Carers Strategy... we’re still waiting

A new Carers Strategy setting out how the Government could do more to support carers was first mentioned by ministers in 2014. We’re still waiting.

The Department of Health said the strategy should be “one which reflects their [carers’] lives now, the health and financial concerns they have, and gives them the support they need to live well whilst caring”. Six-and-a-half thousand people responded to the Government’s Carers Strategy consultation, which closed in July 2016. We expected the results by December 2016. We are still waiting.

We have since been told the Carers Strategy will be encompassed into the Social Care Green Paper this summer. On 7 December 2017, the then Care Minister Jackie Doyle-Price told the House of Commons an action plan would be published in January. At the time of writing, we are still waiting for this. We echo Shadow Mental Health and Social Care Minister Barbara Keeley’s comments: “This is a shabby way to treat carers.”

We have written to all the MPs across our areas to advocate for you and raise their awareness of the importance of a Carers Strategy, which is regularly discussed in our carer forums. We know you feel let down.

All local MPs were contacted and at the time of going to press the responses on the right were the replies we received.

What you can do

- Sign and share this petition: https://petition.parliament.uk/petitions/209717
- Write to your MP to tell them carers must not be forgotten.
- Write a letter/email to a local and/or national newspaper. Please let us know if your letter is printed - call Caroline Firth on 01274 449660 or email cfirth@carersresource.org

What your MPs said

Philip Davies, Conservative, Shipley
Mr Davies visited the Shipley office in December to meet carers, including Barbara Hargreaves, pictured with Mr Davies and Carers’ Resource chief executive Chris Whiley. He has previously written to ministers on our behalf about the Carers Strategy.

Mr Davies writes: “I will also take this up for you with the Minister and send Chris his response as soon as I receive it. In the meantime if you ever feel that I can be of any help to you with anything at all please let me know.”

Judith Cummins, Labour, Bradford South
Mrs Cummins writes: “I’ve shared this important petition with my followers on social media. All too often unpaid carers are forgotten about, but their role in our society is vital. The Government must show that they have not forgotten about them and take action as soon as possible by publishing a Carers Strategy.”

John Grogan, Labour, Keighley
Mr Grogan writes: “Carers come from all different backgrounds and range in age from teenagers looking after parents to people in their 90s looking after partners. It is important that as a society we recognise their contribution and develop a national strategy to value and assist them.”

Imran Hussain, Labour, Bradford East
Mr Hussain writes: “For the Government to make carers wait over a year for the national Carers Strategy shows they treat carers only with contempt. It’s not right that people who do so much and who contributed to the consultation get so little in return, and the Government must publish this strategy before the Social Care Green Paper and show carers that their lives and contributions are important.”

Check out our Time Out For Tea campaign, Page 3
Poetry helped me deal with cancer diagnosis, Page 5
Knitters hope for a princely sum, Page 9
With a will there’s a way

It's Free Wills Month in March, when people aged 55 and over can have a simple will written or updated for free by a solicitor participating in the campaign.

Making use of this opportunity is easy: check the Free Wills Month website from 1 March to find out if there are participating solicitors near you, then make an appointment directly with them.

Appointments with solicitors are limited and once all of them are taken the campaign will close. This could potentially be before the month ends, so it is recommended that you get booked in as soon as you can.

It can be expensive to make or update your will but it is important to have it done professionally, so this is an opportunity to make sure that your wishes are carried out. It will allow you to provide for your family and friends and it can help the people you are leaving to make decisions about your funeral plans or assets.

To make a free will as a couple, only one of you needs to be over 55. Straightforward wills are provided for free during the campaign, but if you think your will may be more complicated, check with the solicitor when booking as they may charge for extra work.

Carers’ Resource chief executive Chris Whiley says: “Carers occasionally call us with questions about probate, inheritance tax and to share other concerns when the person they care for has passed away.

“Wills also enable people to leave a legacy gift to charities of their choice. We have gratefully received legacies, which help us provide services that we do not receive funding for, such as respite, support groups and day trips.

“However, we know from working with clients that not having a will can mean a time of grief is made more stressful by uncertainty about the deceased person’s wishes and difficulties in managing their estate.

“For these reasons we also encourage carers and their families to make a lasting power of attorney.”

If you miss out during Free Wills Month, there are a variety of other ways to secure a will. Will Aid runs a free will campaign in November and a number of national charities individually operate free will-drafting services. There are also low-cost online will-writing services.

You can write your will yourself, but you should get advice if it is not straightforward.

Can you claim Carer’s Credit?

Carer’s Credit is a National Insurance credit that can help plug gaps in an eligible carer’s National Insurance contribution record. A person’s state pension is based on their National Insurance record.

A class 3 contribution is awarded for each week towards the basic state pension/additional state pension. Your income or savings or investments will not affect eligibility for Carer’s Credit.

You do not need to apply for Carer’s Credit if you are in paid employment, you get Carer’s Allowance, you get Child Benefit for a child under 12, or you are a foster carer (apply for National Insurance credits instead).

