



choices

The newsletter of the Carers' Resource.

Issue 69: July 2009



Harrogate Mayor, Cllr John Fox, launches CwC with Carers' Resource staff

CwC is off to a flyer so why not come aboard?

Caring with Confidence is off to "a flying start" in Bradford and North Yorkshire, says national director Graham Brindley.

More than 200 carers in the two areas had attended or booked group advice sessions even before specially recruited staff began work and CwC became fully operational early in August.

As *Choices* went to press, the first courses in Keighley, Gargrave and Harrogate were being followed by more in Ripon and Bingley and Settle. Venues vary and organiser Anna Jackson promises to take the programme to carers who form their own group of about ten.

Graham Brindley said: "I am delighted with the progress Carers' Resource has made in delivering CwC sessions to carers in Bradford and North Yorkshire. Months of hard work have meant they are off to a flying start, and this is down to the team's enthusiasm and

dedication to ensuring carers receive the best possible support and benefit from the programme.

"This is what is making the sessions so successful and I'd like to thank the staff for their work."

Carers' Resource is the only carer centre in the country to have been appointed to run two of the 25 courses set up to improve the lives of carers and the family members and friends they look after.

Participants can attend up to seven sessions or "modules" dealing with key issues like finance, health, benefits and coping. Carers' Resource aims to have 1000 sessions undertaken in each of the next two years.

Read what the first participants are getting out of Caring with Confidence on pages 4,5,6,7 and 8. And for information on how to access Caring with Confidence, please contact Anna Jackson on 01756 700 888.

Carers rank high with public, less so with professionals

Six out of seven people (86 per cent) believe carers make a valuable contribution to society, behind only nurses (91 per cent) and firefighters (90 per cent).

Yet a massive eight out of ten carers feel their role is overlooked or ignored by professionals including GPs, social workers and hospital staff. And three quarters of carers also feel their role is unrecognised by family members and friends.

These findings emerged from opinion polls for Carers Week.

More than half say that being overlooked has affected their health and left them worse off financially.

The overwhelming majority of people think benefits for carers too low. The Carers' Allowance level is found "unreasonable" by 76 per cent. Eight out of ten failed to choose the correct total of six million carers in the UK. Most put it at 1.5 million.

DIRECTOR JOINS CARERS' NATIONAL WATCHDOG

Anne Smyth, Director of the Carers' Resource, has been appointed to the 20-member Standing Commission on Carers from September 2009.

The Commission oversees action by local authorities and others to implement Government promises of a better deal for Britain's six million unpaid family carers.

Anne said: "I am thrilled and honoured. This appointment recognises all that the Carers' Resource stands for."

.. IN BRIEF .. IN BRIEF ..

Beautiful new hotel in the heart of the Scottish countryside

At Dalmellington House, owned by the East Ayrshire PRTC Carers Centre, carers can enjoy all the benefits of a five star hotel with the support of understanding staff. Details on 01563 571 533 or www.dalmellingtonhouse.webeden.co.uk.

Watch your back!

Caring which involves regular lifting or help with moving and personal care can lead to a 'bad back'. Useful advice in preventing back problems can be found in ***A carer's guide to safer moving and handling***, published by **BackCare** (formerly the Back Pain Association). To order, call 0845 130 2704 £3.00 (+ £1.00 p&p)

Getting into work:
a guide for parents of disabled children returning to work is published by **Working Families**, a charity which helps parents and carers and their employers to plan an acceptable work-life balance. Contact Liz Whitehead at Working Families on 020 7253 7243

Track down 'lost' pensions through the Government's Pension Tracing Service.
Write to:
The Pension Service, Tyneview Park, Whitley Road, Newcastle upon Tyne NE98 1BA; call 0845 6002 537 or log on to: thepensionservice.gov.uk

Paying too much tax?
Age Concern offers an online tax calculator to work out how much tax you should be paying. The site is free and no personal information is required. Visit www.ageconcern.org.uk.

