



Wokingham
Learning Disability
Partnership Board

Minutes from the Self Advocate Workshop

Bradbury Centre
Tuesday 9th August, 2011

Being a Carer

Introductions and Icebreaker

Jodie welcomed everyone to today's workshop which was about *Being A Carer*. To help us understand what being a carer means, Dennisha Villaverde from the Princess Royal Trust for Carers joined us today.



We started off with an Icebreaker where we broke into groups and thought about who we live with and the last time we helped someone. Here are some of the things we said:

I used to live with my mum. I helped with the shopping, the washing and collecting prescriptions for her.



I live with my brother & sister-in-law. I help with the washing-up.

I live with my husband. I help him to be more organised!

I live with my husband. I helped my daughter move into her new home.

I live on my own. I help my neighbour with her shopping.

I live with my flatmate. I help him look up cinema times on the internet.

I live with my parents & sister. I help my dad with his allotments.



I live with my mum. I take her out & about in the car.

I live with my parents. I help mow the lawn.



I live with my parents & brother. I help make my mum's breakfast & give her a drink & her tablets.

I live with my parents. I help with the housework & shopping.

I live at Ravenswood. I help put away my laundry & clean my bedroom.



I live with my mum. I help with the washing-up & I'm learning to use the tumble dryer.

Then we asked **What is a carer?**

- ✓ A carer is someone who **helps another person** who would not be able to manage to live at home without help.
- ✓ If you always spend **quite a lot of your time each week** helping someone else, then you might be a carer.
- ✓ Carers **usually look after people in their family**, like their mum or dad, brother or sister. Carers might also look after their husband, wife, partner or a friend.



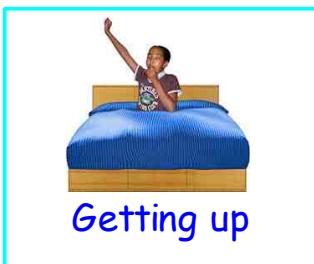
Anything else?

Generally, a **carer isn't paid** to look after someone - whereas a support worker **is** paid to look after someone. Also, most of the time, carers live with the person they look after, but not always.



What does a carer do?

People who are carers might do **lots of different things** to help. Some people need help with every day things like:



And other people might need someone just to help make sure they stay safe or to stop them being lonely and upset. Here are some of our ideas for other things a carer might help people to do:

Have a bath

Get dressed

Get the shopping

Cut up food & eat their meal

Take some exercise

Sort out finances & pay bills

Get out & about - either walking or in a wheelchair

The collage includes images of a person hanging clothes, a person with shopping bags, a person cutting food, a person sitting at a table with a plate of food, a person in a wheelchair, and several utility bills (Electric, Phone, Gas) with a total amount of 35.75.

Next we heard a story about a man called John. He had a bad back. We thought about how a carer might help him look after his home and garden. John is a made up person, but we may know someone like John who would need our help. We got into groups and thought about the practical things we could do to help John.



There are steps up to John's house. Perhaps an OT (occupational therapist) could assess John's needs and arrange for a ramp or a handrail to be fitted to the steps.



The grass is very long. Perhaps we could cut his grass and do some weeding, or get a gardener to do it for John. We could talk to his neighbours and see if they could help, and John could also contact the Age UK Handyperson Scheme on tel: 0118 959 4242 to do a few jobs around the home.



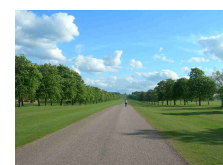
John has difficulty putting on his socks. We could go over to John's house in the morning and help him put them on.



The washing basket is too heavy for him. We could take it to the washing machine for him, or take it to the launderette.



John has to pick up his prescription from the doctors – but it is a long walk and he gets very tired. We could offer to collect it for him, or we could suggest he asks the pharmacy and doctors to talk to each other so that his medication is sent straight to his home. John could do his food shopping online too.



Other suggestions included going to the local Volunteer Centre to see if they know someone who might help, or asking the Citizens Advice Bureau for their advice.



Am I a carer?

Next we talked about the things we do around the home to help the people we live with, and thought about whether we are carers without realising it! Jodie asked us 3 questions:

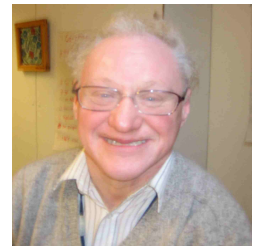
- Do you spend lots of time every week making sure another person is safe and well?
- Do you think the person you look after would be able to manage without your help?
- Do you find it difficult to do the things you want to because you look after someone else? For example - are you stopped from going out in the day or evening because you have to stay at home to look after the person you live with?



Next, some people shared their experience of caring:

David's Story

"My mum was quite unwell for the last 4 years of her life. She found things more difficult to do. I needed to help her out more and more. I helped do the housework (things like polishing, washing, changing the sheets) and made sure she took her medication. I did the shopping as well. It can be hard work caring for someone and holding down a job. When she went into hospital it was quite a shock. I would have liked to have been more prepared."



Philip's Story

"My granny has dementia. She forgets simple things and finds it difficult to remember any of her family. In 2008/9 she lived with us for a few months. When she got upset, I calmed her down, and helped her when she was confused. I also helped tidy up after her. At the time, I felt uncertain and worried – she shouted quite a lot."



