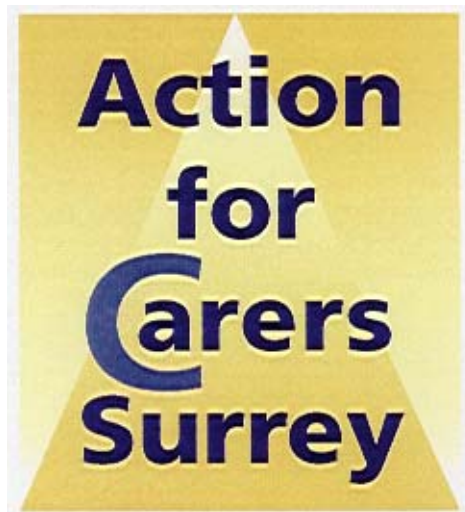


# **ACTION FOR CARERS (SURREY)**

**ANNUAL REVIEW  
2002 - 2003.**



**Astolat, Coniers Way  
Burpham, Guildford  
Surrey, GU4 7HL**

**Registered Charity No: 1064946**



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## **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

At this time of the Annual Report and Annual Review, I have an opportunity to reflect on the activities we have been busy undertaking, since last year. I am always amazed by the range and scope of this work we do, with and for Carers and I am increasingly proud of all that we have achieved together.

When we started out some thirteen years ago, we could never have imagined that our small campaigning organisation would have developed into such a major force in the national Carers' movement. When we first began to make a difference for Carers, there was just one Carers Support scheme in Surrey and now there is a scheme for every borough and district. Not only have we been influential in lobbying for these, and have many members involved in their local scheme, we have developed specialist Carers services ourselves such as the Surrey Young Carers Project; Action for Carers and Employment (Surrey); and the Moving and Handling Back Care Project.

We have also been at the forefront of developing training programmes in Carer Awareness, delivered by Carers themselves. The involvement of Carers in the training programmes has made such an impression with the Department of Health that the requirement to involve Carers in this way is now written into legislation. Surrey Carers can be rightly proud that they are ahead of change - setting the scene for national developments and influencing legislation.

However, this year we saw proposed legislation and Government guidance which threatened to overlook Carers, until organisations such as Action for Carers stepped in and demanded that our rights be upheld. The result has been an enormous change in Hospital Discharge Guidance which to date has been a time when Carers have experienced problems. It will take time for these changes to have a full impact on our health services but with the same collective effort by Carers and Carers organisations - we will succeed in making this work for us.

In the County Carer Co-ordinator's review which follows my report, you will be able to read in more detail about the specialist services for Carers and about the wide range of activities we have been involved in, on behalf of our members. You will read how our staff members, continue to be committed to their work of supporting Carers and how we all work together in getting a fairer deal for them. I would like to thank them all, for their hard work, their empathy and dedication.

**Organising our work** -During the year, we have worked hard in the various steering groups and working groups to co-ordinate all our work and to ensure that we operate in a consistent and fair way across the organisation. We have developed flexible working practice that we hope will support our staff members in having what is known as "work/ life balance" - so that they can juggle work with caring, with parenting, and with their lives beyond employment. We are committed to reducing stress in the work place and have developed support systems and working practice to help to alleviate this worrying symptom of working life in the 21st century.

We continue to ensure that Carers are able to be meaningfully involved in the work of the organisation by providing the support that they might need to get to meetings, by financing alternative care; transport and varying the venues across the county.

We now regularly hold an Organisation Day for Trustees and staff members directly following the Annual General Meeting so that we can all take stock and remind ourselves of our aims, priorities and how we operate. This is helpful to new Trustees and staff members. Early in the year we also have a Risk Management Day when we identify the risks and opportunities we have and how we will plan for these. This is a requirement of the rules set down by the Charity Commission, but we need to be careful that we balance the amount of work we do to meet these requirements, with the main purpose of our existence.

This year we are establishing a Steering Group to direct the lobbying and campaigning activities of the organisation. There are now so many more opportunities for Carers to be involved in, that we will have to decide what are the key areas of work that we should focus on.

During the year staff members and Trustees alike have been making progress on developing our recruitment practice. We are also working to ensure that we have the policies and procedures in place that support our staff members and we are developing our financial systems. We have made progress on securing accommodation in the west of the county, and now must do the same for the staff members working in the east.

**Activities** - We run an enormous range of activities for Carers. We are aided in this by supporters and volunteers who have been active in all areas of the organisation - In the Executive Committee; in the Steering Groups; undertaking administrative tasks; and providing additional help to the projects - such as transport and at the Young Carers activities. Thank you to all of you who help us at these times.

We could not do the work we do with Carers without the funding made available to us. This comes from a variety of sources. We appreciate the confidence they have in us, particularly in the cutting edge work we do, and their support that allows us to continue providing specialist services for Carers and in enabling Carers to have a voice. Our thanks go to the following organisations for their financial support:-

- ❖ Surrey County Council
- ❖ East Surrey Primary Care Trust
- ❖ The Princess Royal Trust for Carers
- ❖ Legal and General
- ❖ The Learning and Skills Council
- ❖ The Children's Fund
- ❖ The European Social Fund
- ❖ The Surrey Information, Advice and Guidance Partnership

**Change and Partnerships** - Since last year's report many of the changes we were concerned about have now been put into operation. The Primary Care Trusts (PCTs), which replaced the Health Authorities, are now partners to the area Carers Strategies and new opportunities to make progress for Carers have opened up. For example:-

- ◆ In the North Surrey PCT a Carers Identification Card has been developed which will help Carers when contacting their health and social care services. They have also made a public commitment to Carers on their web site, have funded Time Out for Carers in Elmbridge and a Back Care Project in the Runnymede area.
- ◆ East Elmbridge and Mid Surrey continue to provide financial support to the Carers Support Schemes in their area, fund Time Out and also the Carer identification project.
- ◆ In East Surrey PCT, there continue to be good links and support for our Back Care project and a strong commitment to Young Carers through their Local Delivery Plan.
- ◆ In Woking Area PCT a Training Day for Carers was planned and funded by the PCT and
- ◆ in Guildford and Waverley PCT we are planning to be partners in a Back Care project. We are exploring ways with Guildford and Waverley PCT in which the new GP contracts can be used as a "gateway" to Carers being better supported in primary care.

The newly integrated Children's Services have still to stabilise and we have much work to do to ensure that Parent Carers and Young Carers issues are fully supported. The recent injection of County Council funds into the Children with Disabilities Teams and the recent introduction of Vouchers for short term breaks, and Direct Payments have already made a difference to Carers getting practical help. The Young Carers Conference held in November 2003 will also be an opportunity to gain more support to the young people who have caring responsibilities.

The new planning systems that are emerging within Adult and Community Care Services must ensure that everyone "thinks Carer" and that the ideas and plans developed within the different planning "boxes" are shared with the Carers Strategy groups. We are in danger of duplicating effort and not making the best use of precious funding, if all the plans that affect Carers are not co-ordinated. We will continue to raise this issue at all levels and areas of planning.

Our relationship with all these key partners is vital, and in the coming year we aim to work more closely with them to develop a greater understanding of Carers' circumstances. We will do this through the Carers Strategies and by using all opportunities that arise.

**Action for Carers** - This year, Carers words did turn into real action. When the Department of Health's Joint Review Team came to inspect Surrey's Adult's and Children's social services, Carers views were heard, including those of Young Carers. The County Council had already made a significant increase in the social care budgets and as a result of the Joint Review, there is expected to be an ongoing process of improvement. Carers also made an impact on the revised Eligibility Criteria for Adult and Community Care Services, and are now more likely to receive their Carers Assessments as a result of the changes. These two developments have made it possible for care managers to deliver services to Carers, which in recent times have not been able to be funded.

