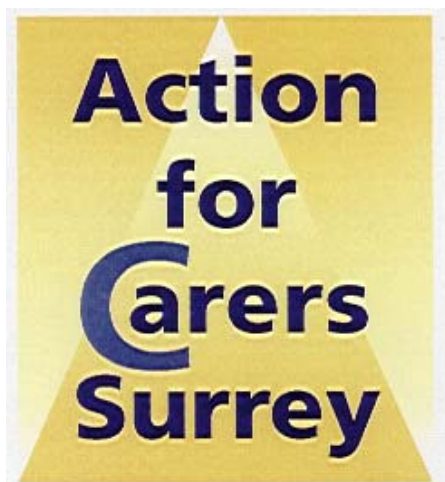


ACTION FOR CARERS (SURREY)

ANNUAL REVIEW 2004 - 2005



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Registered Charity No: 1064946

INDEX

ACTION FOR CARERS (SURREY) IS	Page 4
CHAIRMAN'S REPORT	Page 6
COUNTY CARERS CO-ORDINATOR'S REVIEW	Page 10
SPECIALIST SERVICES FOR CARERS :-	
Surrey Young Carers Project	Page 12
Action for Carers and Employment (S)	Page 16
Moving and Handling Back Care Project	Page 22
LOBBYING AND CAMPAIGNING WORK	Page 24
PARTNERSHIP WORKING	Page 34
CONSULTATION, FEEDBACK TO CARERS AND PUBLIC RELATIONS	Page 38
DEVELOPING INFORMATION TO CARERS	Page 42
TRAINING ACTIVITIES	Page 44

ACTION FOR CARERS (SURREY) is....

An organisation led by Carers, run by an Executive Committee comprised of Carers and supported by professionals of Health, Social Services, the Voluntary Sector and the Business Sector.

ACTION FOR CARERS (SURREY) AIMS TO :-

- **Foster and promote the individuality, personal esteem and self worth of Carers**
- **Highlight the value of Carers' contribution to our society**
- **Act as a two way channel of "best practice" both in caring and in caring advice and information**

Definition of a Carer.....

If you look after a relative or a friend who, because of their disability, state of health or the effects of old age, cannot manage without your help, YOU ARE A CARER.

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

The year 2004/2005 has been another year of significant activity. As reported last year, your trustees anticipate that there would be a considerable amount of work to be dealt with. The Carers Equal (Opportunities) Act 2004 came into force on the 1st April 2005 and this has meant that carers now have further rights. We have been working with Surrey County Council Adults and Community Care staff, to ensure that their staff understands the impact of this new legislation and that carers are informed about it.

In my opening remarks of my report last year, I pointed out that my predecessor would be an extremely difficult act to follow and this has been the case. Added to this we have lost two long standing trustees, Mrs Gillian Smith who sadly passed away in January 2005 and Stephen Ford, who due to his increasing caring role found that he was unable to continue as a trustee. The effect of these losses has meant that the ability of the organisation to do all that it would, or needs to, has been somewhat restricted.

As with many other voluntary organisations, we are having difficulty in attracting sufficient trustees to enable us to expand our sphere of influence and activities. Currently we have six trustees, with a further two to join our complement at the AGM on the 10th November 2005 and we are talking to a further three possible candidates. Our present constitution allows us to have a total of fifteen trustees (three of whom are the officers) and a further five co-optees.

If we are to be truly representative of carers throughout Surrey, we need to have Trustees that come from all five areas of the county and currently this is not the case. You will also note that the County Carer Co-ordinator has made reference to this problem in her report.

In last years report, I indicated that the Trustees would be evaluating the workload that my predecessor managed to handle. This is still an ongoing activity and it is hoped that we may complete this work during this year, as we move from being an unincorporated charity to a Company Limited by Guarantee with Charitable Status. This change will involve us in some significant ongoing administrative work, but once done will ensure that your organisation is on a firmer legal footing for the future.

Again this year you will find reports from:

- The County Carer Co-ordinator
- The ACE Project
- The Back Care Project
- The Surrey Young Carers Project

All reports detail the activities that have been carried out by these projects and also other areas of work that have been undertaken by Action for Carers (Surrey). When reading these reports it should be clearly understood that there has been significant Trustee involvement at Steering Group, and where applicable Think Tank meetings, for each project. As your Chairman I must put on record my thanks to all those who have given of their time and contributed to the work in such a meaningful way.

As well as these work streams there have been four Executive meetings and five Policy, Personnel, and Finance Meetings, that are primarily meetings of Trustees. These ensure the organisation is run and managed within its Constitution. Again, I have to thank those who have so willingly given of their time to contribute to these meetings.

You will have noted that I have referred above to four reports, there is however one aspect of our work that feel I should draw your attention to. Within the report by the County Carer Co-ordinator, is significant reference to Campaigning and Lobbying and this activity is carried out at local, county and national Level.

In her report she indicates that there are significant changes taking place within the Health Economy, both locally and nationally and you will, I suspect, be reading about local and national activities. I would urge you, if you can, to make your voice heard and understood, because it may well be that we as carers, are going to be faced with an ever-increasing requirement to give more of our time and energies, than that which we are already doing.

You may well ask why I am so concerned. Well the answer is simple. As I am sure you are all aware, almost every document that emanates from the Department of Health, has reference to users and carers being consulted and their views being taken into account when services are provided and that they should be at the centre of all decision making. This is all very laudable, but tends to be lost when the budgetary pressures are applied. I would therefore urge you, whenever possible, to make sure that you, when necessary, challenge decisions that will impact upon you. We at Action for Carers (Surrey) will be watching closely all that is happening and will do our utmost, both locally, at county level and nationally to ensure that we as carers are not put under any greater pressures, than that which we are already having to bear.

In my report last year, I identified the following:

- Organising our Work
- Activities
- Change and Partnership

I am not going to repeat that which has already been reported upon in past years, other than to say that we have continued to work closely with Surrey County Council and our Health Partners. It has to be said, that our Health colleagues have been and continue to be subject to ongoing change and as a consequence, it is difficult to achieve a balanced overview of their efforts.

An example of this is Hospital Discharge, where there is not a common approach to this issue across the county. Also, the Single Assessment Process has not yet reached a stage, where the benefits of an electronic system, of recording basic details of a person, can be used by all statutory agencies. It is hoped that a common system will be rolled out across the county in April 2006, assuming that the pilot scheme being trialed in the Woking area proves to be successful.

I could continue with other comments, but will not do so, as we at Action for Carers (Surrey) are well aware that our partners are struggling with some issues, that they have little or no control over.

However, suffice it to say, that we will continue to work with them in a meaningful way and ensure that the views of all carers continue to be heard and recognised.

Finally, I would like to put on record my thanks to all Trustees, staff and colleagues in the statutory sector, who contributed to the ongoing work of Action for Carers (Surrey) and ask that they continue with their valuable support.

John R. Bale
MSc., ACIS, F FInstd, DipSM, MIOSH, MIIRSM.
Chairman Action for Carers (Surrey)

COUNTY CARER CO-ORDINATOR'S ANNUAL REVIEW

Welcome to this Section of the Annual Review. This has been a challenging year for us as the retirement of our Chairman in August 04 left a huge gap for us and this required us to evaluate how her workload might be more equitably shared amongst the Trustees and staff alike. This also focused our energies on reviewing our structure, considering how we might recruit additional Trustees (this being an ongoing challenge for all voluntary sector organisations), and to focus on the future and the development of more strategic based priorities for our work in order to develop a Corporate Strategy. This is a work in-progress and we are grateful for the assistance we have received from the Princess Royal Trust for Carers in supporting us in these activities.

