Only 5% say their wellbeing is unaffected by caring role

Caring responsibilities affect the health of almost all carers, a survey we carried out in June shows.

Of the 242 carers across Skipton, Harrogate and Bradford who responded, 12% said they found their caring role all-consuming.

A total of 70% said they experienced stress as a result of looking after someone else, while 60% reported a lack of sleep, 56% said they had anxiety and 29% experienced social isolation.

Carers’ Resource chief executive Chris Whiley says: “The picture this paints is in line with national figures and we know carers often struggle to look after themselves properly. Our survey shows that caring has affected the existing health problems of 23% of carers, and has actually caused a health problem for 18% of respondents.

“We speak to carers who are not given flexibility around GP appointments, or carers who develop mental health issues due to isolation and financial concerns brought about by caring. Some carers even put off operations as they are worried about what will happen to their loved one if they are in hospital.

“Carers’ Resource regularly raises these issues with national government, local government, health and social care colleagues and other charities. The voices of carers need to be at the centre of all discussions, so thank you to the people who got back to us – having this information adds power to those wider conversations.”

The survey showed 40% of respondents were in touch with us within the first year of caring but 16% had been in a caring role for 10 years or more before even realising they were a carer.

Family and friends, and health professionals were cited as the most important factor in people realising they were carers. Both were mentioned by 40% of respondents to the annual survey, which featured in Choices and on our social media channels between June and August.

Chris adds: “Helping people to realise they are a carer is a constant challenge for us. People often tell us: ‘She’s my wife, it’s what is expected’, or ‘I love him, so I just get on with it’. Sometimes only when someone spells it out to a person that they are a carer does the penny drop.

“It’s up to all of us to ‘think carer’ and gently encourage them to seek support. We know most people are proud of their caring role, but that doesn’t mean that a little extra support wouldn’t help everyone have a better quality of life.

“It’s great to see our excellent relationships with GPs and hospitals are having an effect and that health professionals are helping people to realise they are carers.”

One survey respondent said: “Carers’ Resource helped me to identify both myself and customers I work with as a carer.”

Regarding Carers’ Resource services, 94% of respondents said they were satisfied with the help they received and 80% responded positively when asked if being in touch with us had improved their health and wellbeing.

One respondent said: “My caseworker is one of the most professional, genuine and friendly ladies I’ve ever had the pleasure to meet. Her help has been so very appreciated and valued, especially at times of need. She’s helped me through some really tough times.”

Another said: “I received very useful information about local services: from lunch clubs, to taxi firms that specialise in helping older people.”

Chris adds: “The feedback and comments we received were really useful. While many of the responses were positive, we have areas to work on and will be using the information we received to shape our services in the future.”
Time to make allowance Fairer for Carers

We’re backing Carers UK’s national Fairer for Carers campaign, which is calling on the Government to raise Carer’s Allowance to the same amount as Jobseeker’s Allowance.

Carer’s Allowance – the main benefit for people who provide unpaid care – is the lowest benefit of its kind at £64.60 per week.

In Scotland it has gone up by £8.50 per week to £73.10 – the same level as Jobseeker’s Allowance. This is being paid every six months as a lump sum Carer’s Allowance Supplement, which will not be means tested until Scotland takes control of some of its own social security benefits.

Carer’s Allowance in England, Wales and Northern Ireland will remain at its current level, so Carers UK is sending a letter on behalf of the 778,953 carers in receipt of the allowance to the Department for Work and Pensions Secretary Esther McVey to ask for their Carer’s Allowance to be raised too.

Our chief executive Chris Whiley says: “We know that unpaid carers save the economy an estimated £132bn a year, so this should be recognised. Many carers live on the poverty line and find it difficult to afford even the smallest thing for themselves.

“The Government and wider society have a moral duty to ensure carers have enough money to live on. Life should not be a financial struggle for carers, who give so much of themselves for other people.”

Anyone else who supports the letter can sign it at https://bit.ly/2wmRqd

What is Carers’ Resource doing about this issue?

As reported in the September edition of Choices, we consulted with carers about the impact of the national Carers Action Plan, which was published in June.

One of the main concerns raised in these sessions was that Carer’s Allowance is not in line with other benefits, which puts financial pressure on carers and gives a negative image of the value put on caring. That’s why we’re backing the Fairer for Carers campaign.

Half of working-age carers live in a household where no one is in paid employment, and 1.2 million carers are living in poverty.

When we first backed the campaign, some carers told us they were concerned they would not receive any gain from a rise in Carer’s Allowance, due to it being regarded as income for other means-tested benefits. We raised this when
It’s your Choices

By Carers’ Resource chief executive Chris Whiley.

If, like me, you love the sun and the warmth of summer, then the long nights and dull days of this time of year are hard to feel positive about.

Hopefully the contents of this edition of Choices will cheer you up and stimulate your thoughts. Don’t forget to contact us if there is anything you’d like to pick up or would like further information on.

As usual we will be open between Christmas and the New Year and, although not fully staffed, we will be pleased to help where we can.

I’d like to thank those of you who responded to our survey that we sent out in June. Although there are no particular surprises, it was notable that 95% of people said that their health and wellbeing was affected by their caring responsibilities, with 70% saying they experienced additional stress.