To claim Carer’s Credit you must be aged 16 or over and under the state pension age, you need to care for someone for at least 20 hours a week, and the person you are looking after must be in receipt of a disability benefit or the Care Certificate part of the application form needs to be signed by a health or social care professional.

For more information call the Carer’s Allowance Unit on 0800 731 0297.
Brew up and raise funds to give carers time out

Carers’ Resource will soon be launching an awareness-raising and fundraising initiative called Time Out For Tea, which will run during Carers Week from 11-17 June.

A quarter of unpaid carers have not had a day off from caring in five years, a Carers UK study found. We want fundraising tea parties, afternoon teas, coffee mornings and work meetings to be held across Yorkshire and beyond so the money raised can give carers much-needed time out.

We’re putting together a downloadable fundraising pack that will include a sponsorship form and printable bunting.

You will also be able to get a pack from our offices that will include tea bags kindly donated by Bettys & Taylors. Our staff are already coming up with ideas as to how they can help.

We hope individuals, groups and businesses will get involved, so if you’d like a slice of the fun, maybe you could invite your friends and family over for a cuppa, some cake and a chat and ask them for a donation? Or you could book a meeting room at work and sell your finest bakes to your colleagues.

There are so many ways to get involved. We’ll have more information in the next edition of Choices. In the meantime if you have big ideas or want to register your interest, contact fundraiser Anne Wells on 01423 500555 or email awells@carersresource.org

Host at home
- Invite your friends over for tea and a picnic in the garden and ask them to make a donation
- Bake cupcakes and sell them to family and friends
- Put money in a jar every time you have a brew and give the jar to us at the end of the week
- Carry out a personal challenge during Carers Week and ask for sponsorship
- Skip takeaway coffees for a week and give us the money you’ve saved

Host at work
- Hold a cake stall
- Have a Bake Off competition and auction the winning cake
- Invite colleagues or clients to make a donation for their cuppas
- Have a competitive fundraising challenge
- Pay to cream pie your boss (ask them first!)
- Challenge your workplace to fill a teapot with cash over the week

It’s your Choices

By Carers’ Resource chief executive Chris Whiley.

2018 has already made its mark, and we certainly can’t complain that we haven’t had a proper winter. Many people have had flu or similar unpleasant lurgies, so best wishes for a full recovery to all those who have suffered and apologies if anyone has not had the speediest response from us, we have had a lot of staff off sick.

However, January also had a much more positive note with the organisation being awarded two new contracts by North Yorkshire County Council to start in April. One of those is the Home from Hospital service, for which we will be working in partnership with the carers’ organisations in Hambleton Richmondshire and Scarborough Ryedale to offer a county-wide service. Our second contract is for the Sitting Service, to give carers a break for a few hours. We already deliver this service but the new contract will be slightly different.

I am wondering whether people know that we are a membership organisation and that anyone can apply to become a member? It is totally free and the purpose of members is to ensure that the board of trustees and the staff are doing the best possible job and to hold them to account.

The only commitment we ask of members is to attend our annual general meeting, which is held in September each year. If you are interested in becoming a member or would like more information please contact Heather Smith at the Harrogate office or email hsmith@carersresource.org

Best wishes,

Chris

Choices: Carers’ Resource – Harrogate | Craven | Bradford | Airedale
The smiles of young carers are a real gift

It was Young Carers Awareness Day on 25 January and Carers’ Resource was out and about in the community to let young people know how we can support them.

Young carer worker Hettie Flynn hosted two assemblies at Harrogate High School, where we support 30 young carers through trips, youth clubs and emotional support.

BU DZ youth club members in Harrogate made personalised thank yous for presents, hampers and a party that they and their families received at Christmas. More than 450 presents and hampers were donated by staff at the Department for Work and Pensions, Ashville Prep and Pre Prep, Menwith Hill, local Scout groups and Harrogate & District Round Table. Inner Wheel Club of Harrogate Brigantes hosted a Christmas party for young carers.

Young carers in Craven made Christmas crafts at Bentham Primary School with Carers’ Resource staff.

BU DZ volunteer Harry Beaton won the Young Volunteer of the Year award at the Volunteering Oscars. He is a young carer himself and he wanted to give back something to Carers’ Resource.

Craven young carers visited Oxygen Trampoline Park in Leeds. The trip was sponsored by volunteer Sam Athersmith, who raised the money by having his beard and hair shaved. Find out more about Sam on page 9.

Hookstone Chase Primary School held a non-uniform day for our Young Carers and raised £246, and Harrogate young carers featured in a video called Young and Yorkshire 2, pictured above, about North Yorkshire County Council’s plan to improve life for children and young people in the county.

Groups and support available on Tuesday evenings

Did you know that we open till late on a Tuesday? If you find it difficult to access information or support during the day, our carer support team telephone line in Shipley runs from 9am-8pm on a Tuesday, when any carer – not just those from the Bradford district – can call us on 01274 449660.

