

# **Carersnet**

## **Newsletter**

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## **CARERS (EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES) ACT**

The Carers (Equal Opportunities) Act 2004 comes into force on the 1st April 2005. The Act is a result of a Private Members Bill which was taken through Parliament by Dr Hywel Francis MP for Aberavon. His Private Members Bill quickly received strong cross party support.

The Act will:

- ◆ Require that Carers including Young Carers and Parent 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 carers assessment
- ◆ Require that work, life-long learning and leisure are considered when a carers assessment is undertaken
- ◆ Gives local authorities new powers to enlist the help of housing, health, education and other local authorities in providing support to Carers.

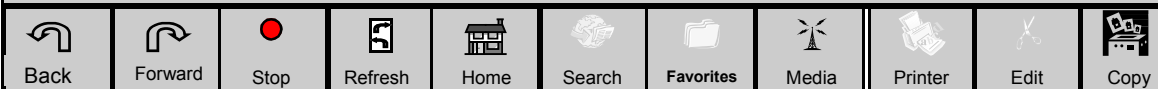
### **THE ACT AND ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA**

Decisions arising from carers assessments need to be in line with Adult Service's Eligibility Criteria and these already recognise risk to carers.



Initially the risk in a case needs to be assessed in relation to user only ie. What would be the risk to the user if the carer was not present?

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If the carer does not want to or is unable to meet an **eligible** need, this has to be addressed by the County Council.

Where a carer has **eligible** needs in his or her own right, the Council has to meet these needs just as for a service user. Such support is not dependent on whether "carers money" is available. It will be unlawful to refuse to consider carers **eligible** needs in relation to work, education/training or leisure simply on the grounds that a particular budget has been spent.

## YOUNG CARERS

Guidance accompanying the Act reinforces the need for Adult Services to identify Young Carers and ensure they are not expected to undertake unreasonable levels of caring. The needs of disabled parents must also be taken into account within the users assessment.

Young Carers who may be "children in need" must be referred to Children's Service. In all cases making a referral to a Young Carers Project must also be considered.

## DIRECT PAYMENTS AND CARERS IN 2005/6

Some additional money for Direct Payments to support carers has been allocated from the National Carers Grant 2005/6 by Area Carers Strategy Groups:

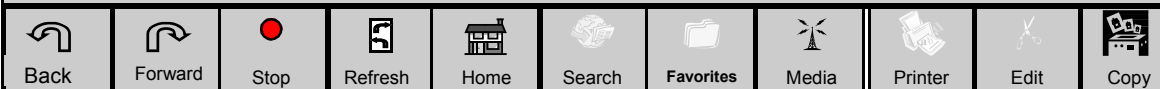
Mid	48,000
South West	84,000
North	60,000
North West	32,000
East	14,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>238,000</b>

This is in addition to funding for already held locally for direct payments for support carers. Carer Break Voucher Funding will also be available at the same level as 2004/5. There will be a further £125,000 European money for direct payments which



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enable carers to work or undertake vocational training. This is held by the Carers Development Team and will be allocated through the Action for Carers and Employment Project. Up to £5,000 per case can be provided to "top up" a care package and will be available on a first come first served basis from 15th May 2005 onwards.

## AN ACE RESOURCE

The requirement to consider work and training could prove something of a challenge to Care Managers and Social Workers who are not trained in career advisers.

The Action for Carers and Employment Project provides an excellent source of support around these issues and can offer:

- ◆ A specialist advice advocacy service to Carers
- ◆ Advice and support to Care Managers, Community Support Workers and Social Workers on how to reflect these issues within carers assessments
- ◆ A brokerage fund of £125,000 pa. for the next two years to top up care packages
- ◆ Speakers at team meetings

ACE Surrey have offices in Guildford and Reigate and cover the whole of Surrey:-

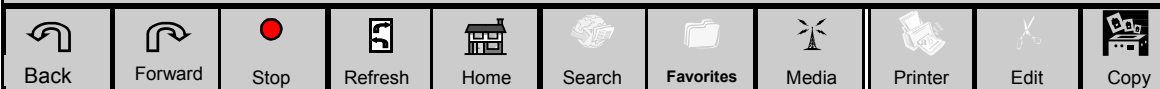
ACE Surrey, Astolat, Coniers Way, New Inn Lane, Burpham,  
Guildford, Surrey GU4 7HL (Tel: 01483 565874)

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## REVISED PROCEDURES

An updated group of Carers procedures have been produced and are now on the S-net Procedures Database. These are included in the Social Inclusion / Cross Services section as:

- Carers Assessments and Carers Plans SI 24
- Carers Services SI 25
- Direct Payments and Carers SI 26
- Young Carers SI 27

The Carer Break Vouchers Procedure is still available as SI 9.

## TEAM PRESENTATIONS

Presentations to team meetings about the Carers (Equal Opportunities) Act 2004 customised from 45 minutes to 2 hours can be provided by a training group comprising the Council's Carers Development staff and representations from Action for Carers (Surrey).

To book a session contact Angie Wright, tel. 020 8541 8737 or email [angie.wright@surreycc.gov.uk](mailto:angie.wright@surreycc.gov.uk).

Surrey County Council and Action for Carers (Surrey) receive financial support for their work around carers and employment from the European Social Fund under the EQUAL community Initiative Programme. Online information about the work of the Action for Carers and Employment Partnership can be accessed on [www.acecarers.org.uk](http://www.acecarers.org.uk).




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