



Our new campaign offers a lifeline to the growing number of unpaid carers in the grip of fuel poverty

Eat or Heat?

OUR initiative has a stark message – “Eat or Heat”. But the hard-hitting theme is designed to highlight how spiralling gas and electric bills are adding to the plight of those looking after loved ones across the district.

Latest figures reveal that around one-in-five households suffer from fuel poverty – when at least 10 per cent of income is spent on fuel.

Deaths during the winter months are known to exceed those at other times of the year and fuel poverty contributes to this problem.

Our Head of Development, Anna Jackson, said: “Carers and those they look after are often hardest hit by rising energy costs, as they grapple with lower household incomes and higher living costs than the average family.

“This can lead to worsening mental and physical health, mounting debt, plus having to

make dreadful decisions when they get up every morning - such as whether to turn on the heating or put food on the table.

“We are reaching out to an increasing number of carers to help them switch to cheaper tariffs or suppliers, and advising them on how to make their energy consumption more efficient.”

One carer to benefit from the charity's support is Judith Hollis, of Eccleshill, Bradford, who cares full-time for her 81-year-old husband James after he started undergoing dialysis seven years ago. He had a kidney transplant earlier this year.

She said: “With the help of Carers' Resource, I have been able to negotiate a 6.5% discount on my energy bills, which is a huge benefit to us. Last winter's bills were crippling and this reduction will make a difference.

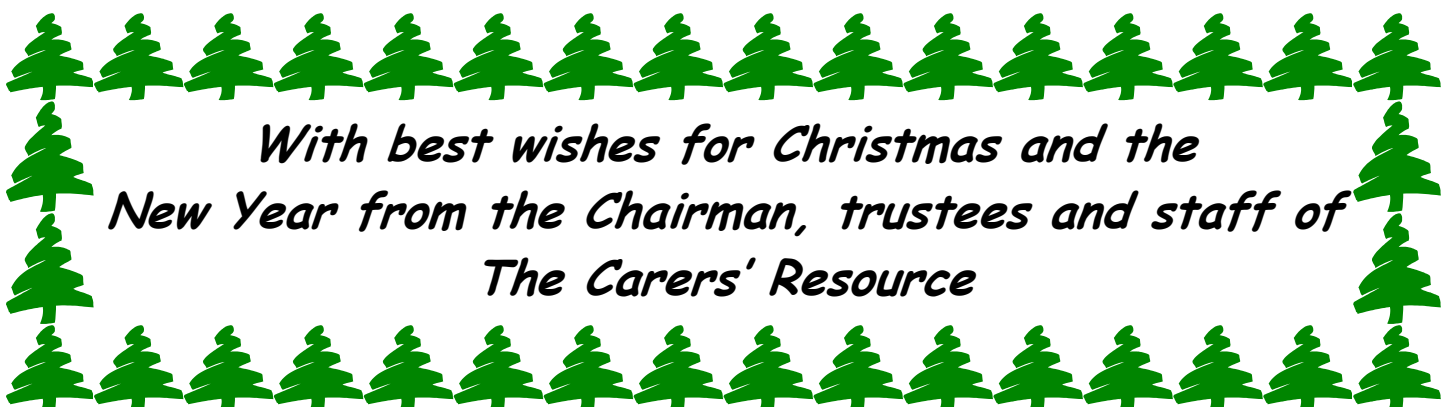
“There are thousands of people

like me who care 24/7 – our working day never finishes. If we didn't do what we do, it would cost many thousands of pounds to employ people to do it – but we end up paying higher energy bills.”

The charity is lobbying local MPs and councillors to seek their support for its campaign to make carers eligible in their own right for a payment under the new Warm Homes Discount Scheme.

Ms Jackson said carers have unique needs - and these have to be reflected in the new scheme, which replaces Social Tariff handouts. She added: “People with limited mobility need more heat to keep warm, continence or other disability-related conditions can mean washing mountains; and very poorly babies may need equipment running 24 hours a day to keep them stable.”

See “**HELPING TO KEEP YOU WARM IN WINTER**” (p6) with details of our new factsheet.





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:
Richard Chew, 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 Smith

Service Managers

Nina Derbyshire, Carolyn Eastwood, Stella Elson+, Linda Owen, Helen Prince*

* 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 February 29, 2012.

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

CARERS' CONTRIBUTION 'AT THE VERY HEART' OF BLUEPRINTS FOR THE FUTURE OF THE NHS

Three influential blueprints for taking the NHS into a new era have recognised that more has to be done to tackle the unmet needs, and changing demands, of the fast-increasing number of unpaid carers.

