

Give Carers A Break



Let's campaign
together to make
sure carers get the
breaks they need



The Princess Royal Trust
for Carers

**CROSS
ROADS
CARE**

Carers need breaks. This year, Primary Care Trusts (PCTs) have money in their allocations to provide breaks for carers. The Government says they have to publish their plans and budgets for supporting carers.

Let's campaign together to make sure carers get the breaks they need.

Breaks from caring, as well as emotional support, advice on benefits and financial issues, and support from other carers, can be a huge help to carers. It can make the difference between being able to carry on, and having to give up. If a carer can't carry on, there will, potentially, be enormous care costs to the taxpayer. This is because health services and local authorities will have to pay for the care that is then needed. It makes sense to provide breaks for carers.

More breaks for carers needed

In November 2011, the Coalition Government announced that they would make £400million available to PCTs in England to pay for breaks for adult and young carers over a period of four years (2011-15). This should be made available to carers through personal budgets.¹ The Government laid out these priorities in the refreshed Carers' Strategy.² These are all very welcome, but the problem is, of course, that **we've been here before**.

From April 2009 - March 2010, the previous Government made £150million available for carers' breaks. The Princess Royal Trust for Carers and Crossroads Care showed that **only a quarter** of this actually made its way to PCTs' plans to support carers - the rest was spent on other areas.³ This time around, the Coalition Government has stated that PCTs must publish their plans and budgets to support carers, showing measurement of outcomes for carers. **The money will, again, not be ring-fenced however, and PCTs will still be able to spend it on other areas instead of carers.**

We can't leave it to chance. Carers need high quality breaks, which are well planned and supported, as well as other services. Carers' services are, already, being told that there is no more money to support or provide breaks for carers. PCTs must be held accountable for how they use their budgets to support carers. By campaigning together, we can work with PCTs to make sure carers' voices are heard. Together, we can make sure that carers receive the support they need. Times are hard, we know. **But carers missed out last time and without support, some can't continue caring.** Let's not miss out again.

¹ Department of Health Press Release 16 November 2010: Personal budgets for all and more breaks for carers

² Department of Health (2010), *Recognised, valued and supported: Next steps for the Carers Strategy*. London: Department of Health.

³ Conochie (2010), *No breaks for carers*, London: The Princess Royal Trust for Carers and Crossroads Care; Conochie (2010), *Tough breaks for carers*, London: The Princess Royal Trust for Carers and Crossroads Care

Give carers a break! Let's campaign for breaks for carers

What do we want?

- PCTs to publish their plans and budgets for supporting carers by October 2011.
- PCTs to spend as much of their allocation as possible on breaks for carers.
- Local plans for the future, such as Joint Strategic Needs Assessments, to highlight support and breaks for carers as a priority.
- PCTs and local authorities to work closely with local carers and carers' organisations to develop their plans for this year and the future.
- The Department of Health to use every lever possible to ensure that PCTs meet their responsibilities to support carers.⁴

Together, we must persuade local decision-makers about the case for carers' breaks.

Support services for carers is an issue for local decision-makers. We want to campaign to **highlight these local issues and work positively with PCTs, local authorities and carers' organisations** to achieve the best outcome for carers. Local carers' organisations are in the best position to do this as you work with local carers. There's never been a better time to highlight the fantastic work you do.

What is your local situation?

Before you can take action, you need to know what your PCT is doing already. Some PCTs are already providing good support for carers and are working in partnership with their local authority and carers' organisations. Use any contacts you may have to get as much information together as you can in advance.

The following actions are for local carers' organisations. You don't have to do it all - choose what works best for your local situation, and adapt things to suit you and to suit carers in your area.

If you are a carer, please contact your local Princess Royal Trust Carers' Centre or Crossroads Care scheme to find out how you can get involved.

If you are a local carers' organisation, contact the "Give Carers a Break" campaign team for further information or for any of the resources mentioned below. All contact details can be found at the end of this pack.

Diane's story

Diane cares for her husband who has enduring mental health needs and long-term physical health problems. Diane has been awarded a Carers' Personal Budget for a gardener to maintain the front and back gardens. *"It will help me tremendously as I suffer from osteoarthritis and find it very difficult doing the maintenance of the garden."* This also allows Diane to have some time for a break in the home when her husband goes out with his support worker.

