

### What can churches do? 1. Recognition

- The first thing is to be attentive to the caregivers with whom we come in contact: to notice those who accompany people with any sort of special needs to church, to notice others who are in the house when we take someone home communion.
- More formal recognition can be given to these people by mentioning them (by name with their permission) in intercessions, not simply praying for the sick and distressed, but those who give them care, paid and unpaid.
- Consider organising service or event to celebrate the contribution made by caregivers. Some suggestions for putting such a service together are given in the second part of this resource sheet.

### What can churches do? 2. Connection

- Consider holding a midweek service, fellowship group, or church meeting in the home of a carer and providing a volunteer to sit with the person who is cared for if necessary.
- A lunch club or coffee morning for older carers (but probably not using the term 'carer!'), where they are served, and care is also provided for their loved ones is a more ambitious idea. A short act of worship or simple reflection could be incorporated. This sort of enterprise would be labour intensive. Transport is also likely to be an issue, and could be helped by a partnership with an organisation such as Age UK.
- It is important to see people as more than carers or receivers of care. Consider inviting an older carer to address a meeting on some aspect of life or ministry in which they have gifts, experience, and wisdom.

### What can churches do? 3. Providing information

There are many organisations – faith based and secular – that provide information that may be of help to carers and those for whom they care. Churches can act as information hubs, keeping a stock of leaflets, perhaps enabling access to internet information, or personally putting individuals in touch with those that might help them. Examples of some of these organisations:

### Key Organisations Offering Support to carers

Organisation	What they do	Phone	Web
Nottinghamshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust	Offer support and involve carers in the care of people with mental health needs	0115 8831960	<a href="http://www.nottinghamshirehealthcare.nhs.uk/families-and-carers">www.nottinghamshirehealthcare.nhs.uk/families-and-carers</a>
Carers Federation	Listen, provide info, groups, training, rights as a carer	0115 9629311	<a href="mailto:acs@carersfederation.co.uk">acs@carersfederation.co.uk</a> <a href="http://www.carersfederation.co.uk">www.carersfederation.co.uk</a> <a href="mailto:r.gardiner@carersfederation.co.uk">r.gardiner@carersfederation.co.uk</a> (Rob Gardiner)
Nottinghamshire Carers Hub	Info, advice, guidance, signpost services, short break accommodation, support groups, gym membership, training, support, benefits and discounts, grants, peer support	0115 8248824	<a href="mailto:hub@carerstrustem.org">hub@carerstrustem.org</a> <a href="http://www.carerstrustem.org/hub">www.carerstrustem.org/hub</a>
Looking after me course	Relaxation techniques, tiredness, exercise, healthy eating, coping with depression, communication, future planning	01623 673302	<a href="mailto:dawn.anderson@nottshc.nhs.uk">dawn.anderson@nottshc.nhs.uk</a>
Carers First	Culturally approp info, support and outreach contact, access and signposting services, advocacy, carer support groups	0115 9629369	<a href="http://www.carersfederation.co.uk">www.carersfederation.co.uk</a>
Action for young carers		0115 9629351	
Carers UK advice line		0808 8087777	<a href="mailto:advice@carersuk.org">advice@carersuk.org</a>
Carers Trust	Website with links and opps for carers to share experiences	0844 8004361	<a href="http://www.carers.org">www.carers.org</a>
Carers Assessment	Free assessment of the impact caring has upon you and the support you may need	0300 5008080	<a href="mailto:enquiries@nottsc.gov.uk">enquiries@nottsc.gov.uk</a>

#### Age UK

Has produced two really helpful booklets: 'From us to you: Top tips for older carers from older carers' and 'Advice for carers: A practical guide'. Available from

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

0800 169 65 65

#### Alzheimer's Society

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

Helpline 0945 300 0336

#### Carers UK

Information and advice for carers of all ages

Princess Royal Trust for Carers  
Information and advice for carers of all ages

Rethink  
A mental health charity that offers support to family and carers

#### What can churches do? 4. Pastoral care

- Be proactive about asking what practical help is needed. Sometimes church members are willing to help, but nervous about what is required. A little bit of training may be all that is necessary. Don't forget to involve your parish safeguarding officer if the task involves spending time alone with a vulnerable adult.
- Giving carers time and space is important:
  - To take a break
  - To be themselves
  - To express their worries, stresses, and joys honestly
  - To laugh and to cry
- Some key gospel truths that we all need to re-appropriate from time to time, but may be especially important for carers:
  - Even when things don't seem to make much sense God is with us
  - We can face the future with hope
  - Whatever our daily work, paid or unpaid, it is a gift from God and also a gift that we offer back to God
- A helpful book of Bible meditations for carers is *The Challenge of Caring* by Alexine Crawford, published by BRF (2011).