NHS services are bracing themselves for unprecedented re-design in the face of sweeping budget cuts and the Carers' Resource has welcomed the fact that the valuable contribution made by carers has been recognised at such a critical time.

Founder, Anne Smyth, said: "For carers to feature so positively at the very heart of these high-profile documents is a much-needed boost. The blueprints provide strong evidence that carers bring a unique dimension to the provision of care for frail, elderly and vulnerable people. They recognise the importance of supporting the work unpaid carers do, day-in day-out.

"Each provides fresh impetus to the carers' cause. The voice and needs of carers must continue to influence NHS decision-making process at all levels, local and national. We understand that those who hold NHS budgets must make every Pound of taxpayers' money go as far as possible. But we all know that failing to support carers does not make financial sense and, from a moral standpoint, is open to challenge."

She added: "Carers have played an important role in the past and, with an ageing population, they will play an even bigger role in the future. And it is only right that the NHS recognises this."

The key blueprint documents include:

The NHS Operating Framework – published as "Choices" went to press, this maps out national health priorities and shapes budgets for the year ahead. Health Minister Paul Burstow has taken on board national research showing that despite extra money being committed to carers last year, a significant part was spent in other ways - leaving carers neglected.

"Supporting Carers" – an action guide from the Royal College of GPs for all members to provide improved support for carers. It highlights the physical, psychological and other effects of caring that GPs and their teams must look out for, along with specific sections on life after caring, and how to meet the needs of young carers and young adult carers.

"New Approaches to Supporting Carers' Health and Well-being" – an evaluation of the Department of Health's National Carers' Strategy Demonstrator Sites programme. It highlights the value of new ways of offering breaks to carers; annual physical and well-being checks; and better support for carers from the NHS.

SOCIAL CARE REFORM

Government minister Paul Burstow has called for help shaping the forthcoming Social Care Bill.

Care sector leaders have been recruited to lead discussions in six areas: quality, personalisation, prevention, integration, the role of financial services and shaping the care market. The engagement exercise builds on proposals to reform social care funding and law from the Dilnot Commission and the Law Commission respectively.

Carers' Resource staff have sent a response but would be happy to support individual carers to make their views known. Please contact Anne Smyth through any of our offices.

Support for carers is not just 'tea and sympathy'

MORE HELP NEEDED FOR CARERS PROVIDING END-OF-LIFE SUPPORT, OUR RESEARCH REVEALS

GREATER support is needed for the growing number of carers who look after loved ones nearing the end of life.

That's the key finding of an innovative research project carried out by the Carers' Resource, which revealed that the physical and emotional needs of carers at such a traumatic time were often overlooked.

We worked with almost 100 carers, gaining an insight from them as part of a major project designed to highlight unmet needs and gaps in available support.

Now, drawing upon the experiences of these carers, we have developed a pathway which maps out what extra support would be valuable and when.

Carers' Resource Head of Development, Anna Jackson, said: "With an ageing population, there will be an ever-increasing number of us looking after family and

friends in their final months, weeks and days of life.

"Support for carers is not just 'tea and sympathy' - it goes far deeper than that. The carer is the expert partner in care and they need specialist help. Their views and concerns (and these may be different from those of the patient) need to be considered carefully."

The Carers' Resource secured six months' funding from Government Office Yorkshire and the Humber through its Improvement Partnership's Carers' Innovation Fund for the study.

We had support from Bradford Royal Infirmary, Airedale General Hospital and Marie Curie Hospice, Bradford.

The report and proposed pathway was presented to the End of Life Programme Board as a suggested model for future service provision for Bradford District.

The Carers' Resource recommendations for improving carer support at the End of Life include:

- *Working in closer partnership with health and social care workers*
- *A system for early identification of, and direct referral for, carers - increasing uptake of support for them*
- *Carrying out awareness-training for healthcare professionals about carer support and its benefits*
- *Ending the so-called 'condition lottery' - where some diseases have many more support networks locally and nationally than others*
- *Improving support for those who are "caring from a distance" - including members of the armed forces, students or prisoners.*
- *Partnership working with employers so they can provide better working practices, policies and carer awareness among their staff.*

We don't give our carers Christmas presents; we give them services all year. But, to keep doing so, we're asking you to give us a present.

If you could give us even a small gift each month we can better plan our services to carers. Enclosed with this issue is a direct debit instruction to your bank. Please help us to continue to help carers. We'd be very grateful.