Special clothing for special people

Do you struggle to find suitable clothing for someone whose needs cannot be met by high street stores? Specialist companies offer clothes with easy fastenings, discreet openings and designs to suit people with a disability or illness.

We have mail order catalogues for loan and a new factsheet listing specialist clothing and footwear companies and additional sources of help. Call Carers' Resource for further details: 01423 500555 or 01756 700888.

Glenthorne Quaker Centre has a bursary fund to assist carers and cared-for to stay at their guesthouse in Grasmere. The accommodation offers disabled-access rooms. Visit www.glenthorne.org or call 01539 435389.

Carers UK National Carers' Summit & AGM
Thursday 12 November 2009
Canary Wharf, London
Carers have a vital opportunity to quiz politicians about their plans to improve support. The meeting is open only to carers and places are limited. Anyone applying before September 4 can be entered into a 'draw' with lucky winners having attendance expenses reimbursed. Contact Carers UK at www.carersuk.org or call Carers Line: 0808 808 7777

Holidays!

Sometimes, Carers' Resource is invited to offer treats and holidays for carers in locations around the country. Carers invariably enjoy the breaks and benefit enormously.

If you would like to add your name to the waiting list should opportunities arise again, please contact our Link Team worker Jean Maxwell on 01756 700888 for more information.

Caring and coping:
the guide for people caring for someone with a mental illness
3rd ed. Rethink 2009.
ISBN 978-0-904854190 £9.99.

Deals with carers' rights relating to care, diagnosis and treatment, coping in a crisis, mental health law and community care support.

Rethink are currently offering a free copy of ***You care, you count*** – ***a carer's guide to getting support*** with every order.
Contact Rethink: 0845 456 0455 or order online at www.rethink.org/ordercaringandcoping

carers' resource



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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 October 2009.

CAUTIOUS WELCOME FOR GOVERNMENT BLUEPRINT FOR SOCIAL CARE REFORM

The Government's long-awaited blueprint for reforming care for older and vulnerable people has received a cautious welcome from care organisations.

The green paper titled *Shaping the Future of Care Together* is seen as sending a strong statement that the Government is ready for a serious debate on how to solve the crisis in care funding. The solution would include scrapping the postcode lottery of care.

Anne Smyth, Director of Carers' Resource, said: "One in five people has had to give up work to care for a relative. This leaves them with lower pensions and can cause poverty. It also deprives employers of key staff. Huge economic and social problems loom unless as a nation we get to grips with the care crisis."

Three options for change emerge

from the green paper:

1: a partnership under which state and individual each pay part of the cost of care.

2: an insurance model where everyone has some costs met and others come from private or state insurance. People would pay to receive free basic support.

3: everyone over retirement age to pay an amount varied according to what they can afford up to £20,000 to fund their social care package.

Anne Smyth said: "While the green paper acknowledges the unfairness of the present system, it hardly reassures carers that they will no longer need to provide unsustainably high levels of care. We must ensure that the contributions of carers are valued properly."

Doorstep selling: your right to change your mind

If you buy something for more than £35 from doorstep salespeople, the law says you have SEVEN days to change your mind. Additionally, your right to cancel should be given to you in writing by the trader. Think carefully before you agree to have any work done or goods delivered within the seven days as you might have to pay if you do not proceed.

If you decide to cancel you must let the trader know in writing within seven days of being told about your right to cancel. Keep a copy of your letter or email as proof of cancellation.

For information on any aspect of doorstep selling, contact Consumer Direct on 08454 04 05 06 or www.consumerdirect.gov.uk or call your local Trading Standards Office (listed under Trading Standards in the phone book).

MPs seek national strategy for young carers

MPs have seized on a report by Ofsted criticising local councils for failing to identify and assess young carers. Ofsted recommended children's caring roles be taken into account when services were delivered to disabled parents.

A group of MPs called on Ministers to implement the recommendations without delay and to develop a national strategy to meet young carers' needs. They were concerned to find young carers were unaware of their right to request an assessment.

