knowledge of caring issues is as comprehensive as that which underpins *Changing Lives* service.

They advise carers seeking to return to study and perhaps employment should come to Carers' Resource first.

*Changing Lives* offers expert information, advice and support to carers considering returning to learning, training or work. *Changing Lives* has fully qualified careers advisers who give information on flexible courses and places of study, one-to-one tailored support, emotional support, respite care and confidence building.

Over the years good links have been established with local employers.

Since 2001 more than 500 carers have taken the *Changing Lives* route to regaining their lives during or after caring. Many have returned to training and work including access to higher education, social work and teaching.

## Saga Respite for Carers Trust

provides free holidays for carers who deserve a well-earned break. They will also ensure the person being cared for has continuity of care. You can nominate yourself or another carer. Carers should:

- be over 50
- have been caring for over a year
- have not taken a significant break during the last year
- not be a professional carer

Nomination forms can be completed online at [www.saga.co.uk](http://www.saga.co.uk) or send for a form, posting a self addressed envelope to: The Trust Manager, Saga Respite Trust for Carers, The Saga Building, Enbrook Park, Folkestone, Kent CT20 3SE

## READER'S LETTER

*I am writing to thank Carers' Resource since I first made contact back in 2008. I would particularly like to thank Fiona from the Skipton office. Fiona has given me emotional support, information, help with filling in forms, and advice on financial matters. I care for my 16yr old daughter who at times over the past 2yrs has needed intensive home treatment and we have been involved with many specialist health professionals. However Fiona has kept in touch when others have come and gone and is always kind and caring. I cannot thank her enough for her support. I find the editions of Choices useful and the Caring with Confidence Programme an excellent idea. Susan & Ilsey*

## 'People cheered and I had tears in my eyes'

# Who was the secret Santa?

**It happened at a Christmas lunch but carers are still talking about the anonymous benefactor who paid the bill at the Dalesway restaurant.**

"When a waiter heard a carer ask about paying he said, 'Don't you know a tab has been set up for you?' Everybody clapped and cheered and I felt tears well up in my eyes" recalls Julia Lambert, *Something Good* co-ordinator for Airedale.

"It was such a lovely surprise, such a Christmassy thing to happen. All the carers were deeply moved and thought it was a lovely Christmas gesture of giving to others."

The occasion was a seasonal lunch



for a party of 31 and the lunch bill for the roast turkey and Christmas pudding would have been £300.

The carers gave the restaurant a thank you letter and photograph for the benefactor who had so generously made their day.

"I still don't know who the benefactor was or how he knew about the event," says Julia. "What I do know is the carers went away very happy and with their faith in human nature restored.

"As one lady remarked, 'It really makes you believe in Santa!'"

## Beware benefit bandits

# YOU DON'T NEED TO PAY FOR ADVICE

**Carers are reminded that expert and comprehensive advice on benefits is available at Carers' Resource - and it's free.**

The reminder follows the recent emergence of companies which are offering benefits advice either for a one-off fee or on a "no win, no fee" basis.

One such company which has targeted carers and vulnerable people is said to be confusing clients by offering a seemingly free service which can end up costing a substantial amount.

Someone who signs up and is found to be entitled to benefit will

be asked for 40 per cent of back pay from the time the claim is made. For example a claim in October resulting in a £30 a week grant from December would produce eight weeks of back pay totalling £240 of which the company would demand £96.

Welfare advice is offered free by many reputable charities including Carers' Resource, Citizens' Advice Bureaux and other local agencies, so people do not need to pay.

To find your nearest free service, or to check on a service you might consider, contact the Information Team at Carers' Resource.

---

## See our factsheet on new credit scheme for carers

**Changes which affect national state pensions, benefits and allowances come into force on April 6.**

Anne Smyth, Director of Carers' Resource, said: "People who care for 20 or more hours a week will now be able to build up full pension entitlements. Benefits will also open up for people who care for those with a mental or other conditions that do not fit the definition of disability or are undiagnosed.

"We hope government guidance will ensure that carers of people

with substance misuse problems are now included in the new carers' credit scheme, because they have missed out in the past.