And you can make your gift worth even more. If you make a regular donation or a one-off gift and you are a UK taxpayer then please sign the Gift Aid declaration and we can claim 25p for every £1 you donate.

Thank you to everyone who has made a donation to help us to help carers

- Ashville College, Junior School and Pre-prep school - more than 700 students, parents and teachers took part in the ten mile sponsored walk and other sporting activities raising over £20,000 for three charities with our young carers receiving a third
- Paula Wall for hosting an Open House and Shopping evening event and coffee morning (£1134).
- Pat Harper incoming Ladies Captain at Knaresborough Golf Club for choosing our young carers as her charity of the year
- The family and friends of Muriel Hawkins, Danny Bell and Ann McManus who made donations in their memory
- Keighley Town Council for £250 for the Craft Group
- Natwest in Harrogate £229 for their dress down day
- Steve and Anna Cock of the Royal Oak Inn, Dacre Banks for organising a quiz (£120)
- Cardale Asset Management for raising £316 for us
- Harrogate Quaker Meeting £100 for young carers.

Please might you organise an event or hold a collection for us or choose us as your organisation's charity of the year for 2012?



Ten years of caring and ten years of support 'You always come with a smile on your face'

Her first contact with Carers' Resource after her husband's stroke is still fresh in Kate Lomas's memory - ten years on.

She recalls the emotional support she needed and received from Mags Allen in the tiny office which Carers' Resource then occupied at Skipton Hospital. Godfrey Lomas had been discharged there from Airedale Hospital.

Along with a shoulder to cry on came an unfailing shoulder to lean on - by way of advice on a Blue Badge, access to benefits and services, help with form-filling and entry to a wide range of Carers' Resource services. "Kate knew that if we couldn't help immediately, we would always get back to her and if we couldn't help, signpost her to

the organisation that could," says Stella Elson, Locality and Service Manager at the Bradford office.

Ten years of caring since Godfrey's stroke in October 2001 have been accompanied by ten years of ongoing support which Carers' Resource staff tailor to her specific needs.

When the *Something Good* scheme began, Kate at once recognised it as something good for her, joining the monthly drop-ins, activities and trips away and clearly enjoying every minute. It was something good for Godfrey too to see Kate return home relaxed. "You must have enjoyed your day out today," he says to her, "you always come back with a smile on your face."

From taking part in *Changing Lives*

and in the *Caring with Confidence* workshops, she has valued the mutual support



which comes from getting together with fellow carers along with the contact with members of the CR staff in Bradford and Airedale.

Kate, who has agreed to become an Ambassador for Carers' Resource, has also had support from our Emergency Planning Services in Bradford. She knows that if she is taken ill or has an accident, her husband will be looked after in her absence just as they would both want him to be.

READER'S LETTER

A lady called me saying she worked for SKY and my SKY box cover had expired and if I renewed over the phone she could offer three years for the cost of two years.

I provided my credit card details and was charged £150.00. Sadly I discovered later that my son pays for my SKY via direct debit. On contacting SKY, it quickly became apparent that it had been a scam. Unfortunately the credit card company have not been able to stop the payment.. Please warn your readers to beware of scams.

Editor's note: If you think you may have been caught by a scam, call Consumer Direct for advice: 08454 04 05 06

Infection Control - it's in your hands! Why hand washing is so important

Visiting hospitals or care homes

When visiting a friend or relative in hospital or carehome, it is important to ensure that you wash your hands or use an alcohol handrub to help prevent the spread of infection.

Norovirus, also known as winter vomiting disease or gastric flu, is a common form of sickness and diarrhoea which can spread rapidly and result in the temporary closure of hospital wards and care homes.

Carers of vulnerable people

For carers, it is important that hand washing is undertaken properly. This will help to reduce significantly the risk of passing on germs to someone who may be more susceptible to infection.

Children

Parents have a vital role to play as children need to be taught the importance of washing their hands properly. This will help to ensure that this practice becomes a lifelong habit.

More information and a short video can be found at www.nyypct.nhs.uk

Carers' rights: 1995 to 2011

At a time of deep cuts at a national and local level it is all too easy for extra pressure to fall on carers' shoulders. But supporting carers is an investment in the sustainability of care and it is important to remind ourselves of the rights that carers do have.

