

West Norfolk Carers

Your local independent charity supporting unpaid family carers & creating a carer's 'hub' in West Norfolk

MAKING POSITIVE IMPACTS ON FAMILY CARER'S LIVES



A family carer is someone of any age whose life is restricted because they are looking after another person who cannot manage without help because of illness, age related frailty, mental health need, substance misuse or disability. Family carers are not paid and do not always live with the person they care for. They may be caring for a friend, neighbour or relative.



West Norfolk Carers
Supporting Carers across Norfolk

www.westnorfolkcarers.org.uk

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Outreach &
Communications
funded by:





“West Norfolk Carers works to help family carers to improve their emotional and physical wellbeing, resilience and abilities to cope with their caring roles - whilst also have a ‘life of their own’. We are dedicated to supporting family carers of all ages and helping them to cope with their caring responsibilities.

*Many people who have a caring role often do not necessarily think of themselves as carers. Therefore they may be unaware of the services and support that exists for them. **We wish to extend our impact and make more of a positive difference to even more carers living locally.***

West Norfolk Carers is now engaged in a major outreach campaign to ensure they know what is available to support them in their caring.

We are delighted that this outreach has been funded by the Lottery’s ‘Awards for All’ grant programme.”

Message from the Board of Trustees

Board of Trustees:
Marion Coleman
Jean Ellis
Lesley Bambridge
Alasdair Macdonald
David Cowling



“Carers typify what many refer to now as the ‘Big Society’, but in acting as they do, they require help to ensure that they are physically, mentally and financially supported to provide care to a loved one.

West Norfolk Carers is a great local charity doing exactly that, by offering an invaluable service to Carers in my constituency. I would like to thank them for all that they do.”

Henry Bellingham MP

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OUR STORY – SUPPORTING CARERS AND MAKING AN IMPACT

We know from the most recent Census that there are around **15,000** unpaid family carers in West Norfolk – equivalent to **one in nine** people living locally. The number of local carers continues to grow, and with more people living longer it is projected that even more carers will need support services to fulfill their caring roles.

West Norfolk Carers is here to help them now, and as the local independent charity dedicated to supporting them when they need help, we are ambitious to develop services and impact further. We are working hard to create an exemplar carer's 'hub' in the borough.



Now two decades old West Norfolk Carers is currently supporting **820** unpaid family carers at any one time – most often **at a crucial time and point in the carer's life when they especially need help, service support and interventions.**

Funded by Norfolk County Council, the Big Lottery Fund and most recently, the Triangle Trust and BBC Children in Need the charity aims to improve the lives of carers of all ages and the people they care for. The charity provides a wide range of support services (these are outlined on page 8). Caring for someone is likely to impact on many areas of their life, such as their health, relationships, work and leisure activities. **In this booklet we have spoken with local carers asking them to tell us about their personal stories of providing care, and capture the positive impact of the support we provide.**

We know from talking with them, and in recent consultation with carers, that more needs to be done by us and many other organisations to support them in their caring roles.

Many people who have a caring role do not think of themselves as carers either. They may, therefore, be unaware of the services and support, which are available to them in their local community, such as financial assistance. This booklet is designed to highlight the support that is available from the charity and the difference we make to their lives as carers.

OUR PLANS

Over the coming years West Norfolk Carers has set itself clear goals to extend its impact by:

Increasing The Number Of Carers Supported By 25% - From The Current 820 To 1,025 - By The End Of 2018;

Positioning And Strengthening West Norfolk Carers As The Main Dedicated Voluntary Sector Carers Support Organisation And First Point Of Contact For Carers Of All Ages And Their Families;

Acting As A Carer's 'Hub' And Offering Support Services At The Crucial Times Required By Carers Needing Support In Their Caring Roles.

THEIR STORIES – IMPACTING ON OLDER LIVES RONNIE & ROGER



Ronnie and Roger live in a village cut in two by the noisy and very busy A47, not far from King's Lynn. Large lorries roar pass their front living room window every few minutes, often briefly blocking out the daylight.

10 years ago Ronnie had her first severe stroke, and this has been followed by two more. She now also suffers from arthritis which makes mobility difficult for her. At times Ronnie finds it a real challenge to get her words out and this can be very frustrating for her. Remembering can often be tricky too. She reports feeling very depressed and on some days she can't stop crying; and on other days she just feels exhausted and is confined to her bed.

