
21 February 2007

A GOOD DEAL FOR CARERS

We welcome the launch of the government's New Deal for carers and acknowledgement that current levels of funding are insufficient to meet present and predicted demand for carers' services.

We know carers will welcome the £25m funding for emergency respite care and the funding for a national helpline for carers and the development of a carer training programme. We are re-assured that the invaluable contribution carers make to our society is being recognised. Many give up an income, future employment prospects and pension rights to become a carer. The majority of carers struggle alone and do not know that help is available to them. And one in five – or 1.2 million - carers spend over 50 hours a week on their caring responsibilities.

Shan Nicholas, Chief Executive, says: "This is a very important step forward. However, the key challenge the government and local authorities now face is to ensure these resources are used in such a way to make a real and positive difference to carers' lives at a local level".

The Princess Royal Trust for Carers currently helps almost 290,000 carers cope by giving information, support and advice through its network of 129 Carers' Centres across the UK.

Shan Nicholas goes on to say: "We have already been in discussion with the Department of Health about training for carers. Many people with a long-term condition depend on their carers. Carers are a vital part of the whole health and social care system – they are there, day-in day-out and often their own health suffers. It should not be underestimated the value of having carers' organisations such as ourselves advising on the services carers need at a local level. It will be critical to the success of these initiatives that carers and carer organisations like us are involved at the earliest possible stage."

Ends

For further press information please contact:
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Notes to Editors

1. The Princess Royal Trust for Carers is a national charity that supports over 290,000 carers throughout the UK through a network of Carers' Centres and interactive websites, www.carers.org and www.youngcarers.net.
2. 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.
3. According the latest census there are 6 million carers in the UK, 175,000 of whom are under 18.