Two carers’ groups also meet monthly on Tuesday evenings in our Shipley office: a book group and a wellbeing session called Live Well, Care Well.

The book group is informal and the people in it choose which books to read. There are two ways to get involved: come along, or if you find it difficult to get there the group leader Chris Whiley can let you know which books the group is reading. Email your comments to cwhiley@carersresource.org and Chris will share them with the rest of the group then feed back to you what everyone else thought. Chris says: “We don’t always all agree but we love it when a book throws up different ways of looking at the world.”

The Live Well, Care Well group is led by carer caseworker Kay Nichols, who – along with life coach Jenny Cooper – helps carers to look at ways of managing and understanding stress.

The small, friendly group tries relaxation techniques such as meditation and hand massage, and there is plenty of mutual support and laughter.

To find out more about the book group and Live Well, Care Well, see the Shipley groups section on pages 6-7.

Page 4
Writing poetry helped me deal with my cancer diagnosis

When Sheena Hussain was told she had thyroid cancer, she decided to confide in a small circle of close friends. Being a carer to her mum, she did not want to worry her mum or put undue stress on her. Sheena was quick to discover the best outlet for her fear, pain and thoughts was poetry.

Sheena, of Allerton, Bradford, says: “The moment I was given the diagnosis I was in shock as I had been led to believe the lump on my throat was benign. Nevertheless, I decided to go through all the necessary procedures in order to make myself better.

“My mum was away visiting family in Pakistan at the time, so it made treatment just that little easier. Rather than worrying about my mother’s emotions I was able to concentrate on my recovery. I have been caring for Mum, who I live with, for more than a decade as she is bedridden by arthritis. She is very understanding and supportive of what I have been through.”

Throughout her treatment, Sheena wrote poetry. She wrote about her childhood and more recent memories, and it became her therapy.

Sheena came to realise her job as a solicitor was no longer fulfilling. She says: “I came out of employment to recover, to continue caring for my mother, and to write. There is much wisdom in caring for someone. It really nourished my soul and humbled me, whilst dealing with my own adversity.”

Sheena has been receiving emotional support and practical advice from Carers’ Resource since 2009. She says: “I’m fortunate that I am part of a large family and have six siblings who I can call to help with Mum if I need a break.

“Being part of the Asian community, our faith instructs us to look after our elders. Going outside the family and community for support can sometimes be seen as a taboo but I think that getting advice and help actually complements my caring role. I can be more effective if I have expert input.”

Sheena has now set up a bespoke poetry service www.poetrybysheenapoetrybyname.com and has self-published her debut book Memories of A Poet, My Road My Recovery. The book features a collection of poems and a short narrative about the moment she was given the cancer diagnosis.

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She is also on Instagram under the username: poetrybysheena.

She adds: “I was eventually given the all-clear and the book is a shining example that you can overcome adversity. You can have a serious illness and yet still go on to achieve, make valuable input and serve humanity.”

Memories of A Poet, My Road My Recovery is available from Amazon.

‘Most carers don’t identify as carers’

Akhlaq Rauf MBE is the manager of award-winning dementia service Meri Yaadain (meaning My Memories), which engages, communicates with and supports black and minority ethnic people with dementia and their carers.

“Like all carers, people within the South Asian communities want the best for their relatives. But the term ‘carer’ is not simple, as most see themselves not as carers but family members obligated to care. South Asian communities are not one community but a mixture of born in or of Indian, Pakistani or Bangladeshi heritage, with different languages, faiths, foods, concepts of healthcare, lifestyles and cultures.

Traditionally some South Asian carers are seen to want to ‘look after their own’; implying they do not have a need for services. The truth is much more complex. These communities no longer live in extended families as a norm, where extended family members would help out, and generational differences, language issues, children moving away and isolated couples often mean there is a need for help from outside the family.

Research tells us that South Asian carers have a lack of trust of mainstream services. Difficulty in accessing GPs and the lack of post-diagnostic support services make for a relatively poor experience for many minority ethnic carers.

Government policy is trying to address some of these issues, as is Meri Yaadain. We have staff who speak community languages, we visit carers in their homes, we work out and make appropriate referrals to support services and, above all, offer advocacy. Peer education through a support group is a source of strength and information for carers to build on their awareness of services, but it also gives people the confidence to use services.”

Sheena Hussain

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BRADFORD DISTRICT

BINGLEY
Drop-in Dates: 1st Wednesday of the month (7 Mar, 4 Apr, 2 May).
Time: 10.30am-noon.
Where: The Coffee Lounge, Queen Street, BD16 2JS.

BRADFORD CITY CENTRE

Afternoon Tea Dates: 3rd Wednesday of the month (21 Mar, 18 Apr, 16 May).
Time: 1pm-3pm.
Where: The Storehouse, 116 Caledonia Street, Bradford, BD4 7BG.