There also continue to be considerable challenges for us within the County as we work together with our partners in health and social care to improve services and support for carers. I have personally had to seize the mantle of campaigning and lobbying and embrace this as one of the central features of my work and I am most grateful for the support that I have received from existing colleagues and friends in the statutory and voluntary sector in developing this aspect of my role. I have been well supported by carers throughout the year as they have responded to requests for information, attendance at focus groups, and feedback to documents and questionnaires. As always we could not have made progress without your support and good will and in this section of the report I would like to feed-back to you on the achievements that have been made possible this year.

Here is a snap shot of the year's activities. The work of Action for Carers (Surrey) falls into six main topic areas:

SPECIALIST SERVICES FOR CARERS

- **Surrey Young Carers Project**
- **Action for Carers and Employment (Surrey)**
- **Moving and Handling Back Care for Carers**

LOBBYING AND CAMPAIGNING WORK

PARTNERSHIP WORKING

CONSULTATION, FEEDBACK TO CARERS AND PUBLIC RELATIONS

DEVELOPING INFORMATION TO CARERS

TRAINING ACTIVITIES

SURREY YOUNG CARERS PROJECT

2004-2005 has been a year of changes for Surrey Young Carers particularly with regard to staff. Rachel Evans left the post of Manager in May 2005 moving on to work for West Sussex Social Services as frontline Child Protection Social Worker and I have been appointed as Manager in August this year. We also welcome to the team Dawn Pereira, our new schools worker in the East, and Gill Phillips, who started work as Support Worker in Surrey Heath and Spelthorne. The writing of this review has come at a very early stage of getting to know the organisation so I have focused on aspects of the work that the project is currently involved in.

The Young Carers Forum

Eileen Brown has worked hard to establish a Young Carers Forum giving an opportunity for a group of young carers to meet on a regular basis to discuss, evaluate and contribute ideas for the development of the service. This is an essential component to the progression of the project as it enables us to draw on the expertise of young carers thus ensuring that the project meets their needs.

Autumn has been a particularly busy period for the Forum as they have prepared for input to the Schools Conference and will be attending the Steering Group Meeting on 24 October.

Schools Conference

Fran Cooper, Patrick Buckingham and Dawn Pereira have been working hard to produce a very high quality PSHE Resource Pack (complete with film and CD-Rom) for teachers to use with Key Stage 3 pupils (ages 11-13 years). This has been a huge undertaking of 18 months duration. The grand finale will be its launch via the Schools Conference "Every Child Matters for Young Carers in School" taking place on 17 October. The pack offers lesson plans covering issues such as isolation, disabilities, role of school, peer support etc. These subjects are as relevant to society as they are young carers so cut across the curriculum whilst also raising awareness about issues impacting young carers' lives.

There has been national interest in this initiative so congratulations to Fran and her team for an excellent piece of work. Thanks also to Jenny Hattersley, Consultant and Paul Gateshill, Head of PHSE Curriculum for Surrey LEA for their contributions and advice.

Allotment

Geoff Parks had the inspiration of starting an allotment to provide his group in Reigate with a new activity. Of course, such an activity does provide a variety of benefits including:

- Being out in the fresh air and enjoying nature;
- Watching and understanding how things grow;
- Being part of a team who are doing something creative and useful;
- Producing fresh, organic fruit and vegetables;
- Help to give consideration to healthy diet by eating produce.

This activity has been well-received by the Young Carers.

Radio

Another interesting idea initiated by Geoff was SYC live radio broadcasting on Spin FM during the summer. Young carers were invited to go on air every Saturday during the Summer Holidays broadcasting across the county and carrying out a number of telephone interviews with Action for Carers staff. This was a wonderful way to raise awareness of issues affecting young carers and promote the organisation. The success of this activity has meant that it will be repeated during October half-term and Christmas

Website

Geoff has been keen to keep the project up-to-date with methods of communication. The web site has continued to develop and grow receiving up to 5000 hits per month - 5 times as many hits than a year ago. There has been positive feedback from young people and professionals regarding the usefulness of the site. The potential of the site is just starting to be realised and the future will bring some exciting and important changes.

Football

Matthew Snow ran the SYC Football Tournament for a second year supported by funding provided by Electronic Arts (EA). This took place at Winston Churchill School in Woking on the 30 August, a venue offering two sports halls should the weather be inclement. The day was well attended and ran smoothly, thanks to Matthew's hard work in organising and attention to fine detail. The weather was excellent and enjoyed by all who attended.

Young Carers Groups

There are eighteen young carers groups run fortnightly at a variety of different venues across the county by the project. All the support workers have responsibility for organising these groups and there is a bank of sessional workers employed to run the sessions. Claire Dukes, Support Worker for Tandridge reports on her group in Oxted:

My group is a very diverse - with young carers from lone parent families on low incomes to high earners living on private estates. It is a junior group so takes young carers up to the age of 11. Currently we have regular attendance of ten with caring roles ranging from caring for someone with mental health issues to a terminal illness.

Part of the aim of the group is to provide a safe place for the young carers to share the problems that affect them at home. It is here that they have a safe place to talk openly and at ease about their lives and meet with other children in similar situations helping them feel less isolated by their circumstances. Being part of this special group helps give them a sense of security and stability that they may not be experiencing in other areas of their lives.

One of the main aims of this group is to have fun and time out from the caring role. The group enjoy a programme of activities including outings such as swimming or a barbeque in the park.

My main aim for the future is to continue to offer a safe, supportive and welcoming environment for the young carers and to give them a 'feel good' factor to carry them through till the next time we meet.

Activities in Elmbridge

Tanya Edrige-Cooke is support worker for Elmbridge and this area has been well supported by its local community with money donated from the fundraising efforts of the Oatlands Village Fair, Walton Fire Station, and Procter & Gamble. This money was specifically ring-fenced for the young carers living in the Elmbridge area.

In part, this sum of money has provided the 8-12's and the 13+ Elmbridge Young Carers Groups to access a larger budget to undertake activities as chosen by the groups themselves. They have enjoyed the experience of Quad Biking, Dry Slope Skiing, a Theme Park trip, Climbing at Craggy Island, Ice-skating, Pottery Painting, High Ropes Challenge, and Laser Quest. On a more individual basis, one teenage Young Carer was able to access private swimming tuition to teach him to swim. He had felt very nervous and self conscious about undertaking swimming lessons with the school, but following his private lessons he felt confident about joining his class peers in the school pool.

The money has also been used to fund a special Horse Riding Day for Young Carers who have shown a particular interest in horses and riding. Due to the general cost of riding lessons, these Young Carers had never had an opportunity to ride before this event. This was a successful occasion which was organised in response to the Young Carers suggested outings. It is envisaged that the fund will go on to help pay for other events and individual Young Carers within the Elmbridge area.

Activities and Residentials

Michelle Ball, Deputy Manager has organised four residentials this year which have been perceived as a great success by the staff and young carers.

The annual Young Carers Festival took place at the beginning of July in Southampton and the young carers that attended felt it was a good experience. This is a national event organised by Princess Royal Trust for Carers and provides a good opportunity for both staff and young carers to see what is happening across the UK.

Eleven Young Carers spent time on an organic farm in Somerset and had a wonderful experience of farming, drama workshops and trip to Lyme Regis. The leader in charge of running the residential from the Magdalen project was a young carers' worker from Bristol and used her drama therapy skills and knowledge of young carers to ensure the young people were able to discuss their feelings around specific issues in a creative manner. A particularly memorable part of this experience was Patrick Buckingham's dramatic storytelling around the campfire.

Surrey Young Carers attend an activity centre at Calshot, Hampshire which offered sailing, cycling and a variety of other outside activities and sports. At present the staff are preparing to take a group of ten on a sailing boat which will involve sleeping out at sea (on the boat!)

Residential do provide a chance for the staff and young carers to spend longer time with each other and build on the relationships already formed. Many of these young people do not have opportunity for holiday breaks because of their family circumstances and the type of activities offered frequently build confidence and self-esteem as the young people try out something that is totally new.