The National Carers Strategy, launched in 1999 heralded a new era for Carers. As you will see in this Annual Review, much progress has been made with many new partners, as a result of that strategy and its local delivery. But why is it still such a struggle to make a difference to the individual circumstances of Carers? Why do we have to keep asking "What about Carers?" - in planning, in policy development, and in every day life situations? We still remain "ignored and invisible" by so many who could make a real difference to our lives.

Along with many of my colleagues, I believe it's because the National Strategy for Carers has very few requirements for our health and social care services to fulfil on behalf of Carers. It just doesn't have the "teeth" that other national strategies have. The National Services Frameworks for Older People, for Mental Health and strategies such as Valuing People (the Learning Disabilities strategy) have many targets for service users, that **must** be met by our health, social and education services. If we are to make real progress for Carers, then we need a National Services Framework for Carers - a Carer's Strategy with targets that **must** be met, over and above the existing small numbers of targets for Carer's. Assessments and the identification of Carers.

We will continue to argue for real and mandatory change for Carers so that we are not always on the sidelines asking for inclusion, but at the heart of every discussion that affects us - until Carers words have turned into real action.

Janice Clark  
Chairman.



# COUNTY CARER CO-ORDINATOR'S ANNUAL REVIEW

Welcome to this section of the Annual Review, which is where I bring you up to date with all the developments and issues that we have worked on over the last year, in partnership with Carers and our colleagues in health, community care services and education.

None of this work would be possible without your support and good will. In this section I will share with you the many examples of the achievements we have made in partnership with Carers who have taken the time to take part in our various meetings, focus groups and questionnaires. It is your feedback to us which is so valuable.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone, - our Trustees who juggle caring with the work they do; Carers in Surrey; my colleagues and our supporters for their undaunting support throughout the year. I would particularly like to thank Karen O'Malley (Action for Carers and Employment), Rachel Evans (Surrey Young Carers) for their contribution to my report.

And now a snap shot of the year's activities. The work of Action for Carers (Surrey) is in five main topic areas:

## **SPECIALIST SERVICES FOR CARERS:**

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

## **ENABLING CARERS TO HAVE A VOICE ON POLICIES AND SERVICE DEVELOPMENT.**

## **DEVELOPING AND PROVIDING TRAINING FOR CARERS, AND FOR PROFESSIONALS IN CARER AWARENESS.**

## **FORGING PARTNERSHIPS TO PROMOTE THE INTERESTS OF CARERS.**

## **DEVELOPING INFORMATION TO CARERS.**

## **SPECIALIST SERVICES FOR CARERS:**

### **Surrey Young Carers' Project.**

Support to young carers continues to be provided through the Surrey Young Carers Project. This year has seen so many changes and expansions within the project, it has been both an exciting and tiring time for everyone involved! The service has continued to work in partnership with many statutory and voluntary services along with mid Surrey Young Carers project. By working with all our partners we are able to promote and empower young carers to voice their needs, and to provide time out and opportunities for young carers which might not otherwise be available to them.

Altogether we have about 560 young carers on our mailing list. This is an increase of over 100 in the past year. National estimated figures relating to the number of young carers in the country have increased this year with the publication of the new census. In the recent census, 171,00 young people were identified as having some sort of a caring responsibility at home, which is a stark increase on the 51,000 figure which has been used for some time now. At the time of writing, we are still awaiting the figures for Surrey to be published but we are expecting to see that our estimated figure of 1,000 young people with substantial caring responsibilities in Surrey will have been an underestimate. This means that we still have some work to do in identifying young carers across the county,

**New Initiatives.** - New areas of activity have been established - we now have a deputy co-ordinator in post who is responsible for the day to day management of the Guildford office and for organising the activities for the young carers, including the residential breaks.

The Young Carers Schools Development work has also increased. With the help of the Learning and Skills Council funding and the Children's Fund, the project has enabled Fran Cooper to work in secondary schools in Runnymede and Spelthorne, and primary schools in Surrey Heath and Woking. We are also recruiting another schools worker to work alongside Fran. Surrey Young Carers has now become a familiar name in the schools in these areas and the input from Fran is valued by both the pupils and the school staff team. The work is meeting its original aims of developing greater awareness within schools of young carers' circumstances, and is receiving an increasing number of referrals from schools. The skills of a story teller are used to discuss with classes the issues which often face young carers. A safe environment is provided within

the school for young people to come forward and talk with Fran should they wish too.

The project is also in the process of developing a Young Carers Forum - this would ensure that the views of young people are considered when planning and developing the services of the project.

The project's referral process has changed during the last year in a way which means that we now discuss all referrals at fortnightly meetings, thus providing a greater network of support amongst support workers and ensuring that expertise is shared across the county.

**Young Carers Groups and Trips.** - 17 young carers' groups have been running fortnightly throughout Surrey, with 250 young carers attending. These offer regular contact and time out for young carers in a supportive environment. Trips were made during the school holidays and half term to places such as the Goodwood festival of Speed, Reigate Caves, Laser Quest, the London Eye, Knockhatch Activity Farm and Quad Biking. We have held many in-house activity days this year, a street dance course ran in the summer, along with a disco and some activity days. EA Games have sponsored a barbecue and a trip to London Zoo.

This year's residential breaks were held at Calshott, a watersports activity centre, Camp Beaumont and Halls Green. They have all been an excellent success and the feedback from the young people has been great.

A large evaluation of the groups, trips and residential breaks is due to be undertaken. The feedback which has been gathered from young carers over the year evaluated. to ensure that we are meeting the needs of the young carers, - We have steered away from large trips to Chessington this year as a direct result of the feedback from young carers. Trips for young people aged under 8 are now being organised by the individual support workers to ensure that young carers in all areas receive the opportunity to attend activities.

**Young Carers Communicating** -The young carers' newsletter and website are currently being evaluated with staff and young carers to create a system that means that they can be regularly updated and maintained. As stated above we are in the process of bringing together a young carers' forum.

Young carers are increasingly taking the opportunity to use our pen pal service, which puts young carers across Surrey in contact with one another.

**Professionals supporting Young Carers** -Referrals to the project come from the Adult and Community Care Teams, Assessment Teams, Children's

Service Teams, Family Centres, Mental Health Teams, Children and Adolescent Mental Health Services, Young Carers themselves, parents, schools, Youth Workers, Community Nurses and Health Visitors and from the Adult Carers Support Projects. We are receiving an increasing number of self referrals, which is excellent as it means that young people are coming forward and asking for the support of the project.

The Interagency Strategy Conference is to be held in November which is an exciting opportunity for professionals working with young carers to come together and discuss ways in which support for young carers in Surrey can be improved. It is also an opportunity for professionals from a number of different organisations to look individually at what they can do to help with the identification and support of young carers.

Support Workers have continued to raise awareness with agencies by giving talks, and firm relationships with assessment teams have started to develop.

Young Carers have been actively involved with the Vision 2020 consultation, a County Council initiative to find out how the people of Surrey would like life to be in the year 2020. They were also actively involved in the Children's Services Joint Review.

Individual work continues to be an important component of the work to support young carers and can help them to understand family circumstances, deal with bullying and be supported through bereavement. Where the work needed by a young carer is beyond the expertise of the project, referrals can be made to counselors and statutory services for specialist support.

The brokerage fund continues to be utilised to provide opportunities for young carers and they would not otherwise have access to because of their caring responsibilities.

Whilst this year we have focused mainly on the development and evaluation of the services we already offer, the outcomes of the interagency strategy conference are going to be highly influential in the development of any future plans the project has.

**THANK YOU** - Without the dedication and commitment of the sessional workers and volunteers we would not be able to run the clubs, trips or residential breaks. So a big "THANK YOU" goes out to them.

Rachel Evans - Young Carers Co-ordinator.