BENTHAM
Lunch Group Dates: 2nd Monday of the month (20 Mar, 17 Apr, 15 May).
Time: 1.30pm-3pm.
Where: Carers’ Resource office.

BINGLEY
Lunch Group Dates: 3rd Tuesday of the month (20 Mar, 17 Apr, 15 May).
Time: 6.30pm-8pm.
Where: Carers’ Resource office.

HARROGATE
STREET
Time: 2nd Thursday of the month (7 Mar, 4 Apr, 2 May).
Time: 10am-noon.
Where: The Hub, Stone Grove, BD20 6TQ.

Ilkley
Lunch Group Dates: 2nd Monday of the month (15 Mar, 12 Apr, 9 May).
Time: 10am-noon.
Where: Abbeyfield, 12 Riddings Lane, LS29 9BF.

KIRKSGATE
Live Well, Care Well Dates: 2nd Tuesday of the month (13 Mar, 10 Apr, 8 May).
Time: 6.15pm-7.30pm.
Where: Carers’ Resource office.

Shipley
Book Group Dates: 3rd Tuesday of the month (20 Mar, 17 Apr, 15 May).
Time: 6.30pm-8pm.
Where: Carers’ Resource office.

SKIPTON
ILKLEY
Lunch Group Dates: 2nd Monday of the month (12 Mar, 9 Apr, 14 May).
Time: Noon.
Where: The Ridge Medical Centre, Robin Lane, High Bantam, Nr Lancaster, LAZ 7AG.

South Airedale
Social for Carers and Members Dates: Every Thursday.
Time: 2pm-4pm.
Where: Carers’ Resource office.

Skinny Dip
Airedale
Super Club Dates: Approximately every six weeks.
Time: Early evening.
Where: Various venues across Skipton and Airedale.

SKIPON AREA
BENTHAM
Lunch Group Dates: 3rd Thursday of the month (15 Mar, 19 Apr, 17 May).
Time: 10am-noon.
Where: Abbeyfield, 12 Riddings Road, LS29 9BF.

SETTLE
Lunch Group Dates: 2nd Monday of the month (12 Mar, 9 Apr, 14 May).
Time: Noon.
Where: The Lion Hotel, Duke St, BD24 9DU.

SKIPTON AIRDEALE AND SKIPTON SUPPER CLUB
Where: Silsden Methodist Church, Kirkgate, BD20 6PA.

SKIRPON

All carers are welcome at all events. You are welcome to bring the person you care for if this is stated in the group description.

Sessions are free unless a cost is stated.

Some events are in our Skipton, Bradford or Harrogate offices. The addresses and phone numbers are:

BRADFORD: Unit 15, Park View Court, St Paul’s Road, Shipley, BD18 3DZ, 01274 449660.
HARROGATE: 11 North Park Road, HG1 5PD, 01423 500555.
SKIPTON: Ronaldsway House, 36 Brook Street, Skipton, BD23 1PP, 01756 700888.

Cost: Voluntary £2 donation.

Team (BEST)

Prices: £2, including refreshments.

Contact: Val Stewart, 01274 449660, vstewart@carersresource.org

Cost: £20 per four-week block.

Contact: Anne Brennand, 01756 700888, abrennand@carersresource.org

Carer forum Date: 2nd Tuesday of the month (12 Mar, 9 Apr, 14 May).
Time: 10am-noon.
Where: Carers’ Resource office.

Carers’ groups and activities: Airedale, Bradford,
HARROGATE AREA BOROUGHBRIDGE
Carer’s Group
Dates: 3rd Monday of the month (19 Mar, 16 Apr, 21 May).
Time: 2pm-4pm.
Where: Church Lane Surgery, YO51 9BD.
Meet for a chat with cake and coffee.
Cost: £2. Includes refreshments.
Contact: Alison Hill, 01423 500555, ahill@carersresource.org

DARELY
Dales Dinners Lunch
Dates: 1st Thursday of the month (1 Mar, 5 Apr, 3 May).
Time: 10am-1pm.
Where: Christ Church Hall, Main Street, HG3 2QG.
Carers and cared for with memory problems. Lunch and social.
Cost: £5 for two courses. Booking required in advance please.
Contact: Carol Lancaster, 01423 500555, clancaster@carersresource.org.

Dancing for Wellbeing
Dates: 3rd Thursday of the month (15 Mar, 19 Apr, 17 May).
Time: 2pm-3pm (please arrive by 1:45pm).
Where: Christ Church Hall, Main Street, HG3 2QG.
Exercise class to suit your ability, sitting or standing.
Gentle, safe and fun – followed by afternoon tea.
Cost: £5.
Contact: Carol Lancaster, 01423 500555, clancaster@carersresource.org.