Administration

An aspect of the work carried out not to be forgotten is the behind the scenes work that is carried out by the Administrative Staff Sally Whiteside and Jean Lewis. Never to be underestimated is the work of sending out letters, form collation, telephone calls, booking of taxis, filing of records, development of easier more efficient systems, co-ordination of meetings/conferences and many more tasks which both Sally and Jean do with smiles and enthusiasm that would be beyond many lesser mortals.

Although I have only been here a few weeks I have already discovered that there is a staff team in place who have a wide range of skills and experience. They are totally committed to promoting the needs of young carers and providing high quality services so that young carers feel valued, have opportunity for time out, meet with others young carers and ensure other agencies take up their responsibilities and this is demonstrated in the expansion and success of the project to date.

Julie Mitchell – Surrey Young Carers Co-ordinator

ACTION FOR CARERS AND EMPLOYMENT – SURREY

2004 – 2005 has been the third and final year of the project's partnership with ACE National and of the funding received from the European Social Funds EQUAL Programme. Accordingly, everyone has been very busy continuing with the day to day work, organising the end of project monitoring and evaluation and also preparing for the start of the 'new' project under a new round of funding from EQUAL, to run from May 2005 – May 2007.

During 2002 – 2005, we worked with other local partners from Ealing, Kirklees and Sunderland focusing on the barriers facing individual carers who wanted to work, testing support such as pre-vocational training, tailored advice and guidance, targeted support services from mainstream employment services such as Jobcentre Plus and the promotion of carer-friendly policies and practices in the work place.

From May 2005 – May 2007, ACE Surrey is fortunate to be part of a new partnership led by ACE National, with funding from EQUAL Round 2, which will take up the challenge to test out innovation in social care delivery, looking at services that 'work around work' and to campaign for the establishment of a National Care Strategy that will result in long term development and investment in the social care sector. More details of our forthcoming activities will be found under future plans later in this report.

This year's activities have included:

Providing information, advice and guidance to carers individually and through ACE courses – We worked with 66 carers during this last year and a total of 193 over the three-year period. The following figures are a breakdown of the work with carers over the three-year duration of the project:

- 193 carers were referred and of these 188 completed the project.
- 31 Males and 162 Females
- We delivered 484 one-to-one advice and guidance sessions.
- We attended 400 home visits.
- 68 carers attended ACE courses.
- 232 carers completed internal activities such as completing CV's, computer guidance careers sessions, job-skills techniques etc.
- 108 carers were referred to external activities such as Training, Education, Employment, Volunteering etc.
- 33 carers were successful in gaining funding from the PRTC 'Back to Work' bursary scheme.

In the last year, we have run ACE courses in Chertsey and Redhill, and have developed the job-focused workshops, which have been well attended. Also, this year we have been working on an initiative with **nextstep** (formerly In Touch with Learning and Work) to mainstream the job-focused workshops, which means they have now taken over delivery of these. We are now able to refer carers to them for any necessary help and will continue to work in partnership with them to provide a service for carers.

Local Education and Training Providers – We have continued to work with colleges throughout Surrey. We attend meetings of the local Community Learning Partnerships, which allows us to ‘give carers a voice’ and ensures their inclusion in the planning of education and training. These partnerships have also served to keep us abreast of any funding initiatives, which may benefit carers. We have also exhibited at some of their Opportunities Fairs, which has helped with publicity and awareness-raising, with some notable successes.

The City and Guilds ‘Learning for Living’ Programme has been awarded Level 2 on the National Qualification Framework. This allows it to be delivered by mainstream colleges, who can access funding from their local Learning & Skills Council. Our work with this programme has been limited during the last year. However, we continue to promote the qualification to carers and to mainstream colleges.

The project is no longer able to be a full participating member of the **nextstep** (formerly, ‘In Touch with Learning & Work’) network, due to a change in their funding arrangements and we are now affiliate members. We continue to work to the **matrix Quality Standard** and incorporate Continuous Quality Improvement and good practice in all aspects of the projects business.

Publicity and Networking – This final year of the project has placed greater demands on different areas of work and we have been more focused in selecting which events we attend. We have continued to exhibit at local events but have been more stringent in evaluating the cost benefit of each request.

We continue to work closely with local carers’ support schemes and have promoted their activities at all events we have attended. We have continued to produce briefing sheets, detailing our activities and these are circulated to all carers’ support schemes.

Our supply of project leaflets held out to the end of the project (just) and we were able to revamp and reprint new project material with no waste and a clear conscience.

ACE National Partnership – We continued to attend ‘Local Partnership meetings’, which were held quarterly around the country and to attend ACE National events. We continued to work with Sheffield Hallam University, who are researching the effectiveness of the project and with the European Institute of Social Studies (EISS) in Kent.

The ACE National website includes direct links to each local project and has a virtual leaflet rack, where our local leaflet can be seen and downloaded.

Transnational activities during this year have included a final seminar in Austria, which was attended by one member of the ACE Surrey team.

Monitoring & Evaluation – This area of work has been ongoing, with Monthly Statistics, Bi-Annual Monitoring reports and Interim reports being produced for the European Social Fund. It has continued to make great demands on staff time, especially with the preparation of the final Closure Report and collation of all the bi-annual reports - not for the faint hearted!

The ACE National database was finally produced early in 2005 and required inputting of all data gathered over the three years in a very short space of time. It

was a large piece of work and I would like to thank all the staff team for the hard work and extra effort they put into ensuring that we managed to complete this task on time. A special mention must go to Diane Cotton who slaved long and hard and managed to cope with frustrations and the many glitches and shortcomings of the actual database. It was a massive effort from all the team – well done.

Working with Employers – This last year has seen the development and commencement of delivery of the employer training seminars throughout the county. Take up of places has been slow but we are hoping that this will gather pace throughout the next year.

Future Plans – The new delivery partnership will comprise:

- Carers UK, including Carers Scotland and Carers Wales
- Contact a Family
- Crossroads Caring for Carers
- European Institute of Social Services
- Nestor Healthcare
- Hertfordshire County Council
- West Sussex County Council
- Surrey County Council (and ACE Surrey)

The next phase of the project will see continuing one-to-one work with carers and former carers. We will be providing independent information, advice and advocacy in relation to education, training, employment and leisure opportunities. In addition, we will be offering help and advice on Carers' Assessments.

New to the project will be our work with social care teams and this will include:

- Partnership working to identify carers requiring information and support with a view to obtaining training and/or employment.
- Awareness-raising of the needs of carers amongst social care teams for adults, mental health services and children's services.
- Awareness-raising of the needs of carers with health service professionals, training and education organizations and employers themselves.
- Developing and assisting in the training to Surrey County Council social care teams.
- Specific promotion, with social care teams, of Carers Assessments under the new Act, to ensure that carers get what they are entitled to with regard to training and employment.
- Assisting carers in obtaining substitute care to enable them to work or retrain.

Our current staff complement is: 1 Full-time Project Coordinator, 2.5 Full-time equivalent Project Workers and 0.55 Project Administrator.

In development is an initiative with Business Link, to include our employer training seminars in their Events Diary, with a view to attracting a wider range of employers and businesses.

The variety of the work carried out by ACE – Surrey is encapsulated in the following case studies:

J cares for his wife who has MS. She is confined to a wheelchair and has little use of her hands. They have a 12-year-old daughter. J has worked for the prison service for many years and deals with young offenders. He finds the role very stressful and the shift work too demanding while he is caring for his wife and family. He has a great deal of experience in the prison service and the aspect of his job he does enjoy, is dealing with individuals giving one-to-one support and guidance on many different issues. He has done a great deal of research into counselling courses, which he would dearly love to do in order for him to pursue a different career path. We applied for a bursary for him and he has been accepted on a counselling course. He is very excited about learning new things and putting some of his experience into practice.