Roger, her 75 year old husband, is her carer. He is only recently retired after a lifetime in the pub and hospitality trade followed by a short time as a car park attendant. Roger attends the monthly male carers support group meetings held at Tesco's Community rooms.

"My life is very busy and taken up with caring for Ronnie, so getting out to the carers support group meetings is a god-send to me. We arrange for one of Ronnie's friends to come around so that I can go and then not be away from her worrying all the time. West Norfolk Carers has also helped us to deal with the means-tested benefits system which we struggle to understand and often feel like we don't qualify for anything! There is not much time for anything besides being a carer - although I do like to potter around our garden and I still nurture the idea of doing some more wine-making again one day."

Ronnie enjoys feeding her exotic fish, watching them come up for food. She also like crafting, and has a whole table with paper, pens, scissors and materials. She makes delightful crafted presents for friends, their children or her own grandchildren. She recognises how difficult Roger finds it sometimes to care for her and what a challenge their life can be. Local charities - including West Norfolk Carers, the Stroke Association and Headway - play a special and prominent role in Ronnie's life.

"Getting the support we need in our old age and with my illnesses makes all the difference, and we are ever so grateful for the help we get."

Impact of caring on carer's health & wellbeing

The impact of caring is often harmful to the physical and emotional health of carers.

Carers UK's analysis of census findings found that those caring for 50 hours a week or more are twice as likely to be in poor health as those not caring. This difference is especially marked amongst younger people. In the 18-25 age group, those providing 50 hours care or more per week are three times as likely to be in 'not good' health as people of that age group not providing care.

Carers providing high levels of care are twice as likely to be 'permanently sick or disabled' as those not caring. Other factors affecting carers are low incomes and lack of respite from their caring responsibilities.



Many reports* highlight in stark terms the difficulties faced by carers in relation to their own wellbeing, and therefore the wellbeing of the people they care for. Especially striking figures include:

96% of carers report a negative impact of caring on their health and wellbeing

86% of carers report suffering with stress, anxiety and depression

45% of carers experienced difficulties due to low income

* 'Sick, tired and caring' (2011)

FIONA

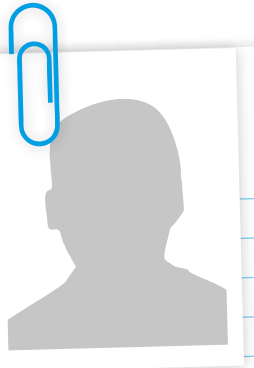
Fiona is very grateful for all the support she has received from the team at West Norfolk Carers. She thinks of the staff and the organisation as a 'special friend'. Other family members - her daughter in particular - have also benefited from support and help from the charity.

Fiona and her family live in the Norfolk Fens, a few miles outside Wisbech. She has been caring for her husband who has dementia for many years. Living in such a rural location can be a real challenge for Fiona and her family, and she talks about the sense of isolation she often feels and how this makes her caring role more burdensome. Like all family carers she explains how the role was thrust upon her and that at the outset she felt ill-equipped to cope as a carer.

"To suddenly find yourself having to do a whole range of things you'd never done before as a carer was a real shock to the system. Overnight I was having to be a nurse and do things - give medicines and personal care - that I'd never done before. I also felt that I was immediately in a kind of battle with all the local helping agencies and health service.

From the outset West Norfolk Carers was there for me and my family. It really had an impact and made a difference to my abilities to cope as carer. Not only was I listened to but I got the practical help needed too. My daughter got respite by attending the young carer sessions, and that was very important to her at such a young age and living in such an isolated village. We like to think of West Norfolk Carers as a special friend and one that has got us through the difficulties we have faced."

CASE STUDY: MARK



Brief overview of Carer & Family/Background and Location:

Mark cares for his wife who has limited mobility due to a severe spinal condition. They live in rented accommodation so were very concerned about the financial impact of the 'bed-room tax'; a Community Assessment had been done for the cared-for but had been carried out several years ago and didn't reflect her current care needs. A Carer's assessment had not been done. As a family carer Mark said he was struggling with his caring role.