CARERS’ RESOURCES
Carer’s Group
Dates: 3rd Tuesday of the month (19 Mar, 16 Apr, 21 May).
Time: 10am-12.30pm.
Where: Carers’ Resource office.
A staffed session for carers and Carers’ Resource volunteers, introducing vital first aid techniques including self-help and home care in emergencies.
Contact: Jenny Sengel, 01423 500555, create@carersresource.org

Food Hygiene Certificate for Carers and Volunteers
Dates: Thu 10 May.
Time: 9.30am-4pm.
Where: Carers’ Resource office.
This one-day course to gain a free Level 2 Food Hygiene Certificate is for anyone who cooks, prepares or handles food whether at home, as a volunteer or in work and is essential for anyone considering work in the food sector. All carers and Carers’ Resource volunteers are welcome.
Contact: Jenny Sengel, 01423 500555, create@carersresource.org

New Beginnings
Dates: Every Wednesday.
Time: 10am – noon.
Where: Elm Church Hall, Park View, HG1 5LZ.
Peer support group for carers who have lost a loved one or have a loved one in care as a result of Alzheimer’s or dementia. To share experiences and offer friendship. Costs £3 to cover room hire and refreshments.
Contact: Lynda Oliver, 07817 820965, lyndaliver99@yahoo.co.uk

Harrogate Outings Group
Time: 2pm.
Where: Venue changes.
Social get together - the venue changes each meeting and is decided by the group.
Cost: Own drink and food.
Contact: Christine Marshall, 01423 500555, cmarshall@carersresource.org

Parent Carer – Coffee and Cake
Dates: 1st Wednesday of the month (7 Mar, 4 Apr, 2 May).
Time: 10am-noon.
Where: Carers’ Resource office.
Join other parents of children with additional needs for a cuppa and a chat to gain knowledge and support.
Contact: Rebecca Scurr, 01423 500555, rscurr@carersresource.org

First Aid for Carers and Volunteers
Dates: Tue 15 May.
Time: 9.30am-12.30pm.
Where: Carers’ Resource office.
A free half-day workshop for carers and Carers’ Resource volunteers, introducing vital first aid techniques including self-help and home care in emergencies.
Contact: Jenny Sengel, 01423 500555, create@carersresource.org

Pins and Needles
Dates: 1st Tuesday of the month (6 Mar, 3 Apr, 1 May).
Time: 10.30am-12.30pm.
Where: Carers’ Resource office.
Carers and former carers. Come along for a coffee and chat with your own crafts, or support our fundraising current craft ideas.
Contact: Jean Eames, 01423 500555, jeamess@carersresource.org

Relaxation and Refreshments
Dates: 7 Mar, 11 Apr, 9 May.
Time: 2pm-3.30pm.
Where: Yorkshire Care Equipment (shop), Forest Lane Head, opposite the Harrogate Golf Club, HG2 7TE.
A professionally led session of relaxation in cosy surroundings. Followed by refreshments (included) and social time.
Please email/call to book.
Cost: £5.
Contact: Christine Marshall, 01423 500555, cmarshall@carersresource.org

Supper Club
Dates: Every 4-6 weeks (28 Mar, 25 Apr, 23 May).
Time: 6.15pm.
Where: Various venues in Harrogate area.
Carers, former carers, cared for.
Cost: Variable but we try to take advantage of early bird and special offers.
Contact: Sheila Constable, 01423 500555, sconstable@carersresource.org

Wellbeing Cafe
Dates: Every Thursday.
Time: 1pm - 3pm.
Where: St Luke’s Church Hall, Franklin Square, HG1 5EL.
The group is supported by Dementia Forward and it’s a chance for people to come along for soup, roll, tea/coffee and cake while taking part in some activities or just chatting. Carers can chat while their loved ones, affected by Alzheimer’s or dementia, enjoy craftwork, music, board games etc.
Cost: £2.
Contact: Victoria 07930559921 (Facebook page – @wellbeingcafeharrogate)

RIPON
Carers’ Drop-in
Dates: Every Thursday.
Time: 10am-1pm.
Where: Carers’ Resource Ripon office, Community House, Sharrow View, Allhallowgate, Ripon, HG4 1LE.
A staffed session for carers wishing to have a short consultation or to make an appointment for a later time.
Report to reception in Community House and they will show you through to the office.
Contact: Carers’ Resource Ripon office, 01423 500555.

Ripon Teas
Dates: 2nd Tuesday of the month (13 Mar, 10 Apr, 8 May).
Time: 2.30pm – 3.30pm.
Where: Ripon Community House, Sharrow View, Allhallowgate, HG4 1LE.
Support group. Confirmation of attendance required one week ahead of the date.
Cost: £2 for tea meetings. Please contact for cost of Rainton Gardens trip.
Contact: Jean Eames, 01423 500555, jeamess@carersresource.org

MASHAM
Carers’ Lunch
Dates: 3rd Tuesday of the month (20 Mar, 17 Apr, 15 May).
Time: 1.30pm.
Where: The King’s Head, Market Place, HG4 4EF.
An informal lunch at the local pub, where carers can enjoy a meal from the lunchtime menu. Carers’ Resource staff do not attend.
Cost: From the menu £10 - £12.
Contact: Louise Wilson, 01677 470843.
Carers call the tune with radio show

Fifteen carers and Carers’ Resource staff have been learning how to create a radio show ahead of going live on the airwaves in the coming weeks.