⁴ PCTs will not exist after March 2013. This term is used here to mean PCTs and successor organisations.

You are the key!

If you are a local carers' organisation, please join the "Give Carers a Break" campaign by:

- Writing to your PCT using our template letter. Ask when they intend to publish their plans and budgets for supporting carers, as required by the Government. If your PCT is already supporting carers effectively, then take this opportunity to let them know. Offer your help in planning support for carers and ask to meet with the lead for carers support services. Please forward on any replies that you receive. Download our template letter from www.carers.org/givecarersabreak.
- Getting carers involved. Put up the "Give Carers a Break" campaign posters in your Carers' Centre or scheme to tell carers about the campaign. Reach new carers in your local GP or dentist waiting room, library or supermarket. Add your details to the poster so that local carers know where to go for support.
- Asking carers to fill in our "Give Carers a Break" campaign postcard and getting them to explain why having a break is important to them. Take these with you when you visit carers in their own homes or give them out in your Carers' Centre or scheme. Present these to your PCT or local authority on their behalf.
- Asking carers to write to their MP, local councillors and PCT chief executives. Together, carers can influence local authorities and PCTs to publish plans to support carers (if it has not done so already). Make sure that carers include details on how this issue affects them and their family. Download our template letter from www.carers.org/givecarersabreak.
- Working together. In campaigning, our voice is always stronger where we work together, so get more people on board. What other organisations in your area would be concerned about this? Think about mental health groups, learning disability groups, older peoples' groups, WI groups, the local round table – anyone you think might be supportive. You could hold a joint "Give Carers a Break" event, or they could ask their members to write to their MP, councillors and PCT Chief Executives or complete the "Give Carers a Break" campaign postcards.
- Organising a "Give Carers a Break" event. Invite your local MP, councillors and PCT commissioners to talk directly with local carers about the support available and their plans for the future. The "Give Carers a Break" campaign team can provide advice on how to do this – get in touch! Invite your local media and use our draft press release at www.carers.org/givecarersabreak.
- Being creative. Put together a display to show your local MPs, PCTs and councillors. Use copies of the completed "Give Carers a Break" campaign postcards. Ask carers to add their photo or even a drawing or poem to show what breaks from their caring role mean to them. Get your local MPs, councillors and PCT commissioners involved and ask them to add to the display. See our suggested event outline and draft press release to help you organise your event and get local media coverage at www.carers.org/givecarersabreak.
- Building for the future. Your local Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) will become increasingly important in determining the local Health and Wellbeing Strategy, which will then strongly influence services to be commissioned. Contact your local authority to be put in touch with the JSNA lead and ask how you can help. Contact the "Give Carers a Break" campaign team for any advice that you may need.

Jack's story

Jack cares for his son who has severe mental health problems. Jack has been awarded a carers personal budget for a laptop computer. "The laptop allows me to escape from the problems I encounter each day as a carer. It also allows me to research medications and treatments for my son."

Christine's story

Christine cares for her partner Ben and is unable to work due to caring full-time. Christine applied for a Carers' Personal Budget to pay for her father to travel down to stay with her and Ben for a week. For Christine, seeing her father would be a break in itself as she does not know anyone nearby.

Christine will use the remainder to buy an annual leisure pass so that she can access the gym and swimming pool when she gets the opportunity.

Q&As

MPs, local authorities and PCTs may want to know more about why we are campaigning. Here's some more information to help you. If you would like more information, do get in touch with the "Give Carers a Break" campaign team by emailing givecarersabreak@carers.org or calling us on **020 8498 7942**.

What is the Government saying about supporting carers and carers' breaks?

In 2010, the Coalition Government decided to take another look at the plans for how carers should be supported and, in November 2010, published *Recognised, valued and supported: Next steps for the Carers Strategy*. The Coalition agreed that carers have a crucial role to play and that they need support. Four main priority areas were identified:

1. Supporting those with caring responsibilities to identify themselves as carers at an early stage, recognising the value of their contribution and involving them from the outset both in designing local care provision and in planning individual care packages.
2. Enabling those with caring responsibilities to fulfil their educational and employment potential.
3. Personalised support both for carers and those they support, enabling them to have a family and community life.
4. Supporting carers to remain mentally and physically well.