In the last 16 years carers' rights have been increasingly recognised in our law, including rights to:

- Carers' assessments, recognising carers' sustainability as a crucial element in community care law (Carers (Recognition and Services) Act 1995)
- Consideration for services in their own right (Carers and Disabled Children Act 2000)
- Recognition of employment, education and leisure issues (Carers (Equal Opportunities) Act 2004)
- Request flexible working (Work and Families Act 2006) and time off for caring responsibilities (Employment Relations Act 1999)
- Be consulted during the assessment of the cared for person (Assessment Directions 2004)
- Short breaks for parent carers (Children and Young Persons Act 2008)
- Protection from discrimination arising because of their association with a disabled person (or a person with any other of the characteristics protected under equality law) (Equality Act 2010)

If you would like further information about any of these rights, please contact the Information Team at any Carers' Resource office

Article by Jean Gould, courtesy Carers UK. Jean is a solicitor, associate tutor at Sussex University and specialist legal trainer and consultant with Carers UK.

Parents of disabled children take action on their right to an assessment

The law says that councils must assess every child who is or may be 'in need'. Disabled children are 'in need' but some councils have refused assessments in relation to short breaks or any other specialist social care service.

To help parents challenge such decisions, the Every Disabled Child Matters campaign, in association with Irwin Mitchell Solicitors, has produced a template letter presenting the child's right to an assessment.

Further information is available from Carers' Resource offices or contact the EDCM campaign on 020 7843 6082.

Who will take care of a pet?

A pet's company can be very welcome, especially at difficult times, but if circumstances change you may need to think about rehoming your pet. Several national charities may be able to help:

- Blue Cross: 0300 777 1897
- Cat's Protection: 03000 12 12 12
- Dog's Trust: 0207 837 0006
(Leeds: 0113 281 4920)
- RSPCA: 0300 1234 555

The Cinnamon Trust specialises in looking after animals for elderly or seriously ill people. Their services, provided by volunteers, include dog walking, fostering and long-term care. Call 01736 757900

The Carers' Resource Information Team has details of local pet care and dog walking services.

HELPING TO KEEP YOU WARM IN WINTER

The Cold Weather Plan for England and Wales was introduced on 1 November 2011 as part of a number of measures which the Department of Health and the NHS are taking to protect communities from the effects of severe winter weather.

Included in the Plan is the *Warm Homes, Healthy People Fund* (£20m for winter 2011/12) which supports local authorities, working in partnership with health and social care organisations, to reduce levels of illness and death due to cold weather.

You may be eligible for a £120 rebate on your winter electricity bill through the **Warm Home Discount Scheme**. Many Pension Credit customers are eligible as well as people who are deemed 'vulnerable' – criteria are set by the scheme's participating electricity suppliers.

The **Home Heat Helpline**, launched in November, aims to raise awareness of help available to pay fuel bills - worth around £250 for each eligible household. Call Freephone 0800 33 66 99.

Details of these schemes are in our new factsheet **Maintaining Winter Warmth**. Topics include insulation, financial help and changing energy suppliers along with details of national support and advice organisations. Copies are available from Carers' Resource offices – details on page 3.

SEEKING PART-USED OR OLD CANDLES

An enthusiast has offered to make candles to fund-raise for us, by melting down and re-using wax. Please donate your candle ends to any staff member or office of Carers' Resource



IN THE FIGHT AGAINST DEMENTIA

Early diagnosis helps sufferers plan a better quality of life

When Terry Pratchett described himself as "one of the lucky ones", fellow Alzheimer's sufferers and their carers would have known what he meant.

The best-selling author was acknowledging that his GP was able to refer him to a specialist able to diagnose his particular form of the disease, unlike those doctors who dismiss symptoms lightly.

Diagnosis at the very earliest stage of memory breakdown has no stronger advocate than Dr Elizabeth Milwain, a dementia care trainer and university lecturer, who says people can have far better lives when memory loss is detected early. She insists that if patients know their memory is going to get worse, they can learn the know-how and confidence to cope. Too

often, diagnosis comes too late for them to plan ahead.

Her views echo those of other experts in mental health and ageing, who despair of doctors telling patients, "It's what you can expect at your age, my memory is just as bad as yours", when much can be achieved by diagnosis before dementia has set in.

Dr Milwain has a doctorate from Oxford University in psychology specialising in Alzheimer's and dementia. She has held training events for Carers' Resource staff. Working with Stella Elson, one of our locality managers with a special interest in reminiscence, she has run training and coping sessions for our carers.



