

# CARERS' FOCUS

## NEWSLETTER OF THE OXFORDSHIRE CARERS' FORUM



### NEWSFLASH!

Caring with Confidence to continue

In May 2009 Oxfordshire Carers' Forum won the Department of Health (DoH) Contract to provide the Caring with Confidence Programme to unpaid Carers' in Oxfordshire. This new programme offered a free, safe and supportive environment for Carers to explore the services available to them and the skills and techniques that may be helpful in their caring role. Our first programme ran in Banbury during September 2009 and sessions ran in Abingdon, Bicester, Cowley, Didcot, Oxford, Henley, Letcombe Regis, Chipping Norton, Thame and Witney. OCF ran 86 sessions for 192 carers. We also ran specialist sessions for dementia and group sessions for the African Caribbean and Chinese Communities.

In June we were informed that Government funding would stop in September, so we urgently pursued alternative funding. We are grateful to everyone who told funders how vital this training was for them (*see Carers' comments - p7*), and to Oxfordshire County Council and the Primary Care Trust for the financial support needed to keep going for a while.

The ongoing Caring with Confidence Programme will continue to enable relatives, friends and neighbours who are caring for someone, to build on their knowledge and strengths, share useful information and identify the positive changes they can make to their own situation and to the lives of the people they care for.

Valerie Thwaites



Welcome to our AGM 2010 Page 7

### IT'S GOOD TO BE HEARD

Oxfordshire County Council & the PCT have been consulting about two major issues, both of which are of real significance for Carers: The Ageing Successfully Strategy an overarching strategy for older people that will influence services well into the future, and the re-commissioning of the Carers' Support Service... *Continued on p3*

### Caring has a serious impact on the physical and mental health of many Carers.

Providing better support to Carers could save money in the long run, as unpaid carers are now saving the UK £87 billion every year in potential care costs. This is more than the government spends on the NHS. On average, every carer looking after an ill or disabled relative saves the economy £15,260 per year. This could be saving Oxfordshire £90m per year. *See our recent GP survey p 4&5*

Carers Voice



## Farewell to Martin



Martin Avis retired as Executive Manager at the end of February. He joined us in 2004 as a Consultant and became part time manager of Oxfordshire Carers Forum in 2005. Martin is also life-long emeritus Professor at Brookes University who brought valuable experience in the Oxfordshire NHS as a Non Executive Director in the Community Hospital Trust, a Mental Health Act Manager, and Chairman of South West Oxfordshire Primary Care Trust. In addition, until this year, Martin was Deputy Chairman of the South and Vale Carers Centre.

Martin's energetic and excellent management from 2005/06 to 2010 massively influenced a threefold increase in our income with a very significant increase in the awareness of Carers 'contribution to Health and Social Care in Oxfordshire. His single largest achievement was our successful bid for the DoH Caring with Confidence (CwC) contract.



To fill the gap of losing Martin, we were very fortunate to agree a Partnership Letter of Intent with Age UK. This enabled their very well known and admired deputy Chief Executive, Penny Thewlis, to step into the breach. Penny's impact has been immediately effective in continuing to deliver our mission, to improve the "Health and Wellbeing" of Oxfordshire's Carers. Very significantly, with our Patron Helen Bakers' greatly appreciated support for our submission, we won OCC's Carers' Voice contract into 2011 with a projected extension into 2012 and beyond. So to summarise: a grateful welcome to Penny and heartfelt thanks to Martin.

**Tony Purkis – OCF Chairman**

## Welcome to Penny Thewlis OCF's new Manager

Penny also takes the lead on involving older people & community development work for Age UK Oxfordshire. She joined Age Concern in 2000 to undertake a study on the needs & aspirations of older people in rural Oxfordshire – Lilac from the Garden. Trained as a teacher, Penny has worked in the statutory & voluntary sectors in the disability field, has taught social work students & spent 10 years as Chief Officer of Oxfordshire Community Health Council, where she developed a passionate interest in making public involvement work. Penny lives in rural West Oxfordshire, & in the interests of work/life balance, enjoys time with her family, walking, reading & theatre-going.