The third and fourth priorities recognise that support should happen in a way that works best for carers and families. The Government recognises the pressure which carers are often under and that this can take its toll physically and mentally, placing caring relationships at risk of breakdown.

Are breaks for carers really necessary? We all have to deal with cutbacks.

Breaks for carers aren't just things which are nice to have. They are vital for carers' health and wellbeing, and for helping to continue with a caring role. In a recent Government consultation, breaks were one of the main things which carers said they needed to help them carry on – and if they can't, then the costs to the taxpayer are greater as the person they care for may need residential care or crisis interventions. Breaks are not a luxury – they're an essential part of prevention and early intervention. If carers don't get breaks, the Government will not meet the objectives of its own Carers' Strategy.

What is a break? What support does a carer need to take one?

In the consultation on the Carers' Strategy, carers told the Government that they need breaks and that one size doesn't fit all. Different things work for different people. Some people want to go away for a

few days or even a week, whilst others want to be able to go to an evening class or social group with friends once a week. For some people, a break doesn't mean going anywhere – it's having the space and time at home to pursue their own interests and relax, and sometimes having equipment they need to do this, or a nicer environment at home. Others want to have a trip or day out with the person they care for, but need extra help to do so.

However, breaks don't just happen on their own. Carers often need high quality replacement care to be made available, which is trusted by both the carer and the person being cared for.

Who can help carers to take breaks and make sure high quality replacement care is arranged?

The Princess Royal Trust Carers' Centres and Crossroads Care schemes are experts. They work with thousands of families across the UK and help them to take breaks. PCTs should be speaking with local carers' organisations and looking at examples of successful services at The Carers' Hub – www.carershub.org.

Why do we think the money won't be spent on carers?

Despite the supportive comments of the Coalition Government and their announcement of money for carers' breaks, it is likely that a large proportion of the £400million will never reach carers, since this is what happened last time. Research has found that, PCTs planned to spend only 26% of the £100million to increase services for carers 2010/11. The rest disappeared into NHS budgets. The mechanism for funding this time around is essentially the same, although there are some more requirements to show plans and budgets.

What has the Government done to make sure the money is spent on carers?

The Government has paid some note to the concerns held by carers and the problems with the previous funding. They have put some measures in place to ensure that PCTs have to account for the services they provide for carers.

PCTs will have to:

- Formulate plans and budgets with local authorities and local carers' organisations.
- Make plans and budgets available to local people.
- Monitor the improvement area for carers and the self-reported quality of life of carers in each PCT area as part of the NHS Outcomes Framework.

These will be helpful in monitoring what measures are being put in place. However, this will not be enough to ensure the £400million is spent on carers. There is nothing to stop PCTs from spending the

Providing breaks for carers – good practice 1

NHS Cambridgeshire has funded a service so that GPs from 22 practices can issue a carer with a free prescription for support from Crossroads Care Cambridgeshire. The carer contacts Crossroads Care who then visit the carer and help them to access the support that they need and want. If the carer wants a break, it is booked directly through the scheme at no charge to the carer. There are also support group sessions that carers can sign up to for free.

Around 165 carers received a GP prescription in 2010/11, around 60% said that it has helped to maintain their health, and 95% said they feel better informed about what support may be available having spoken to Crossroads Care. GPs have advised that one-third of prescriptions have prevented hospital admissions.

Providing breaks for carers – good practice 2

Surrey PCT is working closely with Action for Carers Surrey (part of The Princess Royal Trust for Carers Network) and Surrey County Council to develop a plan whereby GP practices will be able to directly refer carers for a direct payment, if it is felt that a break or other support would improve their health or wellbeing.

Following referral, a social care assessor will carry out a simple carers' assessment and will check whether the carer requires signposting to a full carers assessment or other information and support. Criteria for a break include whether the carer provides regular and substantial care, needs a break for health-related reasons, and lives in Surrey. Funds for a break will then be made available to carers to be spent on any activity, including a holiday, a course or afternoon breaks, to help support a carer's health and wellbeing. Using a direct payment means the carers would be free to make the arrangements to suit their needs. The PCT will monitor carers' perceptions of health-related outcomes (e.g. reduced stress) as a way of assessing whether the scheme is effective.

money however they want – in fact, this is the whole idea of local decision-making. Already some PCTs are saying that they simply do not have the money, or have prioritised other issues. With the cuts which are taking place in public services, this is likely to get worse.