'WE HAVE SOMEONE TO TURN TO AND IT'S BRILLIANT'

What struck Peter Dent at Caring with Confidence in Keighley was to see carers keenly swapping experiences even though their home situations varied so markedly.

He says: "We heard from parents of children with learning difficulties, people whose partners had had strokes or were suffering from dementia and so on. Different people, different problems but facing up to their problems and all grateful to have Carers' Resource to help."

Peter, 75, looks after his wife Grace, 72, who has had dementia for the past two years.

"She knows what she wants to do but she can't always do it," he says. "She manages to dress herself after a fashion but puts the wrong clothes on or two garments of the same kind."



Peter intends to attend as many of the CwC sessions as possible and his daughters and a nurse have promised to keep an eye on Grace to enable him to do so.

"I like the sound of all seven modules - whether they deal with managing the household finances or coping with caring or safeguarding the health of carers and those they cared for," he says cheerfully.

"I remember that back in the day when my mother had a stroke, there was no such help. It was a case of get out of hospital and get on with it.

"We have Carers' Resource, which has already helped me to achieve a decrease in my council tax, and now we have these group sessions giving us the kind of advice and support we need. I think it's brilliant."

Mobility scooters and wheelchairs: questions and answers

Is it necessary to register mobility scooters and wheelchairs with the DVLA?

Under the *Use of Invalid Carriages on the Highways Regulations 1988*, invalid carriages are separated into three categories:

Class 1: manual wheelchairs, self-propelled or attendant propelled. Do not have to be registered with DVLA.

Class 2: powered wheelchairs and scooters intended for footpath/pavement use only; maximum speed 4mph; unladen weight under 113.4kgs. Do not have to be registered with DVLA.

Class 3: mechanically propelled invalid carriages which can exceed 4mph but not more than 8mph on the level – generally intended for use on roads. Unladen weight must not exceed 150kgs. Need to be registered for road use, be licensed in the 'disabled' taxation class and display a tax disc

What about insurance?

Although not a legal requirement, insurance is strongly advised. Schemes are available to cover the driver's safety, accidental damage to other people or property and the vehicle's value.

Further information is available from the DVLA on 0870 243 0444; dvla.gov.uk

Help for heroes

There are numerous organisations and charities which provide help for ex-servicemen and their families. Major sources include:

The Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen and Families Association (SSAFA)

Confidential Helpline: 0800 731 4880; website: ssafa.org.uk

Veterans UK

Free Helpline: 0800 169 2277; website: veterans-uk.info (comprehensive list of services charities available online and from Carers' Resource)

The Royal British Legion

Helpline: 08457 725 725; website: britishlegion.org.uk

Is it free for me?

Out and about with someone who relies on your help because of disability or illness? Some venues and travel companies offer free or concessionary rates for carers. Contact attractions before visiting to check admissions policy – many do not advertise free entry for carers. Find out more from our new leaflet *Is it free for me?* Available from Carers' Resource on 01423 500555 or 01756 700888.

Charlie Brooksbank, chair of the PTA at Belmont Grosvenor School, is training for the Great North Run on 20 September. She is looking for sponsorship to raise money for young carers.

Please contact us or go direct to www.justgiving.com/charliebrooksbank1/

"I found out so much that I would not have found out without this session – the advice was invaluable"





Oak Tree Project is branching out

A little help from a friend and Hilda is out and about

Just a few weeks. That's all it took for Hilda Radcliffe to get her confidence back and go shopping in Hellifield, where she lives.

At the age of 86, manoeuvring a wheeler frame and seat around the village and across a busy street isn't easy when you're short of confidence and out of breath. "And those trucks just seem to come thundering along the road," says Hilda.

It was the company of Pat Pickard, a retired district nurse and volunteer mentor for Carer Resource's Oak Tree Project, which put Hilda's outings back on track. In Pat's words, "she was determined not to be beaten and I was pleased to help. And she knows I'm around if needed again."