Jackie's Story

"Before Steve and I got married 25 years ago, we both knew one day I would end up using a wheelchair. Steve helps me with lots of things. For example, putting on my shoes, getting me up at the weekends, making my breakfast, picking up my prescription, charges my wheelchair, and does the shopping and some of the housework. I help Steve out too. I help organise the home. I make sure all the bills are paid and the rent. I also make shopping lists."



Ask for help!

It's great to be independent, but if you are a carer, and things start to get difficult to manage, it's important that you tell someone so you can get help. Sometimes it is difficult to ask for help and people can be worried about changes that might be made to their home situation - but it is important that you speak up because no-one can make you do something that you don't want to do (like move out).



Being a Carer – the good things and the not so good things!

Dennisha helped us think about the good things and the not so good things about caring for someone.

Good things?

- It makes you feel happy to help someone.
- It's great to learn new things, for example being independent.
- You can get help.
- You may be able to get an extra benefit called "Carers Allowance".



Not so good things?

- There might not be time to do the things you want to do.
- It can be stressful.
- It can be hard work.
- It is upsetting to see a relative who is ill - and sometimes the condition (like dementia) has changed the person you love.
- We worry about new people coming into our homes that we don't know – for example a new support worker or social worker.



What help is available?

Help is available to make life easier for people who are carers.

Practical Help:

- You can ask for help around the home with things like housework, making meals and doing the shopping.
- You can use the Handyperson Scheme (from Age UK) – it's free of charge and can help with odd jobs around the home



- like changing a light bulb or unblocking a sink.
- Safety checks – someone can check your house is safe by making sure there are no trip hazards and that your smoke alarm works.
- Social and leisure activities – groups like the Princess Royal Carers Trust might be able to help you have a break if you are spending a lot of time caring for a family member.
- Pills and medicine deliveries – your medication can be delivered to your home to save you having to go out.



The Princess Royal Trust
for Carers

Equipment to make life easier:

- Emergency alarm – if someone falls over, they can pull a special cord that has been fitted in their home, and an alarm goes through to a call centre.
- Pendant – this is worn around someone's neck and works in the same way as the emergency alarm.
- Adaptations – things like bath rails and hand rails.



Financial Help:

- There is an extra benefit for people who care for someone over a certain number of hours a week – this is called a **Carers Allowance**.



For more advice and support, see last page for details.

Carers' Assessment

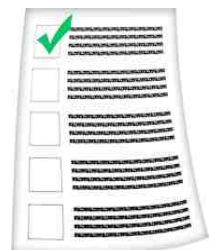
A carers' assessment will help you you to think about:

- What you do as a carer.
- What parts of caring you find difficult.
- What help and support you want.
- What other people can do to help you enjoy your own life too.



A carers' assessment also helps other people know you are a carer. There are lots of people with learning disabilities who are also carers but they don't get help because **they don't realise they are carers**.

If you think you might be a carer, or someone you know might be a carer, talk to Jodie or Dennisha. Then you will be given support to talk to social services about your situation.





Information and Support

Alzheimer's Society

Barkham Day Hospital

Tel: 0118 978 4815

This group supports carers and people with all forms of dementia



Age Concern

Reading

Tel: 0118 959 4242

This charity works with and for older people. They aim to give information and help older people keep independent.



Carers Direct

Tel: 0808 802 0202

Free, confidential advice and information for carers.



CLASP

Wokingham Methodist Church

Tel: 0118 979 6364

Self-advocacy group for adults with learning disabilities.



Community Mental Health Team

The Old Forge

Tel: 0118 989 0707

Provides help and support for adults in the community with severe and enduring mental health problems.



Crossroads

Wokingham Hospital

Tel: 0118 979 5324

Provides respite and support for all carers in the Wokingham area.



NHS Direct

Tel: 0845 46 47

National helpline providing expert health advice and information. Open all day, every day.



PALS (Patient Advice and Liaison Service)

Royal Berkshire Hospital

Tel: 0118 982 2829

Provides information, advice and help for patients, families and carers within the NHS.



Princess Royal Trust Carers Service

Reading

Tel: 0800 988 5462

Provides information, advice and support for all carers in Reading, Wokingham and West Berks.



The Princess Royal Trust
for Carers

Rapid Response Service

Wokingham Hospital

Tel: 0118 949 5079

Rapid response and re-ablement. Intermediate care to try and stop people going into hospital.



WEBCAS Advocacy Service

Wokingham

Tel: 0118 979 2031

Advocacy service for any adult living in Wokingham who has a disability or long-term illness and their carers.



West Berkshire
Advocacy

Wokingham Borough Council

Wokingham

Tel: 0118 974 6000

Local government office.

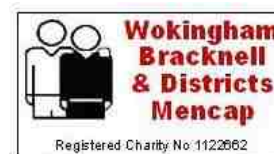


Wokingham, Bracknell & Districts Mencap

Wokingham

Tel: 0118 979 8539

Provides help, support and advice to people with learning disabilities and their families.



Wokingham & District Citizen's Advice Bureau

Wokingham

Tel: 0844 499 4126

Offering personalised advice and information on a wide range of issues, face-to-face, on the telephone or by email.



Wokingham Learning Disability Partnership Board

Support Horizons, Wokingham

Tel: 05600 766 114

Providing information and support to people and groups in the Wokingham Borough.



That was the end of our Workshop!

Our next workshop will be on
Tuesday 20th September at the
Bradbury Centre, 10am-12noon
where we will be talking about

Being Part of Your Community