## Action for Carers & Employment - Surrey

It has been a busy and eventful year for the project. There has been a lot happening with a new team, new working practices and new challenges to meet. With the appointment of three new staff members, amongst them being a new Project Co-ordinator, Karen O'Malley, a fair amount of 2002 was devoted to establishing an effective and cohesive team. More recently we lost our last 'original' Project Worker, Michelle Minniss, to the good life of Cornwall and I am pleased to report we have successfully recruited a new Project Worker, Yvonne Hudson-Vaughan, who started work for us in July this year. Yvonne comes to us with a great deal of experience in training. With so many staff changes over the last eighteen months, we are fortunate to have an experienced and able Project Administrator, Diane Cotton, to provide invaluable expertise and continuity.

This last year has been a time of development, innovation and action with lots of new ideas being tried and tested. It has on occasion felt like a runaway train, with so much going on. Our aim for the next two years is to become more pro-active and we are in the process of planning a schedule of events for the future. However, the nature of the work which is responding to the needs of carers, dictates a reactive approach at times, with the resulting peaks and troughs. It would be fair to report that the staff would probably ask when these troughs had occurred, as they must have missed them!

This years activities have included:

**Providing information, advice and guidance to carers individually and through ACE courses** - In May 2002 we ran an ACE course in Chertsey in the 'old' style with nine sessions. The evaluation from this course and the subsequent difficulty in filling successive course meant we took a long hard look at what carers wanted. The result of this was a 'new look' ACE course, which comprises of six sessions, concentrating on personal development, support and identifying carer's skills. For carers who wish to progress to a more focused approach to training or work, we now offer three one-day workshops; Volunteering & Trusteeship, Learning & Training and Job Skills. We are about to develop and run a C.V. workshop, as this has been a subject requested by the participants of the first three workshops. To date we have run ACE courses in Redhill & Epsom. The workshops have been run at Leatherhead.

Carers continue to be supported on a one to one basis and have access to careers guidance programmes, training resources and PRTC Educational Bursaries.

**Local Education and Training Providers** - An innovative project with the Queen Elizabeth Training College, to tailor a qualification to teach adults, to enable carers to partake, resulted in two carers gaining this qualification.

We also continue to refer to Hilcroft residential college for women. The 'Widening Participation Project' works in partnership with Brooklands College and the National Extension College. This project is targeted at those with disabilities and also carers, it provides an opportunity to study at home with the support of a mentor and postal access to learning resources (from books to microscopes) from Brooklands. Carers can do any course for an inclusive fee of £30.

City & Guilds have now launched their 'Learning for Living' programme. This is on-line learning (e-learning) for carers and is a programme, which uses the caring experience and translates it into identifiable, transferable skills. We currently have carers piloting the course material and will be looking for more carers to take part very soon.

The project is also a full member of Surrey's Information, Advice and Guidance Network, which is called 'In Touch with Learning & Work'. This provides access to all mainstream and voluntary sector, learning providers which is a major bonus for carers.

**Matrix Quality Standard** - During the last year the project has been preparing for and undertaking an accreditation process to attain this award. The Guidance Accreditation Board awards this standard to providers of Information, Advice and Guidance on learning and work. A huge amount of time and effort by the whole team meant that after a gruelling three-day assessment we became the first voluntary sector organisation in Surrey to gain this award and only the second overall. A tremendous achievement and one that has 'put us on the map' as professional providers alongside mainstream colleges, careers service and the like.

**Publicity and Networking** - A lot of effort from staff and carers has gone into the design for the new project leaflet and posters. It has been well received and we have devised a publicity strategy to distribute these in a measured and organised manner. The distribution of all publicity material is carefully recorded and monitored, to evaluate what works most effectively. In October all the project staff attended the official launch of the National Partnership at the House of Commons.

**Carers Week** - The 'Big Green Bus' was our main feature of this week. With the focus of this year being opportunities for learning and work, we felt it was

appropriate to invest time and effort into this event. We decided to take a mobile road show out and about in Surrey. Working in partnership with Carers Support projects, we devised an itinerary and route, which would hopefully take us to the more isolated areas and find more 'hidden' carers. The bus was donated to us by Disability Challengers and was driven (after passing a test) by our own Sandra MacDiarmid. It was an exhausting and exciting week and a very positive experience. The week culminated with an ACE National event at Hilcroft college.

**ACE National Partnership** - We continue to attend 'Local Partnership meetings', which are held quarterly around the country at the six local development sites. Our turn to host this meeting is on 15<sup>th</sup> October 2003. We also liaise with Sheffield Hallam University, who are researching the effectiveness of the project.

**Monitoring & Evaluation** - It would be inappropriate not to mention the enormous amount of work, in collaboration with the other pilot projects and ACE National, that has gone into developing the final version of the numerous forms and evaluation material required by this round of EQUAL funding. This project is trying to develop a tool to measure 'soft outcomes'. As an example of this is recording the rise in a carers self esteem whilst participating in this project. After a year of drafts and re-drafts, we now have a finalised set of forms and evaluation criteria, which meets with the approval of our European funders - no mean feat!

The next step is to implement the database, which I would stress is anonymous, and then to enter all the data from May 2002 onwards.

**Future Plans Working with Employers** - ACE Surrey is working closely with ACE National on this area of work. The National Employers group are producing a 'tool kit' and are leading the way with carer friendly employment practice. They have set up a website with material we will be able to use. Madeleine Starr will be briefing project staff about this material and how we will need to use it.

In year 3 of the project we will be involved in a national push 'on the back' of the National Partnership and will publicise to employers to dovetail with the national initiative. We will be involving Chambers of Commerce and hope they will be able to promote the material, through a series of partnership events. Surrey County Council is committed to introducing carer friendly employment practice and in liaison with John Bangs, we will be on hand to offer help and advice.

I am visiting the Sunderland project in November to study their work with employers and hopefully learn some valuable lessons.

In development is a possible partnership with the Guildford Business College/Pitmans to offer reduced fees and tailored courses for carers.

We are currently developing a workshop for Young Carers as part of the transition from the Surrey Young Carers project to ours. I am working closely with Rachel Evans to devise a transition policy.

There is funding available from the In Touch Network to do some specialist work with the over 50's and I am liaising with them to see if we can provide extra services, using sessional workers. Likewise we are exploring options for male carers.

We continue to try and identify the hidden carers and are expanding the number of other support agencies we work with.

In October, as part of the Transnational work of the project, I am giving a presentation in Austria, along with the other five local projects on our work providing information, advice and guidance and the **matrix** quality standard.

As you will have read there has been lots happening, there has been even more but space permits mentioning it all and there is still a great deal more to do. I would like to thank all the staff of ACE Surrey for their hard work and commitment to this project, without them it would not happen.

ACE Surrey works 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 Manager.

## The Moving and Handling Back Care Project.

This has been another successful year for the Moving and Handling Back Care Project. We were able to appoint Jane Rowe in September 02 as our new Manual Handling Adviser for the Redhill and Reigate area of Surrey. Jane's post has been funded by the East Surrey Primary Care Team for a period of three years. Jane has been working very closely with Annie Ruff our Manual Handling Adviser for Tandridge who has been established in post since 1999 and has done some stirring work with carers, helping them to move and handle in a safe manner and thereby helping to reduce or prevent further injury to their backs.

For an initial three months Jane underwent an intensive induction process, shadowing Annie on home visits, undergoing specialist training and generally developing her skills and experience in the moving and handling field. New publicity leaflets have been produced to advertise the service and the Manual Handling Advisers have been extremely busy visiting carers, undertaking their own assessments and where appropriate doing joint assessments with the Occupational Therapists in their own area. Both Annie and Jane are able to loan equipment on a short term basis to carers, advise on good practice and advocate where necessary on behalf of the carer to the statutory agencies so that they might be able to access a Carers Assessment and possibly wider support and services in their own right.