The Oak Tree Project is expert at matching volunteer mentors with vulnerable older people who risk

being confined at home for lack of nerve, perhaps after illness or bereavement. Hilda Radcliffe recalls: "Last Christmas I couldn't even go to the door. Now with the help of a wonderful daughter and Pat I can again go out under my own steam."

Pat Pickard, a stalwart supporter of Carers' Resource who lives at Earby near Skipton, befriended a lady of 93 who fell flat on her face when the bus started off with a jerk.

A few trips to Morrison's in each other's company enabled the lady to manage on her own. "A little encouragement can work wonders for someone feeling vulnerable," says Pat.

And works quickly too. "I'm sorry, I've got to go to catch the bus," said Hilda Radcliffe, when the call from *Choices* was going on too long.

Easter chicks and baskets

"Delighted to report that when I had finally counted my chickens we had raised £1235 – thanks to the knitters and stitchers and everyone who bought and / or sold the amazing creations," says our Events and Fundraising Coordinator, Anne Wells.



"Special thanks to Cadbury for donating chocolate eggs. The chicks were on sale at coffee mornings and at lunches, in

offices, GPs' Surgeries, Health Clubs and churches

"We fondly remember Maureen Stead, a volunteer for many years with the Carers' Resource, who came up with the knitted Easter chicks idea and gave us the pattern."

'I AM LEARNING NEW SKILLS AND BUILDING MY CONFIDENCE'



"My Dad died when I was eleven so it's really just Mum and me," said Tash Braithwaite. Aged 19, she is one of the youngest carers to take up the support and opportunities offered by the national initiative Caring with Confidence.

Being Tash (short for Natasha), she stays cheerful in the face of the challenges in her young life, had already attended her first three-hour session at Harrogate's White Hart Hotel when she spoke

to *Choices*, and was eagerly awaiting the other six sessions.

"I am learning more skills, finding more confidence in myself and enjoying talking to others in similar situations," she said.

"I was shown new techniques for dealing with stress, such as walking away and calmly getting your thoughts together."

Tash looks after her mother aged 46 who suffers from ME and depression and would probably

never leave the house were it not for her daughter.

Despite the restrictions of such a role for a 19-year-old, she has enjoyed activities and breaks with other young carers during the past nine years and is now moving to an older group.

Over the next few weeks, Caring with Confidence will enable to her build on support already received. The difference to her life could be incalculable.

"Very informative, supportive and helpful. Fellowship of other carers. Sympathetic and encouraging leaders."



'Meeting other carers shows me how much of their lives they give up'

David Craggs can't help feeling the Government is sweeping fundamental caring issues under the carpet. He suggests that Caring with Confidence gives the state a "nice warm glow" when in fact it is failing to respond to the huge burden which unpaid family carers are asked to shoulder.

Nevertheless when asked whether the introductory CwC session has left him wanting more and whether he would recommend fellow carers to join, his answer is a resounding: "Oh yes."

David, 64, a retired senior IT manager with a national company, enjoyed the introductory session, considered it "very professionally done" and found the interaction between presenters and carers "very good indeed".

He said: "As a nation we are rather restrained at showing emotion but the carers who attended were happy to wear their

hearts on their sleeves. I valued the contact with fellow carers and the exchange of ideas about a variety of caring situations."

A second session dealing with caring and coping left him less confident about the ability of its content to address the complexity of caring, but he has booked a third module and he is optimistic that he will hear experiences and advice which will resonate with him.

Since his mother, now aged 89, moved to be near him in Dacre Banks after a stroke in Somerset five years ago, he has been running the two homes and looking after her welfare. There is outside help but his role involves calling in two or more times a day to check on matters like shopping and cooking.

"In meeting many other carers, I now realise how some give up much more of their lives than I do," he says.



New to caring?

Every year two million people become carers, so remember you are not alone! Becoming a carer can be bewildering, confusing and frightening. No-one is super human and all carers will need some support, information and back-up.