Carers’ Resource exists to offer support to alleviate these things and it is really important that we offer the best possible service, and so we were heartened to get a 94% overall satisfaction rate.

Carers’ Resource and Carers UK continue to highlight how low the level of Carer’s Allowance is, and we call on the Government to address the financial hardship that many carers face.
**Spice up your life at an evening meal group**

The introduction of our curry club in Bradford means there is now the opportunity for carers to have an evening meal together in all three of the areas we cover.

The curry club started in October, when 10 people – including carers, people they care for and Carers' Resource staff – went to Omar Khan’s, in Bradford city centre, for a banquet.

The meal included poppadoms and sauces; mixed sizzler platter starters; a selection of mains for the table; pilau rice and naan bread for only £10 per person – a saving of £6 each.

Carer Jamie Lowbridge, of Queensbury, Bradford, says: “It was brilliant because you got to try things on the menu you wouldn’t normally go for, catch up with people you have met before and meet new people. I had such a lovely evening.”

The next curry club is taking place on 14 December at 6pm. Book your place with Caroline Firth at 01274 449660 or cfirth@carersresource.org

Our supper club in Skipton and Airedale is well established and takes place every six weeks. The venue changes to ensure carers, people who are cared for and former carers can enjoy a variety of early evening meals out. Contact Tracey Howes on 07725 111798 for full details.

The same idea is behind the supper club in Harrogate. Sheila Constable (01423 500555, sconstable@carersresource.org) organises this group, which meets every four to six weeks at 6.15pm to take advantage of early bird offers.

The curry night at Omar Khan’s

**Get knitted decorations for your s-elves**

Once again our knitted Christmas decorations are on sale for £2 each. Our volunteers have created 1,300 of them this year and we’re hoping to shift them all. So far these outlets have committed to selling them:

- Feastfield Medical Centre, Pateley Bridge;
- The Grange Medical Centre, Dacre Banks;
- Noir hair salon, Otley Road, Harrogate;
- Harrogate Health and Beauty, Westmoreland Street, Harrogate;
- David Lloyd gym, Oakdale Place, Harrogate;
- Kathryn Elliott Osteopath, Knaresborough;
- Pro HQ salon, Skipton;
- Helene’s Tea Room, Skipton;
- Jets gym, Skipton;
- Utopia cafe, Broughton Park, Skipton.

We’ve got a new Swedish elves pattern for 2018, so see if you can get your hands on one of them. You can also buy knitted decorations at all our offices. If you can’t get to our outlets, maybe you could make a cards pledge to your friends and family this year and donate the money you would have spent on cards to Carers’ Resource?

Huge thanks to schools, businesses and others – such as St Roberts Primary School, Marks & Spencer Harrogate and Bradford district councillors – for selling our decorations internally to children and colleagues.

For all knitted decoration queries, please contact Anne Wells on 01423 500555 or email awells@carersresource.org

Feedback wanted

We are always happy to take constructive criticism of any part of our service, as we constantly strive to improve. We also actively encourage people to complain to us if they are unhappy, so that we are then able to put things right. As well as contacting staff, you can also contact someone from the board of trustees should you have anything that you feel should be brought to their attention. You can email trustee chair Liz Jones at chair@carersresource.org
Cruise plan wasn’t all plain sailing

When Jo Warden’s 59-year-old husband Andrew went into a care home so she could have a holiday on her own, he came back worse than he went in because of his experience. So the next year they found a break for them both – a cruise.

The couple, from Skipton, married three years ago and 10 months after they married Andrew had a stroke that left him in hospital for eight months. Jo is now a full-time carer for Andrew, who is wheelchair-bound and needs help with dressing, personal care, taking medication and all household tasks.

Professional carers come into the couple’s home twice a day throughout the week, but at the weekend Jo, 53, takes care of Andrew to give them freedom to relax and have some privacy.

Jo says that before Andrew’s stroke the couple loved holidays abroad and enjoyed “sunbeds, sunshine, relaxing and time together”. She adds: “We could book flights at the last minute. Now a holiday takes a year to plan because the disability rooms are limited in number and get booked up quickly. As a carer you don’t know what is going to be happening next week, never mind planning so far in advance.”

When Jo needed a holiday the couple used direct payments towards a hotel in Scarborough, or Andrew went into a care home while Jo went away. She says: “Andrew was much younger than most residents, and care homes are not set up to cater for him.

“The experience was difficult for him and I feel he came home much worse than when he went in. Also, going anywhere on my own means it’s difficult seeing couples cuddling.” The couple looked into alternative breaks and wanted to book a cruise, as they love sunshine. Scarborough cost around £1,000 and they found a cruise for £1,500. Direct payments do not cover either of these sums and can only be used for Andrew.

To use direct payments towards some of their cruise, Jo needed special permission from their social worker. She says: “The authorities were surprised that we intended to go abroad. I followed criteria set by the social worker, asked for permission every step along the way and tried to build a relationship with them. I found that by being firm and trying to explain to them what a break means for me, the respite proposal was agreed.”

Jo found a company that would insure Andrew and waited until Andrew’s health was reasonably stable before going ahead, so she could answer questions honestly and make the cost as manageable as possible.

She adds of the cruise: “The boat had facilities for wheelchairs, there were medical facilities, and Andrew had someone to help him to get on and off the boat. There was even a swimming pool with a hoist.”