A cares for her husband who is confined to a wheelchair and she gave up her career as a Building Society Manager to carry on caring for her husband full-time. That was over 6 years ago and A is looking to work again on a part-time basis. While she has been caring, A has amazingly achieved a Reiki qualification and kept herself very busy researching into her interest of Alternative Therapies. A wants to be able to use this knowledge and skill to help her get back to work. She got in touch with ACE to help her research a suitable course and help with funding. A has recently been awarded the monies for her courses and has already completed an Indian Head Massage course and has started her Anatomy and Physiology course by distance learning. She hopes to go on to complete a Level 3 Reiki course to enable her to practice and teach in the subject. She has already started to research how she can market herself in this field by approaching local salons for practical work experience, designing a leaflet and business card to promote her services.

L has recently achieved qualifications in Medical Word Processing (level 2) and CLAIT after being awarded a bursary, via ACE. This has given her an enormous amount of confidence and she is now volunteering at a local hospital doing some administration work for the Sister of the Out Patients department. She has been given several admin duties, particularly typing, to enable her to build up her confidence and skill in this area. She wants to use the volunteering role to help her get paid work towards the end of the year as she is considering applying for bank staff work at the same hospital. L has been given support in compiling her C.V. and looking into interview skills practice over recent months to enable her to look for work.

G has been forced to take unpaid leave for several months to care for her son, she is now in the position where she must return to work or lose her job. Her son's Care Manager is now in the process of applying for money from the ACE brokerage fund to enable G, his mum to receive Direct Payments, which will allow her to purchase respite care for her son and get back to work.

L 58, cares for her husband who suffers from severe depression and mental health problems. She has mild learning difficulties and has always worked as a cleaner but came to us wanting to do something more with her life. She has problems with her English and after some one-to-one confidence building work, was keen to pursue a basic skills course. Not as simple a task as it would appear! L's need was deemed as 'too basic' for a basic skill course as she was in need of one-to-one support, for which there is no funding available. There were only courses available for those

able to work towards a level 2 qualification. So, after much searching for a suitable course, her Project Worker finally managed to persuade a local Supported Learning course in Literacy & Numeracy Lifeskills to accept her (although they were not keen as they felt she was too 'advanced' to attend)! L, however, is very keen and is not at all deterred by the fact that the pace may be very slow or others may be a lot worse of than her. In fact it seems to have given her a real boost and she is happy to support and learn at the same time.

***B** was at the end of her tether trying to balance her caring responsibilities and her full-time job. She had worked for the same company as a bookkeeper for many years. We helped her negotiate a solution, which simply involved diverting a telephone line and she is now able to work from home, answer the office phone and care for her mother.*

ACE Surrey continues to work in partnership with many organisations and individuals who have a common interest in training and employment opportunities and carers. Action for Carers (Surrey) and the staff members of ACE Surrey wish to thank all these people for their contribution in supporting carers who wish to consider training and employment.

Karen O'Malley – ACE Project Co-ordinator

MOVING AND HANDLING- BACK CARE FOR CARERS

This has been a phenomenally successful year for our Back Care Project. Not only have we continued to build on the work undertaken by the Manual Handling Advisers in Tandridge and Redhill and Reigate but in January we have also been able to appoint a new worker for the Guildford and Waverley area (Sarah Brewster). In addition to this, the Government's website for carers has recently highlighted as examples of good practice, the Back Care Projects in Surrey which provides advice and support to carers in their own home. We are delighted by this recognition and the attendant expansion in Moving and Handling Projects in other areas of Surrey.

There are now Back Care Advisers in Runnymede and West Elmbridge, Woking and Spelthorne, Surrey Heath, and Epsom and Banstead. These are all projects managed by independent steering groups and there is now a formal network: the "Surrey Back Care Advisers Group" which meets regularly to exchange information and develop areas of good practice which benefits carers. The meetings usually focus on case study discussions and the agreement of standard procedures across the county. During the last few weeks however, we have been working in partnership with White Lodge Centre to develop a county steering group whereby a federation of voluntary and statutory organizations in Surrey can meet to develop moving and handling services to carers and to campaign where necessary where those services need to be improved or further developed. We are hoping that this group will be a repository of good practice and information on all aspects of moving and handling services to carers and encourage the "roll out" of further projects throughout Surrey.

These developments and the current work of the Manual Handling Advisers has helped to raise the profile of carers with respect to their needs. The Manual Handling Advisers have worked with carers by offering information, advice and training on all aspects of moving and handling and where appropriate they have provided a short term loan of equipment to carers. With respect to our own project, we continue to closely monitor and evaluate the work of the Advisers and we have very specific goals namely to bring about health gain to carers and work to prevent back pain and injury. Carers are asked to fill out a questionnaire about the service they have received and repeated evaluation of the service has shown that it is highly valued by carers and demonstrably provides a positive and valuable intervention into the moving and handling aspects of carers' roles.

Here are a few highlights of the work undertaken during the last year:

Our Project has helped to support "Carers Week" this year, working at local venues with the support projects to raise awareness of carers' needs. Sarah Brewster for example helped to "man" a stand at the Guildford Leisure Centre.

Jane Rowe our Manual Handling Adviser in Redhill and Reigate has continued to work with East Surrey Carers Support Association and Surrey Young Carers developing a "Carers Surgery." Annie Ruff our Manual Handling Adviser in Tandridge also assisted with this work.

Jane Rowe has also been involved in a Steering Group to set up a "Carers Café" at Colebrook Centre in Redhill in 2006. This is headed by Community Services Coordinator and Surrey Borders Partnership NHS Trust.

Our Manual Handling Advisers have provided a consistent input into the work of the "Surrey Back Care Advisers Group" developing a series of written "Instructions" for Carers to reinforce the training and support offered to carers and to ensure consistent practice in the County.

The Advisers continue to undertake regular joint visits with Care Managers and Occupational Therapists from the Social Care Teams and this has proven to be beneficial in terms of professional development as well as the quality of the service offered to carers.

The Advisers have continued to work with the Primary Care Trusts advising them about the services offered, updating their leaflets, undertaking regular mail shots and giving presentations and talks.

Conclusion:

It has been a busy and rewarding year for the service, and referrals to the project have continued to come from a wide variety of sources, including Crossroads, Mencap, the Children with Disabilities Team, Parkinson's Disease Society and the Carers Support Associations for example. A vast range of input has been required by the Manual Handling Advisers depending on the carer and their individual situation and many cases the support offered has been ongoing for some time. Support has always been offered to former carers, as supporting them in their bereavement has always been a part of providing a complete service.

We hope that the service will go from strength to strength and we are particularly encouraged by the recognition from central government as to the importance of this work. The core element of the service remains the detailed assessment of carers' needs with respect to moving and handling issues, and the advice information and training that the Manual Handling Advisers are able to provide. With a growing network of Advisers in the county and their commitment to work together sharing information and exchanging best practice the service should continue to improve. In the forthcoming months we will be working to develop further opportunities for in-service training which will enhance networking in the county amongst manual handling professionals as well as deepen knowledge and understanding of moving and handling techniques as well as the legal framework underpinning this field.

My thanks extend to the Manual Handling Advisers in our project and to their colleagues who have supported their work.

Geraldine Willis
County Carers Coordinator

LOBBYING AND CAMPAIGNING WORK

This has been an exciting and challenging year which has required me to adopt lobbying and campaigning work as the main sphere of my activity and I am most grateful to the lobbying and campaigning sub group of the organisation for helping to guide my work and shape our priorities. I am also indebted to carers to who have written to me about their specific concerns which in turn has influenced our work. We have grappled as ever against a backdrop of change and uncertainty both nationally and at local level. There has been an election this year which interrupted some aspects of our lobbying work and changes in the Ministerial Team in the Department of Health as well as a cut by one third in the number of staff working on social care issues.