**I am pleased and proud to be working with OCF having had links with the Forum since its foundation in 1993, I have always thought it a fantastic organisation.**

Since I joined in January there has been no shortage of activity and events – some welcome and some less so! We started the year with news that we had been successful in tendering to provide the *Carers' Voice* contract, to enable carers to have a voice in the planning and provision of services and support. This is the Forum's core work, the work that we were set up to do and we are delighted to have won the contract, small though it is in financial terms for the enormous job it represents. Most of our work falls under the *Carers' Voice* banner, but we plan to say a little more about the contract and what it means in the next Newsletter.

One of my very first meetings in January was a re-union for the

Abingdon *Caring with Confidence* group – a fantastic group - and I was totally hooked on *Caring with Confidence* (CwC) from then on. Unfortunately we heard in late June that Dept. of Health funding for the *Caring with Confidence* pilot would end in three months time – unbelievable that something just getting into its stride and already so valued by carers was destined for such an abrupt end. A lot of carers told us that we must try everything possible to secure funding for the future. The good news is that the County Council and Primary Care Trust (PCT) have been very supportive and between them have found a little funding to enable us to continue in a slimmed down form until March 2011. Beyond that lies uncertainty ..... but there is a lot of work going on to save CwC in Oxfordshire, strongly supported by the carers who have 'graduated' from CwC.

Our third major piece of work, commissioned by the PCT, was the GP Survey, which involved 95 carers in talking about their experiences of Primary Care. The importance of Primary Care as a first point of identification for carers was borne out by the work and we are working with the PCT to implement the recommendations of this work (more about this on pages 4 & 5) We are also working with the PCT to deliver four Health and Wellbeing Events for carers – the first of these is in Abingdon on 26 November (see enclosed flyer for more details).

In common with most small voluntary organizations in financially turbulent times, the Forum faces an uncertain future. What we do know is that at a time of cut backs the work of the Forum will be more important than ever and we are looking very hard at how we can strengthen the Forum to ensure that the voices of carers are being heard wherever decisions that affect their lives are being taken.

**Penny**

# IT'S GOOD TO BE HEARD

.....*Continued from page 1*

So - we invited Carers to a consultative workshop on June 4<sup>th</sup> - to listen to senior Social Services officers tell us about both these pieces of work and to give them our views. This was an important opportunity for carers to influence developments, and it's fair to say we spoke up! The meeting was very lively indeed, and

we raised a huge number of issues for such a short time. A follow-up meeting on July 30<sup>th</sup> continued what we started, and discussed the Carers Commissioning plans. **John Jackson**, Director for Social and Community Services, was keen to be at the meeting to talk about the proposals and listen to Carers' views. In an email about the meeting he said: "I think it is important that we use this meeting

to discuss concerns thoroughly. Our intention remains to improve the quality of services and support available to Carers." At the 30<sup>th</sup> July meeting he said that he considered adequate support to Carers to be a "no brainer", as the alternatives would place a serious strain on already stretched services and cost a fortune.



## Carers' Voice in Government

We were pleased to welcome **Nicola Blackwood**, (the new Oxford West & Abingdon Conservative MP) to meet with local Carers at Oxfordshire Carers' Forum in June. Nicola listened keenly to all that we had to say and we sent her notes of the issues raised. Her subsequent parliamentary question (see below) shows that she will be a lively advocate, although she was also very clear about the severe financial constraints under which the government is operating, and the challenges they present to services.

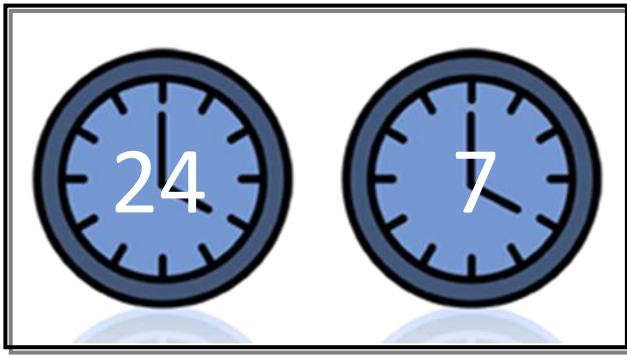
"As the Under-Secretary knows, many people with disabilities depend heavily on carers. During a visit in carers' week to the Oxfordshire Carers' Forum, it became abundantly obvious that, despite the drunken spending spree to which the Secretary of State referred, carers remain chronically under-supported. Will the Under Secretary please comment on the Government's plans to improve support for carers and to reduce the bureaucracy, which too often prevents them from accessing the help that is available?"