We are in the process of sending out questionnaires to carers to monitor that the high standards that the service has achieved are being maintained and that the carers are satisfied with the service. Feed back every year has been highly positive with the repeated refrain "Why isn't the service available in other areas....?" Well we can now report that there have been some positive developments in other areas too. North Surrey (Runnymede) has now appointed a part time Manual Handling Adviser and the Carers Strategy for that area is hopeful that it will spread to other areas in the North. The South West has agreed that it should be an area for priority also. We shall keep you informed of all developments.

Back Care has certainly been high profile during this last twelve months. This year a family successfully sued East Sussex County Council for breach of duty of care in failing to manually handle two profoundly disabled sisters. The Court said in the landmark judgement: "There is an inherent and inescapable need for manual handling". Clearly, without the right support and advice, carers will continue to lift and handle and risk great injury to their backs. The case for back care advice is now getting a twin boost from Government:

- New Department of Health Hospital Discharge Guidance issued in January 03 highlights back care advice as a service likely to be needed as an outcome of carers assessments in hospital discharge situations.
- The Department of Health also includes back care advice to carers as an example of "carers services" which may be funded out of the expanded National Carers Grant from 2004-06. The grant has been increased to provide carers' services under the Carers and Disabled Children Act 2000.

All this will be welcomed by carers in Surrey. Carers input to the County Council's Best Value Review for Carers persuaded the Executive ("cabinet" of senior Surrey County Councillors) to agree that providing back care advice in all areas should become a "planning objective for the council".

If you wish to find out further information about our work in the manual handling field you should contact Geraldine Bolam (now Geraldine Willis) at Action for Carers (Surrey) or use [www.carersnet.org.uk](http://www.carersnet.org.uk) to download our report "Moving and Handling Back Care for Carers".

It has been a very exciting and productive year with respect to moving and handling support for carers, we are hopeful that next year we will have even more news and developments to report.

Geraldine Willis - Moving and Handling Back Care Project, Line Manager.

## ENABLING CARERS TO HAVE A VOICE.

Action for Carers (Surrey) works with Carers, and on behalf of Carers, to raise awareness of their needs throughout the county. It is vital that we have a regular discussion with carers so that we are able to understand their concerns and are able to communicate these to those individuals and organisations that are in a position to influence change. In this way we can make a positive change to carers' lives. Carers are all individuals, each with their own preferences about how they want to "have a say". We aim to ensure that we have a variety of approaches in reaching out to carers and hearing their views. Some carers would welcome the opportunity to take part in a focus group or a public meeting whilst others may not be able to do this and would prefer to write to us, take part in a questionnaire or welcome telephone contact. Each form of involvement and consultation with carers is equally valid and meaningful and we welcome the time that carers give us to tell us what really matters to them.

It is essential that we let carers know what has happened as a result of their involvement and we provide regular reports and feed back throughout the year so that carers are aware of any changes in policy or service delivery and planning that is likely to affect them. We encourage all our partners in community care to tell us what changes have occurred as it is important to know that Carers' views have made a difference and that real change can be made. In this way we avoid "consultation fatigue", and carers know that there is a purpose to the consultation. We will be illustrating throughout this Annual Review how carers views have made a difference! I would like to take this opportunity for thanking those carers who have assisted us in our work, for taking the time and the trouble to come to focus groups, meetings and to take part in research exercises, your views have been welcomed and valued.

Examples of consultation that has taken place this year has included meetings with Adult and Community Care Services on the Charging Policy and Eligibility to Adult Services; the Joint Review Team, the Audit Commission; and the Department of Health as well as the County Council's consultation for the Best Value Review. The next section of this review will expand on how Carers have been involved in the various ways, in **Focus Groups**, in a **Carers' Forum** and by **responding to Questionnaires**.

### Carers having a say in Focus Groups:-

**Joint Review** - A programme of inspection of Surrey's Social Services was carried out by a joint team from the Audit Commission and the Social Services

Inspectorate in Surrey, starting on the 8<sup>th</sup> April 03 and lasted through until the latter part of June this year. (The Audit Commission and the Social Services Inspectorate are the "watchdogs" of the Department of Health and what they report back, influences how many stars a local authority gains in the national ratings tables.) The review team looked at services and talked to service users and Carers, children and young people, staff members and the Council's partners in Surrey, including Action for Carers.

The purpose of the Joint Review was to give local people a clear and independent view of how well Surrey responds to the individual people who need information and help, as well as how Surrey manages its resources and performance. We organised consultation meetings with parent Carers, adult carers and young Carers this summer. During these meetings Carers told the Review team about the difficulties they experienced in getting support, and also they said what Surrey did well that was helpful to them. Following the review we have helped the Joint Review Team in drafting their leaflet which will be available following the publication of the final report. A summary of issues of interest to carers will also be available on Carersnet [www.carersnet.org.uk](http://www.carersnet.org.uk), and a summary leaflet will soon be available from John Bangs, the Carers Development Manager, Adult and Community Care Services.

In general terms the Joint Review reported that :-

- Adult and Community Care Services have made recent progress in improving their performance.
- There has been considerable injection of funding from the County Council which has made it possible for practical help to be more readily available to service users and carers, as well as additional funding for short term breaks.
- The changes to the eligibility criteria will also make a difference to supporting carers, with greater emphasis in looking at what carers need to support them in caring.
- The involvement of service users and carers was seen as an area of strength in Surrey, although we know that there continue to be barriers to carers becoming involved.
- Children's Services were considered safe but there was also a greater "distance to be travelled" in providing an improved service.
- The additional resources made available to Children with Disabilities services, will help them to improve their response to Parent Carers' needs.

There will be an ongoing monitoring of Surrey's community care services by the Social Services Inspectorate and we hope that carers will be very much at the heart of this work.

**Vision 2020** - Another recent example of consultation with carers has been the focus groups held to consider our vision for Surrey in 2020. We held our meeting in Guildford in September for Adult Carers, and for young Carers during August. The and a wide range of carers from across the county who attended, spoke movingly of the need for a more compassionate caring society, in which carers would be valued and enabled to live meaningful balanced lives in which caring would be a positive choice and experience.

I would again like to thank the carers for their time, We await the report from the County Council, with interest.

**Best Value Review** - During the last year we have also worked with the County Council on the implementation of the Improvement Plan. One area for improvement was to make progress on the lack of choice and insufficient short term breaks. Consultation with carers was carried out and as a result of the positive lobby, the Council has provided an additional £500,000 for the provision of short term breaks, with the effect from 1<sup>st</sup> April 03. This has made a significant difference to many Carers. The introduction of Vouchers and Direct Payments should widen the opportunities for choice in how short term breaks are taken.

Other examples of enabling carers to have a voice include:

### **Carers' Involvement in the Carers' Forum.**

**Action for Carers - Carers Forum** - We hold a carers forum twice a year in which carers are invited to attend a series of workshops on a range of topics which should both inform carers and encourage them to share their views. The workshops are always well attended and the most recent issues included have been the charging policy, the review of welfare benefits, hospital discharge, ACE (Carers and Employment) and moving and handling. We also run a workshop on stress management or alternative therapy as these have been very popular with Carers. At the forum we have information stalls which have proven beneficial and these have been available during the lunch break for carers to browse.

### **Carers responding to Questionnaires.**

**Carers satisfaction questionnaire** - Each year we send out questionnaires to carers who have received a service from the Manual Handling Team based at Reigate but covering Tandridge, and Redhill and Reigate. Our manual handling advisers work with carers providing advice, information and

training about moving the people they care for as well as protecting their own backs. The Advisers can also provide a short term equipment loan.

The Questionnaires focus on the carers feelings, physically and emotionally before they were put in touch with the Advisers and what difference their input has made - whether they know how to move and handle correctly, whether they feel less pain then they used to, whether they feel confident about moving and handling and whether they feel well supported.