Carer problem/s and issue/s identified: Support, Advice & other interventions provided:

Both the carer and his wife wanted to have a break but finances were much too tight to make this happen. Mark reported having problems sleeping as he had to care for his wife throughout the night - he also felt that he had no time to himself, outside of caring

Support, Advice & other interventions provided:

The support worker encouraged Mark to attend a regular carer's group meeting. This gave him a break from caring and the opportunity to meet and talk with other carers. He signposted the carer to a council source of finance that might off-set the increase in Council Tax. He made a successful application. Charity funding was successfully secured to pay for the couple to have a holiday together. They reported back that they had had a great time. The support worker commented further: "I made a successful application to a charity to pay for a new bed. I contacted Social Services and arranged a review of the cared-for personal budget, and asked for a carer's assessment to be carried out. I advocated for the couple at the meeting. Both got generous budgets as a result of the assessments - more than in previous years - and money to pay for future breaks together."

How the carer (in response to support, advice and other interventions) has reported their situation has improved or issue/s resolved:

Mark has fed back by email and on the telephone how very happy he now feels with the support he gets from West Norfolk Carers and that he is better able to cope with his caring role - he also reported similar to the Carers Council.

Impact of caring on carer's finances

The financial costs of caring are significant. Research by Carers UK found that **72% of carers were worse off financially as a result of becoming carers**. The reasons cited for this include the associated costs of disability and inadequacy of disability benefits, giving up work to care and the charges for services.

Carers face higher bills than the rest of the population (including extra heating, laundry and transport costs) and many fail to qualify for support from social services (which have diminishing budgets), meaning that they have to pay for care themselves. **Nearly two thirds are spending their own income or savings to pay for care for the person they look after.**

The same research also found carers reporting financial hardship in a number of areas. More than half were in debt as a result of caring. Three-quarters struggled to pay essential bills and could not afford repairs to their house. One in every two carers is cutting back on food just to make ends meet.

YOUNG CARER'S STORIES – IMPACTING ON YOUNG LIVES

Young Carers are children and young people who care for a family member or friend who is ill, has a physical or learning disability, mental health problems or use drugs or extensive alcohol. The charity offers a lot of help and support for young carers aged between seven and 18 years old including organising social activities to provide a break from their caring responsibilities. Three separate young carers groups are catered for.



RACHEL & ANGELI

Sisters Rachel and Angeli enjoy working hard at school and love sports like football - and they are out swimming most nights practising. Of course they also adore their mum who has multiple sclerosis and is very unwell.

“ Our dad does most of the caring, but he works full time and we are needed to help out”, explains 12 Angeli. “ In the last six months we have done more and more caring for mum, and also lots more cleaning up and tidying up in the house because mum can’t do things like that anymore. We help with her medication too, which is sometimes difficult to get right with all the different tablets she needs to take every day.”

Coming to young carer sessions is very important to Rachel and Angeli. As their dad Trevor says: “ With their mother so very ill - her life now is on a knife edge - the young carers group is a fantastic resource, somewhere that they can just be themselves, have fun and enjoy being a youngster - its like they are part of a larger extended family. They can find themselves isolated locally as our relatives live some way away. Coming to the sessions is very important to both of my girls.”

JAMES

James is a sporting enthusiast as well - he has been refining his energetic and highly impressive Parkour* skills for the last seven years. He has performed in public on several occasions and at the young carers sessions he likes to display his expertise and compete with other young carers like Reece. Now aged 13 years old James has been a carer for his dad for the last four years.

“My mum has mental health problems and so me and my sisters care for her. I can get quite depressed as well so coming to young carers is really a bit of a life saver...its like a family here, my second life. Without this I’d be stuck at home all the time, in my room with nothing to do.”

Young Carers groups meet on a monthly basis on a Wednesday evening we have three groups from those aged 7-11; 11-14 and 14-18 years old. The young carers use these sessions to have a break from their caring roles, be themselves, have time to talk and engage a range of activities.

* the activity or sport of moving rapidly through an area, typically in an urban environment, negotiating obstacles by running, jumping, and climbing.



GETTING YOUNG CARERS FEEDBACK

The active participation and engagement of young carers in how the services are delivered is vital. Getting their views and measuring impact are both a high priority for the charity. Recently an external evaluator visited a young carers session held at the Discovery Centre in King’s Lynn.

In facilitated discussions young carers made positive and enthused responses when asked whether their involvement with the charity had made a difference to their personal development, wellbeing, confidence and social skills acquisition. They all report thoroughly enjoying all the activities and social outings.

The young carers believe that the young carer sessions had a major impact on their young lives, making them feel more in control of their caring, more confident, better able to make friends and also articulate their feeling and needs to others. The staff team are highly praised by the young carers who place great value on the activities provided.