My PCT says it hasn't had any extra money for this...

The money for breaks for carers has been included in PCTs allocations. It will, however, not be specifically identified as being for this purpose as it is all in one big "pot" and it may be that they have had no overall increase in their budget. The PCT has to make its own decisions about how to spend the money it is given.

This is an issue for local decision-makers. Why are you getting MPs involved?

This is an issue for local decision-makers, yes, but MPs are very influential and take a keen interest in the needs of the people in their constituency. They can be very helpful in raising an issue with a PCT or local authority and making sure that it is heard.

For more information

The Princess Royal Trust for Carers and Crossroads Care campaign team can help you, so get in touch if you need help, or want to let us know how you are getting on. Email us at givecarsersabreak@carers.org or call us on 020 8498 7942.

For more information, please email givecarsersabreak@carers.org or call us on **020 8498 7942**.

Download materials to help you at www.carers.org/givecarsersabreak.

Find more information about our organisations on our websites www.carers.org and www.crossroads.org.uk.

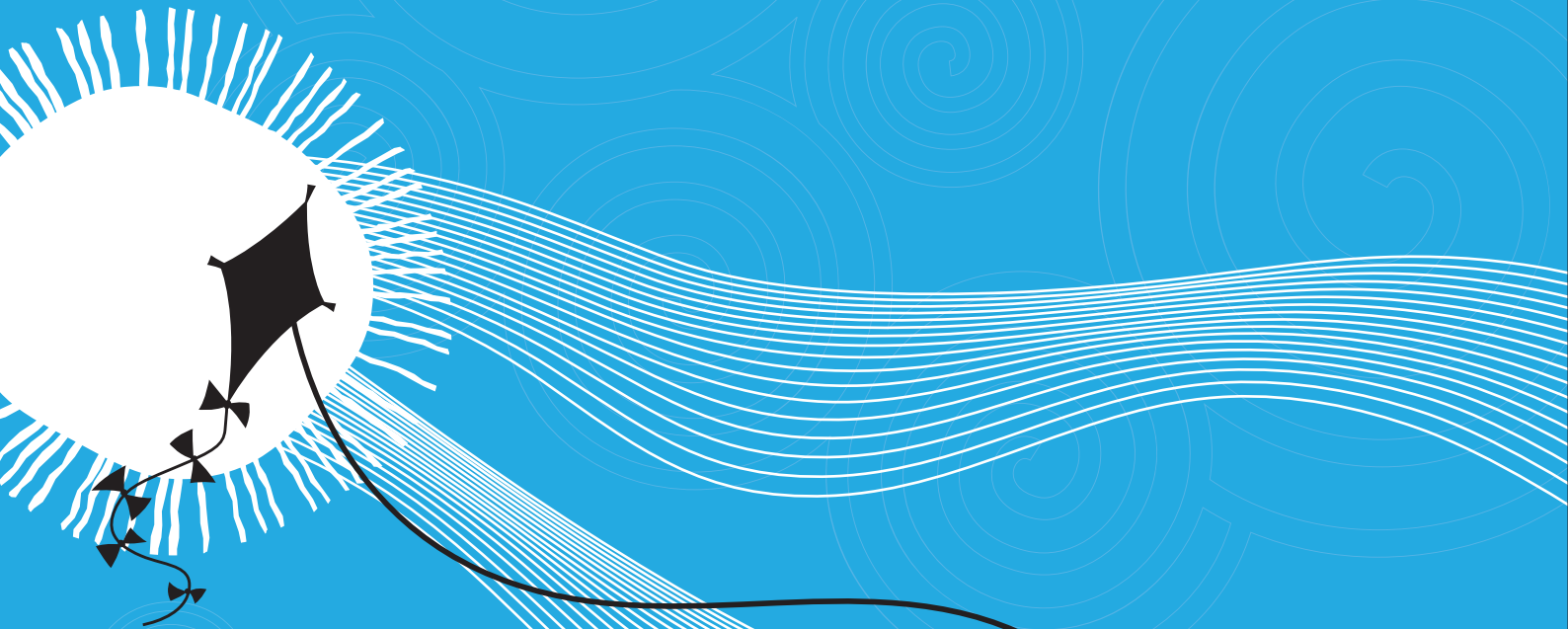
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