It is important to us that we maintain high standards in our service and so we value carers' views and their feedback to help us improve. A report is always published after the end of the evaluation and this is sent to the carers.

**Joint Review Questionnaire** - We routinely seek feedback about our services throughout all our projects and we also assist the statutory services in helping to develop their own survey. In the Joint Review, we mailed out their questionnaire to a sample of 1,000 Carers in Surrey. This research showed that concerns were felt by a significant minority about Customer Care Service Standards. For example - how people were received by County Council staff members, whether they were listened to and whether their views were taken into account as well as how long they had to wait for a service and whether services were available.

As a result of this feedback, Adults and Community Care Services are planning to conduct another survey to track whether the assessment process has improved. We have been working with an officer from the Planning and Performance Team to develop a new set of questionnaires, which are carer specific and relevant to carers' lives and circumstances. At the time of writing this Review, the questionnaires are being developed and tested out with a small group of Carers before being sent out early in the new year.

## Carers Having a Voice on Policies.

The various ways of Carers Having a Voice have ensured that their views have been included in policy and service development. We have been involved in a whole range of policy discussions this year which effect Carers. These have included: Eligibility Criteria for Adult Community Care Services, Welfare Benefits and Charging, the development of Hospital Discharge Policies, Carers Assessments, the Carers Best Value Review. We have also been part of the establishment of the area Carers Strategy groups, the Partnership Boards for people with learning disabilities as well as the newly established board for people with a physical and sensory disability.

**Eligibility Criteria for Adult Community Care Services.**- As we reported to you last year, the financial resources of both our Health and Social Services continue to give us cause for concern, and have not kept pace with the increasing need for social care funding. The local authority informed us that revision of the eligibility policy was necessary for two reasons:

- To incorporate improvements as a result of the review of the eligibility criteria first introduced in June 2001
- The Department of Health issued guidance on 28<sup>th</sup> May 2002 on Fair Access to Care Services (FACS) which Surrey had to comply with.

We have been a member of the Review Group which concluded its work on 20<sup>th</sup> September 2002 . The group made a number of recommendations on both policy and practice which had to be implemented by 7<sup>th</sup> April 2003. We were disappointed to learn that councils were still expected to take account of resources when setting their own threshold for eligibility. In April this year we made a formal response to Adults and Community Care Services Eligibility Criteria 2003 based on the views of carers who came to our consultation day in February.

During the consultation we expressed our concerns about the effect that insufficient resources would have on preventative services. We urged the Council to ensure that eligibility services would not be exclusive to those in critical risk. We worked hard to ensure that Surrey's criteria were fully inclusive of Carers and Young Carers. We had good evidence to show that in Surrey, that where there was a Carer providing support, there was less likelihood that services would be made available. We concluded that Carers were being seen as a "resource" and would not get support, if the policy remained unchanged. Successful lobbying has ensured that we have maintained our rights and ensured that Carers are fully considered in the policy.

Over subsequent months we were able to establish a greater understanding that an Eligibility Policy is about eligibility to services and not about eligibility to assessment or to care management. We have also been pleased to see greater clarity in the rules about savings, and were able to ensure that those service users with savings of over £20,000 would be entitled to care management.

We remain concerned about the initial assessments by telephone which we maintain are not the appropriate way to ask sensitive questions about people's circumstances.

Throughout the whole of the review process we were worried about the proposed timeframes in relation to risk. Physical injury or stresses caused by caring or risks of losing employment need urgent attention, and should be seen as critical risk, regardless of "time" factors.

We were however, encouraged that the final Eligibility Policy in Surrey is now inclusive of Carers and the practice guidance to Care Managers has been drafted using the examples that we described in our response, of how the policy should relate to Carers. We are currently negotiating with the Adults and Community Care Services as to how we can be involved in the monitoring of this policy to ensure that it really works for Carers. We are also requesting that training should be made available to the staff members of our local Carers Support Schemes and ACS.

**Welfare Benefits and Charging** - Last year we reported that the Department of Health issued national guidance on local authority charging policies for Adults, "*Fairer Charging Policies for Home Care and other non-residential Social Service*". Action for Carers (Surrey) held a consultation meeting in February this year to find out carers' views about the policy and in addition a focus group on the costs of disability held in May at our forum also informed our views.

Action for Carers (Surrey) has always opposed charging for care, as we believe that the cost of community based care should be free at the point of delivery, as already implemented in Scotland. The Royal Commission on Long Term Care has recently repeated its opposition to charging for personal care services and has called the system "*Unethical*". We were disappointed to learn that despite the Government's proposals to make charging "*Fair, Equitable*" "*Affordable*" and to "*maximise income*", there will still be variation between local authority areas and so the post code lottery will remain. We also noted that the cost of living in Surrey is one of the highest in England and Wales and yet users and

carers receive the same Welfare Benefits across the UK and these are not weighted to relate to the high costs of living in Surrey.

Within the overall charging policy we did welcome the following proposals:

- A single charge that takes all other charges into account
- Income Support + 25% - better than before but does not go far enough in addressing living on the breadline
- A consideration of disability related costs, but we urged a broader view of the costs of independent living
- Earnings to be disregarded.
- Comprehensive welfare benefits check - we argued that this should be done sensitively and a choice of advice provider to be given.

We have been extremely concerned that almost six months since Carers views were contributed, we still have not received news of the final policy. The new Financial Assessment Forms have gone out to service users, and Carers, and Carers organisations, are asking quite rightly, for information about the revised policy. We have made representations to the Financial Assessments Department for answers and will continue to lobby for a better response in future.

A proposal to extend Welfare Benefits assessments, was consulted on last year. At the various meetings we held, Carers generally welcomed the proposals to extend Welfare Benefits checks, but asked for choice in who carried them out. Carers felt that an independent organisation, such as Surrey Welfare Rights Unit should play a major role in this initiative, as well as the new posts for Financial Assessments and Welfare Benefits Officers, based alongside Care Managers. Unfortunately, this initiative did not go ahead as it was a casualty of the funding crisis. Now, new proposals for the take- up of Welfare Benefits are currently being consulted on. We have organised for Carers to hear these proposals and to contribute to the consultation process.

In April 2003, Invalid Care Allowance was renamed the Carers Allowance, much welcomed by Carers. We responded to the Government's consultation, welcoming the extension of the benefit but expressing our disappointment at the very low number of carers who would benefit from these changes. We told them that much more could be done to give financial support to Carers, bearing in mind that our value to the nation is £65 billion pounds per year.

Other changes this year include the introduction of Tax Credits (Child Tax Credit and Working Tax Credit). The working tax credit in particular provides extra money for those who work and have a disability. For those carers who

are working (full time over 16 hours) and balancing caring, there is no extra element. We would like to see the working tax credit rules extended to Carers, and for Carers to get a fairer financial deal, overall.

For further information about Carer's benefits, a booklet - "Welfare Benefits for Carers in Surrey - What's available?" can be requested from Action for Carers (Surrey). This is published by Surrey Welfare Rights Unit, in partnership with ACS.

**Carers Best Value Review** - During the last year we worked with the County Council on the implementation of the Improvement Plan of the Carers Best Value Review. The recommendations included making short term breaks for Carers more widely available, and progress to be made on **Carers Assessments** and **Hospital Discharge**:-

**Carers Assessments.**-There has an ongoing monitoring process by social services to ensure that carers are offered a Carers Assessment. A target has been set so that by the end of the financial year (March 04) ALL teams are expected to have offered a carers assessment and recorded these on file as well as the reason if a carer has turned the opportunity down. The aim is that at least 95% of Carers will have been offered an assessment. The next steps are to ensure that the quality of Carers assessments is improved to make sure that there is a positive result at the end of the process.