Altham’s travel agent worked closely with Jo to find a holiday that matched the couple’s needs. She says: “They had never booked anything like this before but took on the challenge and got very involved with the whole process.” The cruise has had a lasting effect on Jo and Andrew and they are excited to go again next year. She says: “We both found it scary to do something so different. Andrew was apprehensive about joining in with the entertainment activities, but we overcame our fears – which was worth it because of the memories we have now.

“On our bedroom wall are photos from the trip, and when things get bad, we revisit them.”

Taylor’s brewing up funds for young carers

Harrogate Young Carers has been voted Taylors of Harrogate’s charity of the year.

The year of fundraising started on 1 November and we are looking forward to hearing about how staff at the firm’s tea and coffee production centres and offices will be raising funds for us.

Isobel Goodall, of Taylors, nominated us as she had two friends who cared for their housebound mother without support. Isobel saw how the girls missed out on trips, activities in school holidays, and a connection with other children – particularly those in a similar situation.

Carers’ Resource fundraiser Anne Wells says: “We are delighted to have been chosen by Taylors of Harrogate. This is such good news for our Young Carer service, which is entirely dependent upon donations for its running. Thank you to all involved.

“The money raised will provide breaks during term time at our regular after-school clubs and trips and activities in the holidays. “A day away from caring that is full of fun and laughter is a lifeline for young carers.”
BRADFORD DISTRICT

TINGLEY
Drop-in
Dates: 1st Wednesday of the month (5 Dec, 2 Jan, 6 Feb).
Time: 10am-noon.
Where: The Coffee Lounge, Queen Street, BD16 3JS.

BRADFORD CITY CENTRE
Afternoon Tea
Date: 16 Jan.
Time: 2pm.
Where: The Housefood, 11 Caledonia Street, Bradford, BD7 8QO.

Inn Churches hosts a series of afternoon tea sessions for carers and their cared for. 15 people max per session. Strictly on a first come, first served basis. Entry to the building is via a stairwell. Unfortunately, the building does not have lift access.

Cost: Voluntary £2 donation.
Contact: Caroline Firth, 01274 449660, cfirth@carersresource.org

Curry Club
Date: 14 Dec, 15 Feb.
Time: 6pm.

Where: Omar Khan’s, 30 Little Horton Ln, Bradford BD5 0AL.

Enjoy a banquet of poppadoms and dips; mixed sizzler platter starter; a rice and naan bread. Vegetarian options available. Please mention any dietary requirements when booking. Spaces are limited, so first come first served. The person you care for is also welcome.

Cost: £10 per person, plus drinks.
Contact: Book by contacting Caroline Firth, 01274 449660, cfirth@carersresource.org

CLAYTON
Men’s Group
Dates: Every Friday.
Time: 1.30pm-3.30pm.

Where: Clayton Village Hall, Revy Syke Road, BD14 6GN.

Dominoes, cards, pool table and more. £1 for refreshments. Transport can be arranged.

Contact: Michael Firth, 07734 513652.

ECCLESHILL
Ataxia Self-help Group
Date: 8 Dec.
Time: 1pm-3pm.

Where: Charnwood Centre, Charnwood Road, off Harrogate Road, BD2 3EE.

For people with ataxia and carers.
Contact: Dennis, 07305 179438, or Lynn, 07305 179424.

GREAT HORTON
Bradford Epilepsy Support Team (BEST)
Dates: Fourth Monday of the month (10 Dec in Dec, 28 Jan, 25 Feb).
Time: 1pm-3pm.
Where: The Ridge Medical Centre, Cossen Road, BD7 3UX.

Social for carers and members.
Contact: Michelle White, 07792 799210.

KEIGHLEY
Coffee Morning
Dates: 1st Friday of the month (7 Dec*, 4 Jan, 1 Feb).
Time: 10am – 11.30am.
Where: Café Central, Central Hall, Alice Street, Keighley, BD21 3JD.

*The December meeting will be at Lavender Fields Tearooms, 42 Cavendish Street, Keighley BD21 3RL. Carers, cared for and former carers.

SHIPLEY
Book Group
Taking a break for three months
Carer forum
Date: Thu 24 Jan.
Time: 1.30pm-3pm.
Where: Carers’ Resource office.

An opportunity for carers to meet one another and discuss the issues they face. People who come along also learn more about the services Carers’ Resource offers and feedback back about how we can improve. Just turn up.

Contact: Caroline Firth, 01274 449660, cfirth@carersresource.org

Interlude Café Carers Group
Dates: 2nd Wednesday of the month (12 Dec, 9 Jan, 13 Feb).
Time: 10.30am-noon.
Where: Interlude Tea Room and Café, 27 Westgate, BD18 3XQ.

Cost: Price of your own drink.
Contact: Carers’ Resource, 01274 449660, cfirth@carersresource.org

Knit Together
Dates: Every Thursday.
Time: 2pm-4pm.
Where: Carers’ Resource office. All welcome.

Live Well, Care Well
Dates: 2nd Tuesday of the month (11 Dec, 8 Jan, 13 Feb).
Time: 6.15pm-7.30pm.

Where: Carers’ Resource office.