If you haven't already contacted Carers' Resource, please give us a call and we'll send you our carer's information pack and discuss ways in which we can offer help and support. (Tel: 01423 500555 or 01756 700888).

'New to Caring' provides a good introduction to all aspects of caring – it's available from Carers UK (Tel: 0845 241 0963 or visit www.carersuk.org.uk.)

Don't be caught out - tips for Blue Badge holders

Blue Badges must be displayed with the wheelchair symbol facing upwards and forwards so that its serial number and expiry date can be clearly seen.

The badge-holder's photograph faces downwards towards the dashboard.

Make sure the clock disc does not overlap the Blue Badge

Always check the signs in car parks – charges may apply to Blue Badge holders, too.

Blue Badges are assigned to individuals and are valid in any car they use as a driver or passenger – the badges are not assigned for use in specific vehicles.

Although Blue badge holders can park in some areas where parking is not permitted by other vehicles, they are not allowed to use loading bays, bus stops and taxi ranks.

For further information about Blue Badges, contact Carers' Resource on 01423 500555/01756 700888.

Council Tax Reduction

Anyone with a severe mental impairment, including dementia, who is living on their own and receiving an appropriate disability benefit (such as *Attendance Allowance* or the higher or middle components of *Disability Living Allowance*) is exempt from paying any Council Tax.

If they live with one other person, that person is entitled to a 25% reduction. If you need further information about Council Tax payments, please call the Customer Services Department at your local council office or Carers' Resource on 01423 500555 or 01756 700888.

"Meeting other carers and sharing experiences and tips is always good and positive. Makes me feel less isolated"





Carer achieves regional adult learners' award *How Michelle is juggling family care and studies to help change her life*

A Ripon carer who joined *Changing Lives* only two years ago has gained GCSEs in Maths and English on her way to becoming the bread winner for her family.

And Michelle Burgoyne, who is in her late twenties and lives at Ripon, found her outstanding achievement recognised when she received the Yorkshire and Humber Adult Learning Award in a ceremony at Sheffield University.

Stella Elson of the *Changing Lives* scheme run by Carers' Resource said: "We felt Michelle deserved recognition for the way she has juggled learning with being a full-time carer for her husband and mum to her two young children.

"She is an inspiration to other parents and carers and an example of what can be achieved with a little help and determination."

With her husband suffering anxiety problems, Michelle

decided she needed to be the family bread winner but wanted a career as a social worker and not simply a job. Studying at the Carers' Resource office in Harrogate, she achieved her GCSEs at level 2 and will start a social work degree course at Leeds University in September.

Her tutors praise her organisational skills and the way she embraces any support offered. "Along her learning journey, she has met all barriers head on and has overcome them," they say.

Determination is hardly the word for a carer who gave up smoking, caught the bus from Ripon to Harrogate twice a week, learned to drive and studied hard - all so that with the support of her family she could achieve her goals.

It was a great day for the whole family when her husband put his own anxieties aside and drove her to and from Sheffield for her to receive the award.



'ON £53 A WEEK AND IN NEED OF FINANCIAL ADVICE'

"Saying I find it hard to survive on £53 a week is an understatement," says Keith Smith. "It's pocket money, isn't it? So I'm looking forward to the sessions on financial advice to see if I can get more money for our needs."

In his sixtieth year, Keith doesn't see himself as retired but with a mother aged 88 to care for at their home in Knaresborough, he's not working and his introductory CwC session left him keen to learn what he can from the module dealing with managing your finances.

He says: "Mum is still pretty lucid and hasn't got dementia but she can't walk anywhere. When I look around I see other carers under greater strain than me.

"Some of them are quite young coping with invalid parents. Then there are single parents coping with poorly children. Many of them are hidden away in society.

"I do feel society hasn't woken up to what it's like to be responsible for another person for 24 hours a day - and hasn't woken up to the fact that cost of unpaid caring apparently adds up to the equivalent of spending on the NHS.