Statutory Agencies this year continue to deal with budgetary pressures some of which are mentioned in "Budget 2006/07 and beyond" and all NHS Chief Executives as well as Local Authority Chief Executives and Directors of Social Services are asked to respond to the challenge of Commissioning a "Patient Led NHS" where the emphasis is on improving the commissioning of services alongside improvements in health and in service delivery. A key area for closer scrutiny will be the development of Primary Care Trusts (PCTs) to support Practice Based Commissioning with them taking on the responsibility for performance management contracts with all providers including those in the independent sector. The requirement to improve commissioning and the commitment to make £250 million of savings in overhead costs means NHS organisations will need to change and develop further. The NHS will therefore want to consider the optimal configuration of PCTs and where appropriate Care Trusts and Strategic Health Authorities and their "fitness for purpose".

The NHS will also be consulting on the White Paper in the autumn (currently a Green Paper) "Independence, Well Being and Choice" on the future of social care and we have generally welcomed the aim of flexible, individually tailored social care services and the focus on the delivery of social care for users and carers. (See Consultation, Feedback and PR for further information). This year we have also responded to the Combined Draft Policy Guidance on the Carers and Disabled Children Act 2000 and Carers (Equal Opportunities) Act 2004 (See also Consultation, Feedback and PR) and anticipate Practice Guidance in October 2005. We have also welcomed the All Party Parliamentary Group for Carers as an exciting new development. As you can see we have not been content to rest on our laurels this year and you will find full details of all our campaigns and responses to consultation in this report. Given the time and effort involved in our work on Continuing Care Eligibility Criteria we particularly welcomed the Government's response to the Health Select Committee's Sixth report of Session 2004-05 on NHS Continuing Care. I hope you will find this section of the report of particular interest.

Back Me Up Campaign

This campaign was orchestrated by Carers UK and the focus of the campaign is to improve support for carers in an emergency. Carers wrote to us asking what Action for Carers (Surrey) was doing to support the campaign and we wrote to Surrey County Council with the following questions in mind:

- What provision is there in the local carers' strategies for supporting carers in an emergency?
- Does the local authority advertise Emergency Duty numbers and ensure that they are easy to find in the local phone books?
- Is the service made known to service users and carers at the point of assessment?
- Is the local authority working with the Primary Care Teams to ensure that the carers are supported in an emergency?
- Does staff training on carers' assessments cover contingency planning?
- Does the local authority have a Care Emergency Scheme? If not, could one be developed?
- How does the local authority community alarm scheme work? Could it be modified to include an Emergency scheme?
- Does the local authority provide equipment that enhances independence and provide peace of mind?

Space does not allow us to replicate the response in full but we can consider the main points. The local authority responded by informing us that the out of hours Emergency Duty Team is available within the British Telecom directories, on the Surrey County Council website and contained in the "Access to Services" booklet. In addition, that the out of hours service has good links throughout the county with all other out of hours services such as the twilight nursing service, intermediate care, home based care that utilizes accesses to all services appropriate to meet the needs of the user and carer.

In our response we recognized that it is an omission in the Carers Strategy that there is no dedicated section for emergencies and this will need to be reviewed and we are in discussion with Adults and Community Care Services about this

We have since understood that in North Surrey they have piloted the use of an Emergency Card and we queried what plans there were to ensure that this is rolled out throughout Surrey. We are in dialogue with the Council about this.

Assessments

This year I have undertaken a "Small Scale Enquiry into the Implementation of Carers' Assessments in Surrey". The implementation of carers' assessments throughout the UK has always been patchy as subsequent reports have borne out:

In Surrey we have had discussions with Adult and Community Care Services about frequently reported instances of Carers Assessments not being implemented or forms being sent in the post. Adult and Community Care Services were keen to improve practice and asked for more details about these concerns. During the last

year I have been in contact with all the Carers Support Projects in Surrey with specific questions about the implementation of Carers' Assessments.

The feedback to this enquiry was quite variable from the projects and overall it showed that there was evidence of good practice in some areas (e.g. Runnymede and Guildford) with teams informing carers about their rights and examples of carers' assessments being offered in the form of a dialogue rather than forms being sent through the post. In some other areas however there were issues for concern, examples of carers not being informed of their right to an assessment, lack of clarity about eligibility, poor practice in relation to how carers' assessments are offered and some mixed practice.

The report provides a series of key recommendations which have also been linked to the Beacon Action Plan (After the Council was short listed for Beacon Status) and at the time of writing I have been asked to present some of the key findings of my report to Adults and Community Care Senior Management Team.

In July this year we also wrote to the Council requesting some information about carers' assessments under the Freedom of Information Act. We queried:

- What was the final figure for the Performance Indicator for carers that must by now have been provided to Government and how is this figure arrived at?
- How many carers are recorded on your SWIFT data base or any other records which show a specific service to support a carer as a direct result of a carer's assessment?

We have since learnt that 1182 carers were assessed according to SWIFT and to note that 1082 were carers' assessments and 100 were joint assessments. Of this total 516 received a service; however that number provides no evidence of carers receiving help other than through the small scale carer specific funding. This apparent lack of services outside "carers' budgets" has given us cause for concern and suggests to us that eligibility criteria may not be being applied correctly so far as carers are concerned. Action for Carers (Surrey) has lobbied that where a carer's circumstances indicate the need for a service to meet eligible needs this should in law be provided irrespective of where there is money in a particular budget.

Budget 2006/07 and beyond:

Recently it has been announced by Surrey County Council that it has appointed consultants Robson Rhodes to assist with a business review that aims to reduce the Council budget by £50 million net as well as improving services and minimizing the Council Tax. Despite rising demands for essential public services, we understand that forecasts suggest that Government funding will be diverted from Surrey next year, leaving a likely £50 million shortfall. We have real concerns at this present time that the County Council will be forced to simply cut budgets and this would have an extremely adverse impact on public services and in particular those in receipt of Social Care.

We do not underestimate the challenges of operating in the second most expensive part of the country, with the second lowest level of national grant, coupled with high expectations from the public and high targets set by the Government and

Inspectorates. We have asked the Leader of the County Council for an opportunity for a discussion about how we might improve services to carers and ensure that those services are cost effective. Our main query remains how the Council will be able to make savings of £50 million without having an adverse impact on public services and how it will be able to maintain services, support its priorities and keep the Council Tax down.

Continuing Care

During 2004 we wrote to the Surrey and Sussex Strategic Health Authority (S&SSHA) about our concerns about their Continuing Care Eligibility Criteria however it was not until April 2005 that we were allowed to meet with their representative and a member of staff from the PCT Alliance. From January 2005 we undertook the following actions:

- A letter to Surrey and Sussex Strategic Health Authority repeating our request for a meeting
- A letter to the Health Care Commission outlining our concerns that we had not received a reply from the S&SSHA for over a year
- Letter to the Department of Health re our concerns about Eligibility for NHS Continuing Care
- Copies of a request for a meeting with S&SSHA to all Surrey MPs
- Submitted evidence to the Parliamentary Select Committee dealing with Continued Care also referring to the paucity of response from the S&SSHA
- In April 05 we attended a meeting with Surrey and Sussex Strategic Health Authority and the PCT Alliance

Our concern was that the policy had stated that for a patient to be eligible for Continuing Care, they needed to be receiving regular support from a consultant and a specialist nurse and a member of the multi-disciplinary health care team and the need has to be complex.

We were worried because the Coughlin Judgment said that just a volume of care was sufficient to receive Continuing Care. The S&SSHA has since admitted that the omission of the term “intensity” in their policy was an oversight, i.e. the volume of care. We acknowledged in our letter in January 05 that the word “intensity” had been included in the Eligibility Criteria and that they are now on the Health Authority’s website.

We also argued that the S&SSHA had added an additional requirement which did not form part of the Court’s reasoning in Coughlin. We stated in correspondence that the application of such a policy would result in certain individuals with a need for intense nursing but not supervision by a specialist would be excluded from eligibility unlawfully. We detailed other concerns about the Eligibility Criteria in subsequent correspondence. By July 05 we were satisfied with the updated eligibility criteria and have since sought clarification that this will be actioned by the Strategic Health Authority. In our July correspondence we also queried by what process this would be actioned and whether there would be a record of the reasons for the Strategic Health Authority’s decision to agree the changes. To date we have had no response to this letter or our joint letter with the Woking Alzheimer’s Society to the Strategic Health Authority, about the lack of reference to psychological needs in the assessment tool.