Wellbeing group. Learn how to manage and understand stress, and try relaxation techniques, hand massage and meditation with life coach Jenny Cooper.
Cost: £2 to cover refreshments and materials.
Contact: Kay Nichols, 01274 449660, knichols@carersresource.org

Lunch Group
Dates: 3rd Wednesday of the month (19 Dec, 16 Jan, 20 Feb).
Time: Noon.
Where: The Noble Combe, Salts Mill Road, Keighley BD18 3ST.

Carers, cared for and former carers.
Contact: Carers’ Resource, 01274 449660.

SILSDEN
Chatterbox
Date: 1st Thursday of the month (6 Dec, 3 Jan, 7 Feb).
Time: 10am-11.30am.
Where: Silsden Methodist Church, Kirkgate, BD20 0PA.

Contact: Skipton office, 01756 700888.

STEETON
Time for Me
Dates: 2nd Tuesday of the month (11 Dec, 8 Jan, 12 Feb).
Time: 10am-noon.
Where: The Hub, Stone Grove, BD20 8TO.

For carers and over-50s. Activities, speakers, fun.
Cost: £2, including refreshments.
Contact: Val Stewart, 01274 449660, vstewart@carersresource.org

SKIPTON DISTRICT
BENTHAM
Lunch Group
Dates: 1st Monday/Tuesday (variable) of the month (Tue 18 Dec moved forward due to Christmas, Mon 28 Jan, Tue 26 Feb).
Time: Noon.
Where: Bentham Golf Club, Robin Lane, High Bentham, Nr Lancaster, LA2 7AG.

Carers, cared for and former carers.

ILKLEY
Get Together
Dates: 3rd Thursday of the month (20 Dec, 17 Jan, 21 Feb).
Time: 10am-noon.
Where: Abbeyfield, 12 Riddings Road, LS29 9BF.

Carers, cared for and former carers.

SETTLE
Lunch Group
Dates: 2nd Monday of the month (10 Dec, 14 Jan, 11 Feb).
Time: Noon.
Where: The Lion Hotel, Duke St, BD24 9DU.

Carers, cared for and former carers.

SKIPTON
Airledale and Skipton Supper Club
Dates: Approximately every six weeks.
Time: Early evening.
Where: Various venues across Airledale and Skipton.

Carers, cared for and former carers – early evening meal out in various venues in Airledale and Skipton.
Contact: Tracey Howes, 07725 117798.

Carer forum
Date: Fri 25 Jan.
Time: 10pm-noon.
Where: Carers’ Resource office.

An opportunity for carers to meet one another and discuss the issues they face. People who come along also learn more about the services Carers’ Resource offers and feedback back about how we can improve. Just turn up.

Contact: Sally Skipper, 01756 700888, sskipper@carersresource.org

Christmas Crafts
Date: 15 Dec.
Time: 10am-noon.
Where: Carers’ Resource office.

Relaxed and friendly session for carers and former carers to make Christmas tree decorations. We can tell you where to buy materials, so you can continue to make your own items after the sessions.

Contact: £1 donation per session for cost of materials.

Just Sing! Skipton
Dates: 1st and 3rd Tuesday September to July, with breaks at Christmas and Easter.

Contact Sue for full details.
Time: 1.45pm-3.30pm.
Where: Skipton Baptist Church Hall, Otley St, Skipton, BD23 1ET.

Learn new songs and sing old favourites, some in early evening.

All songs are taught by all. All welcome, although the group is not suitable for people with memory problems.
Cost: £2 per session, which includes a drink and biscuits.

Contact: Sue Jackson, 01756 798667, sjskippton@btinternet.com

Lunch Group
Date: 1st Wednesday of the month (5 Dec, 2 Jan, 6 Feb).
Time: Noon.
Where: Bay Horse, Snapgill, BD20 9HB.

Carers, cared for and former carers.

Making Art with Dementia
Dates: 3, 10, 17 Dec, 7, 14, 21, 28 Jan.
Time: 10.15am-12.15pm.
Where: Either Carers’ Resource office or Pioneer Projects, Looking Well Studios, King Street, Bentham, LA2 7HG.

These popular creative sessions are safe, fun and full of care. They are led by an artist with trained volunteers in support. Carers are welcome to take part or come along to the linked monthly carers group (info below).

Being based in the sessions builds confidence and friendships.

Cost: Sessions are charged in blocks. Between £10 and £20 depending on circumstances.

Contact: Please book by contacting Pioneer Projects on 015242 62872 or office@pioneerprojects.org.uk

Making Art with Dementia: Carers Group
Dates: 10 Dec, 14 Jan
Time: 10.15am-12.15pm.
Where: Either Carers’ Resource office or Pioneer Projects, Looking Well Studios, King Street, Bentham, LA2 7HG.

This free group is designed to link in with the Pioneer Projects art group that will be running at the same time, so it’s a chance for the carers of those people to stay and meet up.

Other carers for people with dementia are welcome.
Contact: Your caseworker or reception at Skipton, 01756 700888, skiptonadmin@carersresource.org

Me Time, Holistic Therapy
Date: 15 Feb, 27 Mar.
Time: 9.45am-12.15pm.
Where: Carers’ Resource office.