**Hospital Discharge and Delayed Discharges.**-At the beginning of the year we lobbied Jacqui Smith M.P. Minister of State with our concerns about the Community Care (Delayed Discharges etc) Bill. This Bill aimed to introduce a new policy whereby NHS Trusts would be able to fine local authorities for every day that a person was delayed in hospital and proposed to set new rules for assessing patients ready for discharge. The Bill also planned to make certain community care services free for older or disabled people upon discharge from hospital, but would not make the services free for carers. We were concerned that once again carers appeared to have been overlooked in this Bill. Yet again Carers rights to an assessment, enshrined in legislation, were under threat. We joined other organisations across the country and lobbied the Government lead by Carers UK. We also wrote to all of the Surrey MPs to get their support. In March this year, we heard that the carers' lobby had been successful in influencing the Government to insert carers' rights into the Bill, which has now been passed as a Act of Parliament.

This is a good illustration that early campaigning can have an impact and that Carers' rights can be secured. The first changes secured recognition for Carers in Part One of the Act and improved Carers' rights to assessments and

services prior to the patient being discharged from hospital. The second major development ensured that carers would receive the same intermediate care services free, as older or disabled people. A victory indeed.

Another landmark development this year was the publication of new Hospital Discharge Guidance which required the development of interagency procedures, to be developed with carers and other stakeholders. Initially, it appeared that Carers would be left out of the new guidance, even though we had been lobbying the Department of Health and Hospital Trusts since 1996, as this was a real problem area for Carers. (1996 was the year of the implementation of the first Carers Act which included a recognition of Carers rights at the time of Hospital Discharge.) After intense lobbying by ourselves and our national organisations, to get Carers included in the new guidance, we were again successful.

By the summer we learnt that each local NHS Trust would be developing the new policies, procedures and joint working processes. At first it appeared that Carers and Carers' organisations would not be involved, as the Guidance required. We had hoped for a more transparent and co-ordinated approach to this work, so that carers could have been involved at the earliest stages.

We shared concerns with Alan Adams (Strategic Director Adult and Community Care Services) that we were worried that the focus would be on delayed discharges and the "re-imburements" (the term used for the fines) and not the overall hospital discharge process. He assured us that carers would be involved in the process and that once the local work had been done to develop the new policies and practice, an Audit would take place to check out that Carers were fully included. Work has since been in progress with local hospital trusts e.g. The Royal Surrey County, Ashford and St. Peters , and Frimley Park in the development of their discharge policies and we have been active in developing a leaflet which will tell Carers what to expect during this time. There is still much to be done to safeguard carers' rights and to develop good practice.

We have also been in discussion with Debbie Grimwood, the author and trainer of the Hospital Discharge Training Programme - "The Whole Experience", to develop a new modular, carer focused training programme. "Hospital Discharge - The Carers Journey" is the result and this has been delivered by Debbie and carer trainers, through nine workshops to a multi-agency audience. The Department of Health are interested in this training programme and it will appear on the DOH website in November 2003. We are proud that yet another Surrey initiative developed and delivered with Carers, in partnership with ACS

will be nationally featured. Our thanks go to John Bangs for funding this initial programme of workshops.

The DOH is also working with Debbie in developing the national training programme to accompany the Hospital Discharge Guidance, based on elements of "The Whole Experience" - another example of how the work initiated in Surrey and developed with carers, is influencing national programmes. We will keep you informed about this and our work with the local trusts in the development of their discharge policies throughout the following year.

**The Learning Disabilities Partnership Board** - Last year we reported on the launch of the White Paper "*Valuing People: A new Strategy for Learning Disability for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*". This established the principles of rights, independence, choice and inclusion. The Learning Disabilities Partnership Board in Surrey has one over-arching Strategic Partnership Board, linked to five Area implementation teams, across the county. This year Surrey's Learning Disability Development Fund for 2003-04 was given to the five local groups to spend on developing important services in their area. The total fund was £364,000 and it was broken up for each group and they have devised their own spending plans. Most groups have set aside a dedicated amount of money to employ a worker to support older carers, this is because Valuing People recognises the neglect of many older family carers of people with learning disabilities.

In Surrey the groups will help to identify carers over the age of 70 and make sure that the person being cared for, has an agreed person centred plan in place by 2004.

Within the Partnership Board, a Leadership Programme has been developed to help users and carers be more involved in planning for the future and to feel more confident at the Partnership Board and Valuing People Groups. 11 Services users and three carers completed the course.

In June 03 a workshop called "Family Matters" was facilitated by Debbie Grimwood. This workshop asked participants to consider how carers are currently able to make their voice heard, how effective these methods are and what gets in the way. Participants also discussed what would help to remove any barriers and enable them to have a greater voice in Learning Disabilities service developments to respond to users and Carers own needs, wishes and aspirations. There were opportunities for Carers to consider these matters further at the A.G.M.

A county-wide data-base is also being developed for people with learning disabilities. The register will cover the full range of people's needs including health, social care, education, leisure, employment and housing. The lead officer is Camilla Thrush, who is employed by Adults and Community Care Services and based at the East Surrey Area Management Team Offices.

**The Physical, Sensory and Cognitive Disabilities, HIV and Aids Partnership Board.** During the year a planning system was put in place for s.users and Carers, similar to the Partnership Board for Learning Disabilities. Five area boards with a 60% membership of s.users and Carers are meeting to discuss ways to implement a set of commissioning intentions which were agreed at a Conference earlier in 2003. We have actively worked to ensure that Carers have a place on the boards and that Carers issues are discussed and made progress on, alongside issues for s.users and those of joint concern. We are pleased to see that there will be no age discrimination in the working of this Board, with older people and their Carers having a voice as well as those under 65. Issues already raised by Carers attending the Board meetings include:- Education and Employment for Carers; Young Carers; Relationships; Carer's well being; Carer's skills in caring - all in relation to caring for people who have the disabilities included by this Board.

**National Service Framework for Older People** - The planning system for Older People based on the National Services Framework, whilst providing excellent opportunities for involvement, is proving difficult for us to manage them all. There are eight standards that have to be met by the statutory organisations, and each of these standards has its own planning group - and this is mirrored in each of the five areas of Surrey. Whilst there are Carer issues in every one of the standards we have decided to focus on just one of the standards in the work we do and that is Standard 2 - Person Centred Care.

This standard includes The Single Assessment Process, which is a new way of co-ordinating the assessment processes of health, social care and council services, so that older people and Carers do not have to give the same information more than once. We have decided to focus on this standard as we need to ensure that Carers are signposted to support services and assessments that meet their needs. Since the Single Assessment Process is now likely to be used at the time of Hospital Discharge, it is vital that we ensure that it works for Carers. We are involved in the county wide group as well as several of the local groups and ensure that the Carer's perspective is included in the developments.

**Better Care Higher Standards.** We continue our work in this group which is required by the Department of Health, to produce a "charter" of what service users and Carers can expect of their services. It sets the standards that are required and then tests the quality of services and responses by health, social care and council services. This coming year we will be helping to organise focus groups of Carers so that they can tell the Better Care Higher Standards group themselves, about the quality of their services.

**Carers' Strategies.** - Following the development of the County wide Carers Joint Strategy launched by the East and West Surrey Joint Carers Strategy groups on 3<sup>rd</sup> October 2002, area strategy groups were established to reflect the new Primary Care Trust areas. There are now five area Carers' Strategy groups in the County. The five areas are as follows: North West Surrey, North Surrey, Mid Surrey, South West Surrey and East Surrey. The groups have now agreed their action plans and are now in the process of monitoring the progress on the work they have thus far achieved. Monitoring forms are now routinely sent to members of the strategy groups for them to comment on aspects of work that is in development. The strategies are now available on the Carersnet website for anyone requiring further information:-

[www.carersnet.org.uk](http://www.carersnet.org.uk)

The first meeting of the County Carers' Strategy Group will be held this winter. This will oversee the whole development of the strategies throughout Surrey and it will aid networking and good practice between the groups. Each local group will send representatives to the county group and so there will be a regular discussion and news updates. South West, North West and Mid Surrey Groups are working towards establishing a Moving and Handling project to mirror the successful work carried out in Tandridge and Redhill and Reigate. In the North area of Surrey, there is already such a project in Runnymede, and they have just appointed a worker. It is anticipated that this service will be extended to other areas of North Surrey.