I am learning that in the realm of campaigning one has to be persistent if not to mention down right dogged. We have been most grateful for the assistance of the Community Care Lawyer Julie Hinnigan (Surrey Law Centre) who has provided the legal advice necessary for this campaign. At the time of writing we have since sent another letter to the Strategic Health Authority and we have been heartened by the recent Government response to the Health Select Committee Report on Continuing Care. We await news over the next twelve months of the development of a national framework around Eligibility Criteria for Continuing Care.

Early Day Motion

In May this year we lobbied all Surrey MPs to support the Early Day Motion in Support of Carers Week tabled by Dr Hywel Francis MP. The full text of the Motion is as follows:

“This House expresses its appreciation of the six million people in the UK who provide unpaid help and support to a relative friend or partner who could not otherwise manage because they are ill, frail or have a disability; welcomes the unique partnership of seven national charities, Carers UK, Crossroads Caring for Carers, Help the Aged, Macmillan Cancer Relief, MS Society, Rethink and the Princess Royal Trust for Carers who together organize Carers Week; congratulates the many employers who already have flexible working practices; encourages other employers to support their staff who juggle work and care; further notes that carers currently save the Exchequer £57 billion every year and calls for the provision of better support and services for carers”

Eligibility Criteria – Adults Services

In August this year we wrote to Adult and Community Care Services about their Eligibility Criteria in the light of the implementation of the Carers (Equal Opportunities) Act 2004. We reminded Adult Services that the Carers (Equal Opportunities) Act 2004

- Requires that carers are informed of their right to a Carers' Assessment. Carers must also be given a range of appropriate information even if they do not opt for a carer's assessment
- Requires that work, life long learning and leisure are considered when a carers assessment is undertaken
- Gives local authorities new powers to enlist the support of housing, health, education and other local authorities in providing support to carers

We queried whether Adults and Community Care Services had taken action to review and amend their Eligibility Criteria to ensure that they had incorporated the issue of work, life long learning and training for carers where this was appropriate. We argued that this would ensure that the assessment process would properly reflect Adult and Community Care duties under the 2004 Act. We pointed out that there were training issues here and that front line staff need to be prepared to work in partnership with carers on identifying training opportunities for learning, leisure, and work and that they are able to access appropriate information networks and other programmes provided by other agencies.

Adults and Community Care Services have now responded by stating that in their view the Eligibility Criteria is already compliant with the carers' legislation as it already recognizes risk to carers as well as service users but they are now in the process of reviewing their staff guidelines regarding Fair Access to Care Services. They are also developing an accessible leaflet about Adult Services Eligibility Policy and we will be providing input and comment about these at the appropriate time.

Eligibility Criteria – Childrens Services

In April this year we wrote to Ashley Ayre, the Head of Children's Services about their Eligibility Criteria and the need to review and amend their assessment procedures to ensure that their assessment procedures properly reflected the duties under the 2004 Act. We reminded Children's Services that the 2004 Act

- Requires that carers including young carers and parent carers are informed of their rights to a carers assessment

We also included the additional points about work, life long learning, and leisure as well as the local authority's powers to enlist the support of other agencies when providing support to carers as outlined above (Eligibility Criteria, Adults Services).

We were informed that the Surrey Children's Services Eligibility Criteria have been revised in the light of the 2004 Act and that had been endorsed by the Procedures Group in September. Furthermore the Eligibility Criteria will be further reviewed and amended in the light of the Children with Disabilities Review commencing in the autumn.

We subsequently responded to Children's Services in August, emphasizing in the light of the Practice Guidance to the Carers and Disabled Children Act 2000, that it is the risk to the adult of the sustainability of their caring role which the loss of employment and other factors might contribute to. We argued that the focus should lie on supporting the parent carer's ability to care. We queried what plans the Department has made to ensure that social workers are enabled to direct carers to appropriate sources of information, training and leisure opportunities. We are currently awaiting a response to these queries.

National Carers Strategy

In December last year we wrote to Dr Ladyman who was then Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Community Care Services, about our concerns that there was no named contact as the lead official for carers' issues at the Department of Health. We received a copy of Dr Ladyman's letter to Ian Taylor MP as we had copied all correspondence to all Surrey MPs. We were not satisfied by the response from Dr Ladyman as he did not confirm who the lead official is in supporting carers so we wrote to him again in February 05 and repeated our key questions:

- Who is the lead official for issues in support of carers
- How will work be undertaken by the Social Care Institute of Excellence (SCIE) bring substantial benefits for carers in their own right (We pointed out that

they had not had a dialogue with Carers UK and the Association of Directors of Social Services)

- Re the good practice area on the carers.gov.uk website, to whom would we send items for possible inclusion.

In addition we commented that:

- Guidance around the monitoring of performance indicators were full of errors
- Where local authorities were unwilling to support a disabled person where there is a carer, this cannot be justified given the future implications of the Carers (Equal Opportunities) Act 2004

In March 05 Virginia Bottomley the MP for South West Surrey recognized that we were raising important issues and offered to put down a Parliamentary Question for us. The General Election intervened however, and this was not possible.

Post Election Liam Byrne is now the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Care Services and we wrote to him about our concerns. Unfortunately we did not feel that his response was adequate so we have written to Mr Phillip Hammond MP requesting a Parliamentary Question, he has recently written to Mr Liam Byrne on our behalf. Correspondence on this matter has been copied to all Surrey MPs and to Dr Hywel Francis MP (All Parliamentary Select Committee on Carers)

National Carers Strategy – engagement with health partners

In addition to our concerns about the lack of a named civil servant to progress carers' issues in the National Carers Strategy we had also queried our concerns about engagement with our health partners with Patricia Hewitt (Secretary of State for Health). We wanted to know further information about the Government's developmental programme (including monitoring to support work with carers). Earlier in the year Dr Ladyman (Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Community Care Services) had stated that the Government would "pull carers up the agenda, the focus must be on the outcomes not on the process (House of Commons Hansard Debates for 14th May 2005) . The response from the Department of Health did not clarify our queries about the Government's developmental programme so this has now also been raised in our correspondence with Mr Phillip Hammond MP who is writing to Dr Liam Byrne for further information.

NHS Responsibilities under the Carers (Equal Opportunities) Act 2004.

In April this year we wrote to the Surrey and Sussex Strategic Health Authority and all PCTs to query what activities will be undertaken by them to help support the implementation of the 2004 Act.

The Surrey and Sussex Strategic Health Authority responded by stating that they oversee and monitor progress on a range of initiatives which incorporate carers' issues. They included the example of developing approaches to patient and public involvement. Another example quoted was the "NHS Improving Working Lives Programme" which includes a standard for NHS organizations to achieve in relation to positive support for staff with caring responsibilities. We asked the Strategic

Health Authority to facilitate a workshop for both social care and health organizations to examine the issues arising from the Carers (Equal Opportunities) Act 2004 and were advised to raise this with the Health and Social Care Partnership Forum as a means of considering the best way forward. We have now formally requested that Mr Alan Adams, Executive Director, Adults and Community Care Services, does this on our behalf.

At the current time of writing this Review only Surrey Health and Woking and Guildford and Waverley and East Elmbridge PCT have responded to our queries about their activities to support the implementation of the 2004 Act. We have since reminded the remaining PCTs of their responsibilities and await a response.