"We expect this is a first step towards a package of support and benefits for carers that are proportionate to the amount of caring they do, rather than dependent on the diagnosis of the person they care for."

Carers' Resource has compiled a factsheet outlining how carers may be affected by the new carers' credit scheme. Copies are available from your local CR office.

---

## Minister wants to know PCTs are spending the money

Health Secretary Andy Burnham says Department of Health directors are seeking to identify where primary care trusts are prioritising support for carers. Mr Burnham was approached by Dame Philippa Russell, Chair of the Standing Commission on Carers, after reports that PCTs were not using money allocated for breaks for carers.

He said he hoped his reply would reassure the Commission of his ongoing commitment to carers and to increasing awareness of new funding.

# Thank you

... at Christmas 2009

A special thank you to all who remembered us. To Burn Bridge Carol Singers who braved the snow to raise £91. To organisations which made donations in lieu of Christmas cards, to Gateways School staff for £102 and to AQA Harrogate Social Committee for £90 which made a total of £644 from them to us as their charity of the year.

Our Christmas hampers were again a real treat for young carers and their families. Thanks to DWP Leeds, Menwith Hill, Sainsbury's, ASDA, Cadbury, Procter & Gamble, the Soroptimists, Winkies, the Inner Wheel Club of Ripon and to Absolute Bliss and Greyfriars UK Ltd, both in Ripon,

The 15<sup>th</sup> Harrogate Scouts raised £350 to buy food for our young carer hampers with a bag packing session at Sainsbury's in Harrogate. They raised yet more money with a cake stall at St Paul's Church. A retiring collection from parishioners and the cake stall raised a further £321.

... to other organisations  
Worcnet in Skipton as their charity of the year £96, Nidd Valley Bridge Club £30, RBS £200 from their dress down days, Skipton Gala Charities Committee £200, Cheridan Raithby Charitable Trust £5000 and the Masonic Lodges Doric £210 and Harlow £375. Cedar Court Hotel provided our staff with car parking once again.

... and to individuals

We are very grateful to carers and supporters who make donations throughout the year. Thanks to Anne Mann of the Fast Response Team for £165 from the Great North Run and to our own Heather Smith who asked friends to make donations in lieu of gifts at her wedding to Ron.



# COST OF COLLAPSE IN CARING WOULD BE 'ASTRONOMICAL'

*- strong warning fires national debate on care*

Social care leaders are warning of the "astronomical" cost of a possible collapse in the unpaid role carried out by six million family carers in the UK.

The leaders have fired their warning as a national debate gathers pace over the future of funding social care, and The Princess Royal Trust for Carers calls for support for older and disabled people to be on a universal basis.

Carole Cochrane, PRTC Chief Executive, says: "Ordinary people are



struggling: giving up work to care, or losing their homes to care bills. Whatever funding mechanism is chosen, it will bring a fraction of the £87 billion that unpaid care is currently worth to the economy each year.

When someone spends years caring, forgoing an income and savings, their caring must count as much as the cash others contribute. A fair insurance scheme should be cheaper or free for carers."

Carers UK want a new Social Contract and action from political leaders long before a "tipping point" is reached in 2017 when care needed for older people is likely to outstrip what families now

provide.

The social contract recommends:

- A nationally determined entitlement to care and support which recognises the contributions of families and carers.
- A fair and transparent funding system for care.
- Flexibility and support from employers for those juggling work and care.
- A tax and benefits system which prevents financial hardship, recognises family caring and lets carers juggle work and care.
- Communities to understand disability, chronic illness, age and caring - and respond through health, care, transport, education and leisure.

## GOING HOME FROM HOSPITAL - HOW IT COULD BE IMPROVED

Some carers continue to report negative experiences both in hospital discharges what happens afterwards, says a report by directors of adult social services (ADASS)

The report says most discharges are timely, safe, relatively straightforward and satisfactory in experience and outcomes for patients and where involved carers, but there are issues around the quality of some discharges.

"Carers as Partners in Hospital Discharge" says: "While there is good practice and progress in some places, there is still a

continuing need to change attitudes and cultures and better understand their impact on carers."

The report asks: "Why is it, when we have so much good policy and practice advice, some carers still feel unrecognised, say they are not treated as partners and processes don't work as well as they might for them and the person they support?"