A 20-minute treatment of your choice. Earthreal of Yorkshire is pleased to work in partnership with Carers’
HARROGATE DISTRICT
BLUFFER HOUSES
Lunch Group
Dates: 2nd Wednesday of the month (12 Dec, 9 Jan, 13 Feb).
Times: 1pm.
Where: Hopper Lane pub and restaurant, Skipton Rd,
Blubberhouses, Otley, LS21 2NZ.
Carers and cared for. Lunch and social get-together for a
cost. Own food and drink.
Contact: Carol Lancaster, 01423 500555,
clancaster@carersresource.org

BOROUGHBRIDGE
Carer’s Group
Times: 1pm.
Location: BEAN Café, St James
Square, Boroughbridge, YO51 9BA
Meet for a chat with cake and coffee.
Not being required.
Cost: Cost of your own drink.
Contact: Alyson Hill, 01423 500555,
ahill@carersresource.org

DARLEY
Dales Diners Lunch
Dates: 1st Thursday of the month
(6 Dec, 13 Jan, 17 Feb).
Times: 1pm.
Where: Christ Church Hall, Main
Street, HG3 2QF.
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
(20 Dec, 17 Jan, 21 Feb).
Times: 2pm to 3pm
(please arrive by 1.45pm).
Where: Christ Church Hall,
Main Street, HG3 2OF.
Exercise class to suit your ability,
sitting or standing. Gentle, safe and fun
– followed by afternoon tea.
Please book in advance.
Cost: £5.
Contact: Carol Lancaster,
01423 500555,
clancaster@carersresource.org

HARROGATE
Carer forum
Date: Wed 30 Jan.
Time: 2pm-4pm.
Where: Carers’ Resource office.
An opportunity for carers to meet one
another and discuss the issues they
face. People who come along also
learn more about the services Carers’
Resource offers and feed back about
how we can improve. Just
Contact: Alison Straw, 01423 500555,
asstraw@carersresource.org

Cedar Court Coffee Morning
Dates: 3rd Wednesday of the month
(19 Dec, 16 Jan, 20 Feb).
Time: 11am.
Cost: Cost of your drink.
Where: Cedar Court Hotel, Park
Parade, HG1 5AH.
Carers and former carers. Meet for
a drink and a chat.
Contact: Carol Lancaster, 01423 500555,
clancaster@carersresource.org

New Beginnings
Dates: Every Wednesday.
Times: 10am –noon.
Where: Elim 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. Cost: £3 to cover
hire and refreshments.
Contact: Lynda Oliver, 07817 820965,
lyndalove99@yahoo.co.uk

Harrogate Outgoing Group
Dates: Various Wednesdays
during Jan, 17 Feb.
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.

Parent Carer - Coffee and Cake
Dates: 1st Wednesday of the month
(6 Dec, no meeting in Jan, 6 Feb).
Times: 10.30am–12.30pm.
Where: Carers’ Resource office.
Join other parents of children with
additional needs for a cuppa and a
chat to gain knowledge and support.
Term time only.
Contact: Rebecca Scurr, 01423 500555,
rscurr@carersresource.org

Pins N Needles
Dates: 1st Tuesday of the month*
(4 Dec, 8 Jan due to bank holiday, 5 Feb).
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
craft ideas.
Contact: Jean Eames, 01423 500555,
jeames@carersresource.org

Mindfulness Relaxation
Dates: 12 Dec, 9 Jan, 13 Feb.
Time: 2pm.
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@boarersresource.org

Supper Club
Dates: Every 4-6 weeks (no meeting in
dec. 23 Dec, 27 Jan, Feb).
Time: 6.15pm.
Where: Various venues in Harrogate and
Knaresborough.
Carers, former carers, cared for.
An opportunity to socialise.
Cost: Variable but we try to take advan-
tage of early bird and special offers.
Contact: Sheila Constable,
01423 500555,
sconstable@carersresource.org

Wetherby
Afternoon Tea/Coffee
Dates: 3rd Monday of the month
(17 Dec, 21 Jan, 18 Feb).
Time: 2pm.
Where: Sant’ Angelo Restaurant,
High Street, LS22 6LT.
Carers and former carers.
Drink and chat in friendly
environment with cakes.
Cost: Of own food and drink.
Contact: Carol Lancaster,
01423 500555,
clancaster@carersresource.org

MASHAM
Carers Group
Dates: 3rd Wednesday of the month
(19 Dec, 16 Jan, 20 Feb).
Time: 2pm-3pm.
Where: Masham Methodist Church,
Park Street, HG4 4TH. A chance to
meet and chat with other carers and
have a free cup of tea and cake.
Contact: Isobel Holmes, 01423
500555, iholmes@carersresource.org
Young Carers chosen by M&S Harrogate as charity of the year

M&S Harrogate has chosen Harrogate Young Carers as its charity of the year.

Customer assistant Daniel Hutton, 42, of Harlow Hill, nominated us and says: “I’ve been aware of the work of Carers’ Resource for many years and I’m proud to be able to support it through our charity of the year initiative.”

Carers’ Resource Young Carers service offers carers aged under 18 one-to-one support at times of crisis as well as regular breaks at after-school clubs and trips in the holidays. M&S Harrogate customers will see our staff, volunteers and young people with collecting tins at the tills at various points throughout the year to raise awareness and vital funds.

