



PRESS RELEASE

News from Carers Together in Hampshire

20 July 2009

Caring with Confidence launches in Hampshire

A national programme to help carers deal with the demands and stress of caring has been launched in Hampshire.

The programme - Caring with Confidence (CWC) is being launched first in **Romsey, Chandler's Ford, Lyndhurst, the Waterside and Southampton** throughout July, August and September and will later be rolled out to other areas of Hampshire and the Isle of Wight, including Portsmouth.

Carers Together in Hampshire is responsible for running the government-backed programme across the county. All carers across Hampshire and IOW can take part in the free sessions and places can be booked via Carers Together in Hampshire. The programme is flexible and can be completed through face to face sessions, self study, online sessions or a combination of all three.

Caring with Confidence consists of seven sessions, some of which are aimed at particular groups of carers. The first session, *Finding Your Way*, is an introductory session completed by everyone and after that carers can choose which other sessions suit them best. Anyone who misses the first session locally can complete it in another area.

The other sessions are:

- *Caring and Coping* – managing the stress and emotions involved in caring
- *Caring and Me* – health and well-being, and how to be fit for life and caring
- *Caring Day to Day* – the practical essentials of caring
- *Caring and Resources* – accessing resources which save carers money and maximise their income
- *Caring and Life* – time out to think about how the caring role fits with other aspects of life
- *Caring and Communicating* – using real life caring situations to help carers get the best from communicating with professionals and service providers.

“Caring with Confidence is not telling you how to be a carer, or whether you are doing it right or wrong,” said Sarah Spencer-Stonehill, the CWC Project manager for Carers Together in Hampshire.

The sessions are designed to help carers to get the most out of their role and to try to balance their caring responsibilities with work and family responsibilities.

“The programme focuses on the carer and their needs, giving them time to think about themselves a little more than they might normally do. It helps to give them ideas for coping strategies that could make their lives a little easier and ease some of the pressure they sometimes face. We also deal with some of the practical issues and signpost resources that will give them additional support.”

The CWC sessions cover practical aspects of caring such as emergency planning and medication, as well issues such as dealing with emotions.

“Caring is a very difficult job, so carers sometimes have feelings of isolation or feel negative emotions such as guilt, anger or frustration. We can help them to realise that these feelings are commonplace and that there are ways to gain support or to deal with them,” said Sarah.

Anne Meader, Chief Executive of Carers Together in Hampshire, said she is delighted that Carers Together will be able to offer Caring with Confidence to people in the Hampshire, Portsmouth, Southampton and Isle of Wight areas.

“The programme allows carers to meet other people in a similar situation, to learn more about the condition they are dealing with, and to improve their ability to get exactly what they need from the health professionals and services available to them,” she said.

“It gives carers a safe and supportive environment to explore the essentials of looking after someone. This can only help carers to improve their own health and well-being and that of the person they care for.”

Caring with Confidence sessions in Hampshire take place as follows and will also be rolled out to other areas at later dates:

Romsey: 9 Love Lane, Romsey, starting **Wednesday July 15**, from 10am to 1pm.

Chandlers Ford: St Boniface Church Hall, Hursley Road, SO53 2FT, starting **Monday 20 July**, from 1pm to 4pm

New Forest: Fenwick2, Pikes Hill, Lyndhurst, SO43 7NG, starting **Tuesday 4 August**, from 10am to 1pm

Waterside: Hythe Community Centre, Brinton Lane, Hythe SO45 6DU, starting **Monday 10 August**, from 10am to 1pm

Southampton East: Bitterne United Reform Church, 446 Bitterne Road, SO18 5EF, starting **Friday 18 September**, from 10am to 1pm

Southampton West: The Switch, Shirley Warren Action Church, 107-117 Warren Crescent, Shirley Warren, SO16 6AY, starting **Monday 21 September**, from 1pm to 4pm.

For further information contact Sarah Spencer-Stonehill on 01794 519495 or email sarah.stonehill@carerstgether.org.uk

Note to editors:

Caring with Confidence is a free Department of Health-backed knowledge and skills based learning experience, which aims to help carers make a positive difference to their life and that of the person they care for. Any carers over 18 living in England are eligible to take part.

It helps carers build on their strengths, gives useful information about looking after someone, and helps carers decide what positive changes they could make in their caring role. Around 4.9 million people are estimated to provide unpaid care in England. Further information at www.caringwithconfidence.net

Carers Together in Hampshire is the largest local independent carers' support organisation in Hampshire and supports over 40 local carers' groups and forums across the county. Carers Together is a charity and social enterprise run by carers, for carers and is one of the few carers' organisations run largely by volunteers, including its management team and chief executive.

The charity organises outing for carers, runs an advocacy service, organises regular information, advice and support sessions and also runs a free listening line, the Carers Active Listening Line, on 08000 3 23456, where carers can get immediate emotional support and advice. The line is available from 9am to 11pm every day of the year.

Further information is available from www.carerstogether.org.uk