The young carers scored the charity’s support to them very highly, with the overwhelming majority scoring it 10 out of 10. This was especially noticeable for how it how increased their social networks and friendship circles. 85% gave the young carers 10 out of 10 for helping them feel more confident and better able to cope with their caring role.

HER-STORY MARION

Marion is dedicated to the voluntary sector in Norfolk and determined to see it flourish. She also cares for her frail 92 year old mother who needs 24/7 attention.

‘I’ve been a family carer for five years now. My mother became so unwell - she has Alzheimer’s and cancer - that we encouraged her to come and live with us. Fortunately we have an annex, otherwise where she was living (in a rural area) would have involved several daily 5 mile round trips. This on top of caring. She is so poorly and I needed to be on hand to help out all the time, although we do have some marvellous support from Norfolk social services. Providing care is not easy and it can be very wearing with a constant round of doing things: personal care, cleaning and making sure she is eating properly.’



Marion not only has first-hand experience of being a family carer but she is now also also a Trustee of West Norfolk Carers, and this has involved her in many hours of weekly voluntary work. Amazingly, she is also a Trustee at West Norfolk Voluntary Community Action, a local organisation that helps other voluntary organisations grow and develop. Previously, and for many years, she was involved in West Norfolk Community Transport.

She has been the chair of the West Norfolk Carers board for the last two years, and is resolute in her determination to improve support for carers and ensure equal access. Lately, she has been actively campaigning for more outreach activities - and spearheaded the People’s Millions Lottery bid for a new Carers Advice Minibus. As Marion explains:

“ We want to buy, equip and run a CARERS ADVICE MINIBUS, which can outreach into rural West Norfolk – enabling more family carers of all ages to access our services and the support they need. Those living in isolated areas and estates will benefit. Advice services and activities will be offered from the minibus to carers – and we estimate that an extra 800 carers will benefit in the first year. There is no other similar resource to this in the area. It will be unique.”

Carers come from diverse social backgrounds. Some are working whilst they care, others not.
Two thirds of carers are women.

Recent census results clearly show that women are more likely to be unpaid carers than men. Women have a 50:50 chance of providing care by the time they are aged 59; compared with men who have the same chance by the time they are 75 years old. Women are more likely to give up work in order to care.
80% of carers receiving support from West Norfolk Carers are female.

Most carers nationally (5.7 million) are adult carers (aged over 18) and the peak age for caring is between the ages of 50 to 59 years. More than one in five people aged 50-59 (1.5 million across the UK) are providing some unpaid care. One in four women in this age group is providing some care compared with less than one in five men.

Impact of caring on carer’s social lives

Carers can often face social exclusion with profound feelings of loneliness and isolation. Carers also have problems accessing entertainment and leisure services (and a host of other social activities) due to the cost, lack of time because of their heavy caring responsibilities and poor accessibility.

Many also lack access to digital and social media equipment and facilities including computers and the know how to use such technology. They are more likely to rely on traditional media sources including newspapers, radio and TV.

FAMILY STORIES – IMPACTING ON FAMILY LIVES

When someone becomes sick or injured, the impact can be far reaching upon the whole family, and whilst there are services who offer support for the ill or injured person, or the carer, there are a very few who offer whole family support. West Norfolk Carers have recognized this, and are responding with a range of support and new services.



FERN & VIC

At the age of just 8 years old Fern is one the charity’s youngest beneficiaries. She attends the monthly young carer sessions.

She helps her mum Vic and dad Paul to care for her two twin brothers Luke and Robin who are autistic. The family are close but in need of some extra help and Vic acknowledges that at times Fern has to wait whilst her brothers needs are met first.

Often Fern feels a little overlooked, which isn’t surprising as the brothers are quite a handful for their parents. She is gleeful about her time with the other young carers as she says:

“ I like having time away from my brothers, and I really enjoy all the activities. I have made new friends! I would like it to be more often though. Going to Legoland with my new friends was great.”

Fern also recognises her mum can, whilst she is at the young carer sessions, then have more time to dedicate to the twins. This gives the whole family a chance to cope with their caring roles. Fern is keen to access more help from the young carers team, and clearly more sessions and support would be most welcome to increase impact.



Rebecca Daisey

Impact of caring on carer’s social lives

The majority of carers are compelled to combine their work with caring responsibilities.

Eight out of 10 carers are of working age. An astonishing 400,000 people in the UK combine full-time work with their caring - for 20 hours a week or more (of these 200,000 are caring for 50 hours per week or more).