Benjy Hollins, who helps to care for his four-year-old brother, goes to our BUDZ after school club and on young carer trips. The eight-year-old asked if he could collect money at M&S with his mum Lizzie and brother Noah, five, over Halloween after our fundraiser Anne Wells asked for volunteers to come forward.

Benjy says: “I’m trying to raise money for young carers. They have a club every two Thursdays and they bring us on adventures, trips and cool things. We have lots of fun and we get lots of friends there and we play lots of games. We get to talk to each other.”

Anne says: “We can’t thank Daniel, the Harrogate M&S team and customers, and our young people enough for their generosity and commitment.”

Our Nafees is Pride of Airedale

Nafees gets his award from Airedale NHS Foundation Trust chief executive Brendan Brown

Awards season is upon us and we are delighted to have won one and been shortlisted for several others.

Home from Hospital co-ordinator Nafees Nazir got a Pride of Airedale Award from Airedale NHS Foundation Trust for supporting a 70-year-old Australian woman who fell from her Vespa in Long Preston, south of Settle.

Nafees is part of the supported discharge project, which is run by our Home from Hospital team and supports people when they are discharged from A&E. The frail elderly pathway team, based at the hospital, nominated Nafees after he helped the woman retrieve her insurance documents from the Vespa and ensured she was provided with a flight back to Australia.

Elsewhere, our Young Carers service was shortlisted for a Yorkshire Children of Courage Award. Carers’ Resource was nominated in a special category focusing on the work of charities and groups that help youngsters to flourish, with the winner decided by a public vote. Helen Prince, from the Carers’ Resource Young Carers team, went to the ceremony in Leeds with Honor and Freya Kesteven, aged 16 and 13, and the girls’ mum.

Helen says: “We didn’t win this time but we had a fab evening and are so pleased that young carers were in the spotlight. Our young people are truly children of courage. We are so proud of our young carer team and the fantastic, resilient young people we work with.”

We are still waiting to hear whether we have won any Regional Care Awards for the work of our not-for-profit paid-for service Care@.

Care@ has been shortlisted for a Home Care Team Award, Care Innovator Award and Care Newcomer Award. Head of care Sam Dawson says: “I am so proud of the team and how they have made a difference to customers’ lives. They regularly demonstrate how caring they are and go above and beyond their role.”

The Regional Care Awards winners were due to be announced in York as Choices went to press.
Community centre now carer aware

When our CReate team went along to give information at a community centre cafe for carers, the centre staff grabbed their opportunity to ask for help to become more carer aware.

Although you might not notice it as you drive by, Sedbergh Community Centre, in Odsal, Bradford, is a thriving hub of activity. It hosts everything from toddler groups to model railway and craft activities.

But it was at the Carers Cafe at which the CReate team from Carers’ Resource first met the staff of Sedbergh. We gave out information and spoke to carers at the thriving and friendly monthly cafe, which offers games, crafts, food and plenty of chat.

CReate is a project that supports carers in employment or those who are looking for activities that boost their confidence and self-esteem, but it also helps employers to look at examples of best practice to become carer-friendly workplaces.

Sedbergh manager Arnie Butterfield was keen to look at ways of developing the centre’s practices around its employment of staff and volunteers.

He got advice from the CReate team to make sure carers he employs are supported and valued. Between them, CReate and Sedbergh staff worked through the centre’s employee handbook and reviewed the policies in it, then updated the handbook with carers in mind.

CReate advised how Sedbergh could make changes so that staff and volunteers would be comfortable to come forward to say they are carers. Project manager Jenny Sengel also worked with Arnie to make sure carers could contribute to their best ability.

The changes were agreed with Sedbergh trustees and shared with staff. Arnie was grateful for the support from CReate. He says: “Thank you for the hard work you have done to help us understand what caring issues are around in society, and also with our policy.

“This piece of work needs to be developed far and wide in society as you never know, it could be any one of us that needs either to be cared for or be a carer in the future.”

The CReate team has continued to work with Sedbergh, and our staff hosted a Carers Week event and still meet carers for appointments there. The team went back to Sedbergh in October to present Arnie with an award to recognise his and the centre’s dedication to supporting the carers who work and volunteer there.

Jenny says: “It’s thanks to inspirational employers like Arnie, who recognise the importance of being a carer-friendly employer, that working carers are becoming more recognised and valued for their contribution, while employers benefit from loyal and experienced staff. It’s a win-win situation.

“Any employer who wants help to become carer aware can get in touch with me and the team and we’d support them to go through this same process. Get in touch on 01423 500555 or email me at jsengel@carersresource.org”

● The Carers Cafe at Sedbergh Community Centre is on the third Wednesday of the month from 10.30am-12.30pm. It costs £1.50 and includes lunch. For more information, call the centre on 01274 679843.

Help may be out there to heat your home

If you are over 60, disabled or on a low income, you may be able to get help towards the cost of keeping warm in winter.

Check out these schemes:

WINTER FUEL PAYMENTS
If you were born on or before 5 November 1953 you could get up to £300 to help pay for heating. You get this automatically before January if you’re eligible and you get the State Pension or certain benefits. If you’re eligible but do not get paid automatically, call 0800 731 0160 before 31 March.