Left to right: Elizabeth Milwain and Stella Elson

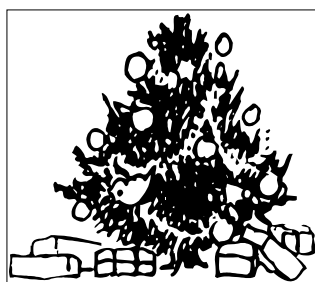
She would like to form groups for carers of dementia sufferers, with a "person-centred" approach which mirrors the Carers' Resource's own ethos of tailored support.

For anyone struggling to differentiate between forgetful old age and early dementia, Elizabeth offers a simple test. "Think of the difference between going to a party and failing to remember most of the names of the people there and having no memory of going to the party at all - suffering a complete loss of knowledge."

She suggests a carer worried about a husband or wife's memory should keep a "memory diary" in which instances of complete memory loss are logged. With that evidence, the GP is more likely to make a serious assessment and less likely to shrug off the worries.

If ANY of the following have an impact on your life, it is advisable to seek advice from your GP:

- Do you struggle to remember recent events while finding it easy to remember things from the distant past?
- Do you find it hard to follow conversations or tv programmes?
- Do you repeat yourself in conversations or lose the thread of what you are saying?
- Do you forget your way home from the shops or familiar places?
- Do you feel angry or depressed about your forgetfulness?
- Do other people comment on your forgetfulness?



A hug is the best gift - one size fits all and it's easily exchanged.

WOULD YOU REMEMBER US IN YOUR WILL?

Please might you consider making a legacy to help us to help carers? Just a few lines in a will lets Carers' Resource build on everything we have achieved over the past years. You will be making a big difference to carers who crucially need more support. Anne Wells, on 01423 500555, would be delighted to hear from you:

- if you have already mentioned Carers' Resource in your will.
- if you intend to leave a gift, so we can thank you properly.
- if you need more information.



TOUCHED by the work of the Carers' Resource, a Harrogate chorister has raised money in a unique way – by cycling 2,000 miles around Iceland. Daniel Hutton, aged 35, from Beckwithshaw, raised more than £1,400 for us. In his own words, this is why he chose to support us:

“Last summer my mother was finding it difficult to balance and was losing the fine control of her limbs. A degenerating spinal condition was suspected but she was left almost paralysed from the waist down after an operation.

“I had heard before this about The Carers' Resource and its work to support those who care for others. In this country there are six million carers, mostly unpaid volunteers and often family members, and in many cases these people have only learned what they know of caring from having to do it themselves.

“The Carers' Resource is a lifeline for these people and I wanted to help raise its profile so that those who could benefit most can get to know about it and to recognise the invaluable work it does.”

There are many other - and less strenuous - ways in which you can contribute to our success. Here are three you can do from the comfort of your armchair:

Online shopping: Our new e-shop is up and running, please go to www.spendandraise.com/carersresource and then link to hundreds of online and high street retailers to do your shopping. We get commission on every purchase, it costs you nothing and you still get your discounts.

Ebay: If you sell items on ebay, donate a percentage of the sale to us, please. If you have items that you'd like to donate for us to sell on ebay, please get in touch. We have small team of volunteers who do it for us.

Donate by justtextgiving: We're trying to offer easy ways in which you can give and what could be simpler than sending a text – all you have to do is text CARE27 £10 or any amount to 70070 and we receive the donation. The text is free so you'll only be charged the amount you choose to donate. What could be easier!



EVERYBODY needs good neighbours – that's the message as we launch a recruitment drive for more volunteers to join two Craven initiatives.

The **Good Neighbours** scheme banishes loneliness for those who live alone or find it difficult to get out and about – whether it is collecting prescriptions, going shopping or simply a cup of tea and a chat.

The **Home From Hospital** initiative is also a lifeline for many, ensuring they have everything they need at home for a six-week period after discharge.

One pensioner who benefits from the Good Neighbours scheme is 80-year-old Moray Irvine. He is pictured above with volunteer Lisa Bickerton.

Moray said: “Lisa's the highlight of my week. She comes every week to take me shopping, rain or shine, and we chat about what's happening in our lives and gives me a window into the outside world.”

NB: We are looking for volunteers aged 16+ across Bradford, Airedale, Harrogate and Craven, who are friendly and outgoing - and able to give a little time to help others.



To celebrate the Carers' Resource being named as its 'Charity of the Year', Sainsbury's store on Wetherby Road treated volunteers to an inaugural thank-you feast. It has also launched a second-hand book stall in the store and 50p from each sale will be donated to us.