**Nicola Blackwood MP**

It was heartening to know that in this general election year Carers have all party support in Oxfordshire. We would particularly like to thank the outgoing Liberal Democrat MP for Oxford West and Abingdon, **Dr Evan Harris**, for his active support over his time as an MP. Both **Andrew Smith** (Labour MP for West Oxford) and **Tony Baldry** (Conservative MP for Banbury and Chairman of the All Party Parliamentary Group for Carers) confirmed their commitment to supporting Carers through better Carer recognition and providing Carers Breaks. We are also grateful to Tony for his support for providing Carers with training to help manage their caring role, and for asking the Minister to look at paying pensioner Carers in intensive caring roles £25-£50 per week, as recommended by the Work & Pensions select Committee. In the run up to the election **David Cameron**, MP for Witney and now **Prime Minister** was fulsome in his support for Carers.

"As I've said so many times before, carers are the unsung heroes of society. I know that the work they do to help disabled people is simply invaluable. Just imagine what would happen if all the carers in this country suddenly packed their bags and left. It's not just that the financial cost of looking after so many disabled people would be a massive burden on the state. It's the sheer emotional effect on all the people who depend, day in and day out, on their love and care. We should all support, recognize and celebrate the incredible work that carers do..."

**David Cameron - Prime Minister**



## A BIG “THANK YOU” for your help with our recent GP Survey

Some of our members may remember helping us out with a questionnaire back in the spring. NHS Oxfordshire (the PCT) wanted to find out what Carers think of the service they get from their GP practices, and we are grateful to them for the grant which enabled us to carry out this survey. The research team would also like to express our thanks to the 95 Carers, the GP practice managers and others who gave their time to fill in the quite lengthy questionnaire, or answer our questions over the phone or at meetings. We looked at:

1. The needs of Carers;
2. Whether and how Carers currently obtain support;
3. Experience of registration by GPs;
4. The contribution of respite care and carer's assessments;
5. How support might be improved;

**Carer needs** We found that most Carers in this survey (60%) gave 50 or more hours of care per week, and were 40% more likely to have poor health than non Carers. They valued respite care, more care for the “cared for” person, financial help or more support at work, information and/or someone to talk to.

**Sources of support** most mentioned were those specifically set up for Carers including the Carers Centres, local Carers Groups and the Oxfordshire Carers Forum programme “Caring with Confidence” (many Carers interviewed/questioned were already known to the Oxfordshire Carers Forum and had been on the programme). The next most frequently mentioned source of support was “family and friends”, followed by the Social care system.

A wide range of voluntary organisations were also mentioned, such as the Alheimers Society, Age Concern (now Age UK), Rethink, the Clive project and other mental health groups. Working Carers valued flexibility at work and appreciated Oxfordshire County Council's help and support in this respect.

**GP Registration** At present, there does not appear to be a strong enough incentive for Carers to register with their GP practice.

- The proportion of registered carers in Oxfordshire (1.2%) is well below the 10% rate suggested by The Princess Royal Trust for Carers and the Royal College of General Practitioners, and both GP practices and Carers themselves highlighted the difficulty with identifying Carers - “It is common that people do not see themselves as Carers particularly when caring for a long-term partner.”
- Carer registration doesn't trigger any automatic action (except possibly getting a priority flu jab).
- And Practices do not get to see the results of the Social Services Carers Assessment.



**Despite 65% of Carers knowing that they could be registered as a Carer by their GP, only 25% of those registered said they had received additional help or support as a result.**

Only one Carer (out of 95 Carers across 43 practices) mentioned “GP” as a possible source of support that they would recommend to others. GP practices agreed, saying that they treat Carers “just like other patients”. Some Carers, however, rate their GP very highly and it was clear that some GPs are proactive in their support of Carers in their caring role.

**“I respect his opinion and take his advice... He makes me laugh!”**

**“Excellent, GP has been fantastic.”**

**“He sees me every six weeks to make sure I am OK. He is concerned that I am able to do things to enjoy myself.”**

**“I know she's there if ever I need a chat.”**

**Respite care and Carer assessments** Both respite care and quality information and advice are clear priorities for Carers, and GP practices already play a role in delivering these (e.g. by identifying Carers who would benefit from Carers breaks).