ADASS calls for all statutory services to have a lead on carers, specialist support for people with dementia, carer issues to be embedded in training and accessible information for carers.

## Please can you help us?

### .. with Easter Chicks

We are very grateful to Cadbury for kindly donating the crème eggs and to the army of carers who have once again been knitting Easter chick covers and baskets. They are now on sale at £1 each.

Anyone interested in knitting and or decorating the chicks or able to sell them on our behalf please contact Anne Wells 01423 500555.

### .. or with raffle prizes

The Rotary Club of Harrogate Brigantes are organising a third Golf Day at Oakdale Golf Club to raise fund for our young carers.

If anyone has tombola and raffle gifts to donate or would be interested in sponsorship opportunities please contact Anne Wells 01423 500555

#### In Memory

Donations at funerals as a tribute to the memory of a loved one make a real difference to us at the Carers' Resource. Recently we received a total of £1574 and we say a special thank you to the family and friends who made donations in memory of the late Joan Hoyland, James Bond, Mark Bryson and Bill Wellock.

*The Carers' Resource Oak Tree service helps vulnerable older people regain confidence and improve their often lonely lives. In Harrogate and Craven, it depends on funding from North Yorkshire County Council*

# 'Putting living back into their lives'

**"I am passionate about Oak Tree. It helps so many people get some living back into their lives."**

The speaker was Betty Burr, a volunteer aged 80, and she was speaking from the heart. "When people lose a partner, as I lost my husband John nine years ago, it knocks them hard. At Oak Tree they come out of their shells and regain confidence in their lives."



Over 200 vulnerable older people have been supported at home each year by five part-time paid staff and 30 volunteers. What it saves

the state in costs to the NHS and other services is incalculable.

Oak Tree provides peer mentoring for isolated, older people. Its sets goals to help them regain independence, and to stay within their own communities and in their own homes.

Much preventative work is with people at risk of admission or re-admission to hospital or long term care. Some find their confidence and self-esteem restored to a point where they themselves become peer mentors after their own mentoring.

Service Manager Geoff Langstaff says: "We are unique at Oak Tree in creating a tailor-made service for every individual client. We look at the practical and emotional needs

and allocate a paid staff member, then when a client becomes more independent a volunteer mentor takes over."

Betty Burr reports on just one healthy branch of Oak Tree: "Three years ago we had two ladies coming to coffee at St Paul's opposite Harrogate Library. Recently we have been getting twelve and whereas those two ladies hardly talked at first, now they never stop.

"Remember in my generation, the men did everything and ladies spent most of their time at home. At Oak Tree they come out of their shells. Last week everyone was talking at once and it was like being in a parrot house. It was lovely to see and hear."

**In youth the days are short and years are long; in old age the years are short and the days long. We put more effort into helping folk reach old age than we do helping them enjoy it.**

## Carers' Resource is up to standard

Producing quality information has always been a key element of work at Carers' Resource. People need to be able to trust health and social care information to make confident, informed decisions about their health and social care. How can they be sure it is accurate, up to date and 'fit for purpose'?

In 2008 the Department of Health invited organisations involved in producing health or social care material to take part in a pilot scheme to develop a national 'kitemark' for information – the Information Standard.

Carers' Resource was one of 40 organisations nationwide chosen to participate, a process which has involved lengthy and detailed



evaluation of our information production. We're delighted to announce a successful outcome and will continue to develop and improve our 'winning' products.

Anna Jackson, Head of Development for the Carers' Resource said: "We are delighted to have been part of the scheme to accredit information. Achieving the Information Standard is recognition of the dedication of our team and the quality of our work."

## ANNA TAKES UP FIGHT TO BANISH INDIGNITY

Anna Jackson has become a Dignity Champion for Bradford. Anna joins former Dignity Ambassador Sir Michael Parkinson in the



campaign to end indignity in health and social care services.

Anna says: "Only by listening to carers and getting professionals to treat them as equals, will the Government fulfil its pledge that carers should be respected as 'expert partners in care'."

Anna suggests carers should become champions of respect and dignity. They can reach her at our Skipton office on 01756 700888.