The group has been to sessions at BCB radio station in Bradford for a few weeks and aims to make a series of shows based around caring. Most of the participants have no experience of presenting and producing, and are learning from scratch how to use a mixing desk and how to record interviews.

Carer Pauline Bird, of Knaresborough, says: “Being part of BCB is brilliant. I’m pleased to have the chance to do this. It’s a mix of having fun and learning technical skills.

“Doing something completely different is a break from everything else. The people training us are very encouraging and inclusive and it’s nice to be part of a group of carers and staff who do this together. We’re bonding more each session. “Taking part is a real confidence booster and when I tell my friends and family what I’ve been up to they say, ‘Wow’.”

Professional James has a real heart of gold

It was a pleasure to receive this letter from Christopher Fisher.

I would like to thank a manager at Skipton Care @ Carers’ Resource called James Elwood, pictured. I was at home caring for my parents: I collapsed on the bed and woke up later. I phoned my sister, who happened to be in a meeting with James at the Shipley office. I said what had happened then collapsed again, banging my head. Later on I opened my eyes all groggy and laid out on the floor. The phone was hanging down at the side of me.

James abandoned the meeting and came with my sister Margaret in their cars. They arrived shocked to see me on the floor. James spoke to me to keep me awake while Margaret saw to Mum and Dad. James stayed with me until the ambulance arrived, he was professional and reassuring. It’s not the first time he has gone beyond the call of duty. A big thank you to James, he has a heart of gold.
Knitters hope for a princely sum

Volunteer knitters have come up with a purler – they are making royal wedding chicks to raise funds for us at Easter.

More than 30 knitters from across Yorkshire and as far away as France are busy producing the Prince Harry, Meghan Markle, Archbishop of Canterbury and wedding guest novelties, which will be stuffed with Creme Eggs kindly donated by Cadbury.

The chicks will be on sale at £2 each at our offices and at a number of outlets across the patch.

The knitters, who are in their 11th year of creating chicks, also made more than 1,200 Christmas decorations that raised £2,150 for us in December.

Events and fundraising co-ordinator Anne Wells says: “A huge thank you to everyone who helps. Knitters and sales outlets do an amazing job to raise money for us, as well as raise our profile as a local charity.

“Enfield WI in Middlesex knits for us every year. This came about after a relative of a volunteer came along to a carers’ knitting group a few years ago and saw for herself the important work we do with carers. The knitting group itself also contributes.

“We get decorations from France, where a staff member’s relative lives. She knits them with friends then posts them, which is amazing. They’ve already sent us some French Easter chicks. Ooh la la!”

● If you would like to knit, decorate or sell chicks for us, please contact Anne Wells on 01423 500555 or email awells@carersresource.org

Our Sam’s the man

Sam Athersmith, who is a volunteer with our young carers, was a runner-up at the Craven Community Champions Awards in January.

Carers’ Resource young carer worker Susan went with Sam and his loved ones to the bash at The Coniston Hotel, Skipton, and they all had a wonderful time.

An article in the Craven Herald & Pioneer newspaper ahead of the event said of Sam: “The young carers look forward to spending time with him. He is motivated and flexible, always ensuring he puts young carers’ needs first.”

Well done, Sam. We appreciate you and all our wonderful volunteers.

● If you would like to volunteer with us, call 01274 449673 or email cfirth@carersresource.org. There are various roles across the organisation, from admin and building maintenance to keeping people company while carers have a break, and loads in between.

KEEPING YOUR DATA

We need to regularly tell you that we keep your data, including your address, phone number and email address.

Keeping this information up to date is really important as it means we can provide you with the best possible service. Please let us know if your details change.

We will store information and records relating to carers and people in need of care and support securely. It will be accessible only to staff and volunteers, or to a third party with your agreement. Information will be stored only for as long as it is needed or for as long as our governance guidelines state.

If the time comes when we need to dispose of it, we will do so appropriately. We will never sell your data. If you have any concerns, please contact us.

Could you take part in dementia research?

One of the difficulties faced by researchers of dementia is recruiting participants for their work. At the same time, many people are looking for studies to contribute to and take part in but don’t know where to find out about them.

This is why the National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) has helped to develop Join Dementia Research – a service that allows people to register their interest in being a part of research and be matched to high-quality, ethical studies locally or nationally.

People with dementia or memory problems, their carers, and anyone who is interested can register. You can also sign up someone else, providing you have their consent.

For more information see www.joindementiaresearch.nihr.ac.uk or call the Alzheimer’s Society on 0300 222 1122.
Sixty people came to the official opening of our Skipton office in January. They saw our art group’s work, the conference/meeting rooms, met our lovely staff and volunteers, and ate lots of cake!