Space allows me only a brief summary of the responses by Surrey Health and Woking and Guildford and Waverley PCT

Guildford and Waverley emphasized:

- “Because Carers Count” training was mandatory for all district nurses and their teams and all community hospital staff are encouraged to attend this training
- Most GP practices have procedures in place to support carers
- The PCT employs many staff who fulfill a caring role and this is facilitated by their flexible working policy

Surrey Health and Woking emphasized:

- Leave policy for the PCT specifically covers the needs of carers
- GPs have a protocol for the identification of carers and a mechanism for the referral of carers for social services assessment
- GPs have employment policies for their staff which includes a section on carers leave
- The PCT are working with practices to have advanced access for patients who wish to book an appointment in advance of the 24/48 hours.
- Following the appointment of the new Patient Advisory and Liaison Services (PALS) Officer the prescribing team will be working with PALS to set up some educational sessions to support carers with safe medicine administration

East Elmbridge and Mid Surrey emphasized:

- Primary Care Carers Identification project
- PCT Carers Back Care Pilot
- Joint Training
- A signatory to the Surrey Carers Strategy

Manifesto for Carers

Supporting Carers UK campaign during the election, we canvassed all Surrey Prospective Parliamentary Candidates and asked them the following questions:

- Will your Government work to end poverty to carers?
- Would your Government do more to support carers' health?
- Will your Government give real opportunities to work?
- Would your Government ensure that all carers are included in society?
- Would your Government ensure real recognition to carers?

All the representatives from the mainstream political parties responded to our queries pledging support to carers.

Misuse of the Term Carer

This year we have written to Mr. Alan Adams (Executive Director of Community Care Services) about the misuse of the term "Carer". We asked him to refresh people's understanding of the term "Carer" and that this issue be placed once more on the County Carers Strategy agenda. This was duly done and is an ongoing issue and a requirement for all agencies to apply the term appropriately.

PARTNERSHIP WORKING

We are indebted as always to carers and our colleagues in health, social care and the voluntary sector in enabling us to make progress on carers' issues. Here are a few examples of our partnership working throughout the year in order to make a positive impact on services and support for carers.

Single Assessment Process

The National Service Framework for Older People sets targets which must be achieved, and one of these is the Single Assessment Process (SAP). This process was developed by a method of coordinating information gathering and recording, by all relevant service users (health social care and housing) about older patients/service users with long term and complex needs. This was to avoid the need to repeat the information to each professional, which users and carers have complained about in the past. Once the SAP has been developed for Older People, it is intended that it will be used for adults of all ages with long and complex needs.

The development of SAP in Surrey has taken a number of years to date, during which carers have struggled for recognition and inclusion in the SAP process and for a clear understanding of the carers' route to a Carers Assessment in the process. We have taken part in the county steering group throughout the year and during the development of SAP we have seen a number of different Overview Assessment Tools being developed. The preferred options to date have been the FACE tool (The Department of Health accredited tool)

This year Surrey commenced implementation of Version 5 (FACE) which is compliant with carers' legislation and has now addressed our concerns. We have worked in partnership with the key agencies involved to ensure that a new SAP carers leaflet has been developed and this was produced at our request.

Hospital Discharge Best Practice Enquiry

In response to our lobbying at local level and our concerns about the inconsistent way that Hospital Discharge Policies have been developed, Adults and Community Care Services invited us to have membership of the Hospital Discharge Best Practice Enquiry. The geographical scope of the enquiry was focused on Frimley Park Hospital and Epsom General. The enquiry targeted patients over 75 years of age and their carers.

Two questionnaires were designed; the users' one based on the standards in Pathway Process and Practice, Guidance produced by the Department of Health and the carers' one was based on our partnership work with Adults and Community Care. Responses were collated over a three month period from March to May 05. The carers' questionnaire was distributed via carers registered with Surrey Heath Carers and to carers on the Surrey 50+ network. The questionnaires for both patients and carers were distributed via the Community Support Workers attached to the hospital social care teams, care managers and the hospital discharge coordinators. The carers' questionnaire was posted on the local carersnet website and on the Surrey 50+ network website.

A total of 157 questionnaires were returned of which 139 were included in the analysis. Approximately 200 comments were received from carers. Common themes emerged from both surveys, demonstrating the need to tackle issues around information and communication with patients and carers, the safety of discharge, staff training and dignity on the ward. Here is an example of some of the highlights:

- Where admission of the person they care for was planned, 67% of carers felt they had been provided with sufficient information before hand.
- 54% of carers felt that staff involved them in the discharge planning, however 46% felt involved only some of the time, or never.
- 40% of carers said they were given no time, support or information to choose whether to take on a caring role, with only 25% saying they were given plenty. Most people felt they had no choice, either because of a moral duty, or because it was assumed they would
- Although half of all carers were given an opportunity to discuss their needs as a carer, only 28% said they were offered a Carers' Assessment and the experience was not necessarily positive.
- At discharge, staff were thought to provide sufficient support and advice by 57% of carers, but 43% felt they never had any support, or only some of the time.
- Only 55% of carers said they were not involved in the decision to discharge, or only partially.

Better Care Higher Standards

We have continued our membership of the Better Care Higher Standards Group. This group had been set up in January 2003 to reflect the structural changes that had taken place in Adults and Community Care Services and to further develop a Charter. A new Charter was produced to allow for the inclusion of new standards set by Government and to incorporate performance management issues. As members of this group we were keen to ensure that the information was relevant and meaningful to carers. A summary booklet, and other versions - in large print Braille and a tape for people with visual impairments - were produced. Versions were also made available in Urdu, and for people with learning disabilities.

This year the take up of training to raise awareness of the document was poor. Some of the key training issues raised concerned providing appropriate information about services and about alternatives for those not meeting eligibility criteria.

Understanding confidentiality and explaining what it means and how it works to users and carers was also considered important. Currently staff have different approaches, knowledge and interpretation of a situation and service options and this will need to be addressed in future training programmes.

Partnership Board (Learning Disabilities)

We have continued to have membership of the Board at local level. Over the last year wide ranging issues likely to affect people with learning disabilities and their carers have been raised e.g. Protecting Adults from Abuse, The Adult Register and Integrated Learning Disability Teams (Joint Teams bringing together Surrey County

Council Care Managers together with Community Nurses and Therapists working for Surrey and Borders Partnership Trust). Colleagues from the Trust will be with us to discuss the wider implications of the new Trust and the new Carers Charter.

One of the key themes in the Partnership Board's work has been the support given to Older Carers. The Foundation for People with Learning Disabilities has produced a briefing about Supporting Older Families of people with learning disabilities and the Older Family Carers' Initiative has run for three years and has made a number of recommendations to make sure people are well supported in the future. The Valuing People Groups have been considering how well they are supporting Older People and through the Learning Disability Development Fund, Older Carers' Support Workers have been funded in East Surrey, Mid Surrey and North West Surrey.

Carers' Strategies

There are five Joint Areas Carers' Strategies covering the five Primary Care Trust areas in Surrey and we have representatives on each of these groups. There is also a County Carers' Strategy with input from the local groups which is attended by Alan Adams (Executive Director Adults and Community Care Services). Locally some of the key issues being discussed are the implementation of carers' assessments, responses to the Green Paper "Independence Well Being and Choice", the Action Plan following the Beacon Report and local information packs. We shall be contributing to a joint paper with Adults and Community Care Services about current structures both county and local and the need to achieve a greater distinction between strategic and county wide issues on the one hand and those issues that need to be led at an area level or more locally.

CONSULTATION, FEEDBACK TO CARERS AND PUBLIC RELATIONS

Throughout this report, I have provided evidence of the work we have undertaken with and on behalf of carers to achieve better services and support for them. As usual we have aimed to ensure we use a variety of methods to ensure that we can effectively “speak” to carers in different ways, e.g. focus groups, correspondence, questionnaires etc. We have been most grateful for their time and effort during the last 12 months. Examples of consultation and feed-back undertaken with carers throughout the year follow:

Action for Carers Questionnaire:

In January 2005 we issued a questionnaire entitled “How well are we doing?” and this asked a range of open and closed questions and was concerned with the following topics:

- Campaigning work
- Consultation and feedback
- AGM
- Website
- General.