"If Caring with Confidence helps carers to safeguard their physical and financial wellbeing, it will do a great job. I certainly recommend others carers to take part."

SWINE FLU - WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

How do you get swine flu?

When people cough, sneeze and spit, flu germs come out of their nose and mouth. Wash your hands after visiting public places.

How to look after yourself

When you cough, sneeze or spit, cover your nose and mouth with a tissue, bin the tissue and wash your hands with soap and water.

What you should do

If you feel very hot, have a cough, find it hard to breathe, stay at home and telephone your doctor. Or stay at home and telephone NHS direct on 0845 4647 or the Swine Flu Information Line on 0800 1 513 513

"A first step in acknowledging your situation and so coping with it. We all share the same needs"



'AS A RETIRED NURSE I'LL PASS ON MY EXPERIENCE'

After a career in nursing and looking after her husband for the past five years, Jean Slater finds attendance at the Caring with Confidence programme to be a two-way street.

She says: "On the one hand I am always learning something new from other carers. On the other hand I meet wives who find themselves caring for their husbands for the first time and are scared of the responsibility. I am happy to share my experience and hope it proves to be of help."

"The Caring with Confidence sessions enable carers to focus specifically on matters like budgeting, health and wellbeing.

"A lot if it is common sense to be applied whether you care for say an elderly person or a child. But other problems are specific such dealing with practical equipment

at home and, as a retired nurse I am pleased to pass on the experience I have."

Jean's husband Bernard is wheelchair-bound at 85 and was recently in hospital after a stroke. While she was looking forward to having him home, his return would make it harder for her to attend CwC sessions in Keighley.



How many other carers are attracted by the Caring with Confidence group advice sessions but cannot find either time or energy to attend?

"My advice to one lady was that if she could not get to the second session in Keighley, she should stay in touch with Carers' Resource in any case. They are so useful on matters of benefits and filling in forms. Their services are simply invaluable."

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.

If you have enjoyed reading this newsletter, please pass it to another carer you know and encourage them to join our mailing list.

It is confidential and any mailings - such as newsletters, information sheets and notification of events - are free.

Any carer can join and you are free to leave the list at any time.

Ring in or write for more information.

... thank you ... thank you ... thank you ... thank you ...

Bentham Methodist Church and St Paul's Church, Harrogate for both raising £100 and Oatlands Methodist Church for £60 from coffee mornings.

Everyone who supported us at two Evenings with George Smith MBE in June when we raised £1367

Gillie Patterson-Whitaker, organiser of the Designer4less Sale at the Harrogate Pavilions, where donations at the door raised £864.

Harrogate's Round Table donated £7,500 from the Beer Festival to fund Young Carer mentoring and Ladies Circle donated £1150

Rotary Club of Harrogate Brigantes organised a second Golf

Day and raised £5853 for young carers mentoring.

Merlin Magic Wand Charity donated tickets and paid for transport for 24 young carers to have a day out at Alton Towers

North Yorkshire County Councillors gave £1708 to pay for much needed new carpets at our Harrogate office

Special thanks to 10th Harrogate St Wilfred's Scout Group which raised £637 for young carers at its centenary celebrations

Richard Houseman, John Feeny and Chris Procter who walked 56 miles from Ribbleshead to Bishop Monkton and raised £2251 in sponsorship with donations still

coming in.

Morag Grey's stall at Bishop Mionkton village fete raised £492

Local companies Bluefin for £200, iQ Business Ltd for £100 and Quartz Finance for £125

Kathleen Kirk for a coffee morning and £265

Royal Horticultural Society for donating 50 tickets to Harlow Carr Gardens for carers

Long Distance Walkers Association raised £250 at a walk in memory of Derek Jennings, one of their founder members

Collections at the funerals of the late Brian Wilson and the late Robert Wass.

**"A relief in speaking to others in the same situation.
A guilt free break and it raises your self-confidence"**