**Equalities and Carers.** We hope that this coming year more progress will be made in this area of Carers support.

- ◆ We will encourage Carers to be fully included in society and more specifically to ensure that Carers are fully involved, and their particular circumstances recognised, in policy and service development by health, social care, education, and other statutory organisations.
- ◆ The ACE project will continue to raise awareness of the disadvantage experienced by Carers who are juggling work with caring, and promote Carer friendly employment practice;
- ◆ Two further workshops on Carers and Equalities training for professionals have been funded;

- ◆ ACS has submitted a formal response to the County Council's Countryside Strategy raising awareness of the experiences of Rural Carers.
- ◆ More needs to be done in promoting better support for Carers who are disabled. The Disability Discrimination Act will come into full force in October 2004. We anticipate that this will bring these concerns to the forefront.
- ◆ We continue to work to support young people who have caring responsibilities, through the Young Carers Project. We will endeavour to support these young people in being fully included in society.

## Carers Having a Voice on Service Development

**Surrey Law Centre.** - Last year we reported on how we had been involved in developing a Surrey Law Centre. This provides a "Specialist Support" Service to professional advice givers, such as Carers Support Schemes, Citizens Advice Bureaux, social workers, health care teams and solicitors' practices across the whole of the county. In this way Carers can be sure of sound advice provided to them by the organisations they use for support. The Law Centre is funded by the Government through the Legal Services Commission, as well as the County Council and several borough councils in Surrey. All over the UK there is a crisis in the provision of legal aid and access to legal advice for those on lower incomes. In Surrey, the Law Centre has gone from strength to strength and the need for such a centre serving carers, users and the people of Surrey is being demonstrated day by day. At last year's meeting in November Angela Goman Smith was elected as the ACS representative at the Surrey Law Centre.

The Law Centre has hit every target that the Legal Services Commission has set and it has been active in clearly ensuring that peoples' rights are upheld. An example might be someone who has been assessed for a service yet not received any help for three years. The centre has three solicitors who specialise in, Community Care, Employment, Immigration and Asylum, and Housing. The Centre can offer training courses for advisers to help to increase their knowledge and to keep them up to date on changes in the law. The team can also offer a range of support materials which advisers can use, such as briefing sheets, standard letters and update on government changes.

Julie Hinnigan, the Community Care solicitor came to the AGM this year and gave Carers an opportunity to find out more about the Law Centre's work. Recently Julie has sent out a questionnaire to the carers support workers in Surrey to find out what training they might be interested in attending over the next year.

**Vouchers and Direct Payments** -Vouchers and Direct Payments are a key element of the Carers' and Disabled Children Act 2002. During the last year a trial was carried out using vouchers, so that Carers who had been given a Carers Act assessment could purchase services directly from providers willing to join the pilot scheme. Carers were able to give their views as to how the Voucher scheme could work and also in the choice of Voucher provider. The Carers Grant made £287,000 available for Vouchers in the current year, and led to an increase in the numbers of service providers offering support to Carers.

This scheme was successfully extended to Children with Disabilities services, and in 2004/ 2005 there will be an estimated £71, 000 for parent Carers. We anticipate that this will also encourage an increase in the numbers of service providers. Direct Payments have also been used to provide additional services that support Carers and Young Carers, who have been assessed by a Carers Act assessment. Direct Payments extends the choice of Carers to purchase breaks services, including holidays booked through travel agents. We welcome this more imaginative way of providing services to Carers, and will continue to ensure that Carers have a voice in this type of service development.

**Back Care** - This service has been highly valued in East Surrey and is now being made available in other areas. We will continue to provide support and advice to the new schemes as they develop, using the expertise we have gained in our Tandridge, Redhill, and Reigate service.

**Reconfiguration of Mental Health Services;** As members of the Steering Board which is overseeing proposed changes for Mental Health Services in Surrey, we have contributed a Carers perspective into the process. When the proposals for change were made public during the consultation period, we gathered a range of Carer's perspective on the proposed changes and submitted a response. We will promote the best practice principles, as described in the Department of Health publication "*Developing services for Carers and families of people with mental illness*", in any future work with this group. One of the key recommendations is that there should be additional workers to support Carers. It states that there should be 5-6 of these workers per Primary Care Trust or one additional worker for each Community Mental Health Team. In a county the size of Surrey - that should mean an additional 10 Carers Support Workers for Carers of people with mental illness. We hope that in any changes to Mental Health Service provision in Surrey , Carers will be a priority for action.

**Joint Equipment Stores.** - In 2001 a partnership project was established in Surrey between local health partners and Social Service departments to review equipment stores. A range of pilot projects and localised groups were set up in Surrey, as well as a county wide steering group to audit current services and to prepare an outline specification. Following a consultation period with users and carers, businesses and/or charities providing equipment were invited to tender to run the equipment stores. At this stage the Primary Care Groups (PCGs) were in a period of transition and developing into Primary Care Trusts (PCT's) which created delays in getting funding, but the process of tendering went ahead. After much discussion Nottingham Rehab services won the contract.

Nottingham Rehab was given three months to set up the service and the service went live from 1<sup>st</sup> April this year. The service has had its teething problems in its early days. The service has been beset by delays, not least of which has been the computer system. There has been a high staff turnover. More recently it has been agreed that there should be a full audit of the system and a consultation exercise with users and carers to check out the recently reported problem with suppliers. (For example, catalogue items have run out and insufficient data on the forms for prescribing equipment have also been reported e.g. prescriber numbers not filled out.) Initial reports from users and carers have suggested that, as yet, there is little evidence of solid improvements but it is fair to say that these are early days and the system offers great potential. We await news of more positive developments in the future. Meanwhile, plans are being made to involve more service users and Carers in their local areas. We will be supporting this way of working.

## TRAINING AND AWARENESS RAISING.

The training programme for and about carers, has continued this year, reaching increasing numbers of carers and the professionals who have an important influence in carers' lives. The Carers Best Value Review and the Carers Strategies have recommended that training programmes for Carers and professionals are an essential element of Carers Support and Carer Awareness.

**Enabling Carers** - A well attended programme of courses in East and West Surrey, funded by the East and West Surrey Joint Training Groups, has provided a number of workshops enabling Carers to continue caring. In East Surrey the workshops related to stress management and a specific course for former carers. In November 2002, Jane Thornton facilitated a half day workshop entitled "*Regaining a new Direction for Former Carers*", in Redhill. The course aimed to support former carers by providing information on specific topics, practical skills training and the development of personal coping skills. The course looked at issues in relation to loss and/or bereavement, and considered options for the future through a step by step plan. A participant stated:

*"A lot of thought went into this workshop, dealing with such sensitive issues and emotions. I think we all came away with positive ideas and meeting other people in the same situation as oneself was encouraging to see how each was coping".*

In March 2003 Anne Denny facilitated two workshops "Coping with Stress Through Relaxation" in Redhill and Leatherhead. This gave participants an opportunity to do some relaxation exercises and to consider some practical ways to help themselves. The workshop looked at - What is stress and its effects? Coping skills and relaxation exercises. The workshops were very well attended and carers stated that they had benefited from attending.

In West Surrey, the Joint Training Group funded programme of workshops which Carers in their local areas had requested. Stress busting techniques as always were very popular.

A new season of training sessions is being planned and publicised through the Carers Support Schemes.