**“Respite is so key – lots of short breaks are what is needed (like lily pads – gets you from one to another)”**

**Improving Support:** the report recommends supporting Carers by:

- Continuing with Carers breaks via GP practices;
- Changing the process of Carers Assessments so that GPs are informed of the results;
- Supporting GP practices to hear the views of Carers in their area;
- Improving the identification and registration of Carers by:
  - Identifying a Carer lead (Champion) in each GP practice;
  - Delivering Carers awareness training for all practice staff (including those likely to come into contact with Carers in the home such as District Nurses). This would aim to encourage all staff to help register and support Carers;
  - Testing new ways of reaching Carers (such as a tick box for Carers on the flu clinic letter);
  - Developing local targets - estimating the number of Carers who might be encouraged to register with their GP practice using data from this research and other sources.
- Improving the signposting of support to Carers via GP practices by simplifying information leaflets for display, primarily prompting people to think about whether they are a Carer and the benefits of registering;
- Delivering more publicity (as suggested by GP practices) including (for example)
  - promotion around Carers Week and better information on notice boards;
  - Developing Carers information packs which can be given to Carers on registration.



## WHERE NEXT

**The findings and recommendations from the Carers research were shared with the Health and Wellbeing Partnership Board, which has representation from statutory, voluntary and third sector organisations to raise awareness of Carers issues and encourage organisations delivering frontline services to think Carers. The work on implementing the recommendations within Primary Care through training to GP practices and locality health teams is already underway. The findings will also guide the work under the 'Self Care' work stream of Creating a Healthy Oxfordshire (CAHO) programme and inform the joint Carers services commissioning initiatives.**

## Caring for Wife is.....



1. All meals
2. All cooking/washing up.
3. Tidying up/h Hoovering/making beds etc.
4. All Wife's correspondence.
5. Bank and financial affairs.
6. All necessary telephone calls.
7. Taking her out to amuse her (in car/up to town/personal clothes shopping).
8. Suggesting and putting on TV programmes for her to watch (she only sees flickering images, unable to follow the plot).
9. All grocery shopping.
10. All other shopping.
11. Monitoring her health.
12. Arranging and taking her to Dr's
13. Appointments with physical/mental health problems.
14. Washing.
15. Ironing.
16. Giving pills a.m. and p.m.
17. Re-ordering pills.
18. Collecting pills.
19. Settling down in bed for the night.
20. Being aware if she has a fall during the night/picking her up and getting back to bed.
21. Ditto if she has bad dreams and screams out.
22. Constantly endeavouring to re-assure her that everything now and in the future will be OK??
23. Taking/collecting from Day Centre.

**Male aged 81 with limiting long term illness**

Report author, web research and analysis: Margaret Melling, MM Consulting Limited  
Research steering group: Angela Barney, Oxfordshire Carers Forum (also telephone research), Nisha Prakash, Oxfordshire Primary Care Trust, Penny Thewlis, Oxfordshire Carers Forum, Margaret Melling and Christine Stanbridge, MM Consulting Limited.

If you have comments or questions about this research or would like a copy of the report please contact us:  
by phone on 01235 547180  
or by email at [admin@oxoncarersforum.org.uk](mailto:admin@oxoncarersforum.org.uk)  
website: [www.oxoncarersforum.org.uk](http://www.oxoncarersforum.org.uk)

**Do you know someone else who's a Carer?** Perhaps they don't see themselves as a Carer? They may be popping in for a few minutes every now & then for a cup of tea & a chat to make sure everything's OK, or they could be doing everything for someone 24 hours a day every day. Thousands of Oxfordshire Carers go unrecognized each year. They could be missing out on vital services, & we want to encourage them to get in touch. But what's in it for them if they do? It can be hard to know where to go for what. We asked NHS Oxfordshire (the PCT), the Access Team (soon to be the Customer Service Centre), and the Carers Centres to each let us have a short piece about what happens when you contact them.

## Help us to help you by letting us know

Approximately 10% of patients in a GP practice are likely to be carers. Of these, about a third are likely to be caring for more than 20 hours a week, and a fifth caring for more than 40 hours per week. Caring has adverse impact on the health of 80% of carers and carers are at risk, both physically with ailments such as back strain, and emotionally with stress related illness.

