Learning Disabilities and Family Carers Project

Introduction

The Princess Royal Trust for Carers and Crossroads Care have joined together to work on a project to improve carers’ services. The project works with people who care for other people with learning disabilities, and carers who have learning disabilities themselves. We are trying to make sure that these people have better information and better services.

What is this project about?

The Valuing People Support Team works to make the aims of the Valuing People White Paper (2001), and the new strategy Valuing People Now (2009) a reality. They are part of the Department of Health and the government.

The Valuing People Support Team gave The Princess Royal Trust for Carers and Crossroads Care some funding for family carers and learning disabilities. This funding is to improve carers services locally, so carers affected by learning disability get a better deal and better services.

The Valuing People Support Team want us to focus on four main groups of carers:

1. Parent carers of children with learning disabilities
2. Carers coping with transition of children with learning disabilities to adulthood
3. Mutual carers, with older people and adults with learning disabilities who care for each other

4. Other carers who have learning disabilities themselves

What are we doing?

Our overall aim is to improve the quality of life for more family carers of people with learning disabilities in the UK.

We need to meet three outcomes:

Outcome 1 - Better services and information for carers affected by learning disability, reaching more of these carers.

Outcome 2 – New partnerships between existing carers services and learning disability organisations such as Mencap, the Home Farm Trust, the National Autistic Society, Contact a Family and others.

Outcome 3 - Better public and professional understanding of these groups of carers. This includes creating new training resources to help make this happen.
We are working with two teams of consultants, Inspired Services and The Foundation for People with Learning Disabilities. They are helping us deliver these outcomes.

So far they have produced:

- A Directory of Learning Disability Carers Services, provided by Carers Centres and Crossroads Schemes across the UK
- Guidance for Learning Disability Partnership Boards on the Carers Strategy
- A literature review and resource pack

This information will be available on our websites:

www.carers.org
www.crossroads.org.uk

The consultants are also going to develop a toolkit of training and best practice about working with these carers. This would be aimed at professionals who work with carers of people with learning disabilities, or people with learning disabilities themselves.
Who else works on the project?

The Princess Royal Trust for Carers has appointed a new **Policy and Development Officer**. Her job is to:

- help people find out more about resources and services for carers
- find out about good services and share this information,
- help build networks with partner organisations,
- and help the public and professionals to understand these groups of carers.

Contact details

Cath Baker  
Policy and Development Officer (Learning Disabilities)  
**The Princess Royal Trust for Carers**

Tel: 01568 760027  
Email: cbaker@carers.org  
Website: [www.carers.org](http://www.carers.org)
Background information

What is The Princess Royal Trust for Carers?

The Princess Royal Trust for Carers is the largest provider of support services for carers in the UK. We have a network of 144 local Carers Centres, who are independent charities in their own right.

Each Carers Centre works to provide information, advice and other support services to carers in their area. The whole network supports almost 350,000 carers. This number includes over 20,000 carers who are affected by learning disability.

The Princess Royal Trust for Carers helps to improve and support the Carers Centres’ services. We also work nationally to raise awareness of carers’ issues, with the public, government and other organisations.

We run 3 websites:

- [www.carers.org](http://www.carers.org) - for all carers
- [www.youngcarers.net](http://www.youngcarers.net) - for young carers
- [www.carers.org/professionals](http://www.carers.org/professionals) - for staff working with carers
What is Crossroads Care?

Crossroads Care improves lives of carers by giving them time to be themselves and enjoy a break from their caring responsibilities. We provide reliable services which meet each carer’s individual needs, and the needs of the people they look after.

There are 123 Crossroads Schemes across England and Wales. Our schemes offer practical support to carers, usually in the home, by supplying a trained carer support worker to relieve the carer.

We talk with each carer to find out how they would like us to help them. When we visit the carer is free to do as they wish – to see friends, keep appointments, go out, study, or rest.

We also work across England and Wales to raise awareness of carers’ issues, with the public, government and other organisations. Our website is [www.crossroads.org.uk](http://www.crossroads.org.uk)

What do we mean by the term ‘carer’?

A carer is someone who, without payment, provides help and support to a partner, child, relative, friend or neighbour, who could not manage without their help. This could be due to age, physical or mental illness, addiction or disability.