Male carers are more likely to be in work than female carers, six out of 10 male carers work, and 90% of these work full-time.

YOUR SUPPORT SERVICES

Executive Manager, Jane Evans has been leading West Norfolk Carers for almost a decade. Growing the organisation from small beginnings to the significant carer's support charity it is today, and she is now focused on creating a truly inspirational carer's 'hub' in West Norfolk.

Jane explains charity's core service offer:



“ We provide a comprehensive flexible range of services designed to give carers of all ages a break from their often stressful caring responsibilities. We are here to give them a listening ear, counselling, up-to-date information and advice. Carers can access activities including therapies, support groups and personal development training. We also visit carers in their own homes recognising that many struggle to find the time to leave the person that they are caring for.

We run several Carers Support Groups that act as a vital link and point of contact to answer carer's concerns, anxieties and queries - and this then allows them to access our comprehensive support services. ”

The carers groups are:

The Carers Retreat...

This group meets on the last Wednesday of the month from 10am - 12 noon at the Deaf Centre in King's Lynn. Carers pop in for a tea/coffee and a chat. Relaxation therapies are available.

Swaffham Wellbeing Group...

Meet every Tuesday at the Icen Community Rooms from 10.30am. A wide range of activities are organised and Carers can stay on for lunch afterward.

Hunstanton Carers Group...

Meet on the last Friday of the month at the United Services Club in Hunstanton at 10am for morning coffee, followed by gentle exercise and home cooked lunches.

Tesco Community Carers Group...

Meet every Monday afternoon in Tescos (Hardwick Road, King's Lynn) Community Room from 1-3pm.

Downham Market Carers Group (run in conjunction with West Norfolk Mind)...

Meets every Friday morning from 10.30 - 12.30 at the Sovereign Centre in Downham Market.

Male Carers Group...

If you are male carer there is now a new friendly male carers group. Relax and take a break from your caring role. Meets once a month on a Wednesday.

Linking Together...

Supports family members and carers affected by drug and alcohol misuse. If you are a family member or friend of someone who is misusing drugs and/or alcohol you may like to talk to someone about it - in complete confidence. We can offer support, practical suggestions and advice. The Linking Together Young Carers Group meets on the end Saturday of the month.