Carers who are supported and have regular health checkups are likely to be healthier both physically and emotionally. Doctors and Nurses want to help but they need to know that you are a carer – help them by letting them know that you are a carer and having your records marked – 'I am a carer'.

### The potential benefits of being recorded with your GP practice as a carer include:

- › Referral to local Carers Centres and Social and Community Services for carers assessment
- › Referral to emergency carers support service A4E
- › Referral for flexible carers break (subject to eligibility and availability of resource)
- › Priority and/or flexible appointments to meet your needs and the person you are caring for
- › Repeat prescriptions
- › Flexible/priority home visits
- › Priority flu jabs

We want to support you in doing this vital work!

**NHS Oxfordshire**

## New Customer Service Centre

The Oxfordshire County Council Customer Service Centre has recently been formed to provide a centre of customer excellence. It will make it easier for customers to access county council services by centralising many of the various current routes into our service teams. Since moving into the Customer Service Centre the Access team continue to be contacted on **0845 050 7666** and the opening hours will also be extended to improve access for customers. On receiving a call, the Customer Service Advisor will initially identify the nature of the call and, depending on the individual circumstances, will either provide advice immediately or will arrange for information to be sent in the post. They may also identify other services which may be beneficial to the customer such as the Blue Badge scheme, smoke alarm installation, electric blanket checks, and availability of carer's grants.

The experience and skill of our customer service advisors allows them to identify other ways customers can be helped. For example, it may be beneficial for a Carers self-assessment to be undertaken. In which case, the appropriate paperwork would be sent out to be completed and returned. Once we receive this back, we will contact the customer to discuss it further.

**Oxfordshire Carers' Centres** will be able to give you a good introduction to the services & support you may need to help you in your caring role, so it is important to contact your local centre as soon as possible. "The Centres give free confidential advice, advocacy, information & support to anyone of any age, race or gender who is looking after, unpaid, a friend or relative who is unable to look after themselves. You can call us, come & see us or ask for a visit in your own home.

We can advise on benefits, & offer you, or point you in the direction of other services such as trips out, holidays, specialist equipment, befriending, courses, groups & complimentary therapies. The Centres can also help with self-directed support, & offer specialist help for Asian Carers, Parent Carers, Young Carers, & Young Adult Carers.

Find our dedicated website with a range of helpful & up to date information at [www.oxoncarers.org.uk](http://www.oxoncarers.org.uk) or call us on...

**South & Vale (Didcot)...01235 510212    Oxford (Cowley Rd)...01865 205192**

**North & West (Banbury)...01295 264545**



## About Us

OCF was set

up in 1993 out of the Carers Reference groups. We are a charity run by Carers for Carers, and have a Board of Trustees elected by members every year at our AGM. As Carers ourselves we recognize the difficulties and challenges facing Carers.

### Carers' Voice

To enable Carers voices to be heard we liaise with statutory and other voluntary agencies, making sure Carers are listened to and involved when services for Carers and those we care for are being developed or changed. We support Carers through raising the caring profile; arranging meetings, talks and training courses; by staying up to date on changes affecting Carers both nationally and locally; by providing signposting for Carers; and by doing research to help the agencies which Carers rely on to improve their services.

### Join us and help us to make a difference for Carers in Oxfordshire - as Volunteers, and Trustees

As the need to support Carers increases and our Forum expands, we need to attract volunteers to join us as Members and, hopefully, as Trustees. "The more the merrier" is appropriate for volunteers and if you wish to join our activities you will be most welcome. "Every little helps"

**Also, we have vacancies now for three Trustees.** Trustees essentially bring skills and experience to help our Forum deliver our mission to improve Carer's health and wellbeing. So let us know if you or someone you know wishes to be nominated as a Trustee. And we'll send you the details on process.

**Tony Purkis OCF Chairman**

# Welcome to our AGM 2010

09:45

**19 November 2010**  
Including:

10.20

Our Patron's thoughts – a Year with Oxfordshire Carers' Forum by Helen Baker, Deputy Lieutenant of Oxfordshire

11.30

Guest Speaker from Oxfordshire County Council Social & Community Services

12.10

Care Worker Awards presented by Helen Baker

**Care Workers' Awards 2010**  
Nominations for the Professional Care Workers' Awards 2010 are now closed and the awards will be presented at the AGM on 19<sup>th</sup> November. These Awards recognise outstanding contributions to caring & improvement of the Carers' quality of life.