A ribbon across the front door of Ronaldsway House was cut by the youngest and oldest unpaid carers who we support in the area – Edward Rhodes, eight, from Horton-in-Ribblesdale, and Brian Eskriett, 89, from Skipton. Brian said afterwards: “I don’t get much time away from my caring role. Carers’ Resource has been a lot of help.”

Edward is one of 80 young carers in Craven who is supported by our Young Carers and Families team. He says: “I felt really happy about cutting the ribbon. I like Carers’ Resource because we get to do lots of fun things and go to interesting places.”

The office move and redecoration were made possible by kind donations from the Tarn Moor Estate, the Rotary Clubs of Skipton and Skipton Craven, and a North Yorkshire County Council locality budget grant from Cllr Andy Solloway.

A craft group is being launched in the Skipton office to complement the art group that is already established.

Join the craft taster session on 14 March at noon to meet other carers, have a break and make something new. Regular get-togethers start from April.

Group leader Kate Fulton, pictured right, displayed a selection of crafts at the official opening, showing carers what they could make. These included ceramic coasters, origami pots and rag wreaths.

The art group also showed its work, including portraits of celebrities, sketches of animals and landscapes. See pages 6-7 for full details of both groups.

**Untold stories from history**

Emma Clayton is the Leisure and Lifestyle Editor of the Telegraph & Argus, Bradford’s daily newspaper.

Watching the BBC’s new series ‘Back In Time For Tea’ recently, I wondered why such televised journeys through social history never seem to touch on the issue of carers.

The BBC2 show follows a Bradford family as they take on challenges of working-class life through the decades, from 1918 to the present. The focus is on the food that families ate, the work they did and how they spent their leisure time. From custard tarts to curries, mangles to microwaves, it is, says the BBC, “a story of class and regional identity and the creation of modern Britain as we know it”.

While it’s interesting to see how families lived – the first episode saw tripe introduced to the dinner table, and a boy kicking a pig’s bladder football around the back yard – programmes like this tend to focus on a very conventional ideal of domestic life.

But even in the industrial North of the early 20th century, some families would have had to cope with looking after ageing or sick relatives, without any of the support that carers get today.

This series begins in 1918 – the year the First World War ended. While many families lost their sons, husbands and brothers, others would have been left with caring for injured men returning from the battlefields. What impact did that have on family life?

With the welfare state as we know it a thing of the future, some families would also have been caring for grandparents and other older relatives too. How did they cope? Was there any support for them in their towns, cities and communities? When did we begin, as a society, to recognise the plight of carers – both adults and children – and their need for assistance and respite?

As a child in the 1970s, I sometimes visited a great aunt who had severe arthritis and was practically bedridden. I remember being fascinated because her bed was downstairs in her living room. She lived in a small terraced house and her daughter, known to us as Cousin Celia, lived two doors down. Celia did all her mother’s housework, shopping and personal care – but with young children at home too, it must have been quite a challenge for her to look after her bedridden mother as well. There must have been many other women like Celia, juggling domestic and family life with caring duties and often a job too.

The next time a TV production crew takes a modern family back in time – to see how life has changed for ordinary people over the last century or so – I’d like them to explore this rarely told history of Britain.
Carers’ Resource works hard to help GPs identify carers to refer to us for support. Our primary care liaison and development officer Melanie Evans gives advice to doctors and surgery staff, provides them with leaflets and posters, attends flu clinics, and goes to meetings to explain the services we offer.

But one GP surgery has gone above and beyond by featuring Carers’ Resource on its telephone waiting line message. Patients calling The Ridge Medical Practice, in Great Horton, Bradford, hear the definition of who is a carer and how they can register with Carers’ Resource.

The practice’s reception manager Janet Pattison says: “As it is now my voice on the phones I thought it would be nice for patients to have a different message every couple of months to promote services within the practice. We had a low number of registered carers and I thought perhaps people didn’t realise they were a carer, or know that they could be registered as such at the doctors, or that they could get help from places like Carers’ Resource.

“I researched the NHS definition of a carer and incorporated that into the phone message. Hearing what constitutes a carer helps people realise they are one, and that there is support for them.”

Melanie, who has been working alongside The Ridge since 2011, says: “Janet’s idea of putting a message on the telephone waiting line is nothing short of brilliant. There’s no cost to the practice and a large number of carers have been identified. It would be great if other practices could also try it.”

Julie Robinson, carers lead at The Ridge, adds: “People are approaching the surgery saying they’ve heard the message on the phone and asking for carer cards and information. It’s working.”

If you are a carer or work in a GP practice you could help us by telling your surgery about this low-cost and effective idea. To contact Melanie call 01274 449660 or email mevans@carersresource.org

Cut-price pamper sessions on offer

The Bingley Physiotherapy Practice has chosen Carers’ Resource as one of its three charities of the year and is offering reduced-price massage and reflexology treatments for carers.