A total of 1104 questionnaires were sent out and 149 carers responded which represents a 13.5% response rate. We asked carers if our current priorities within our campaigning work were right and 86% of the carers answered “Yes”. The majority of carers canvassed felt that our consultation methods throughout the year had proven to be effective and carers were asked for further information about how they might be like to be consulted on future policy etc. Carers have provided us with a wealth of information about the topics that they would like to see considered in future workshops and these have included for example, welfare benefits, parent carer issues, new legislation. We have listened and these topics amongst others are reflected in today’s workshop programme.

We received some useful feedback about our website and in the information section of this report you will be able to read about what action we have taken to improve this site. A great deal of information was fed back to us about how we should improve our conferences and what topics they should explore. Carers seem to be well satisfied with our services but we would all acknowledge that there are areas for improvements and one of the perceived gaps was held to be in Public Relations.

“Public relations are still less than they should be, perhaps more use should be made of the local press to report on proceedings at the AGM and spring Forum”.

“You do a great job, but more carers need to know about you”.

Public Relations

We can now inform you that we have begun funding a freelance PR consultant and parent carer Shelagh Dixon. She has been involved in the areas of public and media relations and journalism for almost all of her working life, and most recently Shelagh has also been writing press releases on a voluntary basis for “the Little Group” in Epsom and GASP. The former is a specialist nursery for children on the autistic spectrum and the latter is a support group for families with autistic children, which Shelagh chairs.

To date we have discussed ways in which to raise our profile starting with publicity about the AGM followed by “carers’ stories” to interest other carers to get involved with the organization and raise our profile further. We will welcome ideas about this and other topics from carers throughout the year.

Consultation with carers – focus groups

In December last year, we held a focus group of carers to provide information to the Commission for Social Care Inspection (CSCI). The CSCI were interested in looking at the ways in which Social Service Departments work with their partner agencies and deliver services to older people and their carers. The Inspection in Surrey focused on the way in which services are delivered in order to support independence, choice and social inclusion. The CSCI provides a list of standards and criteria about which they would welcome feed-back.

Carers, in the main, felt that independence and choice were “empty words” and that users and carers needed greater choice about services and their quality. Carers felt that a “post code lottery” existed and that the quality of provision tended to be very variable. Carers called for better funding of health and social care and said that the “out of hours” services should be improved. Many familiar themes were re-iterated about poor practice in relation to assessments and care managers lack of knowledge about the eligibility criteria. Carers felt in turn that they lacked knowledge about the complaints procedures and that criticism should be viewed as an opportunity to learn and that “a lot of people are afraid to complain in case the services are withdrawn”.

Carers Forum

This is another example of the way in which we have consulted with carers over the years. We generally hold a forum twice a year at which carers are invited to attend a series of workshops on a range of topics designed to be both interesting and informative. The workshops have always been well attended and have covered topics as diverse as stress management, hospital discharge, carers’ assessments, charging and welfare benefits, carers’ legislation and parent carer issues. We invite feedback and suggestions for future workshops.

Manual Handling Questionnaires and feedback

Each year we send out questionnaires to carers who have received a service from our Manual Handling Team which asks whether they feel they have an improved knowledge about manual handling techniques and if they have felt well supported by the team. Our feedback has recorded that carers have felt that the service has proven to be a positive intervention in their lives and supported their caring role.

DEVELOPING INFORMATION TO CARERS

Carersnet

Carersnet has continued to be developed over the last year. People who have entered the site have viewed approximately 300,000 pages over the past year. Carersnet now comprises a number of sites which have their own identities. These include the Action for Carers website, Action for Carers and Employment, Surrey Young Carers two websites and the recently developed ACE Radio website. There are also a number of local carers' support websites which have been developed.

In the past year Carersnet has developed five on line carer information books which can be downloaded by anyone who enters the site. The books have been produced by us, the carers' strategy groups across Surrey and Surrey County Council. The books are continually updated and developed. The publications provide information about support for carers in their local area and the entire County is now covered by these books.

Carersnet has now also re packaged the Short Term Break Database. It is now called the Short Term Breaks Directory and it provides information about Nursing and Residential homes, homecare, holidays, hotels etc. This year the Directory has been enhanced to highlight those facilities that accept Carer Break Vouchers. The Directory also links in to any information about a facility which is held on the Commission for Social Care Inspection website.

This year we have incorporated a new section onto Carersnet for a range of carers whose first language is not English. It will take some time before this is fully comprehensive but at the present time we can cater for 11 languages in addition to English.

Although Carersnet is a web based service we do recognise that not all Carers have access to a PC or want to receive the information via the internet. It is vitally important that all of us continue to deliver information in a number of different formats to try and meet individual needs. We continue to encourage those working with carers to obtain an on line information book before visiting a carer from the Carersnet website.

For the last two years we have been heavily involved in developing and building the Action for Carers and Employment National website. ACE National now has funding for a further 2-year project. Our involvement with the ACE website has only been a stopgap until the Carers UK project lead has been able to develop its own ACE site. With the start of the new 2 year project Carers UK have now taken this website in house. However we are now producing an audio programme for ACE National, which is available via the Internet. ACE Radio is again about delivering information in a non-written format to anyone who enters the Carersnet website. However ACE Radio is also available on the Carers UK and ACE National Websites and is seen as a national resource.

This year we have worked with Surrey Young Carers to produce two audio programmes for Spin FM, which were broadcast in East Surrey during August. The Young Carers produced and presented the programmes over a three day period in July prior to launch of Spin FM. The radio station is available on both FM and the Internet. Carersnet has provided the technical services for this venture.

For the coming year we will further develop Carersnet and the other related site together with ACE Radio. We are currently exploring the possibility of developing a new on line publication for parent carers similar to the Carers Information Books, which are currently on line.

We are also in the process of investigating the possibility of putting some pages of Carersnet and the other sites onto a new platform via Sky television. This will allow us to promote the websites in around ten million homes across the UK.

TRAINING ACTIVITIES

Action for Carers (Surrey) has continued to assist in developing training programmes for and about carers this year. We have continued our membership of the Joint Training Groups and have successfully commissioned some independent trainers as part of the “Enabling Carers” programme in East Surrey. The courses have equipped carers with a range of specific skills to assist them in their caring role or provide them with a break from caring.

Joint Training:

“Because Carers Count”

This multi-agency training has taken place again this year. Ten sessions have been delivered and these focus on raising awareness of carers’ needs. The courses also take a very factual and practical approach to exploring issues for professionals working with carers.

Carers’ Assessments: (“Making it Work”)

These workshops continue to be held this year and focus on improving carers’ assessment practice at local level. The workshops also consider the importance of the assessment process for carers and examine the duties of a range of professionals.

“The Carers Journey” – Hospital Discharge.

“Carers Come Alive”:

This workshop was held in January this year, the aim being to give carers information, guidance, and inspiration to achieve a healthier lifestyle. The programme was linked to the earlier Department of Health document, “Choosing Health” – a consultation on action to improve people’s health. It explored myths and misconceptions around a healthy diet, current messages on healthy eating and practical tips on how to incorporate healthy eating messages into ones daily diet. There were also tips on exercise and, as the workshop venue was at Wisley, there was also an opportunity to do a tour of the gardens and listen to a talk on winter flowering shrubs, winter colour, roses and pruning.

“I have something important to say” (Getting your point across in intimidating situations).

This workshop was held in March this year and the aim of the day was to give carers confidence in getting their point across in intimidating situations. The workshop considered those things which stop carers feeling assertive, a chance to practice some assertion techniques and a personal check list to help carers get their point across in the future.

Adults and Community Care Services – Induction training.

Each month Action for Carers (Surrey) is invited to undertake a presentation entitled “A focus on carers” as part of the induction of newly appointed staff working within Adults and Community Care Services. Key themes include the recognition of carers and their needs and the recent carers’ legislation and their rights. We also undertake these presentations with the carers’ support projects and this provides an opportunity for the projects to explain their service in more detail.