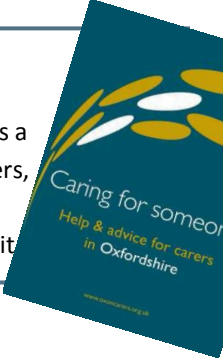


"Since attending the Caring with Confidence programme, I have developed the confidence to voice my thoughts with the intention of having a say in service development for Carers"

"Caring with confidence run by the Forum has been a lifeline"

"This was an amazing course, full of invaluable information & practical advice for coping with crisis moments which every Carer experiences. Having met other Carers I realise that I am not alone. This in itself gave tremendous confidence and moral support. Sharing experiences also means that isolated Carers don't have to keep on re-inventing the wheel. Attendance on this course is an essential aid and I would like to see all Carers attending it, as early as possible at the start of their caring role."

The latest **Caring for Someone** booklet is now out. With over 100 pages packed with information it is a vital resource for Oxfordshire Carers, and for Health & Social Care professionals. You can get hold of it



### Contact Us Oxfordshire Carers' Forum

Level 2 The Charter  
Abingdon  
OX14 3LZ  
Tel: 01235 547180  
Fax: 01235 547181

Email: [admin@oxoncarersforum.org.uk](mailto:admin@oxoncarersforum.org.uk)

# WHAT WE CAN DO FOR YOU

## Inform you

Keep you up to date with new developments in policy and services - by letter, email or on our website.

## Involve you

Make sure your voice is being heard - come and have your say.

## Empower You

Provide Caring with Confidence programmes to help you build on your strengths.

## Share with You

Come along to one of our events. Have a cup of tea, share your ideas with other carers.

Have Your Say

## Your Voice

## Your Thoughts

## Your experience

- **FACE TO FACE:** at meetings, workshops and consultations – come and have your say.
- **IN WRITING or by EMAIL**  
You send us your views.
- **NETWORK:** at our Caring with Confidence sessions and other events.

## Call us

01235 547180

## Email us

[admin@oxoncarersforum.org.uk](mailto:admin@oxoncarersforum.org.uk)

## Use our web site contact facility

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

## Fax us

01235 547181

## In writing

Level 2 The Charter

Abingdon

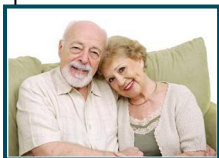
Oxon

OX14 3LZ

**If you don't know where to turn we do.**



## OTHER USEFUL



### Age UK Oxfordshire

Telephone: 01235 849400

Helpline: 0844 8870005

Fax: 01235 849449

Email: [helpline@ageconcernoxon.org.uk](mailto:helpline@ageconcernoxon.org.uk)

Web: [www.ageukoxfordshire.org.uk](http://www.ageukoxfordshire.org.uk)



### Sahara Group for Asian Women Carers

Telephone: 01865 205192

Fax: 01865 242569

Email: [info@carerscentre.co.uk](mailto:info@carerscentre.co.uk)

Web: [www.carerscentre.co.uk](http://www.carerscentre.co.uk)



### Oxfordshire Family Information Service

08452 26 26 36

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

[twitter.com/oxonfdis](https://twitter.com/oxonfdis)



### Oxford Carers Centre Young Carers Project

Telephone: 01865 205192 ask to speak to Young Carers Team

Email: [youngcarers@carerscentre.co.uk](mailto:youngcarers@carerscentre.co.uk)

Web: [www.coolyoungcarerscare.com](http://www.coolyoungcarerscare.com)

Oxfordshire County Council

[www.oxfordshire.gov.uk](http://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk)

NHS Oxfordshire

[www.oxfordshirepct.nhs.uk](http://www.oxfordshirepct.nhs.uk)

Access Team

0845 050 7666

North & West Carer Centre

01295 264 545

South & Vale Carer Centre

01235 510 212

Oxford Carer Centre

01865 205 192

Dementia Advice Service

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

Contact a Family

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

A4e

[a4e.co.uk/Oxford.aspx](http://a4e.co.uk/Oxford.aspx)

Dpt of Work & Pensions

[www.direct.gov.uk/carers](http://www.direct.gov.uk/carers)

Dpt of Transport

020 7944 2914

Job Centre Plus

[www.jobcentreplus.gov.uk](http://www.jobcentreplus.gov.uk)