Sara Melhado



Steve Rourke

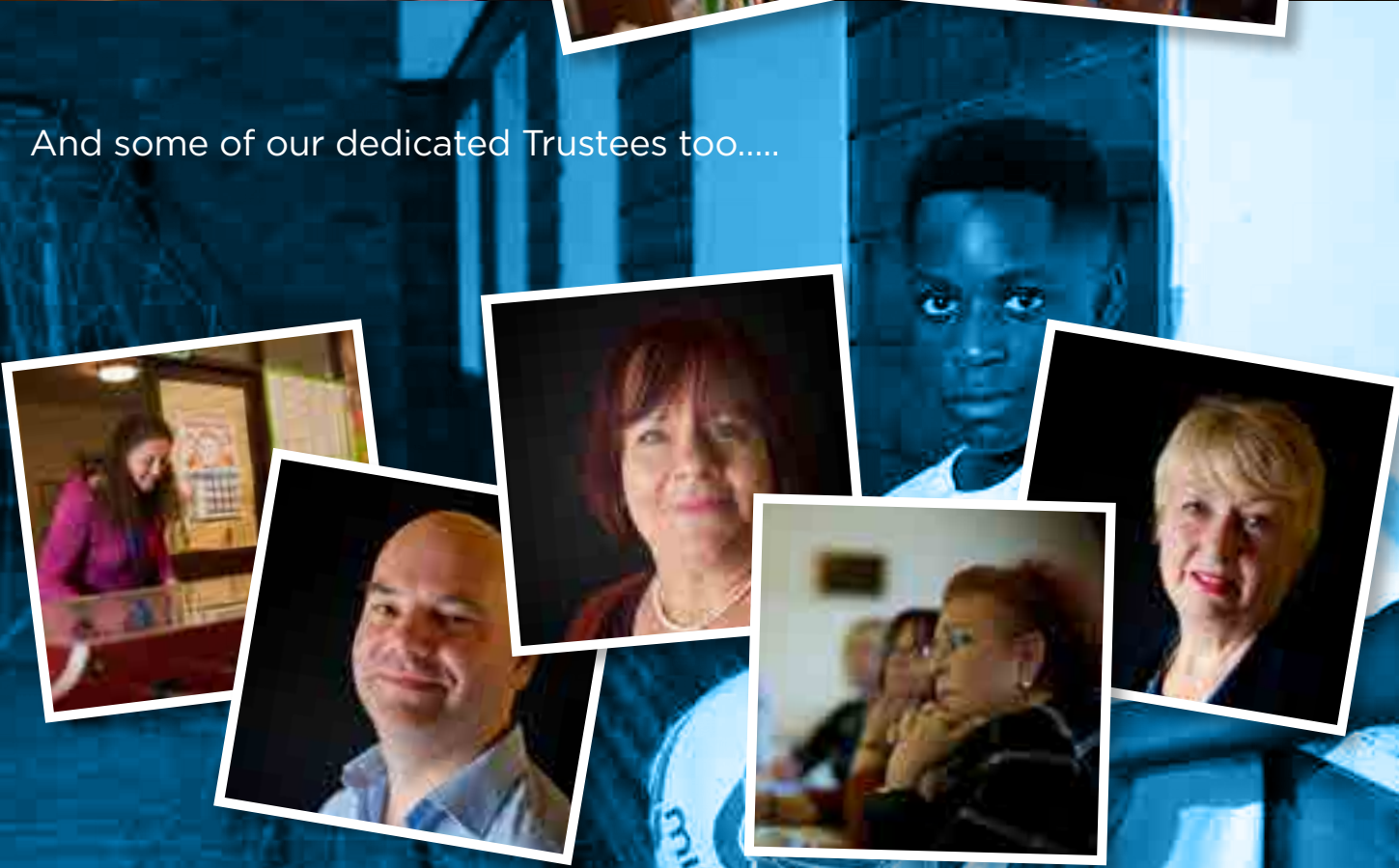


Jackie Haverson

The support services for carers are co-ordinated from the charity's main offices based in King's Lynn, with extensive outreach and delivery of help, advice and support across West Norfolk. These are some of the friendly, helpful and committed staff you are likely to encounter!



And some of our dedicated Trustees too....



NEWSFLASH: WEST NORFOLK CARERS SCOOPS GRANT TO EXPAND SUPPORT FOR YOUNG CARERS

We are thrilled to have been awarded a grant from the BBC Children in Need fund - which will allow us to develop our work with young carers across West Norfolk by creating awareness in schools and outreaching into local migrant communities to identify possibilities for early access support and securing their participation in support programmes.

The new expanded service will offer 50 young carers a range of peer support, one-to-one guidance, social activities and group work aimed at improving their self-esteem and confidence.

NEWSFLASH: TRANSFORMING LIVES

Five year grant for new support services for young adult carers and their families.

West Norfolk Carers has been awarded £211,202 from the Big Lottery Fund which allows for increased support to be offered throughout rural west Norfolk and King's Lynn.

The new support service aims to ensure that the carer and their family build resilience to mental health problems and develop strong support networks and life skills.

By identifying the most vulnerable and disadvantaged carers the charity will support them through one to one sessions as well as telephone and email support. Families will also be signposted to other agencies to help them build coping strategies, self management skills, and to develop social and family support networks. An extra 250 adult carers and their families will be provided with support over five years.

Respite breaks will be arranged and carers will be taught ways in how to deal with stress and anxiety. The final element of the project, learning and employment, will give carers guidance on CV writing, job searches and carers will also be supported to undertake volunteering and work placements.



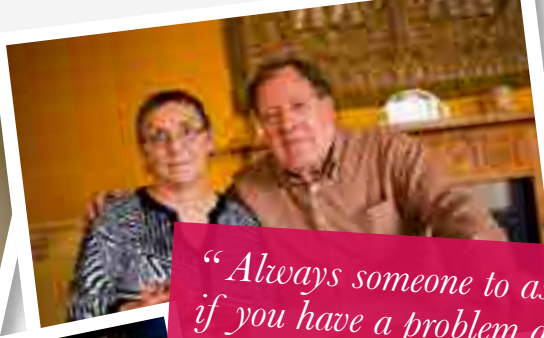


West Norfolk Carers

Supporting Carers across Norfolk



“WNC gave me a weekly break and other people to talk to.”



“Always someone to ask if you have a problem and you get a sensible answer.”



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Comments made by carer's interviewed in West Norfolk

West Norfolk Carers is supported by:



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