**"Because Carers Count"**. This ongoing, well established multi-agency training has been delivered this year to over one hundred and fifty participants. It is funded by Surrey County Council and the Joint Training

groups, and has been endorsed by the Best Value Review for Carers. Carer trainers have been involved in delivering these sessions from the outset and provide valuable experience both for the participants and the carers themselves. The carers have benefited from being trainers, and having their skills recognised has added to their self-development. The administration is now managed by a carer.

**"Hospital Discharge - The Carers Journey"**. We have recently joined forces with the Carers Development Manager - John Bangs, to commission this programme which will take forward the issues for Carers at a time which has been causing difficulties for Carers. The original set of 9 workshops was so oversubscribed, that we have had to seek additional funding from the Joint Training Groups. At the time of writing we are hopeful that a further 5 workshops will be funded.

**Adults and Community Care - Induction Training.**- Every few months we are invited to take part in the Adults and Community Care Induction Training for recently recruited employees of the County Council. We undertake to do an awareness raising of carers issues and have concentrated on the importance of identify carers, understanding their needs and carers' legislation. We have done these presentations in partnership with the carers' support workers who in turn have focused on the role of carers support and how they might work with other agencies in support of carers.

**ACS and the Joint Training Groups.** - We are involved in the East and West Surrey Joint Training Groups along with partners from health, social care, s.user and voluntary organisations. Since we joined the joint training groups we have promoted and developed, in partnership with others, a range of Carer focused training programmes for professionals. These are aimed to improve Carer awareness and professional practice. The programmes that have been running for a number of years now include:- *"Carers Assessments - Making it Work"*; *"Caring about Carers"* - for training with Mental Health teams; and *" We Count as Carers Too"* - to promote Carer awareness for ethnic minority Carers. All these programmes are highly valued by all who attend them - and the Carer trainers' contribution is always considered to be the highlight of the workshop, allowing participants insight into what caring really means.

**Future Plans.** Through the Carers Strategy Groups we are hoping to secure funding to run training sessions for health staff in Carers Awareness. This programme could be targeted at GPs, consultants and also provide induction training to all new health staff. Partnership working with the PCTs is already

underway through the Carers Strategy Groups and we hope that we can build on this to move into this new venture.

We would like to thank the professional trainers, Jane Thornton, Mike Atkins, Sajida Rehman and Debbie Grimwood and the Carer trainers who make these programmes possible. Thanks also to the Joint Training Groups, to Adult and Community Care Services and the PCTs for enabling us to continue with this work.

## PARTNERSHIP WORKING

Working with a wide range of partners is the only way that we can make progress for Carers. This Annual Review has demonstrated throughout, the range of partnerships that have been forged between Carers, service users, voluntary organisations, health, social care, education, employment and training, the County and Borough and District Councils and many others. They have supported us in our campaigns, in seeking funding, and in providing information and guidance. We would like to acknowledge our relationship with two of our national partners:-

**The Princess Royal Trust for Carers (PRTC).** Through our affiliation to the PRTC, we have developed a network of the local carers support schemes in Surrey, and ACS. The local schemes are in every Borough and District of Surrey and are much valued by carers. The Carers Support network in Surrey benefits from the range of funding opportunities available to support carers - including the Rural Transport Fund, Carers Break Fund, Carers Relief Fund, Educational Bursary, Refurbishment Fund, Young Carers Grant and the recent Carer Identification Fund. The PRTC keep schemes regularly informed through their Network Bulletins.

Regular meetings of the Chairs/Trustees of the Schemes have continued to take place throughout the year. This has been a valued opportunity to share good practice and discuss other current issues affecting schemes including funding. In June, the PRTC facilitated a workshop for trustees and workers to consider the continuing capacity issues of the schemes and how we could make better use of our links with the PRTC. Work is progressing to follow up the proposals for common data collection by schemes and how best to co-ordinate partnership activities between them. We thank the PRTC for their national work and interest in our Carers Support Schemes. We also thank the Trustees and workers of the Carers Support Schemes in Surrey for all that they do on behalf of Carers in Spelthorne, Runnymede, Elmbridge, Woking, Surrey Heath, Guildford, Waverley, Mole Valley, Epsom and East Surrey (Redhill, Reigate and Tandridge).

**Carers UK** - Carers UK is the national campaigning organisation for Carers and through our membership, we are regularly updated on legislation; parliamentary bulletins, and any potential breaches of Carers rights. Carers UK also provides extremely high quality training programmes for our staff members and is a highly valued partner in the Action for Carers and Employment national consortium. We rely on their expertise and support and thank them for the service that they provide to us.

## INFORMATION AND CARERS.

We have always been interested in seeking out ways of providing information to carers in a variety of ways to suit their diverse circumstances. The challenge is to provide information at a time which suits carers and in a format that they are most comfortable with. Examples of the ways we have developed information systems to carers include:

### **Carersnet.** [www.carersnet.org.uk](http://www.carersnet.org.uk)

Over half of all households in the UK are now linked to the Internet and we have developed Carers information for this medium. Carersnet was developed in the late 90's and has been continually updated. Over the last two years, it has been closely linked to the National Carers UK site, [www.carersonline.org.uk](http://www.carersonline.org.uk) and is now part of a network of local sites across the UK. We work closely with Ron Critcher, Carers Development Officer - Adult and Community Care Services, to develop Carersnet. The following features are all available on Carersnet:-

**Care Radio** - This year Care Radio broadcasted a national conference live from BT Centre in London. The conference was held as part of the partnership between ACE National and Invest to Save. Those people who tuned-in via their computers to the conference were not only able to listen to the conference through Care Radio but also view it with live video.

**Virtual Leaflet rack.** - The leaflet rack was developed in June this year and provides an opportunity for carers to view leaflets in their own homes via their computer. Carers can download the appropriate leaflets for their own caring situation. One of best aspects of this development is that the leaflets are never out of stock and can be updated easily. Currently available are leaflets for parent carers from Contact a Family, leaflets about Welfare Benefits (which include the various benefit forms) as well as details of Carers Support schemes.

**Surrey Helpfile.** - This has been developed by Surrey County Council Children's Services for parent carers. It has over 70 sections relating to education for children with special needs, to benefits etc. and is available on-line.

**Short term break data base.** - The data base provides information about short term breaks, carers' groups etc. The data base is regularly updated, with routine contacts, to check that the details are accurate.

**The Events Page.** - This is continually been updated with local, national and international events which carers and those working with carers may find useful to know about or to attend.

### **Currently being developed :-**

- On line information book for carers. There will be five books across Surrey with local information, which will be continually updated. This will allow carers and others to download the book and print it out. Those carers who have no computer will be able to ask others they come into contact with to do this. This could be made available for Carers, in hospital trusts, at the time of hospital discharge.
- On line Carers Assessment request form. This will allow carers to request a Carers Assessment on line.
- Carersnet screensavers to market Carersnet.

**Other information.** - We have continued to work with Surrey Welfare Benefits to produce "Welfare Benefits for carers in Surrey. What's available? How to get information and advice in Surrey." This has been an invaluable information booklet for carers.

There are still limited copies of "Moving and Handling Back Care for Carers" which is a report on the need for improved support and services to carers about back care. Carers can download a copy of this from Carersnet.

We regularly updated our leaflets about all our projects, including information about Action for Carers and Employment, Surrey Young Carers and our Moving and Handling Back Care Projects in Tandridge and Redhill and Reigate.

We provide information tables at our Carers Forum which we hold twice a year. We are very grateful to our partner agencies for providing us with articles and leaflets of interest and benefit to carers.

We also provide regular reports, briefing sheets, and an information pack to carers who ring in with various queries, and we signpost them to the most appropriate organisation that can assist them further.

We are currently developing a leaflet and other information to be available to Carers at the time of Hospital Discharge. This will tell Carers about what to expect throughout the hospital stay, of the person they are caring for, and of Carers rights to be supported at the time of going home.

Geraldine Willis - County Carers Co-ordinator.

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