The practice is entering its 10th year in business and as part of the celebratory activities its staff are taking on personal challenges, such as an Olympic-distance triathlon, to raise money for us. They will also promote our services to their clients and place donation buckets in the practice to raise funds for us.

As well as raising money, the staff are also undertaking 10 acts of kindness, which include offering carers a half-hour seated acupressure, reflexology or massage treatment for £10 instead of the usual £30.

Proprietor Jacqui Taylor says: “Liz Crosland, our massage and holistic therapist, had already done some volunteering with Carers’ Resource and I thought it was a great complement to the other charities we’d already chosen.

“Also you are supporting people in relation to health and wellbeing to improve their lives: the very things we aim to do with our services.”

Carers’ Resource Bradford district community fundraiser Richard Dunbar says: “We are very grateful to Jacqui and Liz and we congratulate them on their 10 years in business.”

To register your interest in a reduced-price treatment call Richard on 01274 449673 or email rdunbar@carersresource.org before April 1. The number of treatments on offer is limited. A date for the sessions will be organised once demand is determined.

PIP workshop helps parents

Completing benefits forms can be challenging and stressful for carers, particularly when benefits change.

For that reason we recently held a Personal Independence Payment (PIP) workshop at our Skipton office for parents who are caring for disabled teenagers. EPIC project worker Natalie Baxter, who ran the session, says: “Supporting carers to prepare for PIP and giving them some handy tips can help to relieve some anxieties.”

The workshop was aimed at parents with teenagers who are currently in receipt of Disability Living Allowance and will need to transition to PIP payments when their children turn 16. The workshop covered subjects including how PIP is different to DLA, how to set up appointeeship, gathering evidence for the application and what happens at the face-to-face assessment.

Our next PIP workshop for parents with disabled teenagers is on Monday 26 March, 1–3pm, at the Rainbow Children’s Centre, Braithwaite Grove, BD22 6JB. Call Natalie on 01756 700888 to book a place.
100 unpaid carers have their say in corridors of power

The Carers Rights Day event we hosted in November drew a crowd of more than 100 carers from across our patch to City Hall, in Bradford.

It featured presentations and questions and answers from carers, health professionals and social care workers as well as a Question Time-style panel made up of local politicians. Carers’ Resource staff were on hand to give practical and emotional support, and we set up information stalls to advertise the variety of services we provide. Young adult carer Amen Dhesi, pictured, talked about the impact caring for his father has had on his life for the past decade since his father’s diagnosis of bipolar. Amen explained how he slid into depression and substance abuse before he went on to set up Imagine Bradford – a non-profit organisation that tackles mental health issues through the delivery of fun activities.

He also described the emotional crutch he received from Carers’ Resource and added: “My support worker helped me to get through my darkest days.”

We arranged the speakers after carers at our forums told us what was important to them and who they wanted to hear from, including continuing health care, day care, better understanding of direct payments, and how to be supported by your GP.

Feedback comments included: “Very informative and nice to know WE matter,” and, “Learned some new things. Enjoyed it, really helpful. So worthwhile! Please do this again.”

OK, we will – let’s see if together we can all make Carers’ Rights Day 2018 even bigger and better.

You asked, we answered

Throughout Carers Rights Day you asked us and our speakers questions, some of which we explored on the day. We now want to know how you want the answers presented back to you. Contact communications officer Caroline Firth on 01274 449660 or email cfirth@carersresource.org if you have any suggestions.

For the time being, here are Carers’ Resource staff answering a couple of your questions:

**Q** Patrick asked: “When I first entered the care arena I found it difficult to ascertain what services are available – how can we make this easier?”

**A** Caroline Harley, of the carer support team, replied: “Carers’ Resource is here to show you clear options at this daunting and bewildering time. We are the map to help you navigate what services and which professionals can help you in your caring role.”

**Q** Dawn asked: “I care for my partner and I have two small children - what reasonable adjustments should my work make and what support is there for me?”

**A** Liz Liepins, from the CReate team, replied: “Carers have rights at work, for example the right to take a reasonable amount of time off for emergencies, such as if the person you care for is ill.

After working for an employer for more than 26 weeks you can request to work flexibly. Our CReate service can advise you on how to approach your employer about this and we can support you in putting a request together. If you care for a child under 18 you have the right to parental leave as long as you’ve worked for the same employer for 12 months. Depending on your employer’s policies this may have to be taken as unpaid leave. To claim these rights you need to inform your employer that you’re a carer.

“If you feel comfortable, talk to your manager or HR department.”

WHAT TURKEYS

Eagle-eyed Choices reader Kevin McGrath spotted an error in our Christmas quiz. In the answer for question 18 we said that the blue carbuncle in the Sherlock Holmes story The Adventure of the Blue Carbuncle was found inside a turkey. Kevin wrote in to correct us as it was actually found in a goose. Well spotted, Mr Holmes.