COLD WEATHER PAYMENTS
You may get these if you are on certain benefits. If the average temperature in your area is, or is forecast to be, 0C or below for seven consecutive days, you’ll automatically get £25 for each seven-day period of very cold weather between 1 November and 31 March.

AFFORDABLE WARMTH HEATING GRANTS
You may be eligible for free heating and insulation improvements if you are on a low income or claim certain benefits. The grants help with the cost of insulation work; replacing or repairing your boiler etc. See www.affordablewarmthgrants.co.uk for eligibility.

WARM HOMES DISCOUNT SCHEME
You may be entitled to a £140 discount on your energy bill as a one-off discount paid to your electricity supplier before March. You may qualify if you get the Guarantee Credit element of Pension Credit or if you are on a low income and meet the criteria. If you get the Guarantee Credit element of Pension Credit you’ll get a letter by 7 December telling you how to get the discount if you qualify. Contact 0800 731 0214 if you do not get a letter and you think you are eligible.

If you are on a low income your supplier decides who gets the discount. Check with them if you’re eligible and how to apply. The number of discounts is limited. You must stay with your supplier until it is paid.
Several carers living in the Toller ward in Bradford are being pampered and are learning how to de-stress at two free wellbeing programmes that are running until January.

Community health programme Well Bradford has given us money to run the weekly sessions, which focus on carers looking after themselves, building confidence and resilience, and exercise activities. A life coach and professional speakers from services across Bradford are giving talks on topics such as fire safety, managing money and preventing diabetes. Bilingual staff and volunteers are also there to accommodate for the diversity of languages spoken within the community.

There will be a free celebration lunch in the final week at both sets of sessions. The sessions run from 10am until noon on Tuesdays at Girlington Community Centre, and from 10am until noon on Wednesdays at Manningham Community Centre.

Our caseworker team leader in Bradford, Rifat Parveen, is leading on the project and spoke about it on Sunrise Radio to encourage carers to come along. She says: “There is a possibility for us to arrange and pay for respite care and travel expenses so carers can attend.

“Carers are already feeling the benefits of these sessions. People who come are feeling more relaxed and have been so engrossed in the activities that they’ve been able to completely switch off.

“It’s so important for people to recognise that taking time for themselves means they are much better placed to carry on caring. It’s also important for people to know they’re not alone.”

Well Bradford is led by Bradford Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust (BTHFT) on behalf of Bradford Integrated Change Board, and its members include senior leaders from across the district’s health and social care teams. BTHFT deputy chief executive John Holden says: “These sessions were intended to bring carers and their families together to learn how to look after themselves. We also hope they helped to tackle isolation, as caring responsibilities can get in the way of relationships and socialising.”

For more information contact Rifat on 01274 449660 or rparveen@carersresource.org

Did you know that there is a priority services register provided by suppliers and network operators to customers in need – and you may be eligible to be added to the list for free?

Once registered you would be able to access the following:
- Advance notice of planned power cuts;
- Priority support in an emergency (e.g. provision of alternative heating and cooking facilities in the event of supply interruption);
- Nominee scheme where customers nominate someone to deal with their supply account;
- Identification scheme where additional steps can be put in place to identify company representatives;
- Meter reading services at appropriate times;
- Account and bill information in the most accessible format for you.

You can sign up to the register if you are of pensionable age, you are disabled or chronically sick, you have a long-term medical condition or you have a hearing or visual impairment or additional communication needs.

You may also be eligible for priority services from your supplier if you live with a child aged under five.

To join, speak to your energy supplier using the contact details on your energy bill.
My letter to other carer dads

Being a dad is an amazing experience, whether biologically related or taking responsibility of being a dad for someone. I have the honour of being a dad to two very special children, one of whom is autistic.

Even in today’s society it is considered odd for a father to give up his role as provider to become a full-time carer. I know of only a handful of us. Me and my wife decided I could provide more stable care for our son than she could. She doesn’t drive but I do, which allows me to easily take our child to appointments and to see friends.

My wife gladly returned to full-time work while I became a modern man – a househusband and a full-time carer for our son.

Finding out that our child was disabled helped us to bond together to support our child. Shock, horror and blame swept through our minds. We asked all the unanswerable questions.

In the early days we knew nothing about additional help and care on offer, so we struggled day in, day out, with the normal pressures of life alongside the added bonus of caring for our disabled son.

The way the current Government treats us as a family with a disabled child is shocking and financially we suffer.

By the time we were told there was help out there for us, our son was nearly in secondary school. This time delay was due to “high demands” on our local council – and this was its excuse for years. We found it was quicker in most cases to deal with our additional needs ourselves.

As time went on, our son developed epilepsy. The family was put under enormous stress, particularly due to a lack of support. As a carer for someone with epilepsy, knowledge is power – in our case this was not forthcoming.

I took it hard. The failing system and the feeling of hopelessness overwhelmed me, and I had a breakdown. I am sure a lot of carers have felt the same way I did back then.

I wish I had reached out but, as a man, I felt I was expected to be strong: we don’t need help, we don’t need doctors, and we bottle it all up. I shut everyone out.

It took an amazingly strong woman to pull me through. My wife dragged me kicking and screaming back to reality, told me to go to the doctor, and helped me to get back on the mend. I also got help from Carers’ Resource.

Being a carer is rewarding but it is hard work. Don’t be fooled by how easy other people make it look. You can feel shut out, victimised, alone, helpless, and you don’t know where to turn. This is a massive problem that needs addressing. As a carer you need to have someone to turn to, you need support, and you need to accept that YOU need help. I did. Not everyone will be as lucky as me.

Martin lives in Keighley with his wife Sarah, their son Declan and their teenage daughter Hannah.

I feared caring would make us ill

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

A couple of years ago I opened a letter, at my desk, from a man who was clearly at the end of this tether.

He was caring for his wife, who had dementia, and by the sounds of it he wasn’t in the best of health either. It became clear that he felt isolated and was struggling to access the kind of support both he and his wife needed.

The letter, I felt, was a cry for help. “Who cares for the carers?” he wrote. Many of us will be carers at some point in our lives. By the time I was in my early thirties, I had been a carer twice – for both my grandmother and mother – and a decade or so later I went on to care for my father in the final weeks of his life, too.

I have felt the isolation that comes with being a carer, and the frustration. When my mum first showed signs of dementia, in her mid-fifties, my dad and I struggled initially to get support, not just for her but for us too. It felt like we were stumbling along, as her carers, heading into a black tunnel. I feared that unless we got the right help, the strain of caring was going to make both of us ill, and then we would be of little use to my poor mother.

It is vital that carers feel empowered and have the opportunity to speak up, so that they can access the right services for them and the professionals who can help them.

Carers’ Resource worked with groups of carers in each of the areas it covers to plan this year’s Carers Rights Day event, which takes place just as the printing presses start whirring on this edition of Choices. The event gives carers the chance to share their experiences with a range of professionals. The event is called ‘Carers Telling Professionals How Life Really Is’, which says it all.

When my dad and I eventually got the right support for my mum it eased the pressure for us, as carers. It felt like we were being listened to, and that finally there was a chink of light at the end of that black tunnel.

Who cares for the carers? There is care and support out there, and Carers’ Resource is helping people to access it. Only by gaining help for themselves can carers help those they care for.
Carols for carers

Tune in to our Christmas Eve carol concert on BCB 106.6fm.

The Carers’ Show: Christmas Carols has been specially put together for those people who will struggle to get out to a carol concert because of their caring responsibilities.

The programme, from 2-4pm, will be presented by carer Stephen Greenwood and our communications assistant Lucy Clewes. It will include Stephen reflecting on Christmastime as a carer, as well as tracks from his favourite country Christmas CD.

Tune in online at www.bcbradio.co.uk/ or on your radio if you are in Bradford to sing along to some festive songs from the comfort of your home.

Office party time

The Bradford and Skipton offices are throwing open their doors on Thursday 13 December to carers, the people they care for, staff, volunteers and professional partners for a brew, mince pie and some carols.

Drop in at the Bradford office between noon and 2pm or at the Skipton office from 1-3pm. Staff will be dressing up in Christmassy outfits for a voluntary donation of £1, so anyone who comes along is welcome to do the same – although it isn’t necessary, it would simply be great to see you.

Venues are offering free Christmas dinner to carers

Some venues across the areas we cover are providing free dinners on Christmas Day for people who may otherwise be on their own, or who might need support or people to share the day with – this includes carers and the people they care for.

SHIPLEY CHURCHES are jointly hosting Christmas Day dinner at Shipley Baptist Church, on New Kirkgate. Arrive for noon with food served at 12.30pm. Lifts can be provided for people who live in Shipley or Baildon. Please contact Julie on 07703 518768 or juliewright80@yahoo.co.uk for more information and to book.

CENTRAL HALL, in KEIGHLEY, will be hosting a community three-course Christmas dinner. Transport is available within a 10-mile radius of Keighley. For more information and to book, call Julie at Central Hall on 01535 665258.

A three-course meal is being served at WESLEY CHAPEL, on Oxford Street, HARROGATE, at 12.30pm. People are invited to a family service beforehand at 11am, but are welcome to just the meal if preferred. Transport can be arranged if needed. Call Philip on 01423 563990 to find out more and book.

Christmas Quiz

All the answers are related to Christmas although not necessarily very closely! AnswerS BELOW

1. In 2013, Belgium issued stamps that had glue flavoured with what?
2. What wood is Harry Potter’s wand made of?
3. What is the last name of the poet who wrote Love Came Down at Christmas?
4. Bindwood and Lovestone are other names for which climbing plant?
5. Michael Caine, Alastair Sim and Jim Carrey have all played which character on film?
6. Which form of Christmas decoration is thought to have been invented in Nuremberg around 1610?
7. Which song, Christmas number one in 1988, was originally written for the musical Scraps?
8. In the film It’s a Wonderful Life, Clarence Odbody is an AS2. What does the A stand for?
9. Singer Michael Barratt, who had the Christmas number one single in 1985, is better known by what name?
10. Midsummer in the southern hemisphere occurs in which month?
11. In the Christmas movie Die Hard, who plays Hans Gruber?
12. Christmassy last name of Doug who took over as bass guitarist in the Velvet Underground in 1968 following the departure of John Cale.

Bonus: Taking the first letters of each answer spells what?

10 December! Ala! Riklan, 71 june